
William Blake's Revolutionary and Reformist Tendencies

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ABSTRACT

William Blake was a man whose existence and ideas were controversial for the British society and politics. This essay considers some of the ways, in which he was known and shown as a man of controversy in his community and how his words and actions, made him far from the society, especially from the people who had opposite ideas. It has become so common in the field of literary criticism that Blake's work was not accepted enough by most of the British critics and the public and what this essay analyses, is the causes and reasons of this reaction in the Romantic age of Great Britain. Throughout his life, he cast scathing attacks on three aspects of his surrounding, and they were, society, the important institutions that were effective, and politics and politicians. His main aim was to make some important reformation and support his desired revolution. The essay, identifies the way, in which he attacked those elements and displays examples of those attacks and criticisms by giving reference to the words that he set out and used in them. The body of the essay includes his circle of acquaintance and his hostile relationships with the people who were against revolution or even reformation. Britain, in the pre-Victorian time, was threatened by Napoleon's words and invitations for revolution, and there were long debates in different literary genres. This essay discovers what really happened at that time, before and after Blake's revolutionary rage was startled, and how Blake's works influenced the writers of the future time.

1. INTRODUCTION

28 November 1757 was the day that London, the capital of the British Empire saw William Blake born to James Blake, a hosier, and his mother Catherine, but not so faithful to the Empire herself. From early childhood, he carried on some claims that were so bizarre to so many people. He always said that he had seen God from the window, while angels were accompanying him. His parents always bemoaned the circumstance that their son was a liar and asserted it vehemently to William, the young boy, not to repeat those strange things. But as he grew up, his family understood that he was not like the normal boys and girls, and decided not to send him to a conventional school. When he was ten, he showed his strong desire to learn painting, and his parents did not quench that desire. A little bit later, he learned how to write poems and Blake acquired it easily to impress the other people, but the main part of his life started when he went to the Royal Academy to widen his circle of acquaintance more and more.

In his lifetime, Blake was always in favour of novelty and new ideas, and sometimes he went too far in that case. That was why he was always known as a supporter of revolutions, especially that of the French revolution. Thomas Paine was an intimate of him. The fact that Paine, was a man who supported the War of American Independence, made many of his countrymen angry with him. Blake, however, never gave it up and criticised the government at any possible time, and looked for ways, which could make the society in which he was living better. He was always involved in the debates between the conservative minded people who liked to preserve the British traditions and constitutional monarchy and the people who sought revolution, and doubtless he was a poet in favour of radical revolutions. He believed that his works, which showed his ideas, could be understood by common people but he never sacrificed himself for the people and carried on his ideas in his work by any means.

2. DISCUSSION

William Blake's presence, has always been felt in the world of literature and politics. Throughout his lifetime, he did not look happy with the society, which he lived in. He had a rather limited acquaintance with the so called radical Londoners or London's intellectual ones, depending on the language of different political parties, or various social groups. Mary, and his husband, Percy Shelley, are good examples of how wholeheartedly he backed the left wing or to be better said, libertarian crowd of the Romantic period, mostly influenced by the French Revolution and the man

who was leading it, Napoleon Bonaparte. Although Blake lived in a hard condition, and was opposed by the reactionary people on the continent and Great Britain, he had a great impact on his fellow Romantic poets and thinkers (<http://www.online-literature.com/blake>).

As a man of innovation and novelty, he always believed that new things should be experienced, a reason for renouncing the Old Testament and an announcing his mere belief in the New Testament. He always endeavoured to have a reformist attitude in his life and detested any Conservative ideas that was either related to the Conservative politics, and ideology. He even went further than this and daringly claimed to “have seen God at his window, and angels, bespangling the treetops of Peckham Rye.” (http://www.bbc.co.uk/poetryseason/poets/william_blake.shtml). This strange claim caused some people to call him a madman. (http://www.bbc.co.uk/poetryseason/poets/william_blake.shtml).

Whether what he claimed, was true or false, it can doubtless be said that his mind was obsessed with some strange things that made him look like an eccentric poet. One of the obsessions that Blake had, was the state of the society in his age. He could not stand the inequalities and the injustice that the lower level of society had to incur, and a person like Blake, who knew himself divine by that rather unbelievable statement of seeing God, and had outrageous relations with the radicals of London, being silenced was impossible. John Gold Fletcher in his “William Blake”, says, “Yet, as in the case of all honest artists, Blake was unable to keep silence, though the public wanted none of his works” (Fletcher, 1923).

The works that he had, while trying to reform the society were more than enough. If there needs to be a great example of his endeavours for social justice, and his disapprobation of a bad-tempered government, then there should prevail a reference to his two famous poems, with the same name, “The Chimney Sweeper”, in his *Songs of Innocence and Experience*. One of them is in the part of “The Songs of Innocence”, and the other in “The Songs of Experience.”

The poem “Chimney Sweeper” in the part, “Songs of Innocence”, describes the story of a boy who has to work hard and live on his own income. In the poem, the poet puts the blame on two different institutions. The first one is the family, however, he shows a saintly figure of the boy’s mother. It can be implied from the poem that because the boy has lost his mother, he is in a state of misery. Notwithstanding that image of the poor boy’s mother, his father is shown like a beast. Blake criticises Tom’s father, because he sells his son, for the need of money, as well as criticising the society for the poverty that the family incurs. There is a sad atmosphere in the poem,

When my mother died I was very young,
And my father sold me while yet my tongue
Could scarcely cry “Weep! weep! weep! weep!”
So your chimneys I sweep, and in soot I sleep. (11)

What makes the first stanza mournful is that the boy was sold when he could not even speak. Blake wants his grown up readers who are amongst the lower social classes to think about what they have done in the past.

The blame on the society is not only seen in the first stanza, because to the reader, it is the society, which makes his father poor, but also the poet keeps it maintained through the last stanza with the important word, “duty”. Tom’s hard task is described as, “Though the morning was cold, Tom was happy and warm: | so, if all do their duty, they need not fear harm” (1794). The word, duty, can bear two meanings in line with its ambiguous created atmosphere. The first meaning is that Tom has a character like a lamb, who is going to be slaughtered, but he is unaware of the consequences of what has happened to him. As Mathew Schneider says in his essay, “The Anxiety of Innocence in Blake and Kierkegaard”, the poem “announces itself loudly and clearly as the horror or sorrow evoked by its conspicuous absence from the consciousness of the poetic speaker”(1794). The other meaning that can be understood, and is more probable is another lash at the unjustifiable actions of the society. Tom, is doing his duty, and if the society does the same, all problems would wither away. He is doing what he can, for the society, and it does do nothing to make it reciprocated. What the poet calls for, is a kinder society instead of that brutal one and it cannot happen without a better childcare. Blake demands two significant things, A change in their thoughts about their children, because, they are responsible, for what they are doing, and the other one is a reformation in the society. The society has no right to make children work hard. The amazing part of the poem is the romanticism that Blake uses in his poem. As he narrates Tom’s suffering life in the poem, he gradually takes Tom into a beautiful dream. In that

dream, Tom is brought to a river and washes himself there as well as flying among the clouds. Blake wants to show the innocence of the young boys in the society who worked hard, and sympathises with them, to show exactly who is right and who is wrong in a very much black and white scale and judgement. The guilty and innocent people are conspicuously shown and the reader should contemplate over his poem.

This very touching poem had a great effect on the works of the Romantic and the forthcoming Victorian period. When the Victorian era started, novels became the most predominant genre in English literature. One of the works that seems to be influenced by this poem, is Charles Kingsley's *The Water Babies*. Surprisingly, there is a very similar plot in Kingsley's novel, and the chimney sweeper in his novel has the same swimming spree in the river. The only difference is that Kingsley's work, has the boy in a longer happiness, and cheerfulness. Surprisingly again, the boy's name is Tom, as it is in "The Chimney Sweeper". We even see Kingsley, quoting some parts of poems, something which shows the so obvious effect of Romanticism on that Victorian novelist. He emphasises that the readers of his novels should learn something from it. At the end of the novel, he says,

But remember always, as I told you at first, that this is all a
fairy tale, and only fun and pretence; and, therefore, you are
not to believe a word of it, even if it is true. (214)

Kingsley, uses the same sarcasm as that of Blake. By using "fun and pretence", he means the fun and pretence that the upper social class people have in his novel, and when he says, "even if it is true", he means the aching aspects of the children pains and troubles as some poor chimney sweepers possess, is true.

Blake, also had another poem, titled "The Chimney Sweeper", in "Songs of Experience". Unlike the poem in "Songs of Innocence", the latter, has a more pessimistic tone. The boy seems to suffer more than the former one. In this duality, the latter boy is more comprehensive of his surrounding and his life is really miserable. The main difference that can be seen from the two boys, is their awareness. The boy of innocence knows nothing about his surroundings, so his unawareness, makes him like a fool whom, the road of living, can take anywhere, but the boy of experience knows more and suffers more pain. One is more frightening and one is more miserable and aching. As Dr Linda Freeman says,

The little child who narrates the Song from Innocence is, therefore,
unable to comprehend the world in which he finds himself. This
makes innocence a much more frightening state than experience.
The chimney sweeper of Experience knows his position is one of
'misery' and angrily berates society for it.
([http://www.bl.uk/romantics-andvictorians/articles/blakes-two-
chimney-sweepers](http://www.bl.uk/romantics-andvictorians/articles/blakes-two-chimney-sweepers)).

The first "Chimney Sweeper", seems to be more didactic, because it is more frightening for the readers of it, whereas the latter is more sympathetic, because the boy is more comprehensive and readers become even sadder than when reading about the earlier namesake.

In his scathing attack on society, Blake shows something in the second "Chimney Sweeper", which is assent in the one entered in "Songs of Innocence", and that is his vigorous assault on the Church, which to him had an opposite effect. To him, the churches have been sources of evil instead of splashing the light of divinity. It is for that reason, which the boy knows his parents guilty for entering their church, and even knows God responsible for his own suffering, because God has done nothing to prevent him from those pains. The climax of Blake's reproaching attack is in the last stanza,

And because I am happy and dance and sing,
They think they have done me no injury,
And are gone to praise God and his priest and king,
Who make up a heaven of our misery. (33)

Whether intentionally or not, Blake puts forward a rather atheist matter to his readers. He wants them to think about the position of God, amongst those sufferings, and maybe he wants to lead them through a different way and dictate it to them that Christianity is not what they think, and their notion about religion must be changed, because it is widely known that he "was greatly influenced by the theologian and philosopher Emanuel Swedenborg, who emphasised a

non-literal interpretation of scripture.” (<http://web.utk.edu/~gerard/romanticpolitics/religion.html>), and that according to Thomas J J Altizer in “The Revolutionary Vision of William Blake”, it was his insight that the church, “divided God from creation, substituted judgement for grace, and repudiated compassion, and the original apocalyptic faith of early Christianity”(1). To him, the old-fashioned interpretation of the Bible has come to an end. The Bible, he believed as did Swedenborg, should be interpreted by the individual inspiration.

Not only was Blake a critic of the families, but also he was a criticising the education system in Great Britain. To him, the education system has proved fruitless and useless, and it would be a waste of time if someone were sent to school. Blake believes that the real joy of childhood lies somewhere else. He believes that the joyful life of humans lies in the nature, something that the Romantics revelled in. A good example of Blake’s feeling about the education system in his time, is his poem “The School Boy”, in which he shows his love of nature in its first stanza,

I love to rise on a summer morn,
When birds are singing on every tree;
The distant huntsman winds his horn,
And the skylark sings with me:
Oh what sweet company! (50)

But as he continues his poem, his attack starts. To him, a student’s failure, and his coming to school in the summer, a season that they should enjoy the beautiful nature can be damaging to their souls. In fact, he wants to scrutinise the tough behaviour of the staff and teachers at school. Because it deals more with the harshness of the adults at school, rather than the guiltless look of a schoolboy, it fits more to the “Songs of Experience.” As Tony Williams says, “there are strong reasons why Blake moved it to the Experience section of the 1794 edition” (<https://honestpuck.wordpress.com/writing/essays/william-blakes-the-school-boy>) .

The beauty of the first stanza, is compared with the hardship of the student, which Blake is referring to, in the second stanza. For that, he makes an imagery of the joy of one cheerful morning, which is destroyed by the cruel eyes of a teacher. He continues this imagery in the third stanza, describing the hard experience of the boy. He says that he enjoys neither reading a book, nor learning. He makes a comparison in stanza three, “Nor sit in learning’s bower| Worn through with the dreary shower” (50). The word “bower” is compared to the “learning”, and the word “shower”, to its adjective, “dreary.” Two words, which are associated with the nature, are preceded by words, which show hardship and toil. The boy’s mental image, is in the nature and Blake wants to show that he is in the wrong place at the wrong time.

In the continuation, Blake makes the poem more general. Referring to the damage that is caused by those harsh behaviours, he believes that when the joy of the youth is wasted by the tough schooling and wrong education, the time flies, and nothing can compensate for the destruction of that happiness. Blake invites the society, and all the staff at school to behave the children kindlier than before, and make the school a more enjoyable place for them. What he calls for, is actually, another move for another reformation. He is calling for the rights of the students, because like the adults, they should also live happily and there should be no bossing over them.

Blake did his best to reform the society, which he was living in. It can probably be agreed that society is not unrelated to the government, politicians, and politics, and Blake was never out of touch with them. His acquaintance with the so called radical left-wing people or as sometimes called by their own friends, the intellectuals, always angered the conservative Tory people. Step by step as he got older, his circle of acquaintance became wider, and he could impact his surroundings more. Most of his friends were either from the left-wing or controversial like Blake himself. For a long time, he was a friend of Percy Bysshe Shelley, and his wife Mary who was the author of the controversial book, *Frankenstein*, and whose marriage caused controversy in her own family and an anticipated uproar. But they could get along with Blake well, and they had one common aim with that unusual man, and that was their reformist ideas. Another controversial relationship in Blake’s life was his friendship with the man whose unwanted existence, agitated the reactionary people and patriots in England, and he was nobody, but Thomas Paine, the American rebel who encouraged other people in America to fight against the British soldiers and marines. Anyone in Britain who had served for his country in America, could name him as a traitor and it should not be forgotten as it is well shown in Robert N Essick’s essay that people like Thomas Holcroft and John Horne Took were indicted with treason by the British government at the time of Paine and Blake (“William Blake, Thomas Paine, and Biblical Revolution”, 4). Blake, however, had no scruples to be an intimate of the man who was so much hated in Britain, and whose works like

that of Blake's showed his enthusiastic favour in the French revolution. Blake, and his other Romantic fellows, wanted the same thing as the French revolution, in the rest of Europe and the world. At that time, Napoleon Bonaparte, had attacked some European countries and his threat was spreading fast. People like the Shelleys, Wordsworth and Godwin accepted what Paine believed, in his *Rights of Man*. For that Godwin, published a book, *Inquiry Concerning Political Justice*, in which he "foretold an inevitable but peaceful evolution of society to a final stage in which all property would be equally distributed and all government would wither away" (*The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, "The Romantic Age", 1). It should not be forgotten that Godwin's book was published in 1793, three years after the publication of Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. So was Paine's book, published a year after Burke's. Burke criticised the revolutionaries in France, and it seemed to be something like a sort of warning to the British people not to do the same thing. He believed that the rights of man is wanted by anybody on the globe, but anyone should think about the order and the way a government is controlled. As he said in his book,

I am as incapable of that injustice as I am of keeping terms with those who profess principles of extremes, and who, under the name of religion, teach little else

than wild and dangerous politics. The worst of these politics of revolution is this: they temper and harden the breast, in order to prepare it for the desperate strokes which are sometimes used in extreme occasions. (40)

So, the tension continued, as Burke, who was a supporter of the Whig party, published a book that was conforming to the wills of the opposite Tory party, and this agitated the revolutionaries in the whole Britain who were trying to have the same revolution or at least an evolution towards a republican government. Burke's reasoning seemed to gain ground on the supporters of extreme revolution. As Patrick Brantlinger says in his book, *Fictions of State: Culture and Credit in Britain, 1694-1994*, "Burke held, France was doomed to suicidal violence chaos" (107). and this was what the British Tories focused on, when reasoning for their ideas.

The division seemed to prevail for long, and the agitation of the two sides reciprocated. The Tory followers of a consistent government and the constitutional monarchy, referred to Burke to support their ideas and the supporters of revolution formed groups and talked of their support for Godwin and the other people who published their works with the same idea; amongst them, Blake was not an exception. However, there was some disagreement between them, as that of Blake and John Locke. Locke was being accepted by libertarians in the world, and his famous book, *The Two Treatises of Civil Government*, was accepted by the people who were in favour of the French revolution, and which gave the public the right to stand against any governments. But there was something that Blake could not accept, and that was his principle of epistemology. Generally speaking, epistemology is a branch of psychology, dealing with knowledge. Locke proposed his own epistemology in his essay, "An Essay Concerning Human Understanding." In that work, he supported his idea of empiricism, stating that if an idea is formed by one's experience, it will be true, otherwise it is not. As Michael Ferber says in the second chapter of his book, *The Social Vision of William Blake*, talking about the religious dissenters, as well as Blake,

Some Dissenting thinkers were certain they could see the connection between the doctrine of sensation and what they held to be an inadequate theory of natural rights. They criticized, as we shall see, some of the same points of Locke's epistemology as Blake did. (16)

What made Blake disagree with Lock, was the difference of understanding in depth. Lock believed in Empiricism, and did not believe in the inspiration, Blake was talking about, and Blake did the same to Locke's epistemology.

Amongst those conflicts, Blake consistently supported the idea of the supporters of revolution. He tried vigorously to spread his idea as he made his acquaintances wider. As Charles Gardener says in his *William Blake: The Man 1919*, "Blake's circle of acquaintance became widened much from the day, he became a student at the Royal Academy" (25). But Britain as it was threatened by Napoleon and its violent France, seemed unshaken. The Tories remained in power longer than the Whigs. William Pitt, the younger who was a Tory man, remained Prime Minister from 1783 to 1801, and when Napoleon died, another Tory Prime Minister, Robert Jenkins was the incumbent of Number 10, Downing Street. The Tories, seemed to have won the campaigns of Parliament and Britain's Conservatism agitated

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revolutionaries like Blake, whose demands were not met by the reactionary Tories, and according to Emma Vincent Macleod, Blake was not the only person, who was not compatible with the English life ("British Attitudes to the French revolution", 697).

"London", is one of the poems that shows his reproaching approach to the government, and social communities. Written in 1794, and published in the collection of "Songs of Experience", it is important to know that the date of its writing is one year after the storming of Bastille in 1793, and after Britain had formed an alliance with the other countries against France. But Blake seemed to be out of touch with his countrymen and as William Richey says in his essay, "The French Revolution: Blake's Epic Dialogue with Edmund Burke", "Blake undoubtedly thought the French Revolution an event of potentially cosmic significance" (2). First of all, he criticises the democracy, which Britain was claiming to have, the Magna Carta, which shows the British people's rights in the society, and the rights that the government should respect. This Magna Carta or Charter, is very important in the British history since its foundation on 15 June, 1215. The Magna Carta, according to the British historians, had sixty-three clauses. The most important clauses of Magna Carta are number thirty-nine and forty, as article number thirty-nine, saying,

No free man is to be arrested, or imprisoned, or disseised, or outlawed, or exiled, or in any other way ruined, nor will we go against him or send against him, except by the lawful judgment of his peers or by the law of the land.

(<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/1131069>

6/Magna-Charta-an-idiots-guide-by-historian-Dan-Jones.html)

And number forty saying, "to no one will we sell, to no one will we deny or delay, right or justice" (ibid). Blake, refers to the promised freedom of the English people that was agreed upon in the thirteenth century, and sharply criticises the government for not doing it. The first stanza, mainly concentrates on this agreement and the failure of the government to practise that. Instead what he sees is unhappiness. He complains about the situation of his time,

I wandered through each chartered street,
Near where the chartered Thames does flow,
And mark in every face I meet,
Marks of weakness, marks of woe. (44)

What he is saying is that, there is only a name of Magna Carta, and its Charter, and the thing he sees instead of that civil right, is pain and suffering. In the other stanzas, he refers to the aching people of the society, and makes a complaining tone in the poem. In the second stanza, for example, he describes the pains of the different elements of the society. He refers to the cries of man, the troubles for the prisoners and the mind-forged manacle. By the epithet, "mind-forged", he means that the society is not free enough for people, to think the way they want. In the third stanza, Blake again refers to the brunt that the chimney sweepers have to bear. He is angry with the government for the lack of both a good childcare, and enough support for the labour force. Sufferers suffer, and there is nobody among the callous upper class people to care for them, that is what Blake is complaining about.

In the last stanza of "London", he takes a moralistic method of criticism towards the society. He describes the life of a harlot, or as it is called in the modern time, a prostitute, who is cursing, and whose cursing blasts the baby. The children of Blake's time, according to his words, would have terrible lives, and the posterity will be affected by this predicament, because children will be the fruits of the families, either in poverty or in morality. He also criticises the weakening of the marriage and the social values, because he beholds marriage has no place in the society, and the main reason, for that, is poverty. Women become prostitutes because of poverty, and their children's lives will be destroyed. What Blake wants to assert, is that there is no freedom in the city of London, and the people live in poverty. Then what can be concluded from his complaints, is that, if the government wants the families to be as strong as before, it should do two things. The first is to allow the people to have more freedom and the second is to think about the lifestyle of the lower level of the society.

Blake's "London", had great effects on the works of writers, like James Conrad and Brecht. Christopher Tomlins' essay, "Revolutionary Justice in Brecht, Conrad, and Blake", supports this idea that, "Conrad's London in Heart of Darkness is Blake's London. So is Brecht's" (11). All of them showing London, a place of oppression and without enough freedom.

What seems obvious from the poet's life is his endeavours to support any kind of revolution, whenever he had an opportunity for it. But when he saw himself unable to defeat the reactionary people, he tried to attack them in his work to have at least, a kind of reformation or as Godwin said "evolution", and provoke the people in the hope that they would think about what he says and have the same idea as he had. What can be learned from the history apparently, is that persons like him hoped for the good of the French Revolution as it is obvious in his *The French Revolution*. In that work, Blake attacked the French monarchy and praised the uprising of the public, and says, "Her Nobles shall hear and shall weep, and put off. | The red robe of terror, the crown of oppression. The shoes of contempt, and unbuckle | The girdle of war from the desolate earth" (22). However, some friends were despaired of that revolution. Wordsworth accepted the failure of the French democracy in *The Prelude*, and says, "And now, become oppressors in their turn | Frenchmen had changed a war of self-defence. For one of conquest, losing sight of all | which they had struggled for, and mounted up"(202). Despite, those failures, brought on by Napoleon's attacks on other countries and becoming an oppressor, Blake never stopped being a reformist and said what he thought was right to say.

3. CONCLUSION

William Blake has always been known as a controversial person since he was introduced as a talented painter and writer. When he was a child, he had the claim to have seen God, accompanied by some angels. This was an outrageous claim, and shocked many people who surrounded him. That was one of the reasons that he was called a madman by the public. When he was fourteen years old, he started writing his poetry, and usually conveyed his ideas about different things, through his works.

Not only was he known as a radical person amongst the people who were from the Tory party, and the people who were conservative both in politics and society, but also he had strong relationship with the other revolutionary supporters of revolution, like Thomas Paine, Mary Shelley, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and John Locke. Paine, was in favour of the War of American Independence, and this angered the British patriots at home. However, when he saw that something was wrong, he did not fear to tell them the erroneous part of their ideology; that was why, he criticised Locke for his notion of epistemology, which was a part of the philosophy of Empiricism.

Blake was in favour of the French revolution and this again, made the British people and politicians angry because they were forming a significant alliance against Napoleon. To the British Tories, Blake and his friends' ideas were only for the sake of disorder. Because he was a man with revolutionary ideas, he always tried to scrutinise three important parts of his country, including, the society, the important social institutions and the politicians. He had two poems that criticised the society and both of them were titled "Chimney Sweeper", one published under the part "Songs of Innocence", and the other in the "Songs of Experience." The former, describes the suffering of a chimney sweeper, who has lost his mother, and is sold by his brutal father. Then he dreams about flying amongst the clouds and swimming joyfully in a river. What makes that poem, so painful to his readers is the boy's ignorance of the cruelty of the society and people. This work influenced the later works of Victorian period such as Charles Kingsley's *The Water Babies*. The other "Chimney Sweeper", also shows the suffering of a chimney sweeper, but with one difference, and that is Blake's attack on religion. His parents go to the church while the boy suffers from hardship and hard work. Blake's main aim of those two works is an important step towards his provocation for reformation. He wanted a better childcare.

Blake also wanted some reformation in the important social institutions. In his "The Schoolboy", he lectured the tough behaviour of the school staff and teachers and asks whether a wasted time of youth can be returned. He invites the teachers and school staff to behave the students kindlier and more leniently. His "London", has the aim of supporting a revolution and attacking politicians. He shows in that poem, that there is only a name of the British Magna Carta and in reality there is war, poverty and the destruction of the families.

There arises a question in the minds of Blake's readers, and that is whether he was in favour of revolution or reformation. The best answer is that he was in favour of the revolution but when he saw his plans unsuccessful, he attacked any part of the society that did not agree with him, whether ideologically or in practice, in the hope to achieve at least a kind of reformation or an evolutionary revolution.

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