A comparison between The Lamb and The Tyger by William Blake

Why is the Lamb not like the Tyger?

The Lamb

- Sycophantic tone
- Almost patronising
- Biblical references; The Beatitudes – ‘He is meek and he is mild’, from ‘Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth’, and ‘Blessed are mild men’ - This could perhaps be Blake’s way of showing how the Lamb is blessed, it is special, to be revered.
- Innocence is heavily referred to – obviously with regards to the Title of the Selection of poems. ‘Little Lamb who made thee?’
- Repetition of the ‘L’ sounds representing the bleating of the Lamb.

The Tyger

- Such a powerful creature.
- Religion, though it seems out of place with the main subject of a Tiger. – Referencing the use of the almost archaic term ‘Thy’, a term most commonly found in religious text, therefore can be deemed quasi-religious. Intertextuality.
- The aesthetics of the creature are astonishing, awe-inspiring. The power of the creature is shown through its physicality.
- Choice of a Tiger instead of a Lion. ‘And the lion shall lie down with the lamb’. Decision to be a contrast from the Bible, perhaps accentuating Blake’s lost deference towards the religious text.
- Devilish imagery.

A comparison

The Tyger is the experience – the loss of innocence that the Lamb seems to personify. The choice of the ‘Little Lamb’ can, of course, be in reference to Jesus who was referred to as ‘The Lamb of God’. Again, accentuating the quasi-religious element in the poetry.

The Tyger seems to show that evil is unavoidable – inscrutable – complex. The evil is embodied in the very making of such a ferocious creature, the physicality of it. Whereas, it is the complete opposite with the Lamb.

There is certain propinquity with both animals due to them both – by Blake’s own omission – having the same creator. Yet, he questions how a God thought to be benevolent could deem to create such a creature as the tiger.

The two poems from different Anthologies – Songs of Innocence and Songs of Experience – could perhaps be construed as to represent both sides of the Bible, The New Testament and The Old Testament. As, quite clearly the Lamb may be a reference to Jesus – therefore this poem is representative of the New Testament – which coincidentally portrays the Christian God to be truly benevolent. The Tyger, therefore would be representative of the Old Testament – the book in which the God is greedy, vain and perhaps merciless.