CHAPTER-IV
INTER-RELATION OF POETRY AND PAINTING IN
SONGS OF INNOCENCE AND SONGS OF EXPERIENCE

Blake dramatizes his inner struggles not only in words but
also in pictures—a phenomenon not attempted by any major writer.
In Blake's view, art is expressive, not mimetic. Even the eighteenth-
century restraint was mellowed into an acceptance of romantic
sensibility and sublimity by this expressiveness. The death of Robert
Blake brought about a complete change in Blake's conception of art.
He was changed into a poet-painter-engraver. And it is in this
context that it seems obvious to examine the relation of poetry and
painting. In fact a medieval accent on the intellectualty of such
verbal arts as poetry and rhetoric was gradually modified in the
Renaissance so as to admit equal significance to painting and
sculpture. For example, the sixteenth-century Italian-painters were
of opinion that painting, like poetry, could manage to reach a moral
end. The famous artist Leonardo attempted to make a significant
distinction between the art of the sculptor and that of the painter.
The opening lines of a popular poetical treatise, De Arte Graphica
written by the French painter Charles Alphonse, An Fresnoy, begins
with—

"Ut pictura poesis erit
similisque poesi
Sit pictura ... 
Muta poesis
Dictur haec, Pictura Solet
illa vocari"
This means 'A poem is like a picture; so a picture ought to try
to be like a poem... a picture is often called silent poetry; and poetry
a speaking picture. Dryden made a brilliant attempt in translating
the poem in 1795 along with a preface containing a parallel study
between poetry and painting. The theory was not only technical but
also had its historical implication.

The twentieth century separation of Poetry and music was a
reality which had begun to emerge during the sixteenth century with
the specialised development of instrumental music. This was a
reaction towards simplicity and naturalism, against the intricacies
of polyphonic music in the medieval tradition. The movement
continued and gained strength through the seventeenth century as
part of the humanistic yearning for liberty and emancipation from
the bondage of strict rationality and hard norms. During the second
half of the seventeenth century the inter-dependence of poetry and
music got reversed. Poetry responded to the demands of the musical
setting.

One may safely assert that all art constantly aspires towards
the perfection of music. In other kinds of art, the matter and the
form can be effectively distinguished. But the picture of a thing
actually represents nothing in isolation in the context of its relation
with the form i.e. the object itself. The existence of a picture
inevitably implies the presence of a matter that could be given a
proper form. However, all great art demands that the mere matter of
a picture should become an end in itself but they attempt the
perfection in different degrees.

As far as Blake's idea is concerned, one may observe that he
used illuminated printing to produce philosophical, poetic and
prophetic books. The first ones, the incomplete tracts *There is Natural Religion*, and *All Religions are one*, *The Songs of Innocence or The Book of Thel* were probably completed before 1790. They are less urgent in tones than those of 1790 onwards, beginning with *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* and ending with *The Book of loss* and *The Book of Ahania*. And this sharp division highlights the increasing awareness in England of the convulsive nature of the French Revolution. In December, 1789, Fuseli characterises the French Revolution as an age, 'pregnant with the most gigantic efforts of character, shaken with the convulsions of the old, and the emergence of new empires while an unexampled vigour seemed to vibrate from pole to pole through the human mind, and to challenge the general sympathy.'

And the stylistic change from Neo-classicism to Romanticism was not entirely due to the external events. The painting is thus both an example of the view of immortality and a demonstration of its truth. The artist, in order to be an artist, must study all the springs of the human heart with all the introspection of a philosopher.

So with all his originality and individuality Blake can be regarded as the classical embodiment of the conventions of the western art, poetic painting and pictorial poetry. Blake's artistry in uniting the arts of poetry and painting owes itself to the statement that poetry never appears more lovely than when she dresses herself in the beauties of painting and that painting is "never so transporting as when she emulates the flights and catches the images of poetry". The above remark also finds expression and validity in the galleries of paintings illustrating Shakespeare and
Milton. Goethe also was of opinion that the painters and the poets should share views in order to secure perfect unity and sublimity. Neither poetry nor painting alone would achieve this unity. Jonathon Richardson, the early eighteenth-century pictorialist, said that painting was but "another language, which completes the whole art of communicating our thoughts".4

Blake followed the tradition of the Renaissance artist and sought to elevate painting to the realm of poetry. Blake's words are visual; his paintings are conceptual. Both word and design display precisely the influence of the pictorialist tradition that entertained the imagery of Thomson, the Wortons, Collins and Gray. Blake translated the pictorialist personifications of Milton, Young, Gray and Blair into visual forms. His attempt to illustrate Gray's To Spring contradicts the very natural and allegorical personifications that appear as the image of the poets.

The uniqueness of Blake lies in the fact that his art, like his thought, strives towards a fusion that attempts neither particularity nor a specific concretization. Verbal art alone can attain abstraction in such a way that no verbal visual art can attain. Blake launched his objections against the picturesque tradition on the philosophic as well as aesthetic ground. Both poetry and Naturalistic art got themselves involved in Natural objects which, Blake thought, weakened his imagination.

In fact, Blake took it as his mission to preserve and refine Innocence, to carry it afresh through the realm of Experience into the new Eden, where it becomes imperishable. According to Blake, the very breath and finer spirit of the innocence happens to be Imagination, and Experience may be appreciated as the death of the
artistic spirit. Blake ultimately happens to be a poet who also displayed his genius as a painter. The efficiency of Blake lies in the fact that he could fuse poetry and painting into a single body and breathed into it the breath of new life. In fact a note of unmistakable rhythmic arrangement could be observed between "The Songs of Innocence and The Songs of Experience". 

In this context, it is obvious to mention the three steps of the publication of *Songs of Innocence and Experience*.

The steps are as follows:

1. **Songs of Innocence** (C 1789-90)
   - 48 plates on 34 leaves
   - Relief etching with water-colour,
   - approx 4.5 x 3 (11.5 x 7.7)
   - Yale Centre for British Art,
   - Paul Mellon connection

2. **Songs of Innocence** (1802-1805)
   - 26 plates on 26 leaves
   - Relief etching with pen and water colour,
   - approx 4.5 x 3 (11.5 x 77)
   - Manuscript Library, Yale University.

3. **Songs of Innocence and of Experience** (C 1816 -25)
   - 54 plates on 54 leaves
   - Relief etchings with pen, water-colour
   - and Gold
   - approx 4.5 x 3 (115 x 77)
   - The Library, Princeton University
The first stage reveals the *Songs of Innocence* as a characteristic and exceptionally fine early copy, printed in green with delicate water-colour washes. In early coloured copies, the water colour is normally used as an addition to the main image. The simplicity marked in these early copies betrays sympathy with the poems.

The *Second copy* can be dated with fair precision because some pages have a watermark of 1802 and it was given in 1806 by Benjamin Health Malkin to Thomas Johnes of Hafod. Here Blake has outlined the forms in pen, and the colour is much fuller and more atmospheric. The cool luminosity which pervades the design and the text-areas marks Blake's originality and it is carried out with great care and sensitivity.

The *Third copy* provides a magnificent example of late printing of the combined edition, dating from at least 1815. The colour is built up with utmost richness. The book had something of a revival after 1815. Originally this copy may have been bought by James Boswell. Then it belonged to William Beckford, to whose medieval taste it might have appealed.

The two contrary states have not merely been symbolized separately but they have been fused into a unified whole where the design and the words prove to be mutually complementary to each other. The expression "traveling" is paralleled by a traveller. The words and the designs complement each other in such a way that Blake's entire paradox is represented. Blake's *Songs of Innocence* marks the beginning of Blake's career in the realm of composite Art. Here the mood harmonizes with the tender shades. *Innocence* recalls Eden and anticipates the New Jerusalem. Blake's *Innocence* is often
covered by the Shadow of Experience -- a shadow that anticipates the forthcoming darkness. However, Blake's notion of Innocence is based on such solid ground that the border, design and the word combine in making the *Songs of Innocence*, an integrated and profound work of art.

The pages of *Innocence* are of three kinds -- each demands distinctive artistic sublimation. The three different terms -- 'Illustration', 'decoration' and 'illumination' -- are distantly related in the art of book-making. 'Illustration' implies that traditional form in which the design makes its presence at the top, bottom or middle of the page. The boy and the mother of the "Little Black Boy" appearing at the top design at the water's edge, looking at an emblematic sunrise, display Blake's pictorial talent in fusing the poetry and the painting. The boy's vision of air and angels in "The Chimney Sweeper" is represented at the foot of the page. The first plate dedicated to *Spring* begins with a representation of a child "Welcoming the Year" by stretching his hands out to the sheep. The second plate shows that the child alone without his mother, proves to be an appropriate material fit for the last stanza in which the child speaks: "Little Lamb, / Here I am". The first page of *Night* that possesses a visual tact, displays a splendid variety of images like tigers, a flood of moonlight etc. Actually *Innocence* is related to *Experience* in the same way as a living creature is related to a fossil. Title-page letters, Roman and angular, remain unvegetated and are never softened into natural Gothic. The flames of *Innocence* are now destructive and anticipate the wrath that proves destructive to a society that is corrupt and that awaits rays of illumination and emancipation.
Now, on the basis of the above description, it becomes relevant to analyse some major poems of *Songs of Innocence & Songs of Experience*. And it is on this occasion that one may mention that Blake published his *Songs of Innocence* in 1789 and etched his *Songs of Experience* in 1793. And in the following year Blake issued a combined edition of the songs. In the title-page of *Songs of Innocence* the nurse is shown seated, delivering instructions underneath a tree. Actually it teaches the very method of making such song, and is, in fact Blake's one great essay on poetry. In fact one may have the intention at first, then the melody, then the words, and finally the recording pain.

Blake, in this poem, strongly declared his divine appointment to write. In fact, the poem was deliberately and delicately planned to reveal three basic things: The Divine command, the inner revelation of the Song's meaning, the fitting of words to the wordless melody and finally its appearance in visible forms.

Blake, in *The Tyger*, seems to be very quick in responding to something tragic and revealing. The first four verses of the poem both intensify and deepen the physical action. The sinews of revolt are knitted into existence, with an anticipation of the inevitable conflict in the creation of Jerusalem in the desert of Experience. Blake, in the fifth stanza of the poem, turns aside the impetus in a revelation something achieved, not in revolt, but in reconciliation during the years of Innocence. The *Shepherd* is a tiny pastoral which celebrates the happiness of rural responsibility and trust. *Infant Joy* is a tiny drama in which the parent supplies, in the first stanza, fanciful words for the child to express its feelings and in the second stanza goes on to express his or her own feelings about the baby. The
central idea of *The Little Black Boy* may be derived from the puritan tradition of life as a trial deliberately imposed by God; but Blake has considerably refined it. *Laughing Song* admirably blends the world of humanity and the world of non-human Nature. Blake's love of every living thing expresses itself fluently in *The Fly* that advocates that every living thing has God within them.

In *A Little Girl Lost* Blake depicts the picture of an young girl who has given herself freely to love, she suddenly sees in the woe of her father's face the sorrow that is to overwhelm her.

*The Human Abstract* describes the doctrine of Experience: how false virtues arise from selfishness, fear and weakness; how they spring up as the tree of mystery or established religion. Urizen, as yet un-named, appears in the margin, for it is under the region of 'Reason' only that such a church could appear. *A Diving Image* reveals a picture of the God of this world, Urizen. It reveals Satan, as he appears in human form.

In *London* Blake presents his own view of that "Chattered Liberty"®, on which his countrymen prided themselves and exposes the indisputable ugly facts. The soldier, the chimney-sweeper, are Blake's types of the oppressed characteristic victims of a system based not on brotherhood but on fear. Each in his own way reveals the shame on which society thrives. The churches supported the condemned life of the chimney-sweepers; the court demanded the death of the soldiers. The contrasts between truth and pretence, between spontaneous, smooth happiness and artificial oppression are presented by Blake in the above-mentioned parallelism. Though the *Songs of Experience* were charged by merciless satirical overtone, they are found to be rich in lyrical elements. The pictorial
elements get harmoniously fused with the poetic essence. In fact, Blake’s commitment to art demands special attention in the history of English culture. His art rested on moral, religious and philosophical foundations.

In fact interweaving of poetry and painting implicates a complex interrelationship of the visual and verbal art. While analysing the different variation of the use of medium deployed by mimetic arts, Aristotle in his *Poetics* points out that poetry uses ‘rhythm, melody and verse’ and painting uses ‘form and colour’ as its medium (Poetics, ed. Ingram By water O.U.P., at the Clarendon Press, 1967, pp. 2-4). Aristotle demarcates these two sister arts on the basis of means of imitation. Even Horace in his *Ars Poetica* distinguishes between poetry and painting. Horace thinks that poetry requires close consideration of a text, while painting can yield its true meaning only when the viewer stands at a distance.

Blake was a poet with a difference. He was an engraver, a painter as well as a poet. His paintings are sometimes looked upon as mere illustrations. To consider his paintings appended to his poems as mere illustration is to degrade the true significance of the interrelation of the verbal and the visual. Basil de Selincourt in his *William Blake: A Biography* has tried to suggest that Blake’s paintings can be perceived as modes of yielding the inherent meaning of his poems (See Basil de Selincourt, William Blake: A Biography, Book III, 2000, 171ff). Blake’s painting can be examined from three distinctive perspectives: illustration, decoration and illumination. It may be suggested that these three distinctive aspects show the artistic complexity involved in the process of interrelation of poetry and painting. Illustration as a technique
seems to be a lowly form of expressive mode. 'Decoration' is nothing but a mode of orientation. But 'Illumination' essentialises the process of sublime perception. Thus the paintings as well as design of words in Blake seem to draw the attention of critics like Sheila A. Spector. Spector in her book *Glorious In-comprehensible: The Development of Blake's Kabalistic Language* suggests that Blake constantly deconstructs his language through "Visual interruptions of the verbal" (Blackwell University Press, 2001, p.32ff.). Blake therefore uses painting as an inseparable design that perfectly blends with his poetic art. His poetic art terms to be splendidly sublimated by means of his visual arts.

Now, we may analyse the mingling of poetry and the paintings of *Songs of Innocence and Experience* in the light of picture presented here:
The figures of fallen Man are represented as Adam and Eve. The figures are covered with leaves. Their expulsion from Eden is indicated by the tongues of flame playing over them. On the other hand, the bird of Innocence flying overhead has escaped the flames.

Frontispiece to Songs of Innocence

Here the shepherd with a pipe in his hands looking up at the vision of a child above the head, actually represents the poet. Plenty of trees find their place in the background. The roots of the trees are tightly placed in the ground. The tree, actually symbolizes earthly love.
SONGS OF INNOCENCE

Here the two children, involved in reading are found standing at their mother's knee. The broken apple tree with a few fruits in reality symbolises Christianity embracing the tree of sinful life. The decoration amply reveals the joyful life of the children. The art becomes expressive and alive.

INTRODUCTION

The notion of the shepherd boy and flute is a common one in the poetry of the time. Here the opposite visual effects of joy and sorrow have been beautifully revealed. Actually the visual representation of the poem naturally substantiates Horace's principle "Ut pictura poesis". With the vision of the child on a cloud Blake finds himself directed by the innocent spirit of poetry. He is biden to pipe a song about a lamb that by itself proves to be the symbol of innocence. They also symbolize religion in the person of Jesus. The decorations on both sides make the Arcadian valley vividly alive. The vigour of the pain and the artistry of the painting get inextricably harmonised.
THE SHEPHERD

This poem reveals the efforts of the shepherd as he looks after his sheep. It tends to imply the happiness his labour brings him. He protects and guards his sheep and at the same time sings the paeans of God as he goes about his tasks. The sheep feel secured in that they know that their shepherd will always respond to their cries for help. Here the bird of paradise is found soaring into the sky. A tree with a flowering Plant, twining up its trunk is found delicately placed on the left of the shepherd. The sweet carefree life of the shepherd is brought out vividly by the pictures depicted in the border. The soaring bird symbolises the independent spirit of the shepherd.

THE EC HOING GREEN

The opening stanza sets the scene of bright sunshine and joyful sounds that provide the black cloth to games that the children play on the village green. The end of the play-time coincides with sunset and the tired children find peace and security with their family. The village green is quiet. The ‘green’ is no longer echoing but ‘darkening’—surely a menacing epithet. The first stanza of The Echoing Green assimilates all the symbols of Spring in nature and humanity. The picture vividly expresses the spontaneity and vitality of the nature, found in spring-time. The painting becomes the replica of the vitality of nature. In this correlation, the visual and the auditory imagination come to be intermingled.
THE ECHOING GREEN

The Oak in the village green happens to be the symbol of strength and security. The boys on the ground with a bat or kite in hand, are still safely and quietly placed in the state of childish innocence. This state of childish Innocence becomes vitally alive in context of the decoration, depicted here. The painting here proves to be a perfect background of the carefree life of the boys.

THE LAMB

Here the poet asks the lamb the question about its origin. Blake answers the voice of a teacher who will lead his pupil to profound truths. The technique of raising the question and then answering it in terms which are comprehensible to the listener, is an effective means of persuasion. Here the pastoral note which is evident in Blake may be taken as symbol of innocence and joy. Here the lamb and the child both converse. They are enriched with a cottage on one side and the Oak of security in the background. They are symbols of innocence. And the decoration vividly expresses this innocence. No overtone of experience is suggested in the decoration. The decoration proves to be a perfect background of the innocent life of the lamb.
THE LITTLE BLACK BOY

Blake expresses his thoughts in this poem through the mouth of a coloured child. He protests that though he may be black in appearance his spirit is pure. Despite his self-assurance he sees his blackness as some kind of blemish and a sign of deprivation. Blake raises the problem of apparent deprivation in creation highlighted by contrasting states of black and white in man's colour. Actually the little black boy accepts his life as a gift from God though he knows that reality is very hard. The purity of the soul of the little black boy sitting at his mother's knees, is revealed here significantly. The black complexion of the boy's face seems to be a protection from the heat and light of the Sun - God. The picture also gives us what the words actually express.

THE LITTLE BLACK BOY

Here the two boys are found standing before God, personified as Christ: God sat beside a stream with a willowy tree, hanging over his head. The water and the vegetation indicate that the heaven may be found on earth. The indignation against slavery and the act of divine mercy is vividly revealed in the picture that becomes forcefully alive.
THE BLOSM

This simple, nature-poem has as its speaker a bush or tree that provides a comfort and a refuse to the smallest of creatures. Simple in structure and in symbol but complex in meaning this poem is contrasted with *The Sick Rose*. This fine poem is actually a poetical representation of love by the act of bringing forth the new generation. The maiden sits contentedly among the flying joys, distinguished by her green dress and large wings. The decoration suggests exactly the same thing as the words tell us.

THE CHIMNEY SWEEPER

The poem finds its inspiration in the practice, common at the time of sending a child to work for a sweep whose job it was to keep clean the many chimneys in the city. Blake's opening stanza is characterized by its dramatic nature which is wholly in keeping with the background outlined. In this design, the decoration at the bottom reveals the Angel unlocking the Coffin and the boys rejoicing in the freedom. The decoration graphically implies the life of the chimney sweeper. The words and the art become synonymous.
THE LITTLE BOY LOST

The poem takes as its focus of attention a little boy who in the opening stanza pleads with his father to stay with him as they walk. The second stanza tells us that his pleas were in vain and that the child was indeed lost and distressed in a treacherous environment. Here the visual effects add substantially to the profound meaning of the poem. Here the Child, representing the human spirit and seeking the conventional 'God', proves to be a distinctive figure in this material world. The Angelic figures and stars that surround the text represent salvation.

THE LITTLE BOY FOUND

The little boy continues to wander and shows his distress even farther. However he is saved by the miraculous intervention of God who appears to him as a kind father. He actually returned the child to his mother who had herself been looking for him. The sudden and dramatic rescue of the child symbolises for us Blake's determination that the child ought not to be exposed for too long to the bitter reality of experience. Here both the child and his mother are found sanctified by possessing halos; this only suggests that man has been restored to the life imagination. Actually the innocence of the little boy has been brilliantly brought out by the visual projection.
LAUGHING SONG

The opening stanza sets scene in the country with woods bursting with life, pleasant streams bubbling along and the air full of happy sounds. The imagery of the poem immediately transports us into the green woods, the green hills, the meadows and the dimpling stream. The grasshopper, the girls and the nature itself are all laughing. No body can resist the invitation which is extended by the speaker of the poem. If one calls it witless exultation, one has only underlined the point: this is the least self-conscious of sounds, the pure merry note. Here the youth, standing in the centre of the party, with his hat and wine cup in his hands, proves to be the leader of the Chorus. The visual appeal seems to merge with the poetry inherent in the poem.

A CRADLE SONG

The dreamy tangles of falling vegetations decorating the margin suggest appropriate feeling. A few distinguished figures came in the forefront. This poem seems to be a lullaby sung by the mother over her child as it sleeps in the cradle. The poem overflows with a mellowing tenderness that adequately reveals the tone of the poem.
A CRADLE SONG

Nothing seems to trouble the sleeping child who lies and dreams only of pleasant things. The mother's tears mentioned in the poem are of joy, not sorrow, but they remind Blake of the reality of the birth of Christ and the fact that when he cried as a baby the tears were inspired by the sins of mankind. The poem reminds us that Christ too smiled as an infant just as the baby in this poem smiles. The beauty of the baby's smile as depicted in the picture simply highlights the ecstatic delight that emanates from the very mode of the poem. Here the illustration is found to be uncompromising in the hard outlines of the mother's clumsy chair and the child's weaker lot. The child's image is replaced by that of the infant Jesus.

THE DIVINE IMAGE

In this poem it is implied that all men are tangible expression of God who can be found in visible human form. The designs seem to echo the divine revelation of the inner meaning of the poem that is to say Blake reveals the fact that since we are all like God we should all mutually respect that reality. Here Blake has attempted to identify man with God. God has revealed himself in the form of a man in the personae of Christ. At its bottom, a Christ like figure proves to be instrumental in raising man and woman from the earth. Here the lovely piece of decoration finely projects what is implied in the painting.
HOLY THURSDAY

The opening stanza sets the scene of the children being taken to the Cathedral St. Paul in the heart of London. There voices are raised in hymns of praise that echo round the Cathedral and remind the listeners of heaven. One shall not do any mistake to highlight the fact that we equate the children with the spirit of God. The power of their hymns is visually conveyed to the readers here by the new mode of versification adopted by Blake. Here Blake's true feelings is revealed. The social injustice of poverty and charity is condemned. The processions of children depicted at the top and bottom of the plate highlight Blake's talent in fusing the pictorial art with poetic excellence.

NIGHT

This poem introduces the cruelty of Nature with the prospect of its disappearance in the other world. The decoration depicts this message to a degree of perfection.
The central idea of this poem is that there is divine care for all creatures, and that an eternal life awaits each of them. The angels go about unseen, pouring blessing and joy on every object and on every living being. The first stanza of the poem provides a familiar scene of the end of the day and the coming of night. The empty scene, however, is empty only to the human eye. In reality the angels come with the night. Blake concedes in the fourth stanza that it may be that the care shown by the angels is apparently ineffectual and that some creatures do perish. But in this case the angels perform the equally important task of taking the creatures to the paradise. Here angels are found walking on the grass ready to receive the 'wild spirits'. The evening star is found shining on the right. The whole decoration is pervaded with the deep blue colouring of the night.
The tone of the poem is captured in the first stanza with the piping sound of the flute. The pastoral effect of the lamb is another characteristic of this poem which projects both creature of the day and that of the night. The festive mode of the spring time in conveyed through the overflowing decoration and design. Here the woman with the child in her hand is found looking at the natural beauties, the delicacy of Nature in the Spring-time finds significant expression. The eternal and the universal portrait of a child finding the safety and security in the mother’s bosom perfectly sets the tone of the poem and invariably brings out the poetic appeal inherent in the poem.

Here the decorative spirals and the harbouring winged figures harmonise perfectly with the theme of joyful feeling of the spring time.
NURSE'S SONG

Here Blake depicts the happy laughter of children against a pastoral setting. The painting strongly asserts the innocent serenity and mellowing fluidity of the spirit of the poem. Here the decoration highlights the nurse watching the children dancing merrily in a circle. The happy responsibility of childhood is focused with perfect simplicity in this poem.

INFANT JOY

The first stanza of the poem highlights a baby no more than two days old announcing his birth. The poem also epitomizes the joyful news of the newly born child. Here the beauty of the illustration, coupled with the outward simplicity, reveals the true nature of Blake's verses. The painting inevitably implies the meaning, the inner illumination.
A DREAM

In this poem Blake writes of his dream of an ant which had lost its way in the grass. He describes her as totally depressed because of her situation and from a distance he could hear her touching voice depicting her sorrow. The poet feels deep sympathy for the creature but is relieved to find that nature provides its own care for even such dilemma. Here, the human spirit lost in the 'forests of the night' is portrayed by an allegory of the sorrows that highlight the most insignificant of God's creatures. The 'Watchman of the night' finds his place in the appealing tone of the decoration.

ON ANOTHERS SORROW

This lyric is characteristic of Blake for its teaching that pity is both a human and the divine characteristic. It follows A Dream with its thought as such as might proceed from Blake's pity for the lost and in that poem in fact, it seems to be a sequel to a dream. In the first stanza of the poem Blake talks about the reality of human sympathy. In the last three stanzas he demonstrates the extent of God's care and the power of his benevolence. The poetic sublimation of the theme echoes itself through the mellowing charm of the decoration. Here divine compassion and help are promised at the advent of Christ. A leafy tree with a vine coiling up its stem and a bird of paradise taking wing from its branches reveal the a spirit of nature that unifies poetry and painting.
FRONTISPICE TO SONGS OF EXPERIENCE

Here the visual form does strongly enhance the poetic enrichment that a combined effect of the pictorial beauty and the poetic excellence asserts itself with all its force and charm. Here youth is found securing the boy's balance by holding his hands with his own. And 'the covering cherub' represents the corruption following Experience.

SONGS OF EXPERIENCE

The bare picture of a naked man highlights the message of the poem that is to say that hard, merciless reality is strongly reflected by the designs and decorations. In this picture a naked man and a clothed maiden are seen flying towards one another with arms outstretched in anticipation of the pleasures of love. The leaves imply the pains of sex-love and experience.
INTRODUCTION

The first stanza of the poem encourages the listeners or readers to give heed to the poet who acts in the role of a kind of prophet. Here the poet carries the message of salvation and at the same time extends sympathy to the sinner. The poet promises a new world, freed from the powers of darkness. The decoration and designs add to the poetic charm and enhances the realism of the poetry. Actually the tone of the poem has changed from the initial effect of command to that of pleading. Here the language seeks to be impressed by sound rather than by meaning. The design displays Earth as a female figure reclining on a Couch borne on a cloud amidst the Starry night. A golden circle surrounds the head. And the maiden figure looks at the universe through this circle.

EARTH'S ANSWER

The opening stanza of the poem is grim and hopeless, a strong contrast to the lightness so often experienced in Songs of Innocence. The Earth is depicted in repellent terms, and attributes her conditions to the actions of Adam who is here spoken of as 'the Father of the ancient men'. There is a predominant sensuous effect and cold and darkness and it is from these 'Eternal Bane' (and ever lasting affliction), that the earth seeks to be rescued. In fact Blake personifies the earth and offers a reply to the poet's appeal. Actually Blake presents a green picture of a world bereft of God. Here free love is demanded as typifying the life of freedom lost by the fall of man in Eden. The decorations are for the most part simple vegetation of the material world.
THE CLOD & THE PEBBLE

The opening stanza is one in praise of charity which seeks to help others without itself looking for any rewards. The cloth tells us the Christian message of self-denial and concern for others where as the pebble gives us the less pleasing message of selfishness and lack of concern. The visual effects adds to the poetic element and spirit of the poem. However Blake cannot sympathise with the pebble’s viewpoint. Blake once stated that such is the way of the world that the message of goodness is often trodden down and rejected while that of evil prospered. Here the pebble, lying immobile in the waters of materialism symbolises the contrary state of Experience. In the illustration a duck floats on the water, with frogs and a worm, each in fun preying on the other.

HOLY THURSDAY

The first stanza takes us straight into the argument, and Blake asks pointedly whether the sight of such deprivation is an indication of true religion. The worst sufferers, according to the second stanza, are the children whose cries of despair can be hardly taken for hymns. This insistence contrasts beautifully with poignancy of the poetry of the last stanza where the euphony of the rhymes serves to highlight the discord that exists in the middle two stanzas. The spiritual state of such a country is eternal winter contrasted with the sunshine enjoyed by a more just society. In the right hand side we have other scenes of poverty and death.
THE LITTLE GIRL LOST

The poet tells us of a seven-year-old girl called Lyca. She appears to have wandered away from the parents and was looking for some place to take rest at night. The presentation of the non-religious myth seems to be appropriate. The decoration reveals that the girl with her lover takes her own flight. She points her towards the flying bird. The totality of the picture tends to mellow into a poetic excellence.

THE LITTLE GIRL FOUND

The cumulative impression of distress created by Blake in the first two stanzas of the poem definitely draws our attention. In the opening stanza the parents are found searching for their child Lyca. The mother, indeed, was helpless and the father was forced to carry her. At this moment the presence of lion overpowered them and it is at this moment the lion changes its form and identity in the form of a ‘A Spirit arm’d in gold’. Here, Lyca is seen about to sleep beneath one of the trees of earthly life. Lyca’s parents, wandering through the troubles of this life in search of her, happen to meet the lion. In this picture we find Blake touching upon a level where the two arts poetry and panting become mutually complementary.
THE LITTLE GIRL FOUND

Here children are found playing in paradise with the harmless lions besides the trees of love. A figure resembling Earth lies unconcernedly beside them. The decorative art stands synonymous to the verbal art i.e. the dry words. The poetry of the poem finds expression through this decoration.

THE CHIMNEY SWEEPER

The drama of the short poem is captured in the immediacy of that opening line where, by the simplest of contrast, Blake depicts the helplessness of the child. The blackness spoken of here is treated in a rather tricky manner in a later line where the finality of his fate is summed by the repetition of the clothing image. The illustration showing the boy with his bag of soot in the snow highlights Blake's talent in mingling the painting with poetic excellence.
NURSES SONGS

The design displays how the nurse, with regret, remembers how she had lost the beauty of the spring time without enjoying real pleasure. An adolescent boy, as the illustration shows, allows his hair to be combed by the nurse. Actually the decoration highlights the message i.e. the evil of female domination. In this poem we have a real sense of despair from the very start. The 'Whisperings in the dale' are suggestive of dark plots against welfare of the children. The imagery of distress is carried farther in the rather frightening depiction of the nurse turning 'green and pale'. The force of 'wasted' stands for complete devastation. Here the decorative art conveys to readers the inner meaning as implied in the poem.

THE SICK ROSE

The poem brings before our minds the vision of a rose attacked in a stormy night by a destructive worm. But it is also a symbolic poem which has other meaning. Its images carry a weight of secondary association. We may say that it refers to the destruction of love by selfishness, of innocence by experience, of spiritual life by spiritual death. The red rose, marked in the design symbolises corporeal love. In the illustration a worm is found entering the heart of the rose and the spirit of joy is released. The perils of love is emphasized by the thorns scattered along the whole length.
THE FLY

The sense of destruction that finds expression in *The Sick Rose* is the theme of this poem too. The first stanza shows how quickly life and vitality can be dealt with a death blow. Blake takes the example of an insect, the fly, which is busy one minute and then is carelessly killed. The incident prompts a line of philosophical thought that occupies the last two stanzas. Blake muses that thinking is an evidence of life; the lack of ability to think is synonymous with death. The sordid plight and destructive spectacle of human beings are brought out with force and clarity through this painting and here lies the strength of the poem. The design illustrates the cheerful inconsequence of man's life revealed through the playing children. The dead tree of materialism extends its branches over the border.
THE ANGEL

In the opening stanza the depiction of the innocence may be clearly noted. The image of the dream is indicative of such innocence and the presence of the angel serves to emphasise this fact. A joy is synonymous here with something evil and undesirable and it has the effect of driving away goodness as personified, for example, by the angel, 'the winged life'. Here the illustration, in a way, presents the poet who imagines himself to be a woman dreaming of love. When the Angel returns he finds her hardened by age. The pictorial imagination as depicted in the poem seems to be instrumental in fusing the essential poetry of the poem and the intricate elements of painting.
THE TYGER

In fact the famous poem 'The Tyger', so often taken to be an expression of naive wonder at the greatness of a god who could create both tiger and lamb, seems to be more a comment on the limited capacity of man to conceive God at all. The poem consists of a number of questions posed in anthropomorphic terms -- what shoulder, what art, what dread hand, what dread feet, what the hammer, what the chain, what the anvil, etc. -- the cumulative effect of which is to suggest that the poet is not only unable to conceive of a god in terms other than human but that he is unable to grasp the concept at all. The incredulity of 'Did he who made the Lamb make thee?' may be an incredulity at the whole notion of an all-creating god. The illustration of a tiger, standing beneath a tree, highlights Blake's talent in fusing pictorial qualities with poetic excellence. The image of the tiger speaks for the meaning itself.
'MY PRETTY ROSE TREE', 'Ah! SUN-FLOWER', 'THE LILLY'

In the first poem 'My Pretty Rose Tree' Blake takes his analogy again from nature and tells us that he was offered a flower of unspeakable beauty. But he refused this bloom and gave all his attention to a rose tree. However the rose tree betrayed his trust and rejected him. In the second poem a sunflower does indeed turn and twist to face the sun. It is almost as if it is setting union with the sun itself. The poem does really smack of glowing simplicity. The single-stanza poem 'The Lilly' introduces no fewer than three images from nature to help Blake provide his moral. Actually the Lilly happens to be the traditional symbol of chastity and despite all contrary temptations will rise above all suggestion of evil. In fact these three poems resemble musical variations on different aspects of love. The sunflower with its face turned towards the sun, is planted firmly in the ground.
THE GARDEN OF LOVE

The opening stanza of the poem describes the poet's return to an environment that he always linked with happiness. Here he discovered that a church had been built where he used to play with full freedom. Actually Blake accuses the Church of interfering in a totally negative manner with morality. The priest of organized religion symbolizes the agent of repression and in the illustration the priest is seen instructing a boy and a girl in his doctrines. So the meaning of the poem stands revealed in the pictures that seems to be forcefully alive.

THE LITTLE VAGABOND

In this poem Blake speaks of the child who complains that the coldness of the church is in strong contrast to the warmth of the inn. The alternatives to the grimness of the church are expressed in this poem in simple and touching language. Here the scene below highlights a family of father, mother and three children who are found warming themselves at a blazing fire. The message of the poem is echoed in terms of painting.
LONDON

These the powerful poem attacking three great evils of society's cruelty as seen in the chimney-sweeper's wretched condition, war as represented by the soldier, and lust represented in the harlot who is a threat to the purity of marriage and the happiness of children. In fact soot on the Church building is an outward sign of spiritual indifference, as the chimney sweeper, also covered with soot is a sign of society's callous acceptance of the distress which exists in its midst. The visible stain as reflected in 'London' has become a virulent infection, and its power is caught in the terrible poetic condensation that sees the marriage coach as already a hearse. The existence of the youthful harlot is more than a source of physical infection; it is a symptom of the moral disease evident only to the visionary poet. In the illustration a child leads an old man on crutches through the streets. On the right hand side below another vagabond is warming himself at a fire. Here Blake blends his creative talent and drawing-ability to give rise to a meaningful picture of the London city. And the image, itself echoes the message clearly.
THE HUMAN ABSTRACT

The sentiment in the opening stanza seem appropriate following as they do on the sign of human misery depicted in ‘London’. Blake tells us that such virtues as pity and mercy do depend on the existence of misery. The second stanza however balances this impression by suggesting that there can enter into human affairs those who cruelly take advantage of such deprivation. In the final stanza Blake is ashamed to admit that the source of this scheming and deceit is actually the human mind. Here one may observe a cynical comment implicit in this appraisal of the human situation. Blake presents us with the well-worn explanation of the presence of evil in existence. Actually the poem asserts that the conventional Christian virtues exists as near froth of the surface of a society founded not on great virtues, but great evils – poverty, unhappiness, fear, selfishness, cruelty and the “raven” of death. Actually humanity grows through evil veritably to death itself. The illustration reveals the creator Urizen, caught in the nets of religion. The poem implies the denial of all faith. It is a commentary of true faith in the divinity of unrepressed human instincts. In fact the visual image has its strong influence to bring out the message of the poem quite convincingly.
INFANT SORROW

The first stanza opens up with the sounds of despair in anticipation of the arrival of the newly born child. Blake says the parents see him not as an infant but as a devil. The growing of the mother can be seen as the expression of pain associated with childbirth. But the implication strikes a definite note that is to say the baby's mother is unhappy at his arrival. Here the design implies the infant's unwilling surrender to his mother's arms. The newly born infant has been brought into faith in pain and sorrow and soon manifests itself in the cloud of earth by virtue of earthly life and experience. The image strikingly opens up the vista of an unwilling infant's calm surrender to the mother's arms. And it invariably projects the message of the poem.
A POISON TREE

The design shows how the repression of anger can breed malevolence. It may be read in conjunction with several of the 'Proverbs of Hell' on the evils of repression. The first stanza tells of a common human experience whereby troubles that are aired help the sufferer to gain relief whereas those that are kept to oneself gain in strength and seriousness. The poison tree which Blake chooses to use as his image in this poem is the poison tree of java which inflicts immediate death once it is touched. The image of the tree once again proves attractive to Blake as a means of pointing out his message. The reference again to the apple, which is an integral part of the story of the fall of man, appears here and we can recognize its relevance.
A LITTLE BOY LOST

In this poem a philosophical air can be noted in the first stanza in which Blake proposes the premise that no creature can love anything more than it loves itself. Similarly the child in the poem says that he can love his parent only in a limited sense. Though the child is swept by a furious priest as it is revealed in the third stanza, the distressed child is humiliated also before the parents and is taken up as some kind of prisoner to be executed here like the medieval ballad singer. Blake does not draw a direct moral as such, but he raises questions and suggests answers through the nature of incident and style. This illustration presents the child expressing his instinctive attitude to life, self love being the natural state. In the design below, the boy's parents and family are found weeping before the flames. The very weeping brings forth the message of the poem in a revealing manner and herein lies the beauty of the fusion of instinct painting with that of ecstatic poetic beauty.
The poem tells us about Ona's fall from innocence which takes place, not on the occasion of her sexual encounter with the youth, but as a result of her father's "loving look". In the poem Blake writes history for children of the present time, and tells the story of Adam and Eve, modifying it so that it is the history of every man and woman. The story is timeless, and in order to indicate timelessness Blake slips from one tense to another as he writes. The first stanza in the body of the poem is about a past event, set in an "Age of Gold", but is written in the present tense to indicate that Eden is enacted in every person's experience. It may be noted that in the first stanza, there is a suggestion of threat in the reference to the 'winter's cold'. In the second stanza the threat is echoed in the image of 'the curtains of the night'. The innocence of the young pair exists only when figures of authority and 'strangers' are not present. Once again, Blake uses the image of 'hoary hair' to depict the bitter blows of experience which the father now seems to wish to inflict on his daughter. Here the youthful lovers, seen in the picture, meet and acknowledge their passion in the morning light and agree to meet again in the quiet of the evening. The warmth and secrecy of their love finds vivid expression in terms of the decoration.
TO TIRZAH

The poem seems something of an intrusion into the pattern of Songs of Experience besides the dramatic change in attitudes to the things of nature. This poem provides the first specific reference to the name of Jesus. One can also note a feeling of fanaticism about the poem which has led Blake to reject completely something which he usually used to keep safe deeper down his heart. Actually the decoration relates the story of the fall of man in paradise and his condemnation to the sleep of life on earth. Man's natural body is supported by the two women in the personae of Mother Love and Sex Love. The words and the picture become synonymous to each other.

THE SCHOOL BOY

Here we find three boys climbing up the stems. On the ground two boys and a girl are found gathering the fruits. The decoration vividly expresses the meaning underlying the poetry of the poem. The destruction of innocence is brought to light by the art of painting.
THE VOICE OF THE ANCIENT BARD

The poem is, in fact, an undisguised attack on the mechanistic philosophy and science of his day and an impassioned appeal to lead a life which was explored to the possibilities of the emotions of sensitive people. Actually the illustration shows the Bard with his harp. The young ones and the maidens are found listening to his music. The decoration conveys the message of the poem. Thus poetry and painting seem to be mixed inextricably.

It is true that Blake’s poems go back to the medieval tradition of Illuminated Book, thereby inscribing a specific sense of religious mysticism. Thus his books are not merely creative expressions of a poet; rather these are sublime prophetic statements conceived in terms of ecstatic spiritual illumination. Northrop Frye briefly notes down this medieval tradition; but he gives more importance to an unusual sense of harmony. He thinks that Blake’s poems present a unified vision of the three major arts to the individual as the musical drama with its combination of speech, sound and setting, project it to the audience (Northrop Frye, Fearful Symmetry: A study of William Blake, Princeton Univ. Press, 1969, p·186). Blake himself used to think that poetry, painting and music are essentially expressions of the human creative principle. In Blake’s analysis, Urizen symbolises the principle of reason and Los upholds the ideal of imagination or the human creative principle.
It may be said that Blake tries to uphold this human creative principle of imagination through the interweaving of poetry and painting. It is through the artistic fusion of poetry and painting that Blake achieves for himself a new status as a poet: a prophet, a mystic and a creative genius. It is true that earlier creative thinkers have always noted the contentious relationship of poetry and painting. Leonardo da Vinci in Trattato laments: “If you call painting dumb poetry, the painter may call poetry blind painting” (Jean Paul Richter, tr. & ed., The Literary Works of Leonardo da Vinci, 2nd edn., 2 Vols, London, 1939, Vol. I, p. 56). But in Blake’s analysis, this tension between two specific sister-arts is completely resolved. His poetry seems to be a perfect fusion of his verbal craftsmanship and visual exquisiteness.

In fact poetry and painting are the chief sister arts and the 18th Century critical thinkers have been particularly enthusiastic about this articulate coalescing of this particular correlation. But Blake could perfectly harmonise and blend these two creative principles. Thus the plates that are used here sufficiently substantiate this harmonising principle.