POETS OF CHILDHOOD: A STUDY OF WILLIAM BLAKE AND RABINDRANATH TAGORE

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By
ANANDAMOY ROY

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SUPERVISOR:
Dr. B. K. BANERJEE

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL
RAJA RAMMOHUNPUR
DARJEELING
WEST BENGAL
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Both William Blake (1757-1827) and Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) wrote poems about children and presented their respective visions about the state of childhood being a state of unalloyed joy. I was acquainted with William Blake while doing my post-graduate studies in English. His Songs of Innocence (1789) and Songs of Experience (1794) moved me so much that I was thinking whether I could work on William Blake in future for my Ph.D. dissertation. Blake’s vision of childhood gave me a perspective to look into the poems of Tagore who in Shishu (1903) and Shishu Bholanath (1922) had responded well to the emotions of the children’s world and sang the songs of innocence. My immediate response was to work on both Blake and Rabindranath as poets of childhood.

Poems about children in English literature were not unheard of before Blake. But Blake explored a "New Eden to which man had long been an alien". Against the natural and idyllic background, in which the children respond themselves well, Blake wrote his "happy songs" so that "every child may joy to hear". The essence of the life of children he had translated into print in Songs of Innocence (1789).

Though there is no reference in the whole Corpus of Tagore literature whether Rabindranath had anything to do with Blake so far as his poems about children are concerned, however a closed reading of Blake and Rabindranath would evince, how both of them were kindred souls as poets of childhood. Blake, of course, had not that amazing range of Tagore. But the basic approach of both the poets to childhood remains alomost the same.
While Blake drew inspiration from the life of the "Infant Jesus", Tagore's inspiration to write about children came directly from the reminiscences of his own childhood as well as an onlooker of that state: "Jagat parabarer teere shishura kare khela...". Spontaneity of expression, tenderness of feeling and simplicity of thought have gone a long way in making such poems as inestimable treasures in the literature meant primarily for the children. Such a comparative study till now has not been pursued by any Blake or Tagore scholar. Hence the significance of this dissertation.

The thesis will have five chapters. The first chapter, *Introduction* in brief, will explore the horizon of the poems for children, written both in English and Bengali languages. And it will be simply an introductory chapter. The second chapter, *William Blake*, will be exclusively devoted to the study of William Blake who is the first poet in English literature to have discovered childhood and wrote poems about children. The third chapter, *Rabindranath Tagore*, will introduce Rabindranath Tagore who pioneered the cause of the literature for children and in whose hands the poems (meant for children) reached a culmination. The fourth chapter, *Childhood: A Study in Images and Symbols in the Poetry of William Blake and Rabindranath Tagore*, will study the images and symbols used by the respective poets to present their visions of childhood. As the thesis is comparative in nature, in the concluding chapter, *Theme and Treatment of childhood: A Study of William Blake and Rabindranath Tagore*, Blake and Rabindranath will be assessed primarily in relation to their theme and philosophy as evident in their poems for children.
This thesis may open new vistas for further research works while widening the horizon of the literature for children as a whole.

'Works Cited' and 'Select Bibliography' are prepared in strict adherence to the instructions given in the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* by Joseph Gibaldi (New Delhi: Affiliated East-West Press Pvt. Ltd., 2000). In the body of this dissertation I have drawn the textual references from the original texts and acknowledged them. In case of Rabindranath the original texts have been referred to (wherever necessary) and English translations of the same have been done for the understanding of those who may not know the Bengali language.

I owe my foremost debt of gratitude to my supervisor Dr. Binoy Kumar Banerjee, Professor of English who has been my constant companion in my humble academic effort to accomplish this present dissertation. His steady encouragement, perspicacious directive and profound affection have gone a long way in prosecuting the project and preparing this dissertation. I remain thankful to the staff of the National Library, British Council Library and U.S.I.S. Library, Kolkata. I am also grateful to Mr. Ajit Kumar Bhattacharya, former Headmaster, Garifa High School, Garifa, 24 Parganas (North) and a renowned scholar, Mr Sunit Kumar Biswas, a voracious reader and former Assistant Teacher of the same institution, Prof. Amalkanta Chakrabarty, Ashutosh College, Kolkata, Mr. Siddhartha Chakrabarty and my friend and colleague Mr Prabir Kumar Sengupta. I shall express my wholehearted gratitude to Mr. Debasish Chakraborty, the chief navigator of the DTP processor, Canvas, Kolkata, for the scrupulous service he has rendered to me.
The unpayable debt is due to Sri Barin Roy and Sm. Uma Roy, my parents, whose continuous persuasion has enabled me to complete my thesis. But for whose inspiration and kind assistance this dissertation could not see the light of day is my wife Mousumi who has unhesitatingly shared the painstaking burden of proof-reading. And in the eyes of my only child Kabyayan, I have found out my own childhood days reflected in multi-dimensional colours.
Chapter - 1

INTRODUCTION

Blake's *Songs of Innocence and Experience* and Tagore's *Sishu Bholanath*, *Kheya*, *Sishu* etc. so impressed me that I began to think whether I could embark on my Ph.D. dissertation on the children's poetry of both Blake and Tagore. The critical literature on both Blake and Tagore is vast and myriad. But what is quite amazing is the fact that till now no critical study has been presented on both the poets in relation to their poetry about children. Hence this present dissertation.

Since this dissertation has its main focus on the children's poems of William Blake and Rabindranath Tagore, we would present a brief overview on the geneses of children's poetry in both English and Bengali literature. When literature for the grownups is in "God's Plenty", literature for the children is not that way prolific. But the children in all parts of the world earnestly look for a literature of their own, which illumines the juvenile imagination and captures their fancy world. A good many classics like *The Pilgrim's Progress* (Part-I published in 1678, Part-II in 1684), *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), the tale of *Cinderella* (first appeared in print in 1697), "The Sleeping Beauty", "Puss in Boots", "Little Red Riding Hood", *The Water Babies*; *A Fairy Tale for a Land-Baby* (1863), *Grimms' Fairy Tales* (1823), *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (published in 1865, withdrawn and published again in 1866), *Through the Looking-Glass* (1871), *At the Back of the North Wind* (1871), *The Jungle Book* (1894), *The Second Jungle Book* (1895), *Treasure Island* (published as a serial...
in 1881 and as a book in 1883), *Kidnapped* (1886) and different kinds of folklores, romances, fables, fairy tales, sagas, adventures, illustrated histories, tales of fantasy etc. were written for children of all times. But so far as poetical compositions for the children are concerned, they are not that way vast and varied.

In the old English poetry, childhood appeared in 'Pearl', 'Purity' and 'Patience'. These three medieval alliterative poems introduced for the first time the theme of childhood in English literature. 'Pearl' has been preserved in the same MS as Sir Gawayne and the Grene Knight, along with Patience and Purity. In 101 alliterative stanzas 'Pearl' depicts the intense grief of a father for his dead daughter. The child (named Pearl) may have lived for a short time on earth but goes into heaven by virtue of innocence whereas the adults have a passage of hardship and repentance before attaining salvation. Pearl gives her father a refresher course in the medieval conception of Christianity. The innocent has enough grace when she has been duly baptised. She reminds him how Christ gave his rich blood for purifying humanity. A righteous man with the help of Wisdom can win his way to salvation. A sinner, if he truly repents, will also find grace.

Henry Vaughan (1622-95) in his treatment of the theme of childhood has dwelt on the divine innocence and spontaneity, pure exuberance and feeling, emotional attachment and ventilation. His mysticism like Wordsworth's is grounded on his recollections of childhood. The spontaneous expression of going back to "That shady City of palm trees" has found its fullest maturity in him anticipating Wordsworth's "Immortality Ode" ("Ode on Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood").
John Locke (1632-1704) delved deep into the child's world. He learned from the children through their aspirations, disappointments, affections, and stubbornness about the children themselves. Locke's own candle was held up to shed illumination on the dark ignorance of his time as to how children's minds should be cherished and spared rather than roughly and peremptorily handled. He declares,

"Children should be treated as rational creatures."^2

He undermines the foundation of a whole system when he says,

"Do not charge children's memories upon all occasions with rules and precepts which they often do not understand and are constantly as soon forgot as given."^3

Again and again Locke comes back to the idea, children must have their liberty.

Like Locke, Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) did immense service by making a study of children's minds being different from those of their elders, and further he offered his ideas in a blaze of convincing enthusiasm which carried them much further than could his predecessors. He makes these fictitious young persons, Emile (1762) and Sophie vivid and humane. Best of all, the two children seem to be endowed with sufficient and natural common sense to resist some of the impossible experiments which Rousseau proposes to perform upon them.

John Newbery (1713-1767) was a man, who, in the eyes of Dr. Primrose—a character in Oliver Goldsmith's The Vicar of Wakefield—has written,
"... so many little books for children; he called himself their friend, but he was the friend of all mankind."\(^4\)

His bustling energy in business enterprise, his interest in literature and writers, his deep and sincere love for children — all began to contribute to his truly astonishing success in matter of publishing books for children. The most significant passage among these books is contained in Nurse Truelove's New Year's Gift, published in 1760. "Innocent Pleasures of a Country life, or the Haymakers" is enlivened by lines that fairly dance themselves to a jig tune:

"In came the jolly mowers. / To cut the meadow down, / with bottle and with budget / And ale that's stout and brown."

(You see the picture of the budget, a small bag for bread and meat).

"Sweet jug jug jug jug jug/ The nightingale doth sing/ From morning until evening,/ while they are haymaking"\(^5\)

Cornelia Meigs opines,

"Thanks to Locke and to Locke's theory and to John Newbery's practice, books for children finally stood on their own feet. Literature for the young was to go back into the no man's land where it had wandered for three hundred years."\(^6\)
It was Newbery's idea to attach the name 'Mother Goose' to the first important collection of ancient rhymes, some of them so long current in England that they are as old as literature itself. There can be much interesting study of their quaint and hidden symbolism, but their true charm, felt by every child almost from the moment that he is aware of words at all, is in their unfaltering rhythm and their compact and arresting variety of character and incident. No man who was the first in that sort of undertaking could ever have won success without having a deep understanding and love for children.

One Issac Watts (1674-1748) like Locke, learned about the nature of children's minds while being a tutor in a private family (when he was a very young man). Watt's Divine and Moral Songs for Children, published in 1715, belonged to the same age and surroundings that produced Robinson Crusoe and Gulliver's Travels. In the Divine Songs he introduces children to a happier life in religious belief than Janeway or Mather would have allowed them. Tribute has been paid to his "Cradle Hymn", which sings of every mother and child having an unusual appeal in his light verse:

"Soft my child, I did not chide thee
Though my song might sound too hard,
Tis thy mother sits beside thee,
And her arms shall be thy guard."

As printed in the Divine Songs, alternative words are offered in the place of mother, brother, sister, neighbour, friend so that the sleepy child will know most particularly that the song is his very own.
Between Issac Watts' day and the early years of the nineteenth century, very little verse was written specially for children. Nursery rhymes and rhymed alphabets, even if they were widely circulated in print, as to which the evidence is of a negative kind, were no more than traditional. Watts held a field which few people deemed worth tillage. It would be nearly true to say that between 1715 and 1804 no original poems for infant minds were uttered. Ann (1782-1866) and Jane Taylor (1783-1824), who used that title with good warrant, were in fact both the successors of Watts and the creators of the Moral Tale in verse. But in the internal there were writers who stand out as separate figures. They made verse, respectively, for and about children.

The earliest was John Marchant (fl. 1750), who, from the little that can be gathered from his works, must have been a strange fellow. He published some sturdy and even violent anti-papist books, and two very unusual volumes of verse for children — Puerilia: or, Amusements for the Young (1751) and Lusus Juveniles: or Youth's (1753). The interesting feature of both works is what he calls "other subjects". He saw a great deal — more than many children's authors before or since; and what he saw was usually within children's own little sphere of action. But he had no true imagination.

Nathaniel Cotton (1705-1788) wrote Visions in Verse, for the Entertainment and Instruction of Younger Minds (1751), a collection of odes on different aspects of human life. And the odes earned much popularity at that time.

The appearance of Lyrical Ballads in 1798 by Wordsworth (1770-1850) and
Coleridge (1772-1834) did much to influence the character and quality of children's literature and to bring a full awakening of the children's understanding which was indeed a necessity for a true literature meant for them.

In William Blake (1757-1827), who was their predecessor, juvenile poetry blossomed in full. His *Songs of Innocence* (1789) which represents, in contrast to his *Songs of Experience* (1794), the fullness of youthful glory before it has crossed that knife edge of difference between the thinking of the wholly young and the beginning of adult responsibility and knowledge.

Sarah Fielding (1710-1768), almost a forgotten writer and sister of the novelist Fielding, published one book for children, *The Government; or The Little Female Academy* (1749, second edition). Anna Letitia (Aikin) Barbauld's (1743-1825) publications for children — *Lessons for Children, from Two to Three Years Old* (1778) followed by *Hymns in Prose for Children* (1781) — comparing with Sarah Fielding's, were immeasurably greater and more tenacious. Mrs. Sarah Trimmer (1741-1810), combining her interest in writing for children with her belief that all children had a right to learn and read, undertook *An Easy Introduction to the Knowledge of Nature* (1782). Mary Wollstonecraft's (1759-1797) *Original Stories from Real Life* (1788) deserves mention.

In this way, English juvenile literature has made its onward march enthralling the children with new ideas and forms. While writing about the children care should be taken so that an intelligent understanding of the child as a 'child' rather
than a 'miniature adult' appears to provide juvenile joy while radiating the child's imagination.

The previous section has highlighted the origin of English juvenile literature and its further development. In this section, we will try to show how the juvenile literature made its entry into Bengali literature and its further continuity. Bengali juvenile literature in fact got its proper installation in the second decade of the twentieth century. Naturally its idea and morale were based upon English language. That the English juvenile literature did a lot to stir the Bengali juvenile literature can hardly be denied.

The Western impact and especially the growth of Western education, rise of the educated middle class, a renewed interest in oriental learning, activities of the Christian missionaries and several other developments left their prints in different spheres of life. Through the spread of English education, liberal ideas of the West began to infiltrate first into Bengal and later on in other parts of the country. It heralded a new age of reason. A spirit of critical inquiry into the past and the growth of new ideas and aspirations for the future marked the new awakening. Raja Rammohan Roy was an embodiment of the spirit of the new age. His views and activities generated controversies in the realm of both ideas and actions that continued throughout the century. To a large extent, the Bengali press owed its origin to this ideological conflict and clash of mutually opposite plans of campaign. The different groups of men, caught in the intense cross-currents of ideas, felt the necessity of bringing out their own papers and journals.
to propagate their respective views and ideas. Bengali juvenile literature could not escape the general trend of the time.

Nineteenth century juvenile literature completely depended upon translations, renderings and adaptations. English was not only its principal source of adaptation, but many renderings were possibly done directly from Sanskrit, Urdu, French, etc. into Bengali. The sole objective of the juvenile literature of the period was not so much to create interests among children but to use it as media of imparting education among children. Seven books were written either in prose or in poetry. As the prose was dull, so was the poem. Poems, published in a number of books and journals, were nothing but a reflection of moral scriptures:

"... the aim of literature for children, belonging to the major portion of the nineteenth century was the spread of morality and education."*

In order to have a clear-cut picture of the earlier phase of Bengali juvenile literature, it should be divided into three periods — i) The era of Calcutta School Book Society, ii) The era of Vidyasagar, and iii) The post Vidyasagar era. The former two phases had been dominated by both the society and Vidyasagar. The later one was a product of collective responsibility. The Calcutta School Book Society, founded on July 4, 1817, contributed much to the growth of Bengali language and literature.

Some important works other than poetry appeared in different forms and

It is a historical fact that the bulk of juvenile poetry in comparison to the prose writings of other kinds was definitely very slender. But Madanmohan Tarkalankar was a great scholar and above all a poet. In the first part of his
Shishushiksha appeared the first original juvenile poem of the century:

"Birds are tuning, night disappears
Buds in the garden bloom into flowers."^9

It has been informed by Krishnakamal Bhattacharya’s Puratan Prasanga that Kamakshyacharan Ghosh compiled a collection of poems named Ratnasar Samgraha, first published in 1859. In 1863 was published a book of poems, Kavita Kaumudi, first part, by Harishchandra Mitra. The second and third parts were published in 1867 and 1875 respectively. Tinkari Mukhopadhyay wrote Laghupath Paddya in 1864.

During his days of hardship, Michael Madhusudan Dutta also composed a number of moral poems for children in order to earn money. In the opinion of Jogindranath Sarkar, the biographer of Madhusudan,

"The moral poems were composed by Michael in 1870 .... The moral poems were written according to the system of Bangala Kathamala in the ideal of Aesop’s Fables ... some of them have gained popularity having found their places in the text book of the boys."^10

After two years of their publication, a long narrative poem composed by the famous dramatist Dinabandhu Mitra was published in 1872. It is said that the storehouse of Bengali juvenile poems had been enriched by this poem. Kavitamanjari, written by Haricharan Dey, was published in 1868. After three years, in 1871, Kavitamanjari was published by Gopal Chandra Dutta from
Chinsura. Jnanomanjari, a collection of shorter poems for children, by Hemchandra Chattopadhyay, was published in 1873 from Dacca. The poems, especially the moral ones, were also for children. In the same year (1873) was published another book of juvenile poems, Kavitamanjari. Some of them had moral undertones and others were of narrative kinds.

In the 19th century there was an observable silence in the writing of poems for children. The humming of conventional rhymes or lullabies might have overpowered their creative destiny. In 1881 was published a book of poems entitled Shishu Kavita by Rajkrishna Roy. Frequently, the 19th century children's literature gave birth to two or three poems for children. In order to teach the whimsical boys and girls, Rajkrishna Roy wrote that collection of thirty short poems, Shishukavita. The book includes poems on book, pen, paper, inkpot etc. A poem entitled 'The Pen' bears witness to the above statement,

"... For you only I write with my pen
This book Shishukavita consciously again."

Mozammel Haque wrote a number of juvenile poems and in 1889 published a small book named Paddya Shiksha. He is the first Muslim literateur in Bengali children's literature. In the same year, 1889, Galpaswalpa by Swarnakumari Devi was published. Here, the authoress's aim was also to spread moral education among the boys and girls. Both prose and poems were included there. One of the poems is on noon. The last three lines of the poem, 'The Noon' exhale the serenity of noon and soothes one's heart:
"A Cowherd while keeping his kine, in the distant field / plays the flute under the shady grove."  

This era augured well with the publication, Hashi Q Khela compiled by Jogindranath Sarkar in 1891. In the preface, the author wrote,

"Though there was no scarcity of text-books for the boys and girls in our country, no readable or prizeable book containing pictures for children has yet been published. In order to overcome this scarcity, to some extent, Hashi Q Khela is published. If it draws public interest, I hope, Chhabi Q Galpa, another readable juvenile book containing pictures, will be published."

And again, praising the literary qualities of the book, Rabindranath Tagore wrote in Falgun 1301 B. S. (1894) in the pages of "Sadhana",

"By compiling the book named Hashi Q Khela, Jogindrababu has stood on complement being received from both the children and their parents."

This book included the compositions (both prose and poems) written by Upendrakishore, Pramadacharan, Rajkrishna Roy, Navakrishna Bhattacharjee, Jogindranath Basu etc. Some of them have been enjoyed by the children of today for their easy reading and realisation. One of those written by Navakrishna Bhattacharjee spread from mouth to mouth like the lullaby sung by the Bengali mothers and its humming is yet to be heard.
In this long list of the children's literature of Bengal, the name of Avanindranath Tagore needs special attention. In *Shakuntala*, Avanindranath's serious attempt to spread very rapidly the colloquial tongue in the domain of children's literature became successful. It was published in 1895. In 1896 was published his *Khirer Putul* — the original creation in Bengali literature for children. Both its theme and characters express a new feeling. Though the book hinges on a real incident (historical character or ancient event) however one feels the impression of the *Ramayana* while reading the work. Hanuman played an important role in rescuing Sita, but in *Khirer Putul*, the lamentation of Duorani has been thrown off by the 'Mukhpora Hanuman'. (the monkey whose face is burnt). Among those writers of rare qualities belonged Avanindranath who expressed themselves being as if children themselves.

Now appears Rabindranath Tagore. In the beginning, Tagore's *Sishu* was not a separate book of poems. Many of them were published in the last phase of the nineteenth century. But the peculiarity remains in the fact that the poems included in *Sishu* have satisfied more the mothers than their children. These poems have followed the style of a lullaby poem.

In 1896 was published *Ranga Chhbi* by Jogindranath Sarkar, but it was a wonderful reflection of his *Hanshi Ô Khela*:

"Just as one should have the premonition of the rest of the day at the fresh radiation of dawn, so the identification of the whole work will be possible by going through any one of them."
Only for this reason, a portion of them is to be mentioned.

"Why do you call on, hey
Bird from the wood?
Come to the golden cage and I
will keep you for good."\textsuperscript{16}

And again,

"Mum has said, 'Don't torture
Anyone in life',
So I want you little bird
In my love alive."\textsuperscript{17}

On 16th September, 1897, was published \textit{Hansi Khushi} (Part One) by Jogindranath Sarkar which became a milestone in the world of Bengali juvenile literature and education. The eternal soul of a child responds to the humming of the rhymes. Jogindranath's \textit{Khelar Sathi} was published in November, 1898. It also contains fairy tales. But Jogindranath's remarkable contribution to the storehouse of Bengali children's literature lies in his collection of Bengali rhymes.

The collection entitled \textit{Khukumanir Chhada} was published in 1899. In the preface to the collection, with special reference to the role of juvenile literature, Acharya Ramendrasundar Trivedi wrote,

"The unacknowledged mystery of a large part in human life remains in this literature. In order to evaluate the nature of human adolescence, often we should have to take refuge to such kind of literature."\textsuperscript{18}
And again,

"The people who have got leisure will find a curious comparison between the 'rhymes' of the Bengali boys and the 'nursery songs' of the English ones."^{19}

It is to be noted that Acharya Ramendrasundar was the first one to introduce the term "Sishu Janapriyo Sahitya" (Popular children's literature). Before him, none in the nineteenth century had used the term. Jogindranath's further contribution to the Bengali children's literature is the implementation of nonsense rhymes, evident in *Hanshirashi* (published in 1899). There is the common belief that Sukumar Roy is the innovator of this kind of verse. But actually it is not. Rather, Sukumar followed the trend left behind by Jogindranath.

In this way the stream of the nineteenth century Bengali children's literature got its sustenance from the creations of numerous writers. That Bengali children's literature to its credit enjoys a very commendable position, no less intended to that of English literature for children, is evident from the history of Bengali children's literature studied in this chapter.


7. F. J. Harvey Darton (Frederick Joseph Harvey Darton) in *Children's Books in England*, p-198, speaks of the tales as "2 vols., 1806 but dated 1807". On page 165 he observes, concerning children's books of this period, "The dates, where given, are apt to be confusing".


Chapter - 2
"And I made a rural pen,  
And I stained the water clear,  
And I wrote my happy songs  
Every child may joy to hear."  
("Introduction", Songs of Innocence)

"O Earth, O Earth, return!  
"Arise from out the dewy grass;  
"Night is worn,  
"And the morn  
"Rises from the slumberous mass."  
("Introduction", Songs of Experience)
Chapter - 2

WILLIAM BLAKE

"And I made a rural pen,
And I stain'd the water clear,
And I wrote my happy songs
Every child may joy to hear."¹

"Then come home, my children, the sun is gone down,
And the dews of night arise;
Your spring and your day are wasted in play,
And your winter and night in disguise."²

Recent researches have shown the special importance and significance of childhood in romantic poetry. Blake, being a harbinger of romanticism, had engraved childhood as a state of unalloyed joy in his Songs of Innocence. And among the romantics, he was perhaps the first to have discovered childhood. His inspiration was of course the Bible where he had seen the image of the innocent, its joy and all pure image of little, gentle Jesus. That image ignited the very imagination of Blake, the painter and engraver. And with his illumined mind, he translated that image once more in his poetry, Songs of Innocence.

Among the records of an early meeting of the Blake Society on 12th August, 1912 there occurs the following passage:
"A pleasing incident of the occasion was the presence of a very pretty robin, which hopped about unconcernedly on the terrace in front of the house and among the members while the papers were being read... Miss Wood, who wrote some verses on the occasion, makes the robin say of the members of the society: 'They were friends of the man who loved the lamb./And would never do me harm'."³

Such is the price that William Blake has had to pay for the fact that his most lucid verses are also those which are most gratifying to the sentimental. For many readers, still, he is a poet who expressed with ingenuity sentiments which are worthy but naive. He is the poet, above all, of innocence, and the fact that after a supposed time of bitter disillusionments he also wrote some of experience, is purely secondary.

William Blake (1757-1827) had a happy childhood. His father was reasonably well off and the family was free from want. The best thing about his father was that he had a remarkable understanding of his son and did not fall a prey to the temptation of sending him to school where William would have been completely out of place. Blake was a visionary from an early age. He claimed to have seen visions, and had he been to school he would only have been the butt of schoolboys' ridicule. Quite at an early age, he showed one of his most marked characteristics —a power of imaginative visualization, whether with the inward or the outward eye. When he was four years old, he was frightened by seeing God looking through the window. Margoliouth has rightly pointed out:
"Even if that can be rationalistically explained by the unexpected appearance of some venerable gentleman, the rationalization has little point: it is just the sort of 'vision' young William would have had. A little later he saw a tree at Peckham full of angles — an externalized vision. But it cannot be generically different from what Blake himself wrote in 1810 about the sunrise: I see an Innumerable company of the Heavenly host crying: Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty. I question not my Corporeal or Vegetative Eye any more than I would Question a Window concerning a Sight. I look thro'it & not with it."4

These visions were, however, not hallucinations; they were not fantastic either — they were seen but not believed to be there in the sense in which physical objects are. Blake claimed to have the power of bringing his imagination before his mind's eye, so completely organised and so perfectly formed that he copied the vision, on his canvas; he could not err.

When Blake was born, the eighteenth century manner was dying. Even Pope could not revive it in his masterpiece The Rape of the Lock. Though the poem had excelled in colour, sound, and touch, it had however lacked in imagery. Gray tried to translate the life into his Odes (1757) by presenting an imagery of violence. Burke had just urged upon such imagery, in his Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful. And it had been used
fifteen years before, in the two poems for which Blake was later thought most fitted to design: the "Night Thoughts" of Edward Young and "The Grave" of Robert Blair. Unhappily, the decay of the eighteenth century manner lay deeper than in tricks of speech. The gloom and the indecision of the "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" had been those of a dying society. They were not lessened by being overlaid with Gothic horror: they were merely made fanciful. Blake knew, and shared, the faults of both manners. In his boyhood poem "To the Muses", he set out the eighteenth century manner with care and with charm, part parody and part pastiche, precisely in order to attack it.

"Whether on chrystal rocks ye rove,
Beneath the bosom of the sea
Wand'ring in many a coral grove,
Fair Nine, forsaking Poetry!
How have you left the ancient love
That bards of old enjoy'd in you!
The languid strings do scarcely move!
The sound is forc'd, the notes are few!"

Blake was foremost among the Romantic poets in his emphasis on imagination. For a century, English philosophy has been dominated by the Theories of Locke. He assumed that, in perception, mind is wholly passive, a mere recorder of impressions from without. This way of thinking was well suited to an age of scientific speculation which found its representative voice in Newton. The mechanistic explanations which both philosophers and scientists provided of the world meant that scant respect was paid to the human self and, especially, to its
more instinctive, though not less powerful convictions. Thus, both Locke and Newton found a place for God in their universe, for reasons which were rejected by the Romantics. For them, religion was less a question of reason than feeling. They complained that these mechanistic explanations were a denial of their innermost feelings.

Locke did not have a very high regard for poetry. For him it was a matter of wit, and the task of wit is to combine ideas and "thereby to make up pleasant pictures and agreeable visions in the fancy". Wit, he thinks, is quite irresponsible, and has nothing much to do with truth or reality. The Romantics rejected with contempt a theory which robbed their work of its essential connection with life.

Blake leads a scathing attack on Locke. For him, he represents a deadly heresy on the nature of existence. Blake is concerned with more than discrediting his views on God and poetry. He is hostile to the whole system that supports these views, and robs the human self of all importance. He rejects Locke's conception of the Universe, and replaces it by a new one, which may be called idealistic, because in this system mind is the central point and the governing factor. In other words, this system is called idealistic because instead of being mechanical and objective, it is subjective, and is created by the ideas, as they crystallise in the poet's mind.

The Romantics insist that the most vital activity of the mind is imagination. For them it is the very source of spiritual energy. They believe that it is divine
and it partakes of the activity of God. Blake says in his usual proud and prophetic manner:

"This world of Imagination is the world of Eternity; it is the divine bosom into which we shall go after the death of the Vegetated body. This World of Imagination is Infinite and Eternal, whereas the world of Generation, or Vegetation, is Finite and Temporal. There Exist in that Eternal World the Permanent Realities of Everything which we see reflected in this Vegetable Glass of Nature. All things are comprehended in their Eternal Forms in the divine body of the Saviour, the True Vine of Eternity, The Human Imagination."

For Blake any act of creation performed by imagination is divine, because, for him, imagination is nothing less than God as He operates in the human soul. He believes that man's spiritual nature is fully and finally realized only in imagination. In this respect Coleridge seems to agree with Blake:

"The primary IMAGINATION I hold to be the living Power and prime Agent of all human Perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the finite I AM."§

It is true that Coleridge regards poetry as the product of secondary imagination. But since the secondary imagination differs only in degree from the primary
imagination, it is clear that for Coleridge also, imagination is of the first importance, for it shares the creative activity of God.

Imagination is practically the same thing as insight. Insight awakens the imagination to work, and is, in turn, sharpened by it where it is at work. This is the assumption on which Blake and other Romantics wrote poetry. It means that when their creative gifts are engaged, they are inspired by their sense of the mystery of things to probe into with a peculiar insight and to shape their discoveries into imaginative forms. They combine imagination and truth because their creations are inspired by a peculiar insight. According to Blake,

"Mental Things are alone Real; what is call'd Corporeal, Nobody knows of its Dwelling Place: it is in Fallacy, & its Existence an Imposture. Where is the Existence Out of Mind or Thought? Where is it but in the Mind of a Fool?"

Since what mattered to the Romantics was an insight into the nature of things, they rejected Locke's limitation of perception to physical objects, because it takes away from the mind its most essential function, which is at the same time to perceive and to create. Once again, Coleridge comes to the same conclusion as Blake on this point.

When along with Coleridge Blake rejected the sensationalist view of external nature, he prepared the way to restore the supremacy of the spirit which had been denied by Locke, but was at this time being propounded by the German
metaphysicians. Blake knew nothing of them, and his conclusions arose from his own visionary outlook, which could not believe that matter is in any sense as real as spirit. He dismissed the atomic physicists and their like as men who try in vain to destroy the divine light which alone gives meaning to life and declared that in its presence their theories ceased to count:

"The Atoms of Democritus
And Newton's Particles of light
Are sands upon the Red sea shore,
Where Israel's tents do shine so bright."\(^{10}\)

He was concerned with the things of the spirit and hoped that, through imagination and inspired insight, he could both understand them and present them in compelling poetry.

According to Blake,

"To Generalize is to be an Idiot. To Particularize is the Alone Distinction of Merit. General knowledge are those knowledges that Idiots possess."\(^{11}\)

He goes on to ask,

"What is General Nature? is there such a Thing?
What is General Knowledge? is there such a Thing?
Strictly speaking All Knowledge is Particular."\(^{12}\)

The Romantics appeal to the whole range of intellectual faculties, senses and emotions. Only individual presentations of imaginative experience can do this.
In them we see examples of what cannot be expressed directly in words, and can be conveyed only by hint and suggestion. The powers which Wordsworth saw in Nature and Shelley saw in Love are so enormous that we begin to understand them only when they are manifested in single, concrete examples. Then, through the single case, we apprehend something of what the poet has seen in visions. The essence of the imagination, as Blake would have it, is that it fashions shapes which display these unseen at work, and there is no other way to display them, since they resist analysis and description and cannot be presented except in particular instances. Thus, Blake's indignation against generalities has been exemplified. He knew that nothing had significance for him unless it appeared in a particular form.

When Blake laid emphasis on the particular, the Romantic poets, in general, agreed with it. Their art aimed at presenting as forcibly as possible the moments of vision which give to even the vastest issues, the coherence and simplicity of single event. Even in 'Kubla Khan' which has so many qualities of the dream in which it was born, there is a highly individual presentation of a remote and mysterious experience, which is, in fact, the central experience of all creation in its Dionysiac delight and its enraptured ordering of many elements into an entrancing pattern.

Imagination in Blake is the source of the Sublime. He says,

"All Forms are Perfect in the Poet's Mind, but these are not Abstracted nor compounded from Nature, but are Imagination."
The highest examples of the imaginative art are Michael Angelo and Raphael. In Wordsworth, Blake sees a great imaginative poet, hampered by what Blake considers to be a mechanistic philosophy. The influence of Locke and Hartley had provided Wordsworth terminology which Blake could not accept because of its metaphysical implications. It is probably Wordsworth's Hartleian vocabulary that caused Blake to say,

"I do not know who wrote these Prefaces: they are very mischievous & direct contrary to Wordsworth's own practise."^{14}

Wordsworth's 'Practise', Blake considers to be, at times, "... in the highest degree Imaginative & equal to any poet ..."^{15} 'Immortality Ode' moved Blake to tears. But against Wordsworth's heading "Influence of Natural Objects / In calling forth and strengthening the Imagination / in Boyhood and early youth,"^{16} Blake sets forth Wordsworth's own translation of Michael Angelo:

"Heaven-born, the Soul a heaven-ward course must hold; Beyond the visible world She soars to seek, For what delights the sense is false and weak Ideal Form, the universal mould."^{17}

Between Issac Watts' day and the early years of the nineteenth century, very little verse was written specially for children. Nursery rhymes and rhymed alphabets, even if they were widely circulated in print, as to which the evidence is of a negative kind, were no more than traditional. Watts held a field which few people deemed worth tillage. It would be nearly true, to say that between 1715
and 1804 no original poems for infant minds were uttered. The eighteenth century regarded child as a miniature adult. It has been observed,

"... by 1740, for stealing a handkerchief worth one shilling, so long as it was removed privily from the person, children could be hanged by the neck until dead."\(^{18}\)

Blake knows this is not true; and he gives the readers his vision of the world as it appears to the child, or as it affects the child. An intense conviction of the importance of childhood is seen in him, who is also poignantly aware of the terror and hostility of conventional adult society in face of some features of the child's outlook. But the 'child' was for Blake primarily "an aspect or possibility of every human personality."\(^{19}\)

An yet with all his maturity of meaning and mastery of craft Blake is in many ways singularly childlike. Indeed, he might almost be described as the boy who grew up to be a master, a genius, a prophet, without ever "growing up". Like other geniuses, Blake shows a rare association of comparatively common powers, which, finding themselves in company, are stimulated to an intense activity, and in moments of inspiration accomplish supreme achievements of the human mind. But taken separately very many of the strands which make up Blake's peculiar genius are characteristically child-like things. Children love to draw pictures and then paint them in bright colours; to make up little rhymes and sing them. They think it would be very nice if all human being run about and play with the animals. They like to imagine dreadful and lovely things happening. They are often very
angry with the grown-up world, and if any god or gods dare to create such a place, they with them too. All these things Blake understood not as an outsider but because they were himself.

It is very difficult to relate Blake to any prevalent eighteenth century tradition. The only tradition to which he owed any loyalty was that of a wide-ranging visionary-prophetic tradition (mainly Christian — but Christian in an extended or special sense of the term). This is more or less the agreed critical opinion on the highly controversial subject of Blake's alignment with the traditional modes. The search, however, has continued and succeeded in relating Blake's Songs of Innocence so illuminatingly to a shortlived eighteenth-nineteenth century convention — the convention of moral stories in prose and verse for children. The convention was plainly an extension of the scriptural-prophetic tradition to which Blake so eminently and indisputably belongs. One very important writer in this "moral tales for children" tradition was Dr. Isaac Watts who published in 1715 his Divine Songs attempted in Easy Language for the Use of Children, and in 1719 his Psalms of David written in imitation of the language of the New Testament. In the preface to his Divine Songs, possibly an archetypal book in the tradition, Dr. Watts expressed his desire to stimulate by his publication a successor who would more competently write for the benefit (moral edification) of children. It is quite possible that Blake found his inspiration for Songs in this publication. His own easy language suggests that the volume was meant to be comprehended easily by the teenagers. The nursery-rhymes and folk-tunes, so expertly explored in the poems, only confirm the impression that Blake wrote for children. His
own very intimate acquaintance with the Bible and the Bible-based didactic literature in English is also evident to any reader of the *Songs*. It has been observed, "Having before him the dissenting tradition of children's literature from Bunyan through Watts to Mrs. Barbauld, Blake did not achieve his new inspiration entirely on his own. Of these predecessors, however, only one had an important influence on him: Anna Laetitia Barbauld. From her fine little book, *Hymns in Prose for children* (1782), Blake borrowed a number of themes and images (at least twelve of the *Songs of Innocence* contain parallels with the *Hymns*), but these isolated images were far less important to Blake than one fundamental conception he gained from Mrs. Barbauld's book."^20

There were other influences besides Locke who played their part (indeed Blake from the beginning to the end of his writing life strove to answer and expose the fallacious teaching of Locke) in causing Blake to write *Songs of Innocence*. It is interesting that the tradition enlisted as writers some of Blake's personal acquaintances like Maria Edgeworth and Mary Wollstonecraft. Mary Wollstonecraft was the French editorial assistant of Johnson (one of Blake's friends, a radical publisher and bookseller in St. Paul's Churchyard, for whom Blake worked from time to time as an engraver) and had come under the influence of Rousseau; whom Blake had also read.

Rousseau's novel ideas on natural goodness were adopted with enthusiasm
by Mary Wollstonecraft, and also by Blake, even though the Rousseauian concept of freedom, being atheistic, is only in certain respects comparable with Blake's. Mary translated a charming book entitled *Elements of Morality for the Use Of Parents and Children*, by Saltzmann; kindly stories with a great number of illustrations of which Blake made some of the engravings. She wrote a book of her own, *Original Stories from Real Life*, for which Blake was both an illustrator and engraver. At the time he must have known Mary Wollstonecraft well. *Visions of the Daughters of Albion*, whose theme is the situation of women under restrictive marriage laws, may also have been inspired by Mary; who while publishing her *Vindication of the Rights of Women* adopted Rousseau's views on free love and courageously and disastrously put those ideas into practice. Kathleen Raine has recorded:

"Blake's *Songs of Innocence* may well have been directly or indirectly suggested to him by Mary Wollstonecraft; they were his contribution to the current conflict of ideas in the field of education at the end of the eighteenth century, and to the new thought of which Rousseau was the moving spirit. His poem 'The Schoolboy' well describes the restrictive kind of education practised by those who believing that all knowledge comes from without, set themselves, to form the infant mind by cramming it with facts."^{21}

Blake's poem puts forward the view he shared with Mary and with Rousseau that every child will develop by the light of its own nature if given freedom to
follow its innate bent. Blake's poem challenges the practice of 'forming' the young mind by loading it with information, envisaging just such a childhood as Wordsworth had been living only a few years earlier, and about which he too, in "The Prelude", was to write under the influence of Rousseau.

'Innocence' and 'Experience' are multidimensional concepts in Blake's poetry and prose, so intimately related to each other that neither has its full meaning alone. They should therefore be explained in terms of their essential unity and disunity. Thus considered, each would gain in meaning from a mutual inter-relatedness based on the principle of similarity and contrast. This dramatic interplay extending their meanings, each would look forward to superior dimensions in man's spiritual existence.

In 1789, the year of the French Revolution, William Blake issued his *Songs of Innocence* as the first volume to be produced in his new manner of illuminated printing. In 1794, he reissued it in the same manner, but with the addition of *Songs of Experience* to form a single book (*Songs of Innocence and of Experience*). The fact that the two books jointly published, suggest that they are in certain ways related, and this mutual relatedness has very important bearings on the question of unity between the two parts that clearly appear to have been two separate books in the original design. The title description (*Songs of Innocence and Experience / Shewing the Two Contrary States of the Human Soul*) suggests, as it was evidently intended to do, the nature of the relationship between the two.

This book is noteworthy among Blake's works because it is the only volume
of poems which he himself published. The Poetical Sketches of 1783 was published by the Reverend Henry Mathew, no doubt with Blake's approval or acquiescence but not with his own loving care. Blake's other publications were either prophetic books or prose works, not poetry in the strict sense. What prompted Blake to publish the Songs was the importance he attached to them. There can be no doubt that he intended them to be as good as he could make them both in contents and in appearance. The Rossetti manuscript shows not only what pains he took in revising his texts but what self-denial he exerted in omitting from the book poems which are among the best that he wrote but which for some reason he did not think suitable for publication in it. A book formed with such care deserves special attention. Blake was thirty-seven when he issued it in its complete form, and it represents his mature, considered choice of his own poems. It is perhaps not surprising that in recent years scholars have tended to neglect the Songs for the prophetic books; for the Songs look limpid and translucent, while the prophetic books are rich in unravelled mysteries and alluring secrets. But the Songs deserve special attention if only because they constitute one of the most remarkable collections of lyrical poems written in English. It has been rightly observed:

"... the Songs of Innocence express for the first time in English literature the spontaneous happiness of childhood. Now nothing in the whole world of emotion is of lighter texture than the happiness of a child. Like the dew, it vanishes with the first rays of the sun, and its essential quality, spontaneity, is a thing never to be recalled. One
would have thought that to write songs which not only have this quality, but are so deeply dyed in it that they are its expression, the singer must have been one who carried over into his manhood all his childish innocence."^{22}

Of forty-six poems in the Songs of Innocence and of Experience, roughly twenty are written about a child. Six of these are about a child lost and found. These six poems are coupled to make three pairs, of which one pair stands in the Songs of Innocence, and two stand in the Songs of Experience. Their contraries are less simple than those of other paired poems, set one against the other in the Songs of Innocence and the Songs of Experience. This contrary was prompted by social bitterness. But it was the contrary not to social but to spiritual innocence. To be just, it must remain a contrary within the soul. The symbol of innocence had been the child. The symbol of experience, mazy and manifold as the hypocrite, and as fascinating, is the father.

The sense of happiness is the only seed of writing genuine lyrical poetry. It does not mean that lyrical poetry solely depends on happiness. It has close proximity with both the sense of happiness and that of abysmal misery. For, the sweetest songs in Blake can not stand without the contrast of saddest thoughts in Shelley. The lyrical poets always try to establish the sense of happiness as vivid enjoyment with greater efforts than their fellows.

The happiness of every lyrical poet finds its fullest expression in Blake's
original happiness. The immeasurable wealth that the Songs of Innocence clearly ventilates is self-dependent unalloyed happiness. In the Songs of Innocence Blake was the first to discover and announce childhood. Breaking the shackles of the state of immature growth, he leads to light the harmonious blending of happiness, unity and self-enjoyment. Here one finds the Glory of God and the original state of the soul. Blake opined:

"Unorganiz'd Innocence : An Impossibility. / Innocence dwells with Wisdom, but never with Ignorance." 23

A comparison between the Songs of Innocence and Robert Louis Stevenson's Child's Garden of Verses is worthy to be mentioned. If the readers compare the two, they are at once conscious of an immense difference. Stevenson writes of his own childhood, making the reminiscent efforts and fanciful condescensions of a grown man. Blake recaptures the child mind. He gathers the flower with the dew upon it. He does not merely write about childish happiness; he becomes the happy child. He does not speak of, or for, the child, he lets the child speak its own delight. What is most marvellous, there are no false tones in his voice. It has been rightly remarked:

"Stevenson is particular : he writes memoirs of his own childhood : he expresses what he remembers of his own wonder or fancy, his childish hopes and fears. Blake is Universal; he expresses the natural delight in life of every happy child in the world. The cry of his "Little Boy Lost" is the cry of every child at the first discovery of loneliness." 24
"Introduction" to Songs of Innocence (undoubtedly a graceful poem) introduces the realm of Innocence by telling how these poems came to be written, what they are to be about, and to whom they are to bring joy ("Every child may joy to hear"). That is all very clear, and the dramatic form of the poem, characteristic of most of the poems that follow, relates these things in a way that unites the adult poet with the child. The simplicity of the words, the repetitious phrasing, and the directness of feeling belong to the speech of children; the intellectual control and the symbolic implications are adult. This fusion of the childlike and the adult presents the child's unfallen world as being penetrated by religious insight but given form and explicitness by the wise innocence of a more comprehensive intelligence. The idea of Christ, who is both child and man, is the underlying idea that unifies, indeed identifies the piper and the child in this and all the poems of Innocence. This identification of naive and wise innocence is symbolized also in the Lamb, who is at once the helpless and vulnerable child, and also the Lamb of God — the watchful and shepherding adult. This extraordinary territory of child, adult, and lamb, all ultimately one, as implied by the word atonement, is imaged as a special pastoral world, that must be written about with a "rural pen". In a letter Blake wrote:

"I see the face of my Heavenly Father; he lays his Hand upon my Head & gives as blessing to all my works; why should I be troubled? why should my heart and flesh cry out?"

The poem is not just about the moment of joyful religion and artistic
inspiration; it is also about the process of making poetry out of such inspiration ("... he lays his Hand upon my Head...")\textsuperscript{28}. Here the controlling force of adult intelligence is both represented and shown in operation. At first the inspiration is wordless, a feeling, a melody without lyrics. But the melody is so beautiful that it must not be lost:

"'Piper, pipe that song again;'

So I piped: he wept to hear."\textsuperscript{29}

And again:

"'Drop thy pipe, thy happy pipe;

Sing thy songs of happy cheer:'

So I sung the same again,

While he wept with joy to hear."\textsuperscript{30}

Blake usually placed "The Shepherd" immediately after the "Introduction", probably because it so perfectly expressed the interchangeable identities of God and Man, Shepherd and Lamb, Guardian and Child. It is one of the most direct expressions of the meaning to Innocence of life in its worldly dimension, the dimension which pertains to human interrelationships. In Blake's analogy between the Shepherd and God, the religious affirmation is considerably more complicated:

"How sweet is the Shepherd's sweet lot!

From the morn to the evening he strays;

He shall follow his sheep all the day,

And his tongue shall be filled with praise."\textsuperscript{31}
And again,

"For he hears the lamb's innocent call,
And he hears the ewe's tender reply;
He is watchful while they are in piece,
For they know when their Shepherd is nigh."

The poet (identified as the Shepherd) concerns himself with the spiritual nature of children.

In "The Echoing Green", the village common, be it ever so lightly sketched, provides to innocence a suitable idyllic setting. The speaker is evidently a child; the child's viewpoint is manifest in the vision of the integrated world with which the poem opens:

"The Sun does arise,
And make happy the skies;
The merry bells ring
To welcome the spring; ..."

It is essentially the child's world generally inaccessible to the experienced adult for whom this world hardly exists except as a phantasy to be mocked at. Only such grown-ups as can defy their age and experience or can continue in the child-like condition of mind have access to the child's green sportland:

"Old John, with white hair,
Does laugh away care,
Sitting under the oak,
Among the old folk."
The clearest hint of prophetic meaning is properly exemplified here where Blake, like Wordsworth, finds in one's memory of childhood intimations of immortality. The old folk who recollect their natural past in the joy of children see both their source and their rebirth in Eternity. The ability of old John to "... laugh away care" is a sign not that his worldly care is inconsiderable but that he, like the Nurse, finds peace in the laughter of children. The natural harmonies of the echoing green are sacramental. Like human guardianship, the pastoral landscape is at once an occasion for and the content of prophetic vision, and just as a transcendent meaning resides within the natural world, so the realm of eternity also resides within the human breast. Eternity is both within and without.

'The Lamb' opens with an apparently innocent question: "Little Lamb, who made thee?" But here the child seems to echo an adult, as if the child is quite aware of the creator and hence he has no uncertainty to continue:

"He is called by thy name,
For he called himself a Lamb.
He is meek, & he is mild;
He became a little child.
I a child, & thou a lamb,
We are called by his name."

The basic piety of the young speaker testifies to his innocence in which the essential oneness of the 'identities' is intuitively perceived. The line, "He is meek, & he is mild" seems to be almost a verbatim echo of Charles Wesley's hymn, "Gentle Jesus, meek and mild." More important, however, is the echo of
Jeremiah xiv, 9 ("Thou, O Lord, art in the midst of us, and we are called by thy name; leave us not") in "He is called by thy name" or "We are called by his name." The poem approximately concludes in a spirit of Christian charity, benediction and prayer which are characteristics of innocence: "Little lamb, God bless thee!"

In "The little Black Boy", the little Black boy and the little English boy have the same father, and ultimately the same colour: "And I am black, but O! my soul is white." The final lines are meant as an admonition that refers to life in the world as well as to Heaven:

"And then I'll stand and stroke his silver hair,
And be like him, and he will then love me."

Men are cruel to each other just as they had been cruel to Christ but the true meaning of that cruelty resides in the love with which it is answered by Christ and by the little Black boy, who in this poem quite explicitly has Christ's role as intermediary between the little English boy and God. It is a central and typical poem of Innocence. The primary themes of sacramental guardianship and prophetic vision have equal weight and are perfectly integrated. The mother is the guardian-Christ who lovingly explains both the meaning of suffering and of Eternity: "Comfort in morning, joy in the noon day." Similarly, the little Black boy is the guardian-Christ of English child, shading him from the heat until he too can bear the beams of Love. And, finally, of course, god is the ultimate guardian who comforts people through life and then mercifully releases them from it:
"Saying: 'Come out from the grove, my love & care,
And round my golden tent like lambs rejoice.'

"The Blossom" is a child's expression of delight in the birds like the sparrow and the robin. The scene is set under leaves so green — in a kind of Arcadian bower. The speaker seems to be a little girl whose motherly feeling for the birds is conveyed partly by the word "Bosom". The blossom, as well as the child, see and hear the birds, giving an additional impression of natural innocence and uniting the human child, the birds, and the plants in simple harmony. In "The Chimney Sweeper", the little slaves, black with soot, become clean, free and happy in a green plain by a river in the sun:

"Then down a green plain leaping, laughing, they run,
And wash in a river, and shine in the sun."

In spite of the obvious misery of their lives, the boys retain a vision of eternal happiness and are sustained by it. Like "Holy Thursday", this poem ends with a moral: "So if all do their duty they need not fear harm." Whatever the poetic objections to this didactic statement, it strikes an optimistic note.

"The Little Boy Lost" is a sad commentary on the condition of children, who, once orphaned or separated, would have none to help them out. The system, based on exploitation of man by man is an inhuman system, where there is none to look after even the innocent children. The poem, if read apart from its sequel, is really a tragic poem:
"The night was dark, no father was there;  
The Child was wet with dew; ..."^*

It is only in the sequel ('The Little Boy Found') that the child's tears become efficacious. God appears "like his father in white"^2 and leads the little boy to his mother:

"He kissed the child & by the hand led  
And to his mother brought,"^3

"Laughing Song" is a pastoral poem about children and joy. Just as in "Nurse's Song" and 'The Echoing Green', the landscape gaily echoes the laughter of children ("When Mary and Susan and Emily / With their sweet round mouths sing "Ha, Ha, Ha!")^, and the atmosphere is one of complete harmony and joy ("When the green woods laugh with the voice of joy").^5 The speaker himself, if not a child, is a person who invites the reader "to join in this thoughtless and unclouded happiness."^6 Blake transforms pious analogy into literal sacramental truth in "A Cradle Song". Here he goes far beyond the expected Christological comparisons:

"Sleep, sleep, happy child,  
All creation slept and smil'd;  
Sleep, sleep, happy sleep,  
While o'er thee thy mother weep.  
Sweet babe, in thy face  
Holy image I can trace."
Sweet babe, once like thee,
Thy maker lay and wept for me."

While the mother sees Christ in her infant, the poet sees Christ in the mother weeping over her child. For Blake every mother is Mary and Christ, and every infant is, like God, the parent's parent. The mother's final words as she watches over her child are:

"Infant smiles are his own smiles;
Heaven & Earth to peace beguiles."\(^5\)

For William Blake, God is the divine essence which exists potentially in every man and woman. The power and appeal of this belief appear in "The Divine Image". The divine image, of course, is man, but man in part of his complex being and seen from a special point of view. Blake speaks quite literally and means to be taken at his word when he says:

"To Mercy, Pity, and Love
All pray in their distress;
And to these virtues of delight
Return their thankfulness.

For Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love
Is God, our father dear,
And Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love
Is Man, his child and care."\(^5\)

The divine qualities which Blake enumerates exist in man and reveal their
divine character through him. Though Blake says of man's imagination that "it manifests itself in his Works of Art"\textsuperscript{60}, he spreads his idea of art to include all that he thought most important and most living in conduct. In mercy, pity, peace, and love, he found the creed of brotherhood which is the centre of his gospel. The presence of this faculty in the child implies its universal presence in man, and Blake explicitly formulated the connections between poetry, prophecy, and the universal religious instinct in another etched work of 1788, "All Religions Are One":

"The Religions of all Nations are derived from each Nation's different reception of the Poetic Genius ... As all men are alike (tho' infinitely various), So all Religions & as all similars, have one source. The true Man is the source, he being the Poetic Genius."\textsuperscript{61}

All religions are one because all men are one as Christ and in Christ:

"... all must love the human form,
In heathen, turk, or jew;
Where Mercy, Love, & Pity dwell
There God is dwelling too."\textsuperscript{62}

In "Holy Thursday", one of the two London poems in the Songs of Innocence, the poet is delighted by the visual splendour of the scene: the children in red, blue, and green, the beadles with grey hair and snow white wands. What stirs Blake is the re-enactment before his eyes, and in an overtly religious context, of
Christ's guardianship of man. It is re-enacted on an overwhelming scale. The beadles are shepherds: "wise guardians of the poor"\textsuperscript{63}, the children are "lambs".\textsuperscript{64}

But once inside the cathedral, the aged men sit "beneath"\textsuperscript{65} the children, so that the roles of sheep and shepherd are interchanged just as in 'The Shepherd'. Blake's imagination being stirred, the words that present themselves to him are inevitably biblical:

"Oh what a multitude they seem'd, these flowers of London town!"\textsuperscript{66}

The song of children is also a biblical reenactment:

"Now like a mighty wind they raise to Heaven the voice of song."\textsuperscript{67}

Thus the emphasis is on innocence, purity, meekness, and radiance.

"Night" deals with satisfying pictures of angels looking into all creatures, animal and human. In "new worlds"\textsuperscript{68} the angels receive the spirits of the sheep killed by wolves and tigers. The wild beasts are even transformed in those new worlds driving away wrath by the meekness of Christ:

"And now beside thee, bleating lamb,
I can lie down and sleep;
Or think on him who bore thy name,
Graze after thee and weep."\textsuperscript{69}

No such heaven of sinless animal life was ever conceived so intensely and sweetly.
The Swedenborgian doubleness of Blake's landscape is best seen in a simple poem like "Spring", where the interest resides almost entirely in the sacramental meaning. Like the new year they celebrate, the inhabitants of the poem's springtime landscape are newly born: the lamb, the little boy, the little girl. While it is appropriate to the natural sense of the poem that these young creatures be the celebrants at the birth of the natural year, it is absolutely essential to the poem's spiritual sense that they be newly born, for the poem is not only about birth but also about rebirth and apocalypse. The opening Words:

"Sound the Flute!
Now it's mute."\(^7^0\)

are a pastoral prophecy of the last trumpet. So is the crowing of the cock, which, in Blake's apocalyptic reading of the Bible, announces the moment when a previous cock-crowing assumes its final significance:

"And immediately the cock crew. Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas into the hall of Judgement."\(^7^1\)

Similarly the refrain,

"Merrily, Merrily, to welcome in the Year."\(^7^2\)
gives to the word "Year"\(^7^3\) the same apocalyptic sense it has in Isaiah. And the last stanza, so embarrassing to some readers, carries a weight of apocalyptic meaning in the words:

"Little Lamb,
Here I am."\(^7^4\)

In the "Nurse's Song", the nurse speaks to herself meditatively, then aloud to the children. A little drama ensues, and finally the poet's own voice speaking in
the past tense, distances the scene and gives it a significance. These shifts of voice impose shifts of perspective — from the adult world to the children's and then to a "wise innocence" that embraces both. It is the world of carefree children which knows nothing of suffering. But the nurse's mood at the beginning places this joy in the same adult perspective in which the poet places it at the end. Her heart is at rest,

"When the voices of children are heard on the green." 

Implicitly there are times when her heart is not at rest. The centre of the poem is the contrast between adult knowledge and childish ignorance. Each has a different way of interpreting the disappearance of the sun below the horizon. The nurse knows that this augurs night and unhealthy dews. The children know that it is still light, and so do the sheep and the birds. Both the nurse and the children are right; and in giving way to the children, the nurse expresses not only her love for them but also her understanding of their divine insight. Thus it turns out that the innocent children are just as wise as the experienced adult, and the full truth is one that encompasses both innocent joy and "the dews of night".

"Infant Joy" is a cradle song in which the mother ponders a name for her baby and finally, victoriously, discovers one. The happiness of the infant solves the mother's problem by suggesting the name "Joy", and the mother then sings a lullaby in which she confirms the name and prays for its continued appropriateness. This is the "realistic" account of what happens in the poem, and should be kept in order to avoid the irrelevant question "How could a two-day-old speak?" On
the other hand, the infant does speak, even carries on its share of a dialogue. Here Blake’s reticence in employing inverted commas is functional, since it brings home to the reader the primary demands of the Songs of Innocence — adult empathy with the child. The poem expresses that empathy in its strongest form, motherly love. Neither the mother nor the child speaks separately: the child speaks of the mother’s joy, and the mother the child’s meaning. The dialogue is to be understood as occurring in the mother’s singing as she listens to and watches her baby. The refrain of the mother’s cradle song is “Sweet joy befall thee.” The infant’s refrain is “I happy am,” and the readers have therein the counterpoint between the child’s knowledge of joy and the mother’s knowledge of the sorrow in life. Yet the mother, through her empathy with the child, knows both joy and sorrow, and the sacramental significance of both is implied here as in all the other poems of Innocence.

"A Dream" is, first of all, that at every point celebrates the ideal of guardianship. The speaker’s bed is guarded by angles as he sleeps:

"Once a dream did weave a shade
O'er my Angel-guarded bed." The ant, though lost, is herself a guardian, more concerned with the plight of her family than herself:

"O, my children! do they cry?
Do they hear their father sigh?"

Finally, the glow-worm and the beetles are guardians:
"I am set to light the ground,
While the beetle goes his round:"

The dreamer's world is one in which everyone is both guarded and guardian, and even if he cannot help the ant in her trouble he does what every helpless guardian does: "Pitying, I drop'd a tear." Thus "A Dream" is an authentic poem of Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love whose tone is that of unqualified trust in God's beneficence. It is notable that this is the only dream in Innocence which is about the natural world, and the only poem in which a nonhuman speaker is not in eternity.

In "On Another's Sorrow" — addressed to the child in the adult and to the "true man" in the child — the selfhood is to "annihilate." Both the unknowing child and the poet-adult affirm a truth that empirical and palpable evidence of cruelty, callousness, and perversity cannot touch. The poem is, in fact, invulnerable. It makes itself so by the simple assertion that the readers pity another's sorrow because Christ pities all. This must be, since Christ is the Divine humanity and so are the readers:

"He doth give his joy to all;
He becomes an infant small;
He becomes a man of woe;
He doth feel the sorrow too."

While the poem is about guardianship and pity — like all the Songs that pertain to life in the world — the final stanza summarizes the entire sacramental
cycle of life. The first two lines present the joy that is the inner vision of eternity:

"O! he gives to us his joy
That our grief he may destroy, ..."^90

Until the readers fully enter that envisioned Eternity all men, like Christ, must pity another's sorrow:

"Till our grief is fled & gone
He doth sit by us and moan."^91

From innocence man passes to experience (in arranging his work Blake followed his own maxim that "without contraries is no progression"^92), and what Blake means by this can be seen from some lines in Vala, or The Four Zoas:

"What is the price of Experience? do men buy it for a song?
Or wisdom for a dance in the street? No, it is bought with the price
Of all that a man hath, his house, his wife, his children.
Wisdom is sold in the desolate market where none come to buy,
And in the wither'd field where the farmer plows for bread in/vain."^93

Blake knew that experience should be bought at a price that is bitter, not only in an atmosphere of comfort and mental peace, but also in the spiritual values to the extreme. On one hand experience is factual, on the other, it is dialectical in the cycle of being. Blake hinges upon the fact that experience, being a state much lower than innocence, can not be ignored in the light of necessity. The creation, as a whole, is puzzled with the state or cause of grievous distress. Material striving resounds in the poems of experience that is communicated by infancy and age. According to a critic,
"In Innocence it is day, and spring or summer, with the sun giving light and heat; in Experience, it is "eternal winter" with darkness and the howling storm around."  

A remarkable type of transplantability easily indicates the point of intersection between innocence and experience — a meeting place where the opposition between them ceases to exist. It also suggests that innocence does not completely preclude experience, nor does experience veto innocence out of existence; there is a common ground where they meet and merge. The poems themselves also abundantly show that experience lies latent in innocence and innocence remains dormant in experience. But "contrariness", as Northrop Frye has shrewdly pointed out, does not mean negation in Blake's poetry and as such the two antithetical states of innocence and experience can co-exist without negating each other and can supply each other's deficiency. This, however, necessitates a process of change and evolution through a mutual give-and-take till the two, after necessary modifications, lead on to a higher order or dimension of reality.

The poems (both the Innocence and Experience series) suggest two opposite ways of looking at the same event (child-birth), each way reflecting the speaker's state of mind; the spiritual state of the first speaker, needless to say, is innocence and that of the second is experience. The antithetical approaches are juxtaposed and contrasted by means of the deliberately intended correspondence that exists between the two titles. Similar other corresponding sets or pairs in Songs suggest how the method helps the poet's nicely calculated patterning of thoughts, the correspondence method being Blake's very special variant of the much-used and
hence worn-out poetic technique of similarity and contrast. The method, incidentally, is much explored in twentieth-century literature; the most obvious example it recalls is Huxley’s Point Counterpoint. The following table is intended to show how the ‘point-counter point’ method (evidently from music) has been used by Blake with very subtle variations:

**Songs of Innocence**

"The Lamb", "Nurse's Song",

"Holy Thursday",

"The Chimney Sweeper",

"The Divine Image",

"The Little Boy Lost", &

"The Little Boy Found"

**Songs of Experience**

"The Tiger", "Nurse's Song,"

"Holy Thursday,"

"The Chimney Sweeper",

"A Divine Vision", "The Human Abstract", "The Little Girl Lost",

"The Little Girl Found".

The "correspondence" technique, however, works not only in "sets" or "pairs"; it may exist even within a single poem.

When experience destroys the state of childlike innocence, it puts many destructive forces in its place. In the first "Nurse's Song", Blake tells how children play and are allowed to go on playing until the light fades and it is time to go to bed. It is not spoiled by senseless restrictions. But in the second "Nurse's Song" the readers hear the other side of the matter, when experience has set to work:

"When the voices of children are heard on the green
And whisp'ring are in the dale,
The days of my youth rise fresh in my mind,
My face turns green and pale."
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"When the voices of children are heard on the green
And whisperings are in the dale,
The days of my youth rise fresh in my mind,
My face turns green and pale."
Then come home, my children, the sun is gone down,
And the dews of night arise;
Your spring & your day are wasted in play,
And your winter and night in disguise."\textsuperscript{96}

The voice sees play as a waste of time and cruelly tells the children that their life is a sham passed in darkness and cold, like one of Blake's terrible prophetic scenes of desolation, as in "The Four Zoas":

"But from the caves of deepest night, ascending in clouds of mist,
The winter spread his wide black wings across from pole to pole:
Grim frost beneath & terrible snow, link'd in a marriage chain,
Began a dismal dance. The winds around on pointed rocks
Settled like bats innumerable, ready to fly abroad."\textsuperscript{97}

The first and most fearful thing about experience is that it breaks the free life of the imagination and substitutes a dark, cold, imprisoning fear, and the result is a deadly blow to the blithe human spirit.

For Blake hypocrisy is as grave a sin as cruelty because it rises from the same causes, from the refusal to obey the creative spirit of the imagination and from submission to fear and envy. He marks its character by providing an antithesis to "The Divine Image" in "The Human Abstract". In bitter irony he shows how love, pity, and mercy can be distorted and used as a cover for base or cowardly motives. Speaking through the hypocrite's lips, Blake goes straight to the heart of the matter by showing how glibly hypocrisy claims to observe these cardinal
virtues:

"Pity would be no more
If we did not make somebody Poor;
And Mercy no more could be
If all were as happy as we."^95

In this corrupt frame of mind, selfishness and cruelty flourish and are dignified under false names. This process shatters the world into pieces. It supports those outward forms of religion which Blake regards as the death of the soul:

"Soon spreads the dismal shade
Of Mystery over his head;
And the Catterpillar and Fly
Feed on the Mystery.
...
...
...

The Gods of the earth and sea
Sought thro' Nature to find this Tree;
But their search was all in vain:
There grows one in the Human Brain"^99

So the poet recreates the myth of the Tree of Knowledge or of Life. The tree, which is fashioned by man's reason, gives falsehood instead of truth and death instead of life.

Perhaps the worst thing in experience, as Blake observes, is that it destroys love and affection. On no point does he speak with more passionate conviction.
In "The Clod and the Pebble", he shows how love naturally seeks not to please itself or have any care for itself, but in the world of experience the heart becomes like "a Pebble of the brook" and turns love into a selfish desire for possession:

"Love seeketh only Self to please,
"To bind another to Its delight,
"Joys in another's loss of ease,
"And builds a Hell in Heaven's despite."

The withering of the affections begins early, when the elders repress and frighten children. In "Holy Thursday" Blake shows what this means, how in a rich and fruitful land children live in misery:

"And their sun does never shine,
And their fields are bleak & bare,
And their ways are fill'd with thorns:
It is eternal winter there."

The horror of experience is all the greater because of the contrast, explicit or implicit, which Blake suggests between it and innocence. In "The Echoing Green", he tells how the children are happy and contented at play, but in "The Garden of Love", to the same setting, he presents an ugly antithesis. The green is still there, but on it is a chapel with "Thou shalt not" written over the door, and the garden itself has changed:

"And I saw it was filled with graves,
And tomb-stones where flowers should be;
And Priests in black gowns were walking their rounds,
And binding with briars my joys & desires."
In the state of experience, jealousy, cruelty, and hypocrisy forbid the natural play of the affections and turn joy into misery.

In "London" (another poem that depicts sordid and sad conditions of life), Blake's compassionate heart was outraged and wounded by the sufferings which society inflict on its humbler members and by the waste of human material which seems indispensable to the efficient operation of rules and laws. The poet sees "marks of weakness, marks of woe" in every face. He hears "mind forg'd manacles" in every voice, whether of man or child. Then there is the soldier who sheds his blood in obedience to his King, and there are the blackened chimney sweepers. Lastly, there is the tragedy of loveless marriages which compel men to go to prostitutes and beget illegitimate children. Bowra feels,

"The child chimney-sweeper, the soldier, and the harlot are Blake's types of the oppressed—characteristic victims of a system based not on brotherhood but on fear. Each in his own way shows up the shams on which society thrives. The chimney-sweeper's condemned life is supported by the churches; the soldier's death is demanded by the court; and the harlot's calling is forced on her by the marriage-laws. The contrasts between truth and pretence, between natural happiness and unnatural repression, are stressed by Blake in these three examples, and through them we see the anguish in which he faced the social questions of his time."
"Cruelty has a Human Heart,
And Jealousy a Human Face;
Terror, the Human Form Divine,
And Secrecy the Human Dress.

The Human Dress is forged Iron,
The Human Form a fiery Forge,
The Human Face a Furnace seal'd,
The Human Heart its hungry Gorge."

In 'The Voice of the Ancient Bard', Blake looks forward to a new age, but the present world is full of doubt, dark disputes, folly and "clouds of reason". The theme of sexual guilt and repression runs through "The Angel", "The Sick Rose", "Ah! Sunflower", and "A Little Girl Lost". "The Sick Rose" has been called the most concentrated expression of the horror of repressed sexuality. The youth and the virgin in "Ah! Sunflower" pine and languish because they are denied the freedom of love. In "The Lilly", the poet sees the possibility of danger and treachery in love (represented by the rose and the sheep), but the poet also sees the possibility that genuine innocence and love do exist (in the shape of the white lily).

Two poems first included in Songs of Innocence but later transferred to Songs of Experience are strange narratives, evidently belonging to some world of myth or fairy-tale that yet does not seem to be drawn from any familiar tradition. "The Little Girl Lost" tells of a girl-child who falls asleep beneath a tree in a "desart
wild";¹¹⁶ she is found by the lion king, who carries her to his cavern where she continues to live safely among leopards and tigers; in a plate which accompanies this poem a young woman is shown among her children; so that the readers must conclude that the little girl descended into the world of generation, where in the animal existence of the embodied soul she gave birth to children. In the second poem, "The Little Girl Found", her parents, grief-stricken, seek for their daughter. The mother in turn meets the lion king, and recognises the king of the caverns deep of the underworld of generation as "A spirit arm’d in gold".¹¹⁷ He leads the mother to her child, whom she finds living in safety among the creatures of the natural creation. The stories are based on the Greater and Lesser Mysteries of Eleusis; doubtless based on Thomas Taylor the Platonist’s Dissertation on the Mysteries of Eleusis and Dionysus. The poems stand appropriately among Blake’s songs of childhood, as an affirmation of his belief that the soul that enters the world of generation is already complete in humanity, existing in an eternal world from which it descends and to which it will return.

Blake knows well that consummation will not come simply from good will or pious aspirations and that the life of the imagination is possible only through passion, power and energy. That is why he sometimes stresses the great forces which lie hidden in man and may be terrifying but are none the less necessary if anything worthwhile is to happen. He sees that the creative activity of the imagination and the transformation of experience through it are possible only through the release and exercise of awful powers. The poetry of this desire and of what it meant to Blake can be seen in "The Tyger" being a counterpart to "The Lamb". The tiger seems to symbolize fierce spiritual forces which are needed to
break the shackles of experience. Blake believes in the all embracing nature of
godhead. The apparent evil in the tiger is only an expression of divine strength
and energy. Thus Blake's view of good and evil, as manifestations of the same
heavenly spirit, is essentially mystical. The "... forests of the night",\textsuperscript{118} in which
the tiger lurks, are ignorance, repression, and superstition. The tiger has been
fashioned by unknown, supernatural spirits, like Blake's mythical heroes, and
this happened when "the stars threw down their spears",\textsuperscript{119} that is, in some
enormous cosmic crisis when the universe turned round in its course and began
to move from light to darkness. Just as early in the \textit{Songs of Innocence} Blake sets
his poem about the lamb, with its artless question ("Little Lamb, who made thee?
/Dost thou know who made thee?"),\textsuperscript{120} so early in the \textit{Songs of Experience} Blake
sets his poem about the tiger with its more frightening and more frightened
questions. The lamb and the tiger are symbols for two different states of the
human soul. When the lamb is destroyed by experience, the tiger is needed to
restore the world.

In the \textit{Songs of Innocence and of Experience} there are only hints of the final
consummation which shall restore men to the fullness of joy. The poems are
concerned with an earlier stage in the struggle and treat of it from a purely poetical
standpoint. What Blake gives is the essence of his imaginative thought about this
crisis in himself and in all men. When he completed the whole book in its two
parts, he knew that the state of innocence is not enough, but he had not found his
full answer to his doubts and questions. From this uncertainty he wrote his
miraculous poetry. Against the negative powers, which he found so menacingly
in the ascendant, he set, both in theory and in practice, his gospel of the
imagination. Strange as some of his ideas may be to the readers, the poetry comes with an unparalleled force because of the prodigious release of creative energy which has gone to its making. The prophet of gigantic catastrophes and celestial reconciliations was also a poet who knew that poetry alone could make others share his central experiences. In the passion and the tenderness of these songs there is something beyond analysis, that living power of the imagination which was the beginning and the end of Blake's activity. Of course, profound things are simple too, and any child can respond to the voice of life itself in the lines:

"Arise, you little glancing wings & sing your infant joy!
Arise & drink your bliss!
For everything that lives is holy; for the source of life Descends to be a weeping babe ... ."²²¹
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Chapter - 3
Rabindranath Tagore
(1861–1941)

"Jagat parabarer teere shishura kare Khela..."

("Jagat Parebarer Teere  Shishura kare Khela..."

"On the seashore of endless worlds children meet...")

("On The Seashore"  The Crescent Moon)
"The road over which we journey, the wayside shelter in which we pause, are not pictures while yet we travel — they are too necessary, too obvious. When, however, before turning into the evening resthouse, we look back upon the cities, fields, rivers and hills which we have been through in life's morning, then, in the light of the passing day, are they pictures indeed. Thus, when my opportunity came, did I look back, and was engrossed."¹

"It seemed as if into this mysterious region the laws of the universe had not found entrance; as if some old-world dreamland had escaped the divine vigilance and lingered on into the light of modern day. Whom I used to see there, and what those beings did, it is not possible to express in intelligible language."²

"It was a period to which, if error was natural, so was the boyish faculty of hoping, believing and rejoicing."³

One of the women poets of the Victorian Era, Alice Meynell (1850-1992) writes in her book Children that "Great boys" are those poets, painters and sculptors
who have been able to restore the thrill of childhood into their creations. Tagore should be included in the list of the "Great boys". In 1899, having been fully interested in the book *Children* by Alice Meynell, Tagore wrote a letter to Priyanath Sen to purchase the same. It is to be mentioned that Tagore's *Shishu* (1903) had not yet been published. After a few years he started writing for children. In the same year, 1899, *Khukumonir Chhada* by Jogindranath Sarkar was published with blessings from Tagore. Stories and poems for children were initiated by Tagore and other members of the Tagore family and the Bramha-family long before such publications.

Before Tagore became a maestro of juvenile literature, he was quite familiar with the juvenile writings of Abdul Karim Sahityya Visharad, Basanta Ranjan Roy, Ramendrasundar Trivedi, Kiranbala Devi, Dinesh Chandra Sen etc. In this formative period, such writers gave Tagore a tremendous boost. And Tagore's poems for children "Bristi Pade Tapur Tupur", "Saat Bhai Champa", were published in "Bharati" and "Balak" (Baishakh, 'Ashad' B.S. 1292). Fables were also published. Further attention of the readers was drawn to the literary value of girlish rhymes and fairy tales by those two poems (entitled "Bristi Pade Tapur Tapur" and "Saat Bhai Champa") composed by Rabindranath Tagore. Later, these were included in *Shishu*. On the other side, Shibnath Shastri started reconstructing the fairy tales of the country and their foreign counterparts. "Tak Dooma Doom" and "Saat Bhai Champa" — the two dramatised fairy tales by Gyanadanandini Devi were published in "Balak". Being requested by Tagore, Avanindranath found his metier in *Khirer Putul* (*The Condensed-Milk Doll*, 1896) and *Shakuntala*
(1895). Subsequently Bangalar Brata (1909), Rajkahini (The Royal Tales, 1909), Bhoot Patreer Desh (The Land of Ghosts, 1915), Budo Angala (Mr. He-Thumb, 1920) etc. were published following the inspiration of the same. In between were published Galpasalpa (Stories a few, 1889), later counterpart Bangya Upakatha in the magazine 'Arunadaya' by Swarna Kumari Devi. Hansi o Khela (Play and Laughter, 1891) by Jogindranath Sarkar appeared previously. All these works had experienced either direct or indirect influence of Tagore.

Tagore's Shishu grew amidst this atmosphere. In this connection, references should be made to other poems which Tagore composed especially for "Bharati" and "Balak". Besides the poetic form of four fairy-tales included in Sonar Taree (The Golden Boat, 1894), "Bimbabati", "Rajar Chhele o Rajar Meye", "Nidrita" and "Suptotthita", were introduced by him almost simultaneously for the magazine "Sadhana". "Bimbabati", "Hing Ting Chhat" ("The Meaningless"), "Paraspather" ("The Touchstone"), "Dui Pakhi" ("The Two Birds"), "Akasher Chand" ("The Moon in the Sky") — all these are metaphorical stories. Apart from the significance of such stories both socially or philosophically, they, on the other hand, stir the imagination of the, child folk memories. In framing this juvenile literature, Tagore drew much from his own childhood love and its yearning for affection. From Chhabi o Gaan (Pictures and Songs, 1884) onwards until his Chhada (The Rhymes, 1941), we observe how Tagore had translated his own childhood with great gusto into his works. And quite untiringly he went on writing about them. What is to be remembered in this connection is Tagore's affiliation to a kind of juvenile literature similar to that of William Blake who countered to the garrulous
neoclassical tradition of pomp and grandeur by dint of knowledge and infant vision in the world of feeling and emotion. At the outset of the Romantic movement in England and Germany, attempts were made to introduce the simplest directness by way of releasing folk literature, or introducing the essence of fairy tales, forwarded by Goethe, Schiller, Heine, Wordsworth, Coleridge including the later Pre-Raphaelite poets. Tagore's juvenile literature followed the tradition initiated by the romantic poets in England and Germany.

The child-like vision of the romantics found its distinct expression in Tagore. Chhabi o Gaan (Pictures and Songs, 1884) had introduced him with the domain of poems composed for and about children. This was for the first time that Tagore had become familiar with juvenile poems. He opined,

"Pictures and Songs seized every opportunity of giving value to these by colouring them with feelings straight from the heart. Or, rather, that was not it. When the string of the mind is properly attuned to the universe then at each point the universal song can awaken its sympathetic vibrations. It was because of this music roused within that nothing then felt trivial to the writer. Whatever my eyes fell upon found a response within me."

And again,

"Like children who can play with sand on stones or shells or whatever they can yet (for the spirit of play is within them), so also we, when filled with the song of youth,
become aware that the harp of the universe has its variously tuned strings everywhere stretched, and the nearest may serve as well as any other for our accompaniment, there is no need to seek afar."

The reason behind a child's mode of expression is obscure. It could not be possible for the adult ones to realise why does it laugh, cry and rejoice. The poem "Khela" ("The Play") reveals the meaningless expression of ideas of a child:

"... why do they laugh at random,
Why do they behave in such a way,
Why do they jostle,
Why do they run aimlessly,
Why do they enjoy affection full to the brim?
Someone rolls on grasses,
Someone dances here and there,
And scatter golden laughter in the golden evening sky."*

When these children go to sleep, their enthusiastic vigour, merriment, naughtiness etc. come to a close. The poet visualises it in "Ghooni" ("The Sleep"):

"The children have fallen asleep,
Forgetting all their sport.
The night-breeze blows slowly on the open window,
And makes eyes sleepy,
Toys lie at the foot of the bed,
They have fallen asleep while playing."*
Children are, to a greater extent, sentimental as well emotional and they behave so in response to petty affair. Tagore has observed it from a close distance:

"She is my sentimental daughter
Don't tell her anything.
She has come closer to me,
She has loved me,
Don't tell her anything.
Behold her standing there
Spreading her unruly locks,
her eyelids, having no moments,
are filled with tears."8

Besides, "Ekakinee" ("The Solitary Lass"), "Matal" ("The Drunk"), "Smriti-Pratima" ("The Icon of Remembrance") etc. have proved Tagore's close association with childhood. In this way Chhabi o Gaan (Pictures and Songs) paved the path of Kadi o Komal (Sharps and Flats, 1886).

While writing the comment on Chhabi o Gaan (Pictures and Songs), Tagoer said:

"Chhabi o Gaan (Pictures and Songs) has unlocked the preface to Kadi o Komal (Sharps and Flats, 1886)."9

What strikes the readers is the variety of themes and moods of the poems for children published in Kadi o Komal (Sharps and Flats). Indeed children have been given a significant place in this volume. In one of his poems "Kangalinee" ("The Destitute Girl"), Tagore even sheds tears for a destitute girl whom he
sympathises with. She was deprived of her daily necessities. There were pomp and splendour everywhere during the festival of goddess Durga but the destitute girl could not enjoy. She was ill-clad, ill fed. Festival of autumn would be meaningless if the girl stood before the image pale and hungry:

"At the coming of the eternal joyful mother, merriment has swept over the country. Behold, standing at the rich-thresholds the destitute girl She heard the festive mirth and merriment in the morning, leaving behind her woeful home and coming out today she has come to the rich-thresholds to enjoy the merriment."  

The poet's loneliness in his infancy finds expression in "Khela" ("The Play"):

"Besides the road under a banyan tree the girl plays; she remains there at her will all day long."

Now comes the poet's successful attempt to show children's peculiar attraction for the animals:

"She wishes to take the squirrel in her lap,
and she will offer food to its mouth
breaking it into small particles.
She will be sweetly calling it by its names
keeping it closely to her cheeks,
and feeling its wrapped stature on her breast.  

In another poem "Pashani Ma" ("The Stone-hearted Mother"), Tagore was rather indignant of the attitude of mother. He felt for the men who were deprived of mother's affection:

"Is this a mother's soul,
Is this her affection?"

"Bristi Pade Tapur Tupur" ("Rain Drops in Pattering Noise") was "Shaishaber Meghdoot" ("The Cloud-messenger of Infancy") to the poet. But it was published later along with "Saat Bhai Champa" ("Seven Champa Brothers"), "Purono Bat" ("The Old Banyan Tree") etc. in Shishu (1903) by changing or unchanging their names. [They will be discussed in the part entitled Shishu (1903).]

A few poems in Sonar Taree (The Golden Boat, 1894) could be placed in the genre of fairy tales which would easily give satisfaction to children. They include "Bimbabati" ("The Queen Bimbabati"), "Rajar Chhele o Rajar Meye" ("The Prince and the Princess"), "Nidrita" ("The Sleeping"), "Suptotthita" ("The Awakened") etc. The poems evoke wonderful sensation and a mixed feeling of aspirations, joy, desire and pathos being saturated with popular forms of rhymes and folk-tales. Tagore's appreciable attempts to visualize his own childhood in the land of fairy-tales are noticed from a closer distance. Children should be enticed with the jealous activities of the queen Bimbabati ("... Then unwrapping she slowly..."
took out the golden magic-mirror. Chanting mantras she asked it — tell me truly who is the loveliest on this earth."^{15} which have close proximity with "Snow-Drop"^{16} in Grimms' Fairy Tales (1823) by Brothers Grimm. Children let loose their fancy and imagination when they will read out "Rajar Chhele o Rajar Meye" ("The Prince and the Princess"):

"The Prince used to go to the pathshala,  
the Princess did the same.  
They met on the way everyday,  
who knows their never ending story."^{17}

In "Nidrita" ("The Sleeping") a child fancies:

"I am, the Prince, have visited from land to land  
across seven oceans and thirteen rivers.  
I have visited every sweetest faces everywhere  
leaving behind none of them unvisited."^{18}

And again in "Suptotthita" ("The Awakened"):

"Everyone arose in the land of slumber,  
and started the noise.  
Birds awoke in the branches  
on the flowers bees."^{19}

— the golden and silver sticks in the land of the princess of dreams beckon a child.

The poems in the Sonar Taree period bear testimony to the fact that they are
vibrant with the merriment of children who belong to this earth. At least three remarkable poems of this period present the integrated duty of both mother and child. "Jete Nahi Dibo" ("I will not let you go") is the best one in this regard where the poet has heard like a child the innocent message of the world in the voice of his own daughter. In this poem the anxious mother symbolizes worldly conscience. In "Samudrer Prati" ("To the Ocean") a mother lulls her baby into a sleep, and in "Basundhara" ("The Earth") a child-mother nurses in her lap. This aura of childhood permeates the poems of Tagore. In this respect he has been associated with the ever-widened tradition of romantic childhood-concept of England and Europe in the eighteenth-nineteenth centuries. These information provide the background of Tagore's poems composed for and about children.

Tagore has made use of the vast wealth of Indian history, myth and legend enshrined in the works like the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, the Buddhist myth, the Maratha history etc. in his innumerable poems, collected in Katha o Kahinee (Stories and Tales, 1900, a reprint in 1908). Tagore's imagination thus sometimes moved around the pages of history to discover in the heroes their valour and courage, human benevolence, sometimes hovered over the earth to find out the earthly reality, again roamed about the world of human emotions to drink deep the human warmth found in the affections of mothers and love of children. All these myriad experiences illumined the world of Tagore and gave him a richer vision of childhood.

Almost all the poems in Katha (Stories) are historical. The poems in Kahinee (Tales) are based on imagination. Children identify themselves with the heroes
of the poems included in *Katha (Stories)*. The Maratha hero Shibaji's humble deference to his teacher in "Pratinidhi" ("The Representative")

Satyakama's innocent confession to Lord Buddha in "Bramhan" ("The Brahmin")

Sudas's simplicity in "Mulyaprapti" ("The Price Received")

the unforgettable heroes' dedication to honour, freedom and patriotism in "Bandee Beer" ("The Warrior Imprisoned")

"Manee" ("The Honourable")

"Prarthanateet Daan" ("The Beyond-Prayer Contribution")

"Nakal Gad" ("The Unreal Fort")

"Panraksha" ("The Oath Kept")

kindle the children's heart and conscience with inspiration, courage, love, honesty, gratitude, affection and simplicity. Though the poems in *Kahinee (Tales)* "Puratan Bhrittya" ("The Old Servant")

"Dui Bigha Jami" ("Two Bighas of Land")

"Devatar Grash" ("The God's Fury")

"Bisarjan" ("The Immersion")

are tuned with tragic notes, children will shed tears by going through "Devatar Grash" ("The God's Fury"). They will find their own selves in the character of Rakhal immersed in sea-water during a voyage. On the one hand, they feel the boy's yearning for the varied aspects of life, on the other, they realize his aunt's affection resembling that of their mothers.

Hence, the culminating period with *Shishu* (1903, translated as *The Crescent Moon* by the author, 1913). Most of the poems in this collection were written at the foothills of Almora where the poet went along with his rickety daughter. His wife was no more. Despite this, amidst the gloomy state of mind, the poet guided his mind to the children's world full of boundless imagination. In a letter he wrote:

"The more I write, the more is increasing / the recognition of the stemming-child within me."
He had travelled down to the days of his own childhood encircled by loneliness as recorded in his *Jivansmriti* (1912, English translation *Reminiscences*, 1917). How could Tagore remain oblivious of his own childhood memories which used to flash across his mind off and on while recollecting them in tranquility?

"I wish I could take a quiet corner in the heart of my baby's very own world."

Besides he explained the nature of children's world:

"I wish I could travel by the road that crosses baby's mind, and out beyond all bounds; Where messengers run errands for no cause between the kingdoms of kings of no history; Where Reason makes kites of her laws and flies them, and Truth sets Fact free from its fetters."

The tinkling of a child's "nupura" (anklet bells) and its make-up are immensely enjoyed by the universe:

"The wind carries away in glee the tinkling of your anklet bells."

"The sun smiles and watches your toilet."

The demise of the poet's wife, the bewailing children, the illness of his daughter led him to this innermost reality of the world of children. The children, who build sand-made houses on the sea-shore of eternal world, play with the oyster, sail the toy-boat in the fathomless blue sea, keep afloat carelessly a raft made of leaves by his own hand, have been playing continuously a stringed instrument of joy and woe. It is deeply realized that the remarkable poems in *Shishu* are not
infact written for children. They are, as it were, a kaliedoscope, through which is seen a mature vision of a man moving around the world of children while viewing the oneness in the infant soul that throbs with the pulsations of the outward life of the universe having cosmic images at its core.

Like Wordsworth and Walter de la Mare, Tagore too found in children a mystic quality. He found in them beauty, innocence, humour, charity, and a kind of ancient wisdom. "Janmakatha" ("The Beginning") is one of the finest poems Tagore ever wrote. Here the baby asks its mother:

"'Where have I come from, where did you pick me up?'" 39

The mother answers as mothers in India have always answered to such questions:

"She answered half-crying, half-laughing,
and clasping the baby to her breast, —
'You were hidden in my heart as its desire, my darling.'" 40

The mother is the very picture of the blessed feminine, the symbol of the world creatrix:

"'For fear of losing you I hold you tight to my breast. What magic has snared the world's treasure in these slender arms of mine?" 41
The child's sympathies are wider than ours. It can identify itself with the puppy and the parrot and tell the mother that, if they are not treated with affection, will run away into the woods:

"If I were only a little puppy, not your baby, mother dear, would you say 'No' to me if I tried to eat from your dish? Would you drive me off, saying to me, 'Get away, you naughty little puppy?' Then go, mother, go! I will never come to you when you call me, and never let you feed me any more."\(^{42}\)

Again and again Tagore ridicules or lashes the adult way of viewing the child's life and trying to control or stifle his free expression. The Bhagavata is full of examples of the boy Krishna exasperating his mother and all his elders. The predicament is indeed a perennial one. Tagore thus consoles the child in "Apajash" ("Defamation"):

"For every little trifle they blame you, my child. They are ready to find fault with for nothing. You tore your clothes while playing — is that why they call you untidy? O, fie! What would they call an autumn morning that smiles through its ragged clouds?"\(^{43}\)
In another poem "Biggyan" ("Superior"), Tagore makes a rather older child "impeach" a mere baby to their mother:

"Mother, your baby is silly! She is so absurdly childish!
She does not know the difference between the lights in the streets and the stars. ...
When I open a book before her and ask her to learn her a, b, c, she tears the leaves with her hands and roars for joy at nothing;
this is your baby's way of doing her lesson."

"Samalochak" ("Authorship") is a piquant piece of fancy. The father, who is an 'author' goes on scribbling (he is supposed to be writing 'books'). The child is, however, at a loss to know what it is all about:

"What nice stories, mother, you can tell us! Why can't father write like that, I wonder?
Did he never hear from his own mother stories of giants and fairies and princesses?
Has he forgotten them all?"

Father mooning for hours in his study, wasting sheets and sheets of paper writing prosy incomprehensible stories, is a puzzle to the child and even a challenge to her view of priorities.

Tagore has painted children as the heroes of fairy tales. Thus, in "Beerpurush"
"The Hero"), a child's valour and undaunted courage are shown:

"Mother, let us imagine we are travelling, and passing through a strange and dangerous country. You are riding in a palanquin and I am trotting by you on a red horse."^46

And then,

"... I spur my horse for a wild gallop, and my sword and buckler clash against each other. The fight becomes so fearful, mother, that it would give you a cold shudder could you see it from your palanquin. Many of them fly, and a great number are cut to pieces."^47

Tagore reveals the child's capacity for imaginative identification with a variety of persons. Hence the child's extraordinary gift for generous understanding and ready forgiving:

"When the gong sounds ten in the morning and I walk to school by our lane, Every day I meet the hawker crying, 'Bangles, crystal bangles!' There is nothing to hurry him on, there is no road he must take, no place he must go to, no time when he must come home."
I wish I were a hawker, spending my
day in the road, crying, 'Bangles, crystal bangles!' "48

The same yearning of children is to be noted in "Majhi" ("The Further Bank"):

"When the sun climbs the mid sky and
morning wears on to noon, I shall come
running to you, saying, 'Mother, I am
hungry!'

When the day is done and the shadows
cover under the trees, I shall come back
in the dusk.

I shall never go away from you into the
town to work like father.

Mother, if you don't mind, I should
like to become the boatman of the ferryboat

When I am grown up."49

Fancy and fantasy mingle, humour shades off into mysticism, and a revelation
comes through tears and laughter, defeat and triumph. In "Rajar Badi"
("Fairyland"), "Lukochuri" ("The Champa Flower") and "Chhutir Diney" ("The
Land of the Exile"), imagination reigns supreme and fantasy crosses the border-
line of reality. In "Rajar Badi" ("Fairyland"):

"If people came to know where my king's / palace is, it
would vanish into the air. / The walls are of white silver
and the / roof of shining gold. / ... But let me tell you,
mother, in a whisper, / where my king's palace is. / It is at
the corner of our terrace where / the pot of the tulsi plant
stands. / The princess lies sleeping on the far- / away shore
of the seven impossible seas. / There is none in the world
who can find / her but myself."^50

In "Lukochuri" ("The Champa Flower") the child fancies:

"Supposing I become a champa flower, / just for fun, and
grew on a branch high / up that tree, and shook in the wind
with / laughter and danced upon the newly budded / leaves,
would you know me, mother?/ You would call, 'Baby,
where are you?' / and I should laugh to myself and keep /
quite quiet."^51

In "Chhutir Diney" ("The Land of the Exile") the child's imagination knows no
bounds:

"When I grow up and am big like my / father, I shall learn
all that must be learnt. / But just for today, tell me, mother,
/ where the desert of Tepantar in the fairy / tale is?"^52

Tagore has shown that a child's mental upbringing cannot understand the
barriers of this earthly life. Its mind always remains with the semi real, semi
imaginary world. This concept is found in "Prashna" ("Twelve O'Clock"),
"Byakool" ("The Wicked Postman"), "Baigyanik" ("The Flower-School"),
"Jyotishsashtra" ("The Astronomer") etc. Child-like vision of the romantics is
inherent in Tagore and thus in "Prashna" ("Twelve O'Clock"):
"Mother, I do want to leave off my lessons / now. I have been at my book all the / morning."\textsuperscript{53}

or, in "Byakool" ("The Wicked Postman") :

"Why do you sit there on the floor so quiet / and silent, tell me, mother dear? / The rain is coming in through the open / window, making you all wet, and you / don't mind it."\textsuperscript{54}

Sometimes a child's imagination gives birth to absurd yearnings. In "Baigyanik" ("The Flower-School") :

"When storm clouds rumble in the sky / and June showers come down,/ The moist east wind comes marching / over the heath to blow its bagpipes among / the bamboos. / Then crowds of flowers come out of a / sudden, from nobody knows where, and / dance upon the grass in wild glee. / Mother, I really think the flowers go to / school underground."\textsuperscript{55}

or, in "Jyotishsashtra" ("The Astronomer") :

"I only said, 'When in the evening the / round-full moon gets entangled among the / branches of that Kadam tree, / couldn't somebody catch it?' / But dada laughed at me and said, 'Baby, you are the silliest child I have / ever known. The moon is ever so far from / us, how could anybody catch it?' "\textsuperscript{56}

— this note has been established. They are enjoyable for children as Tagore
insists a child on transforming the possible standing amidst the kingdom of impossible ones.

The two poems "Bristi Pade Tapur Tupur" ("Rain Drops in Pattering Noise") and "Purono Bat" ("The Old Banyan Tree") are deeply reminiscent of Tagore's childhood and naturally they draw special attraction for children. "Saat Bhai Champa" ("Seven Champa Brothers") has another appeal to them. Torrential rain had an electrifying effect on young Tagore's mind. He used to let his imagination loose and tried to visualise the world where the Byangama and Byangami and the beautiful princess lived. The jingling sound of raindrops made him feel an enthralling joy during sleep at midnight:

"I remember the flickering lamp / in the corner of the room, / and black shadows fall on the wall opposite. / Water splashed down outside continuously—/ hearing stories the naughty boy kept total mum."^57

The enforced confinement within a room, with glimpses of nature outside, roused in young Tagore's mind a keen desire to have direct contact with nature:

"O you shaggy-headed banyan-tree standing / on the bank of the pond, have you / forgotten the little child, like the birds / that have nested in your branches and / left you? / Do you not remember how he sat at the window and wondered at the tangle of / your roots that plunged underground?"^58
"Saat Bhai Champa" ("Seven Champa Brothers") leads a child to the land of fairy tales:

"Seven Champas are the seven brothers / in the seven trees;
/ and the red-garment clad elder-sister Parool / is incomparable."^9

Both "Bristi Pade Tapur Tupur" ("Rain Drops in Pattering Noise") and "Saat Bhai Champa" ("Seven Champa Brothers") have given a tremendous boost to Bengali juvenile poems. All these poems are indeed so enduring for the children. These are entertaining for the poet too who manifests his child-soul in these poems.

In "Sab Peyechhir Desh" ("The Eldorado"), published in Kheya (The Ferry, 1906), Tagore desires to reside in that precious land where simplicity, innocence, happiness, merriment dwell. The unfulfilled hopes and desires find satisfaction here. And therefore:

"There are no crowded streets / or noisy markets here — /
Oh poet, build up your hut in that place. / Wash yourself /
and be unburdened — / attune your lyre, / give up your findings. / Stretched your legs here / after all day long / in this eldorado / under star-studded sky."^10

In Chaitali (The Midsummer, 1912), the poet finds "... not the stature but the agony of songs"^11 and sometimes this agony is transformed into ecstasy. A little girl representing her mother and being engaged in washing utensils in "Didi"
("The Elder Sister")\(^6\), another little girl's affection for her little brother in "Parichay" ("The Recognition")\(^6\), a puppy's playfulness with its little nomad-mistress in "Sangee" ("The Companion")\(^6\) — all these bring to the children an opportunity of enjoying themselves in the midst of their dreams.

**Palataka (The Runaway, 1918)** is a collection of stories in verse where the poet Tagore has come down to this mundane world from its illusory counterpart. He has assimilated his child-like vision with the common senses of joy, woe and pangs of separation so that children take special interest in them. Children cannot forget the scribblings of Shaila, the uncared for fourth daughter of the poet's closed door neighbour, and its effect on him in "Chiradiner Daga" ("The Eternal Scar")\(^6\), the tragic death of a little boy, named Biju in "Bhola" ("The Forgotten")\(^6\), the boundless joy in long-drawn vacation in "Thakurdadar Chhuti" ("The Grandpa's Vacation")\(^6\), the Weeping Bami at the sight of the putting out lamp in darkness in "Hariye Jaoa" ("Being Lost")\(^6\).

After Tagore's return from America, (the paradise of material splendour), the poet developed a new insight to look into the world of children in **Shishu Bholanath (The Child Bholanath, 1922)**. The following excerpt is his candid confession:

"... My mind was crying to play the last play once again in the world of the naked babes wherein lies no responsibility at all. And my gratitude rushed towards those who made me cry, and laugh and plundered my songs scattering everywhere."\(^6\)
Hence,

"Being free from the materialistic craze of America, I started writing *Shishu Bholanath*. Just like a prisoner who, getting a little chance, comes by the sea to breathe in the fresh air. Whenever man is imprisoned completely behind the wall for sometime, he realises then the sole necessity of the vastness of the sky for his soul. Being imprisoned in the fort of adult-hood, I realised the truth that the play-ground of the child within the soul lies beyond time eternal. For this I delved deep into that playfulness in my imagination, swam over its waves in order to soothe my mind making pure and free at the same time."

As a result, the poet retreats into his own childhood:

"The life that is started with the days of childhood let it be ended with the same."

In the introductory poem the poet has imagined the power that dominates nature as totally indifferent to gains. In its eagerness to satisfy its creative urge, it ruthlessly destroys all that is worn out and old to prepare nature for a rejuvenation. In Bengali literature or in the Hindu scriptures, Lord Shiva is an embodiment of both creation and destruction. The child is the same. He acts according to his whims. Sometimes he creates, sometimes destroys:

"Let your creations / free continuously from destruction amidst destruction, / secure your playfulness breaking the shakles of toy."
In the poem "Baul" ("The Bard"), the mind of the poet is led by the nomadic
equivalent of the bards or ballad singers to the distant land being lured by the
fanciful freedom of childhood:

"A long distant land / soothes the eyes of mine /
whenever on the path I see thine."^73

In some of the poems, the depth of humanism is introduced by the fanciful juvenile heart. The pilgrim in search of the eternal vision of life expresses his own yearning for childhood,

"You tell, the heaven is best / The light therein / paints the sky with various colours / All day long / the flowers are playing / on Paruldanga! / Let it be good as it wills / who will be taking them forcefully aunty? / As we remain with you / so we always do the same."^74

This love for the earthly life of ours may not be enjoyable to children. This is nothing but the transformation of the intellectual concept of the adult poet into the philosophy of juvenile mind.

This type of child in Tagore differs no more from the nomadic gesture within the mind. The nature of a child has got no responsibility, burden of regular duty at all. Father is a dutiful man, therefore, mother becomes his companion. The teacher spoils the total leisure of a holiday by offering heaps of tasks, therefore, he is intolerable in the eyes of a child. His sight shifts from the confined classroom to the pedlar whose care-free travelling life is a matter of jealousy to him.

In this connection 'Amal' in Dakghar (The Post Office) comes up before our
view. "Study Spoils Holiday" — this sense is heard again in Shishu like that of Shishu Bholanath. So, the child tells his mother that he does not feel to be one "Ambika Gosain" (The Bard, Ambika). Idiocy is suitable to him:

"Holiday all day long
Is enjoyable to them
who are idiots
They are all cowboys
Grazing cattle all day long
By the side of a river."

The anti-pedantic children's mind never desires fame or affection. To them, mother's affection is the sufficient one. Just as "Khokar Rajya" in Shishu tells us the land of impossible eldorado, so does "Khela Bhola" ("The play-forgotten child")²⁶. The child longs for setting sail across the unknown island of Bangyama Bangyamee, the two birds of fairy tales accompanied by his mother. Taking her beside him he faces blatantly the combined trouble of awe and wonder on the road, the wild animals in the dense forest and finally heaves a sigh of relief after the awakening. Therefore, a child does not believe in fairy tales, he himself creates fairy tales.

The child's rivalry with his father results from a complex mental make up. This kind of natural humorous rivalry originates from the child's self-centred mental make up. This mature mental upbringing of an adult as often manifested in a child is not something unusual rather quite natural. It is so when both nature and the fairy tales co-exist in a child's territory. His thrilling imaginary exploration,
his affection towards dumb, mute animals and birds, his closest relationship with the moon and the stars in the sky — all these elements keep house together in the collected volume of Shishu Bholanath.

In "Bani-Binimay" ("Exchange of Words")\textsuperscript{77}, the mother becomes as it were a sky while the child becomes a champa tree followed by a dance between the two. It is Tagore's forte that he has often observed the universe in the natural view of a child. Tagore's famous poem "Tal Gachh" ("The Palm Tree") should be remembered in this regard. It embodies in nutshell the whole philosophy of Shelley's Skylark.\textsuperscript{78} Therefore:

"The palm tree, standing on a foot
and crossing over the heads of other trees
peeps at the sky.
It yearns to pierce through the dark cloud
and fly for ever;
Where does it get its wings from?"\textsuperscript{79}

A lonely dreamy imaginative gentle little boy who has no congenial companies except his own thoughts in "Sangshayee" ("The Doubtful")\textsuperscript{80}, "Ichchhamatee" ("The River Ichchhamatee")\textsuperscript{81}, "Rajmistree" ("The Mason")\textsuperscript{82}, "Bristi Roudra" ("The Rain and the Sun")\textsuperscript{83} and "Saat Samudra Pade" ("Crossing the Seven Seas")\textsuperscript{84}, a harmonious blending of fairy tales and reality in "Raja o Ranee" ("The King and the Queen")\textsuperscript{85}, "Duoranee" ("The Queen Mother")\textsuperscript{86} and "Ghoomer Tattya" ("The Theory of Sleep")\textsuperscript{87}, peculiar psychology of children in "Putul Bhanga"
("The Breaking Dolls") and "Dui Ami" ("The Dual Selves") — all these are treated with artistry and dexterous craftsmanship in *Shishu Bholanath*.

*Lekhan (The Writings, 1927)* is a collection of small pieces of poems, had its origin in China and Japan where Tagore was asked for his writings on fans or pieces of silk. Here the readers will find some feeling of, for and about children. Thus is visualised the ever changing moods of children:

"Spring, resembling a child, paints colourfully on the dust, In every moment rubs them out, forgets and departs at last."

And again:

"Children are gathered together in the temple premises, / God forgets the worshippers and watches their playfulness keenly."

In *Parisesh (The End, 1932)*, the poem "Balak" ("The Little Boy") written by Tagore is deeply reminiscent of his childhood days. His loneliness and boredom, partially compensated by the scenic beauty, evidently made a deep impression on his mind. It recurs as the theme of this poem:

"When I was a boy, in a corner of the garret at tranquil noon supporting my head on the door and sitting on a mat,
I used to spend my days alone, —
I neither obeyed rules of study, nor played...."
The hawker hawked from the other side of the lane —
Who was flying kite from a distant roof.
Sometimes the grandfather clock stroke in an ancestral house....
Meaningless likings
and pains were blended into dreams having no branches and roots.
The companion of the unaccompanied
seemed to me to make its blue space in the horizon.\textsuperscript{92}

\textit{Punascha (Postscript, 1932)} also contains a poem of the same title, "Balak" ("The Little Boy") :

\begin{quote}
"I used to be confined to a room in
a corner of our old house,
leaving which was strictly prohibited.
There the servant was engaged in dressing up
betel leaves and rubbing his hands on the wall,
singing in low voice the song composed by Madhukar."\textsuperscript{93}
\end{quote}

In-depth feelings, characterization and reality set up an additional attraction for children in "Chheleta" ("The Boy")\textsuperscript{94} and "Shesh Chithi" ("The Last Letter")\textsuperscript{95}. In these poems Tagore has observed intensely both a child's agony of loneliness and his thirst for companionship with near and dear ones.

This relevant context of creation has undoubtedly been a harmonious blending of mature intellect and imagination, but it is sufficiently enough to stir the imagination of both the child and the young. Besides it is to be observed that in
order to enjoy his own childhood, the childhood of man, the poet has entered the Kingdom of a child and for this the half of his total self belongs to the innocence of a child and the other half to his own self—observed in the eyes of an adult, in the words of Meynell "Great Boy" or the innocence of a miniature adult. Therefore, this "Great Boy" Tagore could not forget his own childhood and the boy inside in the last phase of his life. So Chhelebela (Childhood, 1940) has been written after long interval of Jivansmriti (Reminiscences).

The rhymes for children, written in the last phase of the poet's life, have apparently received the glow of mature, intellectual humour. Among these rhymes remain a few which create within themselves a peculiar intellectual strain resulting from the blending of both variation of rhythm and absurdity of imagination. This enjoyment of absurd humour found in the shortest rhymes of Khapchhada (Nonsense, 1937) is, undoubtedly, eternal. Both the peculiar irrelevant mental make-up and absurd reason of the Kalna-resident five sisters of Khantoboori's great mother-in-law are enjoyable to all. Or in the same way are enjoyable the purest religious nature of "Bostombaba" (a Vaishnava Preacher)—the dogmatic, chicken roast being cooked by the Ganges water following the purest rules and regulations, the idea of taking beef resulting from a close glance at the roaming cattle, selling tin-packed tablets made of leg-dust etc.

Chharar Chhabi (The Pictorial Rhymes, 1937) has contained the impression of the reminiscences of the poet's childhood and youth. All these are character-sketches written in the language of poems and the lightning of memoirs on different
occasions. For example, in the story of the old woman "Pisni", the innocent agony of a hapless, solitary nostalgic old woman—a pilgrim towards death, may perhaps bring about pathos into the adult mind beyond juvenile realisation. In fact, despite the poems' easy appeal to children, the gloom of old age in them (the poems) remains beyond the juvenile imagination. Therefore, the poems for children of this period have got the inherent burden of life in spite of having their lightness from the conceptual point of view.

This is no exaggeration to say that a twinkling stream of wit and humour runs smoothly through the pages of Prahashinee (The Smiling One, 1939) and Chhada (The Rhymes, 1941) written by Tagore in order to draw juvenile attention. While Prahashinee deals with different subjects surcharged with different light cadence Chhada has injected fresh blood of merriment and rejoice into the vein of children. They take their final resort to them. They even identify themselves with them. Wit appeals to the intellect but humour to the heart. The worldly meaningless and irrelevant objects find their fullest expression in humour. By introducing them, Tagore returns to his own childhood days being geared up to a higher level of fancy and imagination.

Children have not only been the theme of Tagore's poems, they have come up in his novels, short stories and even dramas. The basic conception about the children in poems and other literary works remains the same. As in Rajarshee (The King in Recluse, 1887), the affection for children has compelled the King to get down from the throne and turned the pride of Raghupati to the dust. A
good number of stories are to be referred to, e.g., "Post Master" ("The Postmaster"), "Ginnee" ("The House Wife"), "Ramkanaicar Nirbuddhita" ("Ramkanai's Idiocy"), "Khokabur Prattayavartan" ("The Return of Mr. He child"), "Jivita o Mrita" ("The Alive and the Dead"), "Kabuliwala" ("The Man from Kabul"), "Chhuti" ("The Holiday"), "Atithi" ("The Guest") — wherein widens deep innocent affection towards children or the youngsters. Or the solitary child becomes alone resulting from hapless pain, suffers amidst the imprisonment of life and at last mingles with this large universe liberating from the imprisonment. In the same way, the veil of the universal motherhood spreads over the stories named "Mastermoshai" ("The Honourable Teacher") and "Rashmonir Chhele" ("The son of Rashmoni").

In the story entitled "Thakurda" ("The Granpa"), a little girl, resembling a good mother, bears affectionately the glorious hallowness of Thakurda. On the other hand, parallelly are saturated with each other metaphor and fairy tales which finally transform "Ekti Ashade Galpa" ("An Absurd Story") into "Tasher Desh" ("The Land of Cards"). The 'motif' being touched by "Sonar Kathi" ("The Golden Wand") has been applied here. The same touch of fairy tales is seen in "Ekti Ashambhab Galpa" (afterwards "Ashambhab Katha", "Absurd Tales"), and "Ekti Khudra Puratan Galpa" ("A Little Old Story"). It is an ideal fable on metaphorical ideas. After long twentyfive years of this composition, the blending of metaphor and fairy tales is to be found in the age of Lipika. "Namer Khela" ("The Jugglery of Names") or "Rajpoottoor" ("The Prince") is categorically included in Galpaguchha (A Bunch of Stories). Besides are included parables like "Kartar Bhoot" ("The Ghost of the Master"), "Totakahini" ("Parrot's Tale") etc. Again, "Pata" ("The Canvas"), "Nutun Putul" ("The New Doll"), "Swarga Marta" ("The
Heaven and the Earth"), "Pareer Parichay" ("The Recognition of a Fairy") are concerned with fairy tales, but as a whole, the deep rooted meaning being saturated with the gesture of words and the force of feeling has taken the shape of extraordinary poetic form. Such emotionally charged "poem in prose" are called "Senela" by Turgenev — the famous Soviet literateur.

In the last phase of his life, Tagore gave a new opening to an absurd artistry, as in rhymes so in stories. Such stories provide unalloyed pleasures both to the young and elderly persons. Those bear evidence of the author's artistic dexterity having deep significance. Children of course are satisfied with the design only.

Now turning to drama, we find the juvenile interests in the plays entitled, Mukut (The Crown), Hasshokautuk (The Humorous Plays, 1907) or Baikunther Khata (The Copy of Baikuntha, 1897), Sharodotsab (The Autumnal Festival, 1908), Raja (The King, 1910), Dakghar (The Post Office, 1912), Achalayatan (The Static, 1912), Muktadhara (The Freely Flowing Stream, 1922), Phalgooni (The Matter with the Spring, 1916), Raktakaravi (The Red Orleander, 1926). Among such plays, Tagore's The Post Office, the story of which hinges on a small boy Amal, is still today considered as Tagore's classic, manifesting the purest emotions of the world of 'Innocence'. Amal, an embodiment of innocence and purity reminds one of Blake's children in Songs of Innocence.

Tagore knew it quite well that the fountain of life splashes and foams in laughter and tears. He believed that the flute of the infinite is played without
ceasing, and its sound is love. This love has led Tagore to formulate his very concept of eternal children whom he has universalised in "Shishuteertha" ("The Pilgrimage of Children"):

"A sun-ray of dawn has fallen slantly on the lower portion of the closed door. / The united mass, as if, feels in its pulse for the first time/ that divine message of creation, mother, open the door. / The door is opened. / Mother is sitting on the grassy bed, with a child in her lap, / resembling Venus in the lap of dawn. / The awaiting sun-ray at the corner of the door has flashed on the child's head. / The poet has started his own harpening, the sky has become musical: / Victory to Man, the newborn, the ever-living."
Work Cited


5. Tagore. 242.


12. Tagore. 65-66. Translation is mine.


20. Tagore. "Jete Nahi Dibo" ("I will not let you go"). Rachanabali. 49. Translation is mine.


25. Tagore. "Mulyaprapti" ("The Price Received"). Rachanabali. 45.
29. Tagore. "Nakal Gad" ("The Unreal Fort"). Rachanabali. 73.
34. Tagore. "Bisarjan" ("The Immersion"). Rachanabali. 111.
37. Tagore. The Crescent Moon. 16-17.
41. Tagore 15.


47. Tagore. 65.


59. Tagore, Rabindranath. "Saat Bhai Champa" ("Seven Champa Brothers").
Translation is mine.

60. Tagore, Rabindranath. "Sab Peyechhir Desh" ("The Eldorado"). Kheya.
Translation is mine.

is mine.


64. Tagore. "Sangee" ("The Companion"). Rachanabali. 27.

65. Tagore, Rabindranath. "Chiradiner Daga" ("The Eternal Scar"). Palataka
Vol.-XIII. 5. Translation is mine.


58.

68. Tagore. "Hariye Jaoa" ("Being Lost"). Rachanabali. 60.

69. Tagore, Rabindranath. Pashchimjatreer Diary (Diary of a Passenger to the
403. Translation is mine.
70. Tagore. 409.


73. Tagore. "Boul" ("The Bard"). Rachanabali. 94.


75. Tagore. "Murkhu" ("The Illiterate"). Rachanabali. 79.


77. Tagore. "Bani Binimay" ("Exchange of Words"). Rachanabali. 111.


80. Tagore, "Sangshayee" ("The Doubtful"). Rachanabali. 90.


82. Tagore. "Rajmistree" ("The Mason"). Rachanabali. 103.


84. Tagore. "Saat Samudra Pade" ("Crossing the Seven Seas"). Rachanabali. 81.

85. Tagore. "Raja o Ranee" ("The King and the Queen"). Rachanabali. 91.
86. Tagore. "Duoranee" ("The Queen Mother"). Rachanabali. 101.


91. Tagore. 161.


"What writer has not sighed for a new vocabulary? To see the words flowing like the River of Life itself, spotless in purity, crystal in cleanless, fresh as Eden — every word exact in its full meaning, unsullied by use, untainted by custom — it is an enchanting dream full of the most amiable self-gratulation."^1

"The symbol always retains the sensuousness of the original experience...."^2

The use of images and symbols is the birthright of a poet and it is a matter of common knowledge as to how poetic language is permeated with images and symbols, beginning with simplest figures and culminating in the total all-inclusive mythological systems of Blake or Rabindranath. The images and symbols of a poet inseparably are linked up with his sensibility. It is not a pastiche or imitation and it lays bare the poet's temperament itself. The images and symbols of a poet change only in so far as his sensibility undergoes a change and in choosing his images and symbols, a poet is not necessarily bound to confine himself to his world of eye and ear, mighty though it is. Images and symbols should not be confused with actual sensuous, visual image or symbol-making.
Imagery (that is, "images" taken collectively) is used to signify all the objects and qualities of sense perception referred to in a poem or other works of literature, whether by literal description, by allusion, or in the analogues (the vehicles) used in its similes and metaphors. The term "image" should not be taken to imply a visual reproduction of the object referred to; some readers of the passage experience visual images and some do not; and among those who do, the explicitness and detail of the mind-pictures vary greatly. Also, imagery includes auditory, tactile (touch), olfactory (smell), gustatory (taste), or kinesthetic (sensations of movement), as well as visual qualities. Most commonly, imagery is used to signify figurative language, especially the vehicles of metaphors and similes. Recent criticism, and especially the "new criticism", has gone far beyond older criticism in stressing imagery, in this sense, as the essential component in poetry, and as a major clue to poetic meaning, structure, and effect.

A symbol, in the broadest sense of the term, is anything which signifies something else; in this sense all words are symbols. As commonly used in discussing literature, however, symbol is applied only to a word or set of words that signifies an object or event which itself signifies something else; that is, the words refer to something which suggests a range of reference beyond itself. According to Abrams:

"Some symbols are "conventional" or "public"; thus "the Cross", "the Red, White, and Blue", "the Good Shepherd" are terms that signify symbolic objects of which the further significance is fixed and traditional in a particular culture."
Poets, like all of us, use such conventional symbols; many poets, however, also use "private" or "personal symbols", which they develop themselves.... Some poets, however, often use symbols whose significance they mainly generate for themselves, and these set the reader a more difficult problem in interpretation."

William Blake has extensively used images in his poetry, and his images are very frequently symbolic. It is important to remember in this connection that Blake's special method of publication, technically known as 'Illuminated Printing', placed his 'poetic' (verbal) imagery in an illuminatingly close proximity to the 'painterly'. In this perspective alone Blake's imagery has its full meaning. It is quite possible that the verbal-visual medium gave to the imagery its concreteness and many dimensionality. To read his poetry detached from the pictorial framework is to get only a part of the total meaning, and yet even for such a reader it is quite plain that Blake's early training as a painter-engraver gave him a sharp eye for physical details and the mechanical (constructional) ability and adequately 'body' them forth in another medium. It is true that he did not attach much importance to physical perception except as a window opening on reality and saw more with his 'second' vision than with the physical optical organ and yet the organic eye he never completely disregarded:

"I question not my Corporeal or Vegetative Eye any more than I would Question a Window concerning a Sight. I look thro' it & not with it."
The corresponding reliance on the second vision (literally meaning a mystical intuitive power) which opens on the hidden dimensions of reality inaccessible to the senses necessarily gave a symbolic meaning to the actual objects rendered in his poetry:

"Each grain of Sand, / "Every Stone on the Land,/
"Each rock & each hill, / "Each fountain & rill,/ 
"Each herb and each tree, / "Mountain, hill, earth & sea,/ 
"Cloud, Meteor & Star, / "Are Men seen Afar." "

His constant preoccupation is with these hidden 'forms', often clearly suggested to be somewhat platonic, as for instance, in the poems already cited. Thus, his major preoccupation was distinctly 'spiritual' and this gave to his imagery a representative value.

While writing on Tagore as an artist Carol Cuthbertson observes that the nature of a true artist is

"To see with detailed sensitivity, to capture the essences of life, and simply to feel, these abilities are found in an artist, They can be fostered or matured, but never manufactured. A truly great artist focuses his abilities on one aspect of what he senses, be it line and color, form, or rhythm and sound; but he is capable in all aspects. Those upon which he does not focus he uses to augment, to provide overtones, or to strengthen. An artist must be a "Universal man" in a real sense, for true greatness in art rests upon two levels;
that of the particular is of interest in itself for it is directed specifically at our senses; just as important, however, is our ability to capture the essence of the particular within our souls. Here it is that depth lies. In the audience, rapport and understanding are achieved here; in the artist, creativity."

If the gradual evaluation of expressive images and symbols of Tagore is noted historically in the light of the above-stated comment, one should find that various dimensions and transformed creative process of the poet's mental make-up have been distinctly exemplified. Whenever a poet's experience has got a stature through images, they are not simply information but truth. The principal quality of Tagore's images is transformation of total poetry through minimum vibration. They have flourished in the world of Tagore's own. In images suggesting motion, travelling, sailing, speeding, and the like, the poet finds symbolic actions expressive of the soul's dynamism and these dynamic symbols are most fully exploited. Thus he celebrates the joys of the universe.

In Blake's Songs of Innocence and of Experience physical details frequently carry symbolic suggestions. The cloud-borne child in the introductory poem to the Innocence volume has been concretely rendered, but it is evidently a symbol of the poetic muse or inspiration. For Blake, Inspiration is another name for Poetry; the poetic power is the "Imagination, the Divine Vision." The 'child' image has however been otherwise interpreted: the child is easily taken as Jesus Christ. It has also been suggested that Blake's is always the ideal child who can
look at the Heavenly father in the face. The drift of Blake's thoughts abundantly suggests that the divine attribute is incarnated in a relatively pure 'form' in the innocent child, and this divine attribute in its most important earthly or human manifestation is the Imagination: "Man is All Imagination. God is Man ...." Or "Imagination is the Divine Body in Every Man". Or, "The All in Man. The Divine Image or Imagination." Or most importantly:

"Jesus considered Imagination to be that Real Man & says I will not leave you Orphaned, I will manifest myself to you; he says also, the Spiritual Body or Angel as little Children always behold the Face of the Heavenly Father."

The 'child' symbol in the introductory poem signifying imaginative inspiration, incidentally, relates Songs (Songs of Innocence) to the short-lived eighteenth-century tradition—the tradition of moral stories, in prose or verse—for children. It is thus a pointer to a major inspiration (motivation) behind this bunch of poems. The 'child' image is, however, central to Songs of Innocence. It is a symbol for the spiritual state which Blake calls innocence. Bowra is of the opinion:

"Blake's state of innocence, set forth in symbols of pastoral life akin to those of the Twenty-third Psalm, seems at first sight to have something in common with what Vaughan, Traherne and Wordsworth say in their different ways about the vision of childhood which is lost in later life, and it is tempting to think that this is what concerns Blake. But he is concerned with the loss not so much of actual childhood as of something wider and less definite. For him childhood
is both itself and a symbol of a state of soul which may exist in maturity. His subject is the childlike vision of existence. For him all human beings are in some sense and at some times the children of a divine father, but experience destroys their innocence and makes them follow spectres and illusions. Blake does not write at a distance of time from memories of what childhood once was, but from an insistent, present anguish at the ugly contrasts between the childlike and the experienced conceptions of reality."

Blake’s innocence appears to be a somewhat comprehensive, multi-dimensional concept signifying many qualities generally associated with the child — tenderness, spontaneity, idealism, selflessness, lovingness, gracefulness, simplicity and an essential piety:

1. "He is meek, & he is mild;
   He became a little child.
   I a child, & thou a lamb,
   We are called by his name.
   Little Lamb, God bless thee!
   Little Lamb, God bless thee!"

2. "Sweet joy but two days old,
   Sweet joy I call thee:
   Thou dost smile,
   I sing the while,
   Sweet joy be fall thee!"
3. "I'll shade him from the heat, till he can bear
   To lean in joy upon our father's knee... ."^{15}

4. "O! he gives to us his joy
   That our grief he may destroy;
   Till our grief is fled & gone
   He doth sit by us and moan."^{16}

5. "The little boy lost in the lonely fen,
   Led by the wand'ring light,
   Began to cry; but God, ever nigh,
   Appear'd like his father in white."^{17}

6. "Then every man, of every clime,
   That prays in his distress,
   Prays to the human form divines
   Love, Mercy, Pity, Peace."^{18}

These excerpts, taken at random, may suggest how the imagery of the
Innocence book reflects the mental (spiritual) state which is part of Blake's
thematic preoccupation in Songs.

A large number of poems, intended for children, may be found in Tagore's
Shishu (published in 1903, its english rendering entitled The Crescent Moon
was published in 1936), the earliest of them all and the later Shishu Bholanath
(1922). He did not make the selections himself. One is rather surprised by the
serious purport of many of these poems until one remembers that he disliked
"babying" children and firmly believed that growing children should reach out to
what is just beyond them rather than have the ends dragged down to their level. Children are capable of understanding deep thoughts if couched in simple language. Whether this theory applies to the pampered boys and girls does not concern the readers at the moment. Actually, the poems are superb and never beyond the comprehension of normal youngsters. The **Shishu** and **Shishu Bholanath** poems may be divided into two groups. They are all concerned with children and the wonderful world around them. An undercurrent of wry humour may be discerned even in the more serious ones. Almost half are "for" children and the rest "about" children, the later could sometimes embarrass the children's guardians and tutors. But all are delightful, for he is never didactic and frequently writes with his tongue-in-his-cheek.

The poems, appeared in **Shishu**, are often philosophical. In these poems one frequently comes across a lonely dreamy imaginative gentle little boy, who has no congenial companies, except his own thoughts. The poet's well-meaning elders are often a wee bit harsh and un-understanding, but there is always a tender loving woman in the background, who makes up for everything. It is said,

"Soon one recognizes the little boy. He is Rabi, who lost his mother when he was 12 and who never saw the face of nature except a corner of it out of a little upstairs window. This little boy never climbed trees, or bathed in ponds, or fought with other little boys or kept pet-dog, and saddest of all, never had the opportunity to be truly naughty."

In the words of Tagore himself,

"Going out of the house was forbidden to us, in fact we
had not even the freedom of all its parts. We perforce took our peeps at nature from behind the barriers. Beyond my reach there was this limitless thing called the Outside, of which flashes and sounds and scents used momentarily to come and touch me through its interstices. It seemed to want to play with me through the bars with so many gestures. But it was free and I was bound — there was no way of meeting. So the attraction was all the stronger. The chalk-line has been wiped away to-day, but the confining ring is still there. The distant is just as distant, the outside is still beyond me; ...

The enforced confinement within a room, with glimpses of nature outside, roused in the boy's mind a keen desire to have direct contact with nature. It seemed to him that nature was beckoning to him but he could not respond. This yearning for freedom from confinement would rouse strong emotions of disappointment in his immature mind. No wonder this became the theme of one of Tagore's poems composed in later life:

"The tame bird was in a cage, the free bird was in the forest,
They met when the time came, it was a decree of fate.
The free bird cries, 'O my love, let us fly to the wood.'
The cage bird whispers, 'Come hither, let us both live in the cage.'
Says the free bird, 'Among bars, where is there room to spread one's wings?"
‘Alas,’ cries the cage bird, ‘I should not know where to sit perched in the sky.’

The poem, stated above, speaks about two birds which once made contact—one confined in a cage, which evidently represented him, and the other enjoying complete freedom outside, which represented the condition he yearned for. Tagore’s basic concept of imagination has been originated from this point of view.

In these sensitive, often fanciful and entirely delightful poems appeared in *Shishu (The Crescent Moon)*, Tagore gives the readers the different worlds of the mother, the child and the father. As delicate as the crescent moon, these poems sympathetically explore the private world of the mother and her child and the fulfilment that each finds in the other. The poet has a powerful insight into childlife. One aspect of life which has engrossed him, as perhaps none else, is the treatment of child-psychology. The innocence and harmless curiosity of the young touch him, and his fertile imagination supplies in its turn a pile of images of the child as it plays, imagines, creates, destroys, and builds. The poems on childhood reveal his great capacity to look at the world through the eyes of a child. In a letter written in the month of April to Pramatha Chowdhury, Tagore wrote:

“I have already been promoted. ... I have got the portfolio of a friend in the court of the Shishu Maharaj (The Child King). ... Having been crossed over the noon of youth, the span of my life has come down to the evergreen childish
horizon. My master has appeared as a child, I have also been awarded. There is less punishment but more peace in his works, but there is no holiday. For this, I hope you successful sitting here, but I have no time to follow your rhythmic expedition. I have accompanied them who will be the youth of tomorrow."

Tagore's concept of eternal childhood, having certain simplicity and naive openness, appeals to children as well as to adults. But the simplicity is deceptive. The poems are not as easy and obvious as they look. Behind the song-like rhythms, the child-like questions and answers, the short lines and bright images, lies a subtle complexity of meaning that the readers only gradually learn to penetrate. In fact, the readers never penetrate it completely and that is why the poems in Shishu (The Crescent Moon) remain a source of renewed pleasure all through life.

The symbol of eternal childhood has been revealed through images in the poem composed as a preface to Shishu (The Crescent Moon). Here, Tagore sees the wonder and beauty and goodness through and beyond all that he actually sees and touches, and it fills him with the spirit of worship, of self-consecration and aspiration. He nicely sums up his philosophy of children in the preface to Shishu (The Crescent Moon):

"On the seashore of endless worlds children meet.
The infinite sky is motionless overhead and the restless water is boisterous. On the seashore of endless worlds the children meet with shouts and dances."
They build their houses with sand, and they play with empty shells. With withered leaves they weave their boat, and smilingly float them on the vast deep. Children have their play on the seashore of worlds. They know not how to swim, they know not how to cast nets. Pearl-fishers dive for pearls, merchants sail in their ships, while children gather pebbles and scatter them again. They seek not for hidden treasures, they know not how to cast nets.\(^{23}\)

Now an auditory image merges in:

"The sea surges up with laughter, and pale gleams the smile of the sea-beach. Death-dealing waves sing meaningless ballads to the children, even like a mother while rocking her baby's cradle. The sea plays with children and pale gleams the smile of the sea-beach."\(^{24}\)

The child-image comes at random in different poems of *Shishu (The Crescent Moon)*. It also symbolises different activities of innocence saturated with heavenly bliss and simplicity:

1. "Heaven's first darling, twin-born with the morning light, you have floated down the stream of the world's life, and at last you have stranded on my heart."\(^{25}\)

2. "Who state sleep from our baby's eyes? I must know. I must find her and chain her up."
I must look into that dark cave, where, through boulders and scowling stones, trickles a ting stream.

I must search in the drowsy shade of the bakula grove, where pigeons coo in their corner, and fairies anklets tinkle in the stillness of starry nights."

3. "When the marketing is over in the evening, and the village children sit in their mothers' laps, then the night birds will mockingly din her ears with:

'Whose sleep will you steal now?'"

4. "Say of him what you please, but I know my child's failings. I do not love him because he is good, but because he is my little child.

How should you know how dear he can be when you try to weigh his merits against his faults?

When I cause his tears to come my heart weeps with him.

I alone have a right to blame and punish for he only may chastise who loves.""

5. "I wish I could take a quiet corner in the heart of my baby's very own world.

I know it has stars that talk to him, and a sky that stoops down to his face to amuse him with its silly clouds and rainbows."
6. "Child, how happy you are sitting in the dust, playing with a broken twig all the morning.
I smile at your play with that little bit of a broken twig.
I am busy with my accounts, adding up figures by the hour.
Perhaps you glance at me and think, 'What a stupid game to spoil your morning with!'
Child, I have forgotten the art of being absorbed in sticks and mud-pies."\(^{30}\)

7. "Why are those tears in your eyes, my child?
How horrid of them to be always scolding you for nothing?
You have stained your fingers and face with ink while writing— is that why they call you dirty? O, fie! Would they dare to call the full moon dirty because it has smudged its face with ink?
For every little trifle they blame you, my child. They are ready to find fault for nothing."\(^{31}\)

8. "Mother, the folk who live up in the clouds call out to me—
'We play from the time we wake till the day ends. We play with the golden dawn, we play with the silver moon.'
I ask, 'But, how am I to get up to you?'
They answer, 'Come to the edge of the earth, lift up your hands to the sky, and you will be taken up into the clouds.'"\(^{32}\)

Tagore's philosophy, laced with the eternal note of joy, is a type of dynamic
Vedanta. He had a positive view of life, and he loved humanity as the manifestation of God. He did not believe that the supreme reality was an impersonal Absolute. He looked upon the supreme as a person. The supreme person is characterised by unexcellable bliss (Ānand), unconditioned existence (Sat), and supreme life-force (Chit). The infinite supreme person for Tagore was the concretion of the three values: Truth, Beauty, and Goodness (Satyam, Sivam, Sundaram). The universe with all its colour and beauty is the joyful expression and manifestation of the Lord. It is His supreme Leela (His supreme sport). It is not an illusion nor a dream to be set aside. Creation is the manifestation of the Lord in all His glory. As a result, joy prevails everywhere:

"Thus it is that thy joy in me is so full. Thus it is that thou hast come down to me. O thou lord of all heavens, where would be thy love if I were not? Thou hast taken me as thy partner of all this wealth. In my heart is the endless play of thy delight. In my life thy will is ever taking shape."^33

Like many other artists William Blake employed a central group of related symbols to form a dominant symbolic pattern: his are the child, the father, and Christ, representing the states of innocence, experience, and a higher innocence. These major symbols provide the context for all the minor, contributory symbols in the songs. Blake often used symbols to express increasingly subtle and complex intellectual distinctions. However, as his system developed, he found it convenient and even necessary to reinforce the symbolism with an elaborate mythology,
which does not easily explain itself. This is not to suggest that Blake's symbols are always easy to understand. For instance, it is very difficult for the readers of poetry to dissociate stars from brilliance, however much Blake may try to restrict their meaning to denote tyranny. The problem for readers of Blake's poetry is to maintain a balance between what he is trying to say and what the words commonly convey. The symbolism of the Songs of Innocence and the Songs of Experience is successful, because Blake is able to maintain this balance.

F. W. Bateson has listed some principal symbols in Blake's poetry, which should help the reader understand his double vision:

1. Innocence Symbols (pre-sexual and amoral as well as Christian): Children, sheep, wild birds, wild flowers, green fields, dawn, dew, spring — and associated images e.g. shepherds, valleys, hills.

2. Energy Symbols (creative, heroic unrestrained as well as revolutionary righteously destructive): Lions, tigers, wolves, eagles, noon, summer, sun, fire, frogs, swords, spears, chariots.

3. Sexual Symbols (from uninhabited ecstasy to selfish power over the beloved, and jealousy): dreams, branches of threes, rose, gold, silver, moonlight associated images, e.g. nets, cages, fairies, bows and arrows.
4. Corruption Symbols (hypocrisy, secrecy as well as town-influences, including abstract reasoning): Looms, curtains, cities, houses, snakes, evening, silence, disease.

5. Oppression Symbols (personal, parental, religious, political): priests, mills, forests, mountains, seas, caves, clouds, thunder, frost, night, stars, winter, stone, iron.

But to justify the use of these images, and preserve their traditional value in fact, a highly organised context is necessary. It must be such that the one value of innocence, and no other, is permitted to them. The homogeneity of imagery has a structural function additional to the immediacy of relation which it allows. Confront the lamb with a wolf, and it becomes an image of more than love and less than innocence. Any insistence to the contrary would destroy the unity of the poems, for it would be an attempt to deny a relationship which the poem itself had established by bringing these two worlds together. For the most part the Songs succeed in preserving unity by the strict exclusion of all images of fear and doubt. In the world which Blake has created by a restriction of the Christian and pastoral traditions, there are no beasts of prey or lust, disease is unknown, and old age only means an access of dignity, not the approach of death. There is no need to exclude sorrow, for in another's distress, like joy in another's happiness, is an expression of innocence so long as it does not lead to fearful questioning:

"Can I see another's woe,
And not be in sorrow too?"

is as true to the note of innocent love as:
"Thou dost smile,
I sing the while."^*

Fear, on the other hand, comes only from experience, and only by experience can it be reconciled with love. Words can not, of course, be cut away from experience, but by the strict control of context all reference to individual experience can be excluded, so that only the typical experience remains. Here, the context is devised to cut away all conditional meanings. Within the Garden of Eden enclosure of the *Songs of Innocence*, names have the same freshness which they had when Adam first gave them to the creatures.

The suggestion implicit in the image is that "experience" (materialism) stands as a threat to "innocence" (idealism), and this dramatic opposition between the two spiritual states is worked out into the full argument. The threat which in the child's psychological situation lies latent as a recognition of the reality of pain and suffering (note "The Chimney Sweeper" or "The Little Blake Boy" or "A Dream"), requires his world to be well-protected. This theme is recurrently touched on and is fully treated in the most representative poems of the *innocence* volume — "Night" — which opens exactly where "The Echoing Green" ends:

"The Sun descending in the west,
The evening star does shine;
The birds are silent in their nest,
And I must seek for mine."^*

The similarity in details between the ending of "The Echoing Green" and the beginning of "Night" is too close for the readers not to link the two. Thus related,
the later poem would read like the child's image of the sport-land at night. The threat to the echoing green is now too great for the angels to keep aloof; they protect the flock, and the child-speaker must seek his shelter or protection.

In terms of the symbolic language, the child's world is too fragile to survive on its own, the child-like condition of the human mind being extremely susceptible to experience. The divine protection which is granted to the child's fragile existence points to the Christian meaning of Blake's vision; the major images (Father, Mother, Angel, God, Shepherd, Lamb) are essentially Christian symbols. God is evidently the 'father' figure in the seven poems on the restoration of missing children in the joint-publication: the loss obviously symbolizes deviation from faith (errancy) and the restitution means restoration to faith (salvation). The state of errancy easily suggests the image of the erring sheep. The association is Biblical. In the Bible, God is the Shepherd and Christ is the Sheep, and Christ (Blake's highest God) is the Shepherd\(^{38}\) and the pious man is His sheep. The straggler is evidently the sinful man (sin meaning separation from God) who weeps his way back to the fold ("piety" through "penance"). The weeping child (sometimes, it is the weeping parent = an equally solicitous God) is an iterative archetypal figure in Blake's Songs.

The first native nakedness suggests innocence, and the soul's journey towards the second nakedness (organized innocence at the final stage) is through experience, but experience is the outer clothing (The Natural Body is an Obstruction to the Soul or Spiritual Body\(^{39}\)) but from this sinful contamination the inner 'vest' of divine mercy protects the pilgrim soul. The outer clothing is to
be cast off before the innocence is regained ('identity' that never changes, or essence as distinguished from accidental accumulation — experience). The two states thus become assimilated and permanently fixed up in the all-inclusive divine body of the Supreme and our essential 'identity', in the spiritual essence with God (who is the Imagination Human / Divine) is unalterably (eternally) established.

The 'contrariness' in Blake is mainly worked out in the imagery. The 'garment' image, for instance, may link up the early thoughts with the mature. One explanation of the phrase "clothing of delight" in "The Lamb" is that "delight" is like the cloth of "innocence" and recalls "And Secrecy the Human Dress" in "A Divine Image" or the next line of the same poem: "The Human Dress is forged iron" or "They clothed me in the clothes of death" in "The Chimney Sweeper". Most important, however, seems to be the derobing of the lost little girl:

"While the lioness / Loos'd her slender dress, / And naked they convey'd / To caves the sleeping maid."

The lioness, apparently frightful but really so tender, is derobing the girl, and the process is the sloughing-off that is essential for a bodily creature to be entitled to a fuller spiritual existence.

The 'child' image in Songs of Innocence symbolizes the good in the subheavenly terrestrial existence; the same image occurs recurrently in Songs of Experience where it signifies the evils of a post-lapserian state-man's sinfulness and consequent insecurity. Thus, the contrariness between innocence and
experience is projected by means of the iterative central symbol. The contrast is
directly counterpainted in sets of corresponding (supplementary) poems: "The
Chimney Sweeper" (Songs of Innocence) / "The Chimney Sweeper" (Songs of
Experience): "Infant Joy" (Songs of Innocence) / "Infant Sorrow" (Songs of
Experience) etc. One set may be examined here in some detail: in "Infant Joy"
child-birth is an occasion for universal jubilation:

"Sweet joy I call thee:
Thou dost smile,
I sing the while,
Sweet joy befall thee."^45

and in "Infant Sorrow" the same event is an occasion for pain, anguish and terror:

"My mother groan'd! my father wept;
Into the dangerous world I leapt:
Helpless, naked, piping loud:
Like a fiend hid in a cloud."^46

Blake's full theme (i.e. the antitheticality between innocence and experience
being gradually subsumed in the inclusive pattern of an emerging final existence)
is finely suggested by the imagery:

"The modest Rose puts forth a thorn,
The humble sheep a threat'ning horn;
While the Lilly white shall in Love delight,
Nor a thorn, nor a threat, stain her beauty bright."^47

The theme is, however, more finely worked out in the symbolism which
Blake's imagery very frequently carries. Sometimes, the symbolism is quite
traditional. Blake has succeeded not only in exploiting the scriptural associations but also in exploring new possibilities latent in the symbolic imagery of 'light' (day) and 'darkness' (night). This has given to his twin concepts of innocence and experience just the requisite extent of religious dimension.

One who opens his eyes and tries earnestly to see the world, to him the world puts off its mask of vastness and becomes small. This is what Tagore has preached through the images and symbols of his poems especially written for children. This is the feeling that Blake has crystallised in the lines:

"To see a World in a Grain of Sand
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower,
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
And Eternity in an hour."\(^{48}\)

When Blake writes, "Infant smiles are his own smiles", Tagore echoes,

"Bless this little heart, this white soul that has won the kiss of heaven for our earth.
He loves the light of the sun, he loves the sight of his mother's face.
He has not learned to despise the dust, and to hanker after gold.
Clasp him to your heart and bless him,"\(^{50}\)

Lower self ("Jibatma") has been dissolved into Higher self ("Paramatma"). The images and symbols in Blake's poems for children and about children seem to be resplendent in the celestial light, the glory and freshness of a dream. Tagore's
images and symbols identify at once the ecstasy of the revelation with the state of mind of a child, believing deeply that —

"it is the same life that shoots in joy / through the dust of the earth in / numberless blades of grass and breaks / into tumultuous waves of leaves and / flowers."\textsuperscript{51}
Works Cited


24. Tagore. 4.

27. Tagore. 13.
38. Cf. "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep" (St. John. x, 11). Or, "But there are other sheep of mine, not belonging to this fold, whom I must bring in; and they too will listen to my voice." (St. John. x, 16) : New Testament, The New English Bible. London : Oxford & Cambridge University Press. 1961. 162-63.
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THEME AND TREATMENT OF CHILDHOOD: A STUDY OF WILLIAM BLAKE AND RABINDRANATH TAGORE

"...I see the face of my Heavenly Father; he lays his Hand upon my Head & gives a blessing to all my works; why should I be troubled? Why should my heart & flesh cry out?"¹

"On opening my eyes every morning, the blithely awakening world used to call me to join it like a playmate; the fervid noonday sky, during the long silent watches of the siesta hours, would spirit me away from the workaday world into the recesses of its hermit cell; and the darkness of night would open the door to its phantom paths, and take me over all the seven seas and thirteen rivers, past all possibilities and impossibilities, right into its wonderland."²

William Blake has come with the innocent eye, the apparently naive approach in the Songs of Innocence and of Experience (1794). A "laughing"³ child has been represented as his sole inspiration for the Songs of Innocence. The poet gives the readers his vision of the world as it appears to the child, or as it affects
the child. And this world is one of joy, purity and security. Pure are the children themselves, whether their skins be white or black, and the lambs whose "innocent call" \(^4\) is heard, and with whom the children are compared. Joy prevails everywhere; in the "Joy but two days old" \(^5\), in the leaping and shouting of the "little ones" \(^6\); in the bells, in the sun, in the voices of the birds. But above all there is security. There is scarcely a poem in which a symbol of protection, a guardian figure of some kind, does not occur. The \textit{Songs} are not merely about children, they are for children, so that "Every child may joy to hear." \(^7\) No other poet has succeeded in attaining such child-like qualities in his verse, "without falling into namby-pamby." \(^8\)

The process of growing-up has been exemplified by Wordsworth: "Shades of the prison-house begin to close / Upon the growing Boy." \(^9\) Blake calls the "prison-house" Experience. Instead of innocence, joy, security, he finds guilt, misery, tyranny; the mood is one of disillusionment. The benign guardians have disappeared, and in their place are the tyrants. Chief among these is the dread god Urizen (Blake's symbol of the archtyrant) and his ministers are those in authority on earth, the king, the priest, the parent, the nurse. Although he is only mentioned specifically in three poems ("Earth's Answer" \(^10\); "The Human Abstract" \(^11\); "A Divine Image" \(^12\)) his dark shadow hovers over most of the other \textit{Songs}. He is "Starry Jealousy" \(^13\) or "Cruelty" \(^14\). He halts life and joy, and has bound the would in his iron law of prohibition: "Thou shalt not ..." \(^15\). In Experience all Earth's vital energies are frozen ("Earth's Answer" \(^16\)). The Schoolboy refers to buds being nipped, and the "blossoms blown away". \(^17\) The
The art of illumination

These ‘illuminated’ pages come from Blake’s Songs of Innocence (left), published in 1789, and its sequel, Songs of Experience (right), which appeared in 1794. They combine words and images in a way that recalls medieval manuscripts, but Blake’s intensity of vision is completely personal. He finished each copy of the book by hand, so no two copies are identical.
"Sick Rose" has been attacked by the "invisible worm"; and other forces of destruction are the caterpillar and the fly. There are unnatural growths; the tombstones sprouting where flowers used to be; the Poison Tree and the Tree of Mystery, both rooted in the human brain. The readers hear of the "mind-forged manacles."

Thus, to attain a higher state, man must be tested by sufferings. He must go through the actual experience of life. This is the link between Songs of Innocence and Songs of Experience. Not only is Experience an inescapable fact of life, it is a necessary stage in the cycle of being. While delving deep into the analysis of the contrariness of the human soul, Blake has been greatly influenced by the Bible. As the poet himself comments:

"Without Contraries is no progression. Attraction and Repulsion,
Reason and Energy, Love and Hate, are necessary to Human existence. From these contraries spring what the religious call Good & Evil."

Tagore's enforced isolation at Almora in the central Himalayas (where the higher altitude was expected to give better results) and the need for suitable entertainment for his ailing child that provided the incentive for him to try his hand at a new field of poetry; composing verses for children. In his earlier days, he had written a few poems for children to feed the children's magazine started in the family. When, however, it was wound up after a short life of three years,
he gave up writing such poems. Now again, children's verses came in profusion. The central figure of these poems was a boy through whose eyes Tagore tried to see his small but interesting world consisting of his parents, sister and brother. The poems written at this stage were subsequently collected and published under the title Shishu (The Crescent Moon, 1909). They have served to enrich Bengali literature as one of the finest collections of children's verses.

Tagore aptly names the early part of his life as the period of the monarchy of servants (Bhrityarajak Tantra) and draws a comparison with the Slave Dynasty that ruled the Delhi Sultanate in the thirteenth century. He distinctly remembers Shyam whose favourite trick was to draw a circle on the floor of a room with a chalk and then to place the child within it. He would warn the child against crossing the line of the circle and threaten him with dire consequences if his order was violated. Somehow the boy felt overawed and lost his capacity to defy him. So, young Tagore had no option but to face detention within that circle for the duration of the entire day. By opening the venetian shutters, the entire landscape would appear before his eyes. This visual contact with the outside world would provide diversion to while away his time. The pond used as a place for bathing, would be visited at different hours of the day by different groups who again adopted different methods of washing and bathing. This provided him an endless view of constantly shifting scenes and made his confinement somewhat bearable. Referring to a very large banyan tree on the west bank of the tank Tagore wrote:

"It seemed as if into this mysterious region the laws of the universe had not found entrance; as if some old-world
dream-land had escaped the divine vigilance and lingered on into the light of modern day. Whom I used to see there, and what those beings did, it is not possible to express in intelligible language."

It is about this banyan tree that he wrote later:

"With tangled roots hanging down from your branches,
O ancient banyan tree,
You stand still day and night, like an ascetic at his penances, Do you ever remember the child whose fancy played with your shadows?"

The enforced confinement within a room, with glimpses of Nature outside, roused in the boy's mind a keen desire to have direct contact with Nature. It seemed to him that Nature was beckoning to him but he could not respond. This yearning for freedom from confinement would evoke strong emotions of disappointment in his immature mind. No wonder this became the theme of one of his poems composed in later life:

"The fame bird was in a cage, the free bird was in the forest,
They met when the time came, it was a decree of fate.
The free bird cries, 'O my love, let us fly to the wood.'
'Live in the cage.'
Says the free bird, 'Among bars, where is there room to..."
spread one's wings?'

'Alas', cries the cage bird, 'I should not know where to sit perched in the sky.'

Tagore wrote later:

"Beyond my reach there was this limitless thing called the Outside, of which flashes and sounds and scents used momentarily to come and touch me through its interstices. It seemed to want to play with me through the bars with so many gestures. But it was free and I was bound — there was no way of meeting. So the attraction was all the stronger. The chalk line has been wiped away to-day, but the confining ring is still there."

This experience of early boyhood exercised a profound influence not only on his poetry but also on his way of life.

Referring to the image of childhood Tagore has written:

"Looking back on childhood's days the thing that recurs most often is the mystery which used to fill both life and world. Something undreamt of was lurking everywhere, and the uppermost question every day was: When, oh! when would we come across it? It was as if nature held something in her closed hands and was smilingly asking us: 'What d'you think I have?' What was impossible for her to have was the thing we had no idea of."
Being well aware of his own powerful insight into childlife, Tagore got a new vision of child psychology while presenting his children in the perspective of this "mystery which used to fill both life and world." As a result, the eternal stature of the child has been perfectly drawn by the poet in the mind of the readers. Besides, the eternal bond of child-mother relationship has also been referred to. In the preface to Shishu (The Crescent Moon, 1909), Tagore has represented child as a messenger of God, the Almighty:

"On the seashore of endless worlds children meet. / The infinite sky is motionless overhead and the restless water is boisterous. / On the seashore of endless worlds the children meet with shouts and dances. They build their houses with sand, and they play with empty shells. With withered leaves they weave their boats and smilingly float them on the vast deep. Children have their play on the seashore of worlds."

And again,

"They know not how to swim, they know not how to cast nets. Pearlfishers dive for pearls, merchants sail in their ships, while children gather pebbles and scatter them again. They seek not for hidden treasures, they know not how to castnets."

The child's eternal query has been exemplified in these lines:

"Where have I come from, where did you pick me up?" the baby asked its mother."
And the mother,

"... answered half crying, half laughing,
and clasping the baby to her breast, —
'You were hidden in my heart as its
desire, my darling.
You were in the dolls of my childhood's
games; and when with clay I made the
image of my god every morning, I made
and unmade you then.
You were enshrined with our household
deity, in his worship I worshipped you'."^9

This query finds its fullest expression in the untold words and amazed vision
of a child. It carries within its soul the harmonious blending of extreme love,
hope and desire of a mother. To a child its life is nothing but wonder and its
query originates from it. In response to such query the mother replies:

"For fear of losing you I hold you tight
to my breast. What magic has snared the
world's treasure in these slender arms of
mine?"^1

The mother-child relationship has become the central theme of Shishu (The
Crescent Moon, 1909). Tagore finds his own mother image there. Losing her at
the age of fourteen (unfortunately Tagore's mother Sarada Devi died quite young)
and missing her very badly, even long after her death, the poet would find solace
in remembering the soothing touch of her affectionate fingers which bore
comparison to the cream-white buds of the bel flower, as recorded in his reminiscences:

"When, in later life, I wandered about like a madcap, at the first coming of spring, with a handful of half-blown jessamines tied in a corner of my muslin scarf, and as I stroked my forehead with the soft, rounded, tapering buds, the touch of my mother's fingers would come back to me; and I clearly realised that the tenderness which dwelt in the tips of those lovely fingers was the very same as that which blossoms every day in the purity of these jessamine buds; and that whether we know it or not, this tenderness is on the earth in boundless measure."^^

And this mental make-up takes shape in this way:

"Ah, these jasmines, these white jasmines!
I seem to remember the first day when I filled my hands with these jasmines, these white jasmines.
I have loved the sunlight, the sky and the green earth;
I have heard the liquid murmur of the river through the darkness of midnight;..."^^

The poem concludes:

"Yet my heart is sweet with the memory of the first jasmines that filled my hands when I was a child."^^
None gives importance to the child. But he keeps inside his heart such desires that are saturated with expressive valour on the one hand, the imaginary appreciation from the mother on the other. His desire to see the unseen, to know the unknown, to feel the unfelt, to explore the unexplored regions makes him courageous and undaunted. The child who takes shelter in his mother's lap in the hovering darkness of the evening, desires to escape the mother from the clutch of shivering fear and anxiety. 'The Hero' is the clear-cut revelation of the same:

"It is evening and the sun goes down.
The waste of Joradighi lies wan and grey before us. The land is desolate and barren.
You are frightened and thinking — 'I know not where we have come to.'
I say to you, 'Mother, do not be afraid.' "

After this, the heroic deeds of the child come to the fore:

"Then I spur my horse for a wild gallop,
and my sword and buckler clash against each other.
The fight becomes so fearful, mother,
that it would give you a cold shudder could you see it from your palanquin.
Many of them fly, and a great number are cut to pieces."

But in peroration,
"A thousand useless things happen day after day, and why couldn't such a thing come true by chance? It would be like a story in a book. My brother would say, 'Is it possible? I always thought he was so delicate!'
Our village people would all say in amazement, 'Was it not lucky that the boy was with his mother?'"

The child has come down to the dust of reality. He feels that everything enjoyed by him is nothing but a pictorial fantasy. The garb of a hero has been transformed into the colourful garment of a child. But the feeling is immortal as well as eternal:

"Mother, let us imagine we are travelling, and passing through a strange and dangerous country. You are riding in a palanquin and I am trotting by you on a red horse."

The "red horse" is the symbol of valour that incites the innocent world of a child, attaches importance to the significance of its real meaning and gives it a proper dimension in the adult-world while highlighting Tagore's concept of innocence successfully.

In order to receive love from the adult-world, the child takes the garb of a poor and pauper. He tries to get entangled in the intolerable agony of the same. Here the feeling comes true:
"Baby had a heap of gold and pearls, yet he came like a beggar on to this earth. It is not for nothing he came in such a disguise. This dear little naked mendicant pretends to be utterly helpless, so that he may beg for mother's wealth of love."{40}

Tagore has attained epitome of perfection while combining the child's impression upon the world and the parents' attitude towards him. This totality is only indispensable in the poems of Tagore written for children. They are lulled to sleep by the stories told to them. Thus, the little child appears in the eyes of his mother,

"The sleep that flits on baby's eyes — does anybody know from where it comes? Yes, there is a rumour that it has its dwelling where, in the fairy village among shadows of the forest dimly lit with glow-worms, there hang two shy buds of enchantment. From there it comes to kiss baby's eyes."{41}

And again,

"The smile that flickers on baby's lips when he sleeps — does anybody know where it was born? Yes, there is a rumour that a young pale beam of a crescent moon
touched the edge of a vanishing autumn
cloud, and there the smile was first born
in the dream of a dew-washed morning —
the smile that flickers on baby's lips when he sleeps.**^42

The mother invokes the goddess of sleep so that she appears in the dream of
her little babe and softens his eye-lids by the touch of her (the goddess of sleep)
magic wands.

During his boyhood Tagore was subjected to bitter suffering under the system
of school education. This system inflicted much pain on him and hurt him so
much that he carried its memory even when he grew up. For, under this system,
the child is separated from the bosom of Nature and society and placed in the
factory that goes by the name of school. The irritation of its abnormal
environment subjects the child's mind to daily torture. The poet felt it. Hence,
the child-like vision of the poet:

"Mother, I do want to leave off my lessons
now. I have been at my book all the
morning. You say it is only twelve o' clock. Suppose
it is n't any later; can't you ever think
it is afternoon when it is only twelve
o' clock?"^^43

The eternal child of his soul imagines:

"I can easily imagine now that the sun
has reached the edge of that rice-field, and
the old fisher-woman is gathering herbs
for her supper by the side of the pond. I can just shut my eyes and think that
the shadows are growing darker under the *madar* tree, and the water in the pond looks shiny black.
If twelve o' clock can come in the night,
why can't the night come when it is twelve o' clock?"44

The child need not have to take heed of what others say. He plays sitting in the dust with a broken twig all the morning. The poem entitled 'Paper Boats' has a special significance of its own and it is worth preserving in the readers' memor:

"Day by day I float my paper boats one
by one down the running stream.
In big black letters I write my name on them and the name of the village where I live. I hope that someone in some strange land will find them and know who I am."45

And at last,

"When night comes I bury my face in my arms and dream that my paper boats float on and on under the midnight stars. The fairies of sleep are sailing in them,
and the lading is their baskets full of dreams."46
The child's eyes are lit up with animation as he plans to take out Madhu's boat that is moored at the wharf of Rajgunj:

"The boat of the boatman Madhu is moored at the wharf of Rajgunj. It is uselessly laden with jute, and has been lying there idle for ever so long. If he would only lend me his boat, I should man her with a hundred oars, and hoist sails, five or six or seven. I should never steer her to stupid markets. I should sail the seven seas and the thirteen rivers of fairyland. But, mother, you won't weep for me in a corner."

For children, to live is to discover. To discover means to find out about things vaguely known or completely new. While going out for adventure the child-hero keeps in his mind the mother's agony at his father's departure to the distant land. 'The Further Bank' echoes the same:

"When the day is done and the shadows cower under the trees, I shall come back in the dusk. I shall never go away from you into the town to work like father. Mother, if you don't mind. I should
like to become the boatman of the ferry-boat
when I am grown up."}

The eternal 'Valgopal' (a child Krishna) concept of Vaishnava literature has been transformed into Tagore's concept of childhood. As a symbol of immaculate purity the Vaishnava 'Valgopal' has been drawing the attention of both the poets and the artists. Tagore's child has also captured the same:

"Ah, who was it coloured that little frock,
my child, and covered your sweet limbs
with that little red tunic?"

And again:

"What is it makes you laugh, my little
life-bud?
Mother smiles at you standing on the
threshold.
She claps her hands and her bracelets
jingle, and you dance with your bamboo
stick in your hand like a ting little shepherd."

It is only the child that possesses the instinct of seeing something utterly romantic in the life of the hawker who sells bangles, the gardener with his spade and the watchman swinging his lantern and making his rounds all night.

"When the gong sounds ten in the morning
and I walk to school by our lane,
Everyday I meet the hawker crying;
'Bangles, crystal bangles!' There is nothing to hurry him on, there is no road he must take, no place he must go to, no time when he must come home. I wish I were a hawker, spending my day in the road, crying, 'Bangles, crystal bangles!' "51

And then :

"When at four in the afternoon I come back from the school, I can see through the gate of that house the gardener digging the ground. He does what he likes with his spade, he soils his clothes with dust, nobody takes him to task if he gets baked in the sun or gets wet. I wish I were a gardener digging away at the garden with nobody to stop me from digging."52

At last, the child imagines, "I can see through my open window the watchman walking up and down. The lane is dark and lonely, and the streetlamp stands like a giant with one
red eye in its head.
The watchman swings his lantern and walks with his shadow at his side, and never once goes to bed in his life.
I wish I were a watchman walking the streets all night, chasing the shadows with my lantern."

Tagore finds the purest approach to imagination to be found in children. They do not always feel what adults expect them to feel, nor see what adults expect them to see. They inhabit the same world but they look at it so differently. In the poem entitled "The Flower-School",

"When storm clouds rumble in the sky and June showers come down,
The moist east wind comes marching over the heath to blow its bagpipes among the bamboos.
Then crowds of flowers come out of a sudden, from nobody knows where, and dance upon the grass in wild glee.
Mother, I really think the flowers go to school underground.
They do their lessons with doors shut, and if they want to come out to play before
it is time, their master makes them
stand in a corner.
When the rain comes they have their
holidays.  

In "The Astronomer", the poet paints a lovely picture filled with child-like imagination containing every range of green to black and the very yellow-white moon. Colour for Tagore "transcends all bounds", for in it is incorporated all that "he senses in the essence of a moment."

"I only said, 'When in the evening the round full moon gets entangled among the branches of that Kadam tree, couldn't somebody catch it?'

But dādā laughed at me and said,
'Baby, you are the silliest child I have ever known. The moon is ever so far from us, how could anybody catch it?'

I said, 'Dādā, how foolish you are!
When mother looks out of her window and smiles down at us playing, would you call her far away?' Still dādā said, 'You are a stupid child!
But, baby, where could you find a net big enough to catch the moon with?'

I said, 'Surely you could catch it with your hands.'

Tagore had written in Reminiscences:
"There was yet another place in our house which I have even yet not succeeded in finding out. A little girl playmate of my own age called this the 'kind's palace.' 'I have just been there', she would sometimes tell me. But somehow the propitious moment never turned up when she could take me along with her. That was a wonderful place, and its playthings were as wonderful as the games that were played there. It seemed to me it must be somewhere very near — perhaps in the first or second story; the only thing was one never seemed to be able to get there."

But the young poet's query knows no bounds:

"How often have I asked my companion, 'Only tell me, is it really inside the house or outside?' And she would always reply, 'No, no, it's in this very house.' I would sit and wonder: 'Where then can it be? Don't I know all the rooms of the house?' Who the king might be I never cared to inquire; where his place is still remains undiscovered; this much was clear — the king's palace was in our house."

This childhood memory of the poet has given birth to a poem which steers him to visualise the world where the "Byangama" (the he-bird of the fairyland) and "Byangami" (the she-bird of the fairyland) and the beautiful princess live. The undaunted prince helps him to let his imagination loose.

"If people came to know where my king's
palace is, it would vanish into the air.
The walls are of white silver and the roof of shining gold.
The queen lives in a palace with seven courtyards, and she wears a jewel that cost all the wealth of seven kingdoms.
But let me tell you, mother, in a whisper, where my king's palace is.
It is at the corner of our terrace where the pot of the tulsi plant stands.
The princess lies sleeping on the faraway shore of the seven impassable seas.
There is none in the world who can find her but myself.\textsuperscript{60}

The child requests his mother:

"When the heavy rain patters for hours on the bamboo leaves, and our windows shake and rattle at the gusts of wind, I like to sit alone in the room, mother, with you, and hear you talk about the desert of Tepántar in the fairy tale.
Where is it, mother, on the shore of what sea, at the foot of what hills, in the kingdom of what king?\textsuperscript{61}
Or, he desires:

"Supposing, I became a champa flower, just for fun, and grew on a branch high up that tree, and shook in the wind with laughter and danced upon the newly budded leaves, would you know me, mother? You would call, 'Baby, where are you?' and I should laugh to myself and keep quite quiet. I should slyly open my petals and watch you at your work."  

Again and again, the child dreams of visiting strange lands undiscovered and unexplored. He gives his mother, the only listener, a vivid description of the same and assures her to return again:

"There in the early morning light pearls tremble on the meadow flowers, pearls drop on the grass, and pearls are scattered on the sand in spray by the wild sea waves. My brother shall have a pair of horses with wings to fly among the clouds. For father I shall bring a magic pen that, without his knowing, will write of itself. For you, mother, I must have the casket and jewel that cost seven kings their kingdoms."
For, the child's world is a world —

"Where messengers run errands for no
cause between the kingdoms of kings of no
history;
where Reason makes kites of her laws
and flies them, and Truth sets Fact free
from its fetters."^64

The child does not get importance from both the brother and the parents. Therefore, he does not want to give importance to his younger sister. The hope of being superior springs within his mind:

"Mother, your baby is silly! She is so
absurdly childish!
She does not know the difference between
the tights in the streets and the stars.
...

When I open a book before her and ask
her to learn her a, b, c, she tears the leaves
with her hands and roars for joy at nothing;
this is your baby's way of doing her
lesson."^65

The father is the idol of the child. He dreams of capturing fatherly appearance
and gestures day and night:

"I am small because I am a little child. I shall
"Khokar moner thik majhkhantite
Ami jadi pari basa nite..."

"I wish I could take a quiet corner in the
heart of my baby's very own world."

("Baby's World", The Crescent Moon)
be big when I am as old as my father is.
My teacher will come and say, 'It is
late, bring your slate and your books.'
I shall tell him, 'Do you not know I am
as big as father? And I must not have
lessons any more.'

The child feels joy at the pages of rhymes, fairy-tales, folk-tales and fables
dealing with animals. He does not like those books written by his father for
they are not understandable to him. But he does not understand the cause of his
mother’s attraction to them. So the innocent child inquires about:

"You say that father writes a lot of books,
but what he writes I don’t understand.
He was reading to you all the evening,
but could you really make out what he
meant?
what nice stories, mother, you can tell
us! Why can’t father write like that, I
wonder?
Did he never hear from his own mother
stories of giants and fairies and princesses?
Has he forgotten them all?"

By analysing child-psychology it is felt that children have natural sympathy
with birds and animals. He can not bear the burden of refusal from anybody.
Even, he can not tolerate the refusals imposed upon his near and dear ones:
"If I were only a little puppy, not your baby, mother dear, would you say 'NO' to me if I tried to eat from your dish? Would you drive me off, saying to me, 'Get away, you naughty little puppy?' Then go, mother, go! I will never come to you when you call me, and never let you feed me any more.""68

The excerpts, taken at random in the following, may suggest how the mother-child relationship of The Crescent Moon reflects the mental (spiritual) state which is part of Tagore's thematic preoccupation in the concept of childhood:

1. "Who stole sleep from baby's eyes? I must know.

Clasping her pitcher to her waist mother went to fetch water from the village / near by.

... ... ...

In the meanwhile the Sleep-stealer came and, snatching sleep from baby's eyes, flew away."69

2. "Why are those tears in your eyes, my child?

... ... ...

You have stained your fingers and face
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with ink while writing — is that why they
call you dirty?

O, fie! Would they dare to call the full
moon dirty because it has smudged its face with ink?"'

3. "Child, how happy you are sitting in the
dust, playing with a broken twig all the
morning.
I smile at your play with that little bit of a broken twig.

... ... ...

Child, I have forgotten the are of being
absorbed in sticks and mud-pies."'

4. "When I bring you coloured toys, my child,
I understand why there is such a play of
colours on clouds, on water, and why
flowers are painted in tints — when I give
coloured toys to you, my child."'

5. "Say of him what you please, but I know
my child's failings.
I do not love him because he is good,
but because he is my little child."'

6. "Mother, the folk who live up in the
clouds call out to me —
'We play from the time we wake till'
the day ends.

We play with the golden dawn, we play with the silver moon.""\(^74\)

7. "Why do you sit there on the floor so quiet and silent, tell me, mother dear?

What has happened to you that you look so strange?

Haven't you got a letter from father today?""\(^75\)

8. "When, on the great festival of puja, the neighbour's children come and play about the house, I shall melt into the music of the flute and throb in your heart all day.""\(^76\)

9. "The night is dark now, and I call for her, 'Come back, my darling; the world is asleep; and no one would know, if you came for a moment while stars are gazing at stars.' ""\(^77\)

10. "I want to give you something, my child, for we are drifting in the stream of the world. Our lives will be carried apart, and our love forgotten."
But I am not so foolish as to hope that I
could buy your heart with my gifts."\textsuperscript{78}

To Tagore the child's world has been made of a "fresh feeling of wonder."\textsuperscript{79}

To the poet,

"It was a period to which, if error was natural, so was the
boyish faculty of hoping, believing and rejoicing. And if
the fuel of error was necessary for feeding the flame of
enthusiasm them while that which was fit to be reduced
to ashes will have become ash, the good work done by
the flame will not have been in vain in my life."\textsuperscript{80}

He hopes that his song will touch the child's forehead "like a kiss of blessing"\textsuperscript{81} resembling "a pair of wings"\textsuperscript{82} to his (the child's) dreams. The child's
life, resembling "a flame of light"\textsuperscript{83}, "unflickering and pure"\textsuperscript{84}, brings delight to
the life of those who "clamour and fight"\textsuperscript{85}, "doubt and despair"\textsuperscript{86}, "know no
end to their wranglings."\textsuperscript{87} Tagore has identified the child with the messenger
of God — the Almighty. Again and again he brings forth the heavenly message
from the garden of Eden:

"Bless this little heart, this white soul that
has won the kiss of heaven for our earth.
He loves the light of the sun, he loves
the sight of his mother's face.
He has not learned to despise the dust,
and to hanker after gold.
Clasp him to your heart and bless him."\textsuperscript{88}
William Blake has been greatly influenced by the Bible. While he was mere of a child, he had a power of imaginative visualization, whether with the inward or the outward eye. At the age of four, he was "frightened by seeing God look in through the window."\textsuperscript{89} A little later he saw a tree at Peckham full of angels — an externalized vision.

"But it cannot be generically different from what Blake himself wrote in 1810 about the sunrise: "I see an innumerable company of the Heavenly host crying: 'Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty.' I question not my Corporeal or Vegetative Eye any more than I would Question a Window concerning a sight. I look thro' it & not with it." Again Tatham, one of the young friends of his old age, records a childhood vision of Ezekiel. Blake cultivated his visionary power."\textsuperscript{90}

Blake declared himself a Christian without reservation:

"I still & shall to Eternity Embrace Christianity and Adore him who is the Express image of God ..."\textsuperscript{91}

When Blake declares his worship of "him who is the Express Image of God"\textsuperscript{92} he is speaking not of the historical Jesus but rather the universal divine humanity. "Human nature is the image of God" and

"Man can have no idea of any thing greater than Man as a cup cannot contain more than its capaciousness. But God is a man, not because he is so perceiv'd by man, but because he is the creator of man."\textsuperscript{94}
These quotations are taken from Blake's earliest writings. At the end of his life he was to affirm with greater assurance the same realization. In the margins of his copy of Berkeley's Siris he wrote:

"Imagination or the Human Eternal Body in Every Man... Imagination is the Divine Body in Every Man."\(^{95}\)

It is well known to all that the Upanishadic impact upon Tagore was immense. This truth needs no proof, it is spontaneous. Early in his life, Tagore had imbided a feeling of piety from his father and brothers as the family used to be surcharged with an atmosphere of religion. The founder of a new religion in a monotheistic frame, his father Maharshi Debendranath, took personal interest in seeing to it that his children became initiated into the spirit of the new faith. In due course Tagore developed a love for the Upanishadic concepts and ventured to satisfy his sense of piety through independent exploration. This is evident from the pages of Reminiscences:

"On one occasion my father came home to invest the three of us with the sacred thread. With the help of Pandit Vedantavagish he had collected the old Vedic rites for the purpose. For days together we were taught to chant in correct accents the selections from the Upanishads, arranged by my father under the name of 'Brahma Dharma', seated in the prayer hall with Becharam Babu."\(^{96}\)

Rabindranath has revitalised the teachings of the ancient Upanishads, which every Hindu carries in the unconscious depths of his heart. He intuitively feels
the all-pervasiveness of God in every object of life and in all human relations and makes us feel the truth of it by imaginative vividness. This Gof of the Upanishads becomes to him a playmate, an intimate friend and lover, taking him into confidence in the sports of his divine lila and offering glimpses of Himself through the veil of natural objects. He even becomes the presiding spirit of his poetry, urging him to write and even putting words into his mouth. This dry-as-dust world of the common people is transfigured for him into a haunt of divine communion; every speck of dust, every drop of dew, every beam of sunlight becomes for him transfused with the tender radiance of the Divinity. The dogma of the Upanishadic philosophy becomes for him a living symbol of the presence of the God. The Vaishnava doctrine of divine love and friendship mingles with the Vedantic Brahma and gives to him a new spiritual insight and intuition.

The God of Tagore is the result of the overflowing joy of the Absolute. The Upanishads have taught him:

"... perfect bliss was Brahman. For it is from bliss these beings are born. It is by bliss that, when born, they live, and it is bliss that they enter on passing away."

Tagore has realised that the universe with all its colour and beauty is the joyful expression and manifestation of the Lord. The supreme person is characterised by unconditioned existence (Sat), supreme life-force (Chit), and unexcellable bliss (Ananda). Human soul, Tagore insists, is conscious, full of joy, and absolutely free from taints. The realisation of this supreme truth is the source of joy that knows no end. Joy is attained only when the soul can rise
above the external objects and the and the cross-currents of the mind. A Vedantist in a wide sense, Rabindranath has pinned his faith in joy, goodness, beauty and truth in life and art. Most of his songs are an expression of the irresistible urge for union with the universe, aglow with joy. A few excerpts of such songs deserve mention:

"To the feast of the world of joy I have been invited.
Blessed, indeed, is my human life.
My eyes are feasting upon the rich fare of beauty;
and my ears are absorbed in the grand profundity of music."98

Again,

"Your joy has reached every door.
O citizens, spread your cloth on the dust to receive it."99

Again,

"The stream of joy flows throughout the universe.
The nectar of life overflows in the universe throughout
the day and night."100

William Blake's *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* bears no testimony to the days of his own childhood. He has his own understanding of the events of the life of Jesus, from his birth to the crucifixion. The extraordinary radiance and poignancy of all Blake's poems about infancy — Infant Joy, the child on a cloud of *Songs of Innocence*; the Infant Sorrow who leaps into the dangerous world "Helpless, naked, piping loud"101, — come surely from his belief that in every birth the Divine Humanity is born anew. Its importance lies not only in its
contents, but in its method of publication — the only method by which any of
his books was ever published in his life-time. There was no typesetting or printing
from type. He wrote his words and drew his pictures on the copper plate in
some liquid impervious to acid, then he applied acid to eat away the surface of
the rest of the plate leaving the words and pictures in relief. Then he applied ink
or colour-wash and so printed, the pictorial part being finished off by hand with
watercolour. This is Blake's Illuminated Printing.

On the pages of The Crescent Moon by Tagore are reflected the sweetest
memories of his childhood days. In the preface to Reminiscences Tagore has
realised:

"When, however, before turning into the evening resthouse,
we look back upon the cities, fields, rivers and hills which
we have been through in Life's morning, then, in the light
of the passing day, are they pictures indeed. Thus, when
my opportunity came, did I look back, and was
engrossed."\textsuperscript{102}

Again,

"What one has truly felt, if only it can be made sensible
to others, is always of importance to one's fellowmen. If
pictures which have taken shape in memory can be brought
out in words, they are worth a place in literature."\textsuperscript{103}

The period of the monarchy of servants, an old banyan tree standing on the
eastern bank of a pond, the enforced confinement saturated with the glimpses
of Nature, pleading his mother for exemption from taking lessons, warm response to his father's letter, "... the sing-song of the bangle-seller"\textsuperscript{104}, the "King's palace"\textsuperscript{105}, undaunted adventures in distant lands "not named in any geography"\textsuperscript{106} — all these provide extremely valuable source material for \textit{The Crescent Moon}. Having literary charm of their own, they have been recorded in the form of poetry. Herein lies the significant appropriateness of \textit{The Crescent Moon} in the domain of the literature for children.

One who opens his eyes and tries earnestly to see the world, to him the world puts off its mask of vastness and becomes small as one thing, as one touch of the eternal. This is what Tagore has preached through his poetry. This is the feeling that Blake has crystallised in the lines:

"To see a World in a Grain of Sand  
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower,  
Holy Infinity in the palm of your hand  
And Eternity in an hour."\textsuperscript{107}

It is opined:

"Undoubtedly it is to be observed that Rabindranath's literary talent has received its proper dimension from the composition of his paintings. No western literateur has ever been so perfect as William Blake to express his own literary talent through the medium of painting."\textsuperscript{108}

Both these painters have been identified with the concept of childhood. Both of them show a rare association of comparatively common powers which are
stimulated to an intense activity, and in moments of inspiration accomplish supreme achievements of the human mind.

That range and variety bringing all the facets of child-life while mirroring the myriad vision of childhood is absent in Blake. His aim is to study the conditions of the human soul in two contrary states. Hence in 'Songs of Innocence' there is the depiction of childhood having the celestial hue. Because the child who is innocent and pure without having any knowledge of the world of reality knows only the shepherd, lamb and God. The external world with its knowledge of 'getting' and 'spending' is still unknown to him.

So far as the 'mood' of the juvenile poems of both Tagore and Blake is concerned, there is a striking resemblance. Both of them have brought the spontaneous joy of the juvenile world in their poems. While 'joy' is the supreme mood of Blake's 'Songs of Innocence' that joy is diffused in all the juvenile poems of Tagore. Blake is a joyful mystic. Rabindranath is not otherwise.

But could both Blake and Rabindranath ignore the vision of reality staring even the innocent world of the children in the face? The poet who creates an eldorado for the children, has shifted his vision to the other world — the world of woe, selfishness, jealousy, greed and indignation — which is synonymous with experience. Though "... his child poems, more abundant than Blake's, blend Blake's innocence with an almost sophisticated humour", he does not however shrink from identifying these two phases of innocence and experience which
dwell in childhood. Tagore has felt (like Blake) the disappearance of "the benign guardians..." and "in their place are the tyrants" in the world of children which stare the children in the face. A few of the following poems will show the poet's displeasure with experience (in a word "... the mood is one of disillusioment") as an upshot of moral conventions and hard social realities.

The poem "Balak" ("The Boy") in Parishesh (The Last, 1932) records the agony of the poet's own loneliness felt in his childhood:

"When I was young, at a room
in the corner of the roof
at silent noon
placing heads on the door
and being seated on a mat
I spent the day alone —
ignoring rules of studies and playfulness
... ... ...
The hawker hawks from the other
side of the lane —
an unknown one flies kite from a distant roof,
frequently
clock chimes at some tower.
... ... ...
Meaningless enjoyment
along with meaningless agony gives birth to
meaningless dreams."
The companion of the no-companion.

It seems to show one the blue carpet in
the horizon."

The lines echo time and again the dream wedded to infant reminiscences and the poet's longing for freedom.

In "Chiradiner Daga" ('The Affliction Eternal') published in Palataka (The Fugitive, 1918), Tagore has shown a down-to-earth reality beset with woe and agony in his vision. Hence, joy prevails nowhere. The girl child Shaila, the neglected fourth daughter of a family, has been prevented from meeting the old neighbour whom she loves as a rescuer from her father's cruelty following the scribblings on her father's account-book. She has passed through this pathetic experience of her life. But after her death in a ship drowning, the poet realizes:

"That scribbled account-book,
that pages resembling her eyes
look at my face
The time of that playful calculations is now no more.

...          ...

Only left this
affliction eternal
caused by a child's scribblings on my heart.""

"Shesh Chitthi" ('The Last Letter') is another poem tinged with pathos. For it presents the tragic death of the child heroine who has expressed her innermost
feelings through a letter to her father and which is found unfortunately after her premature demise. While groping the domestic articles inside the room of the little girl, the poet confesses:

"I sit silent on the seat
in front of the table.
There's the red leather case
she used to take to school.
From it I pick up an exercise-book,
a maths one, as it happens.
Out slips an envelope, unopened,
with my own address
in Amli's childish hand."

The letter reveals the girl's last wish interlaced with her agony and loneliness:

"'I want to see you so much'.
There's nothing else on the paper."

This filial affection as the poem records, leaves a note of void in the heart of the bereaved father. Hence the reality of death which has visited the girl and robbed her of her life and snatched her away from all filial bondage.

"Chheleta" ('The Boy') in *Punashcha* (*The Post-Script*, 1932) is a wonderful composition of Tagore in depth, characterisation, reality and child-psychology. This neglected orphan who has been brought up by a close-door neighbour is not the prototype of "Shishu" and "Shishu Bholanath". He is devoid of both the luminous halo of the mother's love and the father's affection. He does not care
for the so-called discipline and other trifling codes of life. He is the child of "Experience", who does not dream of "pleasant streams"\textsuperscript{117}, "sweet moans"\textsuperscript{118} or "dovellite sighs"\textsuperscript{119} which governs the little child in Blake's "A Cradle Song":

"He was about ten years old, an orphan raised in a home that wasn't his own, like a weed that springs up by a broken fence, not tended by a gardener, receiving sunlight, gusts of wind, rain, insects, dust and grit, which sometimes a goat crops off or a cow tramples down, which yet doesn't die, gets tougher, with a falter stem and shiny green leaves."\textsuperscript{120}

His love for carefree life manifests in him a peculiar type of arrogance and restlessness:

"Neither fear nor loathing did his body know. He would pick up a fat frog just like that and in a hole in the garden meant to take a pole keep it as a pet, nourish with insects. He'd stow beetles in a cardboard box, feed them on dung-balls, raise hell if anyone tried to chuck them."
He'd go to school with a squirrel in his pocket.

One day he put a harmless snake inside the teacher's desk, thinking, 'Let's just see what Sir does!'

The gentleman opened his desk, leaped and ran — his flight was quite a thing to see.\textsuperscript{121}

In this way, the boy of ten cheates his own world passing through contrary events and experiences in this world of "getting and spending":

"From the jujube tree he'd fall, trying to pluck its drupes, and break his bones, faint after eating poisonous berries, get lost on his way to the Chariot Festival; but nothing could destroy him: halfdead, he'd revive, lost, he'd return, caked with mud, his clothes ripped; would be spanked hard and yelled at in torrents, and when freed, he'd run off again."\textsuperscript{122}

In the adult world of cruelty, prejudice, greed and discord, the child, like the little child in Blake's "Infant Sorrow", feels:

"My mother groaned, my father wept; Into the dangerous world I leapt; Helpless, naked, piping loud, Like a fiend hid in a cloud."\textsuperscript{123}
Like Blake's child, Tagore's "The Boy" knows too that the adult world is a dangerous place to live in, where one finds strife, struggle, bondage etc. Tagore has made a deep probe into it and thus:

"Ambika the schoolmaster regretted to me,
'Even your poems written for children don't appeal to him. That's how thick he is.
Mischievously cuts the pages
and says the mice did it,
the monkey that he is.'
I said, 'The fault is mine.
If there was a poet truly of his own world,
the beetles would come out so vivid in his verse
the boy wouldn't be able to leave it.
Have I ever managed to write with authenticity
about frogs, or that bald dog's tragedy?"  

Like Blake's "Seven Summers Old / Lovely Lyca ..." in "The Little Girl Lost" and "The Little Girl Found" or ("Songs of Experience") who, lost in desert, falls asleep in the frowning night, while the beasts of prey come from deep caves and gambol around her, the little Bami in Tagore's "Hariye Jaoya" ("Getting Lost") published in Palataka (The Fugitive, 1918) does not appear to be so. But;

"... having heard the call of her mates,
stopping and starting nervously in the dark,
was making her way down the stairs.
And at last:

"... it seemed that as she'd been going down the stairs,
the wind had blown out her lamp."\(^{127}\)

Then,

"She cried from below, 'I'm lost!'"\(^{128}\)

Bami's blazing lamp (innocence) has been turned into the blown-out one (experience). Darkness (obviously a symbol of experience) envelopes her. She is now no more. Her innocent call "I'm lost" has been extended to the vastness of the sky of Chaitra, full of stars (transformation from innocence to experience). Blake believed that the gateway to eternity lies through a complete satisfaction of the human senses and moreover this satisfaction has come from experience. Tagore has realised the same:

"... on that night of Chaitra, full of stars,
back on the roof-terrace looking up at the sky,
a girl just like my Bami I thought I saw —
slowly, without companions, walking by,
lamp-flame shielded by dark-blue sari's end.
Should her light have gone out, making her suddenly stop,
she would have filled the sky with her cry — 'I am lost!'"\(^{129}\)

In "Prashna" ("The Question") — one of the few prose-poems in Lipika (Letter: Prose Poems, 1922) — the father who had just returned from the cremation of the departed mother, found his little boy of seven:
"... his body bare, a gold amulet round his
neck — was alone by the window above the lane.
He was unaware of his own thoughts."\(^{130}\)

And then:

"The father came and took his little boy in his arms. The
little boy asked: 'Where's Mummy?'

The father lifted his head upwards and said: 'In Heaven.'\(^{131}\)

Heaven appeared to the little child as something where there is bliss, peace
and no suffering of the world. And the said poem is typical of innocence:

"The morning sun had just touched the tip of the neem tree
in / front of the house opposite. A man selling green mangoes
came / to the lane, called several times, then went away."\(^{132}\)

The innocent morning had been fainted away very soon. The grief-stricken,
bereaved father sobbed intermittently in his sleep. Experience crept in with all
its images (the night and its hovering darkness):

"A lantern glimmered by the door. A pair of lizards kept /
watch on the wall. / The room faced an open terrace. At some
point the little boy / went outside and stood there. / All around
him the houses with their extinguished lights looked / like
guards at a giant's palace, sleeping in a standing position."\(^{133}\)

Like Blake none could adore the little boy with:

"Sweet dreams, form a shade
O'er my lovely infant's head;
Sweet dreams of pleasant streams
By happy, silent, moony beams.

... ... ...

Sleep, sleep, happy child,

All creation slept and smiled; Sleep, sleep, happy sleep,

While o'er thee thy mother weep."

Instead under the vengeance of the night:

"The naked child stood staring at the sky.

His bewildered mind was asking a question of someone:

'Where's

the road to heaven?'

The sky didn't answer, only the stars trembled with the
dumb darkness's tears."

In 'Brahman' ('The Brahmin') — the notable one in Chitra (Chitra, a collection of poems, 1896) Tagore has chosen Satyakam, an innocent boy from

Chhandogyopanishad which tells us the story of Satyakam. The story begins
with the boy's query to his mother Jabala, about his identity. But the mother
could not be that frank with the child. She answers vaguely telling him that he
was hidden in her very bosom. This boy when approached Gautam to join his
school as a seeker of the knowledge of Brahma, the master asked the boy about
his lineage. The boy unaware of his father's identity came back to his mother
and insisted her on telling him about his father. The mother could not hide her
shame from the boy and disclosed the fact how he was born. The boy pure of
heart, went straightway to Gautam and without any inhibition reported the Guru
as he was told by his mother. When Gautam heard this story, he understood that
the boy was an outcast. But Gautam paid the boy his due reward for his truthfulness and innocence and allowed him to study in his hermitage as his priceless disciple. The whole narrative is a unique example of both innocence and experience which co-exist in life and present the picture of that reality which Blake's *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience* inform.

In Tagore's "Devatar Grash" ("The Wrath of God"), through a child protagonist, Rakhal, Tagore has come down heavily on the social scenario of his time, played by religious superstitions or orthodox taboos. How an innocent boy is sacrificed in the sea to abate the storm as a sequel to God's wrath is the story of Tagore's "Devatar Grash". The boy wants to join a pilgrimage along with others of a team in a village. The boy's own mother was reluctant to spare the boy to this sea voyage. But the mother finally had to yield to the boy's insistence on going to the sea. The farewell of the mother was not a happy one. Unfortunately, it was a farewell for good. The boy did not return. He became a victim of the situation which stared the ship in the face. At the behest of the headman, the boy was thrown into the turbulent sea. Hence the contrary pictures of innocence and experience, dwelling side by side on human planes to complete the cycle of joy and pain, construction and destruction, life and death. A boy being innocent does not know that the world is "more full of weeping" beyond his comprehension. But he does not always remain alien to this world of experience. Like Blake, Tagore too has presented this double vision of reality. Hence the story of innocence and experience in both Blake and Tagore.
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