

RELIGIOUS SYMBOLS IN WILLIAM BLAKE'S "THE LITTLE GIRL LOST" AND "THE LITTLE GIRL FOUND"

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Abstract

The research aimed to discuss religious symbol in William Blake's The Little Girl Lost and The Little Girl Found. The objectives of the research were to describe what the meaning of symbol related to religious symbol. The symbols would be related to religious symbols as portrayed in the Bible. The theories used in this study were symbolism, religious symbol, Garden of Eden, Innocence, Creation, and Jesus. The technique of data collecting was library research, while the method of this research was descriptive. There were two approaches used in this study. They were structural and formalist approach. According to the findings of this study, religious symbols in The Little Girl Lost and The Little Girl Found contained four symbols: the Garden of Eden, Innocence, Creation, and Jesus. The Garden of Eden explained the situation of Adam and Eve, and the Tree of Knowledge. Innocence described the main character of this poem, a little girl named Lyca. Creation explained the process of creation in this universe, done by God and the Sabbath. Jesus explained about the Holy Trinity, Lion, Tiger, and Crown of Thorns.

Keywords: Religious Symbol, Garden of Eden, Innocence, Creation, Jesus

1. INTRODUCTION

The poems will be discussed in this research were written by William Blake. From 1783 to 1827, he was England's greatest author. In 1784, he published his first literary work, entitled *Songs of Innocence*. During his career, he got a vision of God. Therefore, he wrote some poems related to religion. Furthermore, the poems that have become the focus of analysis dealing with religion through symbols are "*The Little Girl Lost*" and "*The Little Girl Found*". This research used William Blake's works entitled "*The Little Girl Lost*" and "*The Little Girl Found*". The primary goal of this research is to identify the symbols in both poems. Due to the reasearch was related to religion, symbol will be focuses to the religion as the topic of the discussion.

Some theories are applied to support finding the answer from the problem statements. A symbol is a figurative language that can appear in a literary work to

represent or convey the author's message. As M. H. Abrams writes in this book *A Glossary of Literary Term Seventh Edition*, “the term symbol is applied only to a word or phrase that signifies an object or event which in its turn signifies something, or has a range of reference, beyond it-self” (1998: 311). It means that a symbol is a sign that can be associated with something in the minds of the readers in order to introduce them to the meaning. According to Knickerboker and Beninger in *Interpreting Literature*, “Symbol is something which is used to represent another thing” (1963:225). It means the author of a literary work has their own way of conveying the message to the readers.

Religion can be viewed as a collection of institutions, a set of ideas and beliefs, or a lived practice, all of which are intertwined and influenced by and influenced by literature. “Religious symbols are used to convey concepts concerned with humanity’s relationship to the sacred or holy” {Religious symbolism and iconography” (<https://www.Boundless.com/sociology/textbooks/boundless-sociology-textbook/religion-14/the-symbolic-interactionist-perspective-on-religion-108/religious-symbols-597-6711>, accessed on December 21st, 2020)}. It means that a religious symbol is a sign that conveys a religious message.

Garden of Eden in the *Old Testament Book of Genesis* is mentioned as earthly paradise. It was lived in place by the first created man and woman. According to Ryken, Wilhoit, and Longman that “the Garden of Eden is the archetypal earthly paradise, a place of pastoral bliss, provision and human innocence” (1998:1114). It means that Garden of Eden is place as a heaven that provide happiness and purity.

The Garden of Eden is where the first person sinned, according to the Bible's narrative. Nonetheless, the Garden of Eden was a beautiful location, with a tree that God banned us from eating, as detailed above. The tree of life was its name. As stated by Ryken, Wilhoit, and Longman, “the trees in the garden of eden have the potential for both and blessing (immortality) and cursing (the fruits that leads to death)” (1998: 2990). It indicates that the tree in Eden may be both good and terrible.

Innocence is a recurring theme in William Blake's poetry. The term "innocence" refers to something that purified.

Innocence is most appealing about children. It is simply their physical beauty. It is their openness to loving and being loved, and their playfulness. Beyond these things, in our view, children are beautiful because they possess something that we have all lost the quality of innocence {What is childhood innocence (<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2013/may/10/what-is-childhood-innocence.html>, accessed on January 9th 2020)}.

From the theory above innocence can be refers to appearance of someone, especially a child.

Creation is the term that God create the world. The creation begins before anything exists except for God himself. According to:

Christian belief, God created the universe. There are two stories of how God created it which are found at the beginning of the book of Genesis in

the Bible. Some Christians regard Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 as two totally separate myths that have a similar meaning. Others see the two chapters as part of one continuous story {Creation (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zg3vxfr/revision/1>, accessed on January 19th 2020)}

It means creation that God create the world has been described in the bible. God created all of his creation in seven days.

According to Joe Cienkowski in "Jesus Christ is God, Jesus Christ, being God incarnate, is a central teaching in the scripture and Christianity. It goes to the heart of the gospel, which is central message the Christian beings to the world" (2009: 30). It means Jesus Christ as a guide for the Christian path of the truth through the gospel that has been given.

Moreover, John F. O'Gray stated in *Catholic Beliefs and Traditions*, "Jesus is the word of God become flesh, the incarnation of the wisdom of God, the one who gives instruction through his teaching and gives this spirit to his followers" (2001: 39). It intends that Jesus is the incarnation of God. Through his word of God, Jesus taught the way of life. Many Christians believe also that Jesus incarnation is depicted as an other being such as lamb, whale, egg, butterfly, lion, tiger and hare.

Furthermore, Jesus Christ is God as the creator and father of all people. Jesus is the manifestation of God. As stated by Donald in *Jesus Christ: Savior & Lord*, Jesus Christ as "the representative as human being," and therefore as "son of God" but not as God (1997: 22). It means Jesus is the son of God. He came as to the earth to save his people from a sin by his life, death, and resurrection.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

Object of the study in this research are "*The Little Girl Lost*" and "*The Little Girl Found*". William Blake, an English poet, is the author of this poetry It was included in his collection of *Songs of Experience*, which was published in 1794. In the poem "*The Little Girl Lost*", Lyca, the "little girl" in the poem, wanders out into the wilderness. Her parents are heartbroken over the loss of their daughter. The knowledge of her parents' grief disturbs her, but she has no anxiety on her own behalf and the very beasts her parents fear treat her gently and carry her to their caves as she sleeps. The poem ends with the animals taking Lyca off to the caves. The second poem, "*The Little Girl Found*", is about the parents of a seven-year-old girl. Lyca was her name. Her parents are looking desperately for their young daughter, who is currently lost in the desert. During the days and nights, they go on looking for the girl up to the moment they find a lion, which tells them where the child lies.

Since this research just describes the data without verifying any hypothesis, the most appropriate method applied here is a descriptive qualitative method. This study uses library research to collect the data. It means that the data related to this research can be found in printed materials and online materials as references in order to support this research. Furthermore, the documents, such as articles and books, are related to religious symbols and poems, such as William

Blake's "*The Little Girl Lost*" and "*The Little Girl Found*." Besides, some of the data is collected from online literature resources to support this research.

In this study, the structural approach and the formalist approach are used to analyze the research problem. The first approach is the structural approach. According to Patel, "structural approach means the arrangement of words in such a way as to form a suitable pattern of sentence" (2008: 89). It means the arrangement of sentences is acceptable in such a way. It is thought to be more about mastery of sentence structure than vocabulary acquisition. The structural aspect, on the other hand, is related to the meaning that is built up in the words of the sentence.

The second approach is formalist approach. Formalist approach also known as formalist criticism. Formalist criticism, as stated by Kennedy and Dana, "regards literature as a unique form of human knowledge that needs to be examined on its own terms" (1995: 1791). From the statement above, the formalist approach is the way to understand literature that is found in the text, and depends on the readers' opinion itself.

This research carries out religious symbols, some theories and approaches. There are several steps, as they must be carried out sequentially in order to find a solution to the problem. The first step is reading the poems. Interpreting the poem and portraying the religious symbols in this poem. According to the theory, religious symbols are used. The second step is to analyze the poems, and the researcher employs two approaches to solve the problem. The last but not least step is to reach a conclusion. The researcher will assemble the results of the analysis and construct the conclusion.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The problems that have already been formulated in the previous chapter will be discussed in this chapter. Two problems will be analyzed by the researcher. The first problem is with the religious symbols in "*The Little Girl Lost*." The second is religious symbols in "*The Little Girl Found*." Both problems have relationships with religious symbols that link each other, presented in William Blake's poems entitled "*The Little Girl Lost*" and "*The Little Girl Found*."

A. The Religious Symbols in the Poem "The Little Girl Lost"

The poem is shown to reveal and explain the religious symbols in this research. They consist of four religious symbols. They are the Garden of Eden, Innocence, Creation, and Jesus. The poem is as follows:

1. Garden of Eden

God created the Garden of Eden is the first place. As described in the bible, the place was developed from zero to existence. In the first stanza is related to the garden of eden.

*In futurity
I prophesy
That the earth from sleep
(Grave the sentence deep) (4)*

The Garden of Eden, as we know, is the future place given by God to all of humanity, as depicted in the first line of the future. Because there are living creatures who know the secrets of what God can do, the location itself is like a prophecy for humans. The creature itself is an evil being that transformed into a snake. He had deceived the people who lived in the Garden of Eden. He has revealed a tree of life inside the garden that can show us what God is. It is shown in 2nd line *I prophesy*.

Moreover, *Grave the sentence* in the fourth line depicts the earth or Garden of Eden after the event that happened when Adam and Eve ate the fruit of the *tree of life*. It also evokes the Garden of Eden, the heavenly paradise that human beings lived in before falling into sexual guilt and self-consciousness. Lyca is supposed to represent inner peace and the re-establishment of what was lost in the collapse. It means that Lyca is going through the desert to seek out her Maker. She was having a bad time with her family. Then in the next line of this poem *And the desert wild, Become a garden mild* implies that a restoration of Lyca's feeling. She took on the role of a restoration manager. The natural connotations of deserts and gardens, as well as the contrast between them, are used in these allusions.

The symbols of the Garden of Eden found in the second stanza.

And the desert wild (7)

Become a garden mild. (8)

The seventh line of the second stanza indicates that after the event, humans left the Garden of Eden, causing God to become enraged, and the garden itself to become a wild garden. At first, all creatures live side by side, turn into savages, prey on, kill, and kill each other. The following lines then explained that the atmosphere before the humans left the garden was very mild. It means that the garden is a beautiful and peaceful place. When Adam and Eve broke the rules, everything destroyed in a single day. The rule imposed by God is that no one may eat the forbidden fruit from the *Tree of Knowledge*.

Underneath this tree; (18)

The phrase "*Underneath this tree;*," in the 18th line of the fifth stanza, represents the *Tree of Knowledge*. *This tree* here refers to the tree of life inside the garden. It refers to the main character in this poem, Lyca, sleeping beneath the tree. The tree of life also known as *The Tree of Knowledge* of good or evil in paradise as told in the bible. Adam and Eve were forbidden by God not to eat the fruit of the tree of life. They were tempted by the demon in that tree. Eve eats some and gives to Adam, as result the garden fall from innocence. Revealing all good and evil inside the garden. Then, God is wrath with them, and they left the Garden of Eden.

Some other line in 34th line of ninth stanza found another symbols related to this discussion.

While the beast prey, (34)

The phrases "*While the beast is prey*" described humans after they left the Garden of Eden. However, the beast within the Garden of Eden did not leave in harmony, as it had done in the past, before humans obtained the fruit from the tree of life. Even the animals were together and, at that early stage, they all ate plants.

2. Innocence

There are religious symbols describing innocence. This data is entitled "*The Little Girl Lost*," as seen in; *Is it your little child?* The phrases "*little child*" represents innocence in the fifth stanza's 22nd line. It refers to a girl named Lyca who was underage at the time. She is wandering along and looking for God or her Maker through the desert. As we know, that little girl represents a pure or sacred personality. So she does not know about sin, because she is still a little girl. It is possible to conclude that the little girl in this poem represents human innocence.

Besides, the little girl in this poem not only described her innocence, but also described how she grew up from a child to an adult. According to the seventh and eighth lines,

And the desert wild (7)

Become a garden mild. (8)

It tells us about the transformation of the desert to become garden mild. The garden mild means the garden covered by the snow. This explains the transition of the little girl who is looking for her maker from childhood to adulthood. As a result, of the change in nature, we can also get to know the little girl during the change of seasons in a few years.

In 13th line there is relating to the girl.

Seven summers old (13)

This stanza can show us the girl's transition. The girl grows older, around seven years, and begins to drift towards God. Despite the fact that this poem includes a line stating that, we have known the little girl's age for the past seven summers.

To prove that she is a child, we can see it on line 38th from the tenth stanza.

And the virgin viewed: (38)

From the line above, it is not enough to prove that she is a mature or adult person. It will take her a few years to mature or become an adult. The term "*virgin*" refers to someone who has never had sexual relations. In another sense, a person who has not had sexual intercourse is one who is still holy and untouched at all.

3. Creation

There are religious symbols describing creation. As shown in 3rd line of first stanza.

That the earth from sleep (3)

This sentence "*that the earth is sleeping*" refers to the earth that still has no creatures living in this era. Then the earth is still in the process of creation. It takes seven days for the creation to become perfect.

Some other lines are shown 7th and 8th of second stanza related to this discussion.

And the desert wild (7)

Become a garden mild. (8)

In this analysis of two lines, the phrases describe the transformation of creation from nothing to something. It means that during the creation of God, there was nothing in this universe. Then God created all the living things and inanimate objects. These were created during the seven days of creation.

In another stanza found,

Seven summer old (13)

The number seven refers to the seven days it took God to create the earth and everything in it. We know the stage of creation from the beginning until the finish. In Christian theology, the Bible describes the notion of our universe's origin in detail. Then, the word *summer* means the turn of the season in seven years. That means it will take some time to complete the creation process over time. This is clear enough to compare the phrases *seven summer* with the seven days creation process as written in bible.

4. Jesus

There are religious symbols describing Jesus. As shown in 6th line of second stanza

For her Maker meek; (6)

The phrases *For her Maker meek;* refers to Jesus. In the Bible, God is described as the Trinity, namely the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Therefore, Jesus is also God itself. Jesus, as the Creator, is a humble figure. In order to analyze and determine his aim, it is necessary to thoroughly, know the concept of meekness. The dictionary defines meekness as "docile, excessively obedient, spineless, yielding, or tame." It is worth noting, nevertheless, that the literal definition of meekness differs significantly from the spiritual connotation mentioned in the Bible and used throughout this research. This spiritual example of service should make it clear that this virtue refers to Jesus, who is willing to share and sacrifice himself to atone for all humankind's sins.

Some other symbols in tenth stanza related to Jesus.

The kingly lion stood, (37)

Jesus is referred to in the phrases *The kingly lion stood*. As shown in the bible, there are prophecies about the birth a baby as the last prophet and the king all of human kind. The prophecy of the last prophet was Jesus. Jesus is the king who saves all of us. He is the savior.

Then in 41st line of eleventh stanza, another symbols found

Leopards, tigers, play (41)

The phrases *Leopards, tigers, play* refers to wild animals. In the bible wild animals can be described as Jesus. Sometimes Jesus is called "Lion of Judah." The lion is powerful and brave. Some people believed that after three days, lion cubs were born dead and came alive. The lion is linked with the resurrection, and it symbolized Jesus, the lord of life for this reason.

Leopards, tigers, and lions are depicted not only because they are fierce animals, but also because they represent threatening and predatory powers in the Old Testament prophetic text. These, according to Blake, are representations of creation's ferocious strength and energy, as important to it as the lamb's gentleness. Jesus is depicted as both a lion and a lamb in the Bible.

Moreover in 43rd line of eleventh stanza there is symbol related to Jesus.

While the lion old (43)

From the phrases, *While the lion old* refers to Jesus as the Maker. Lion old refers as how old the God lives. As the creator, God is the oldest living thing. He is the Creator of all living things, as we know from the Bible.

B. The Religious Symbols in the Poem “The Little Girl Found”

The poem is shown to reveal and explain the religious symbols in this research. They consist of four religious symbols. They are the Garden of Eden, Innocence, Creation, and Jesus. The poem is as follows:

1. Garden of Eden

In the 2nd stanza is related to the garden of eden.

Tired and woe-begone, (5)

The phrases *woe-begone* refers to Adam and Eve when they were expelled from the Garden of Eden. They are released into an environment that is no longer as green and productive as Eden was. In this poem, it relates to Lyca's parents when they go looking for their long-lost girl. They left their homes in a village so fertile it led to a barren desert.

In 12th line of fourth stanza,

Starved in desert wild. (12)

From the phrases above, we know that after Adam and Eve left the Garden of Eden, they sought their lives in the barren wilderness. They must suffer and start their lives from scratch. Unlike in the Garden of Eden, everything they need is already available because of the fertility of the place that provides a source of food for life. Like Lyca's parents, they had to endure thirst and hunger in the desert.

Another symbol is found in 13th of third stanza.

Pale through pathless ways (13)

The phrase "*Pale through pathless ways*" refers to Adam and Eve after the Garden of Eden collapsed because of their actions. They eat the fruit that God has forbidden. God evicted them and they left the Garden of Eden without any guidance from God. Make them miserable because of their own deeds.

The first human sin was Adam and Eve's disobedience to God. They ruined humanity for all time and gave every person born the desire to sin. God did not tempt Adam and Eve. No one is forced to follow God. Adam seems to be a bad husband. Adam was with her when Satan tried Eve, but Adam did not remind her of the warning from God and did nothing to stop it.

In 29th line of eighth stanza, there is a relation to Garden of Eden.

Smelling to his prey; (29)

The phrases "*Smell of his prey;*" refers to animals that did not prey on each other at first. However, all changed when God was angry at the behavior of man who violated his orders and the entire contents of the Garden of Eden became a mess it was. Previously, the animals were tame and lived alongside humans. Even the animals got along with one another, all of them eating plants at that early stage. It symbolizes the collapse of the Garden of Eden.

Then in 40th of tenth stanza, another symbols found.

Gone was all their care. (40)

The phrase "*gone was all their care*" refers to Adam and Eve's departure from the Garden of Eden. God curses them and no longer cares about the people who have violated him. Not only humans, but also the entire Garden of Eden, including all of the animals that lived in harmony, have changed into predatory animals.

2. Innocence

As we all know, the poems "*The Little Girl Lost*" and "*The Little Girl Found*" are linked, as is the discussion of the innocence symbol. Lyca is the name of one of the characters in this poem.

And saw their sleeping child (47)

From the phrases above, we know that Lyca, who wandered for seven years, was tired and asleep. As a result, the symbolism of innocence is highly variable. It can represent a variety of things depending on the context. For example, innocence is a much-loved virtue in Christianity symbolized by lambs.

A little girl appears in this poem to represent innocence. Some of the most innocent beings on Earth are children. Still naive, they are not aware of their dangers. They have yet to witness the bad things that a man can do in this world. They are also unaware of their surroundings and they are capable of doing it. It is often during their teenage years that children become exposed and innocent in the real world. Because of her lack of blame, lack of experience, ignorance, and purity, the Little Girl represents innocence. In the Bible, the concept of innocence is repeatedly referenced. Because it is the fundamental symbol of children and their innocence, it is one of the most significant themes in the Bible.

3. Creation

There is symbol of Creation in second and third stanza.

Arm in arm, seven days (7)

Seven nights they sleep (9)

Wandering for seven days and nights is a phrase that is frequently used to refer to *seven days* and *seven nights*. Lyca's parents suggested being a representative of some return to a vision of harmony and shameless sexuality lost in Eden. A vision of harmony is meant to create a Garden of Eden with all living things in it. All the processes of God's creation are explained in the book of Genesis in the Bible. The shameless sexuality meant for Adam and Eve who left Garden of Eden.

In 24th line of sixth stanza related to Creation.

A couching lion lay. (24)

A couched lion lies alludes to God, who rested on the seventh day after creating the entire universe on the sixth. The process lasts for seven days. The first day God created light. God created the sky on the second day. On the third day, God created dry land, seas, plants, and trees. God created the sun, the moon, and the stars on the fourth day. On the fifth day, God created creatures that live in the sea and creatures that fly. On the sixth day, God created animals that live on the land and, finally, humans, made in the image of God. By day seven, God finished his work of creation and rested, making the seventh day a special holy day. Those are all the processes that last at least seven days.

4. Jesus

As we all know, the poems "*The Little Girl Lost*" and "*The Little Girl Found*" are linked, as is the discussion of Jesus's symbol. The characters in this poem, the girl is named Lyca. The symbols of Jesus found in the eighth stanza.

A couching lion lay. (24)

The phrases *a couching lion lay*, this refers to Jesus rest on the Sabbath. The Hebrew word Sabbath, which signifies "rest, stop or stop work," is fundamental to

the comprehension of Jesus' Sabbath rest. The Sabbath's origin comes from Creation. God rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had created six days after creating heaven and earth. This means that God was tired and had to rest. We know God is all-pervasive. He has all the power in this universe. He never gets tired, and even when he expends all of his energy, he does not lose power. It means he just stopped doing what he always did. He stopped his work. It is important to understand the Sabbath and the role of Jesus as our rest on the Sabbath.

Another symbol is found in 36th line of ninth stanza.

A spirit armed in gold. (36)

From the phrases *a spirit armed in gold*, it represented Jesus as the Holy Spirit. In the Church's tradition, Jesus Christ is revealed to us as a mystery of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, known as the *Holy Trinity*. In God, one is the Holy Spirit, one of the three: God as the father, Jesus Christ as the son, and the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, as he is referred to in the early New Testament texts, is an enigma. God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ are both frequently mentioned in the Bible, but the Holy Spirit only appears in the Acts of the Apostles.

Some other lines are shown 37th and 38th of tenth stanza related to this discussion.

On his head a crown, (37)

On his shoulders down (38)

Both lines above represent Jesus when the soldier Pontius Pilate bestowed the prickly crown on him. Jesus was crowned because he was the king and the savior of all humankind. He was willing to be tortured and crucified to atone for the sins of humankind. Therefore, the crown here symbolizes Jesus as a king.

When we hear the word crown, we usually think of luxury and nobility. The glamorous accessories that come to mind are gold, silver, and precious gems. We may even fantasize about what it would be like to wear one or hold a position that would qualify for one. The crown of thorns, on the other hand, was a different story. The most basic of materials are wrapped around in a circle and pressed into his holy head.

4. CONCLUSION

This study deals with literature. Literature is an expression of the human condition. It has a significant impact on people's lives. There is a lot of literature. Poetry is one of them. The famous English poet, William Blake, is a poet. Two of his works are "*The Little Girl Lost*" and "*The Little Girl Found*." The researcher is interested in poetry. This research examines the religious symbols of "*The Little Girl Lost*" and "*The Little Girl Found*." The goal of this study is to explain and describe how the poem's symbols relate to religious symbols. As a result, determining the poem's implied message necessitates a symbol analysis. Some methods are required for analyzing the research. These methods are required to ensure the research's validity. The approach to study, the method of study, and some steps are all part of the research method. The approaches employed in this study are structural and formalist. The study's method is library research.

According to the analysis of religious symbols in the poem “*The Little Girl Lost*” and “*The Little Girl Found*”, it consists of four religious symbols. They are Garden of Eden, Innocence, Creation, and Jesus.

Finally, after conducting this research, further research on religious symbols, particularly those associated with Christianity, can be conducted. Some religious symbols that are shown in this poem are related to the Holy Bible. This research could be a good reference for analyzing religious symbols for other researchers.

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