

Topic - William Blake's Two Incompatible States: Songs of Innocence and Songs of Experience.

- ⇒ In studying Blake's Songs of Innocence and Experience, (which had merged into one work in 1794), the two Contrary States of Innocence and Experience are not only symbolized in the poem alone but rather, there exists a closely-knit coherence between each poem and its particular design.
- ⇒ Innocence and Experience, the two Contrary States of the human soul, are opposites. The state of Innocence is selfless and desire to please "All." It represents the spontaneous happiness of childhood. Truly, nothing in the world of emotion is lighter than the happiness of a child.
- ⇒ This Innocence, possessed by each of us in childhood or fantasy, is a kind of proof that we do possess the powerful, creative, and "Divine Imagination". Experience, on the other hand, is blighted innocence. It is an analytic state of mind that finds the limits of the world the human's fallen perception gives him.
- ⇒ It is selfish and has a devouring character which seeks to please only itself. The greatness of Blake's work arises from the juxtaposition of the two modes of vision - Innocence and Experience.
- ⇒ Not only are Innocence and Experience Contrary States but, there are also exist two Contrary types of Innocence as well as two Contrary States of Experience. Moreover, these Contrary States appear in single poems.

⇒ According to Blake, although innocence is highly associated with childhood, an individual could move back into innocence, especially when in old age. This example is evident in the poem 'The Echoing Green'. In this poem, the narrator states that 'old John with white hair / Does laugh away care / Sitting under the oak / Among the old folk.'

⇒ Blake was thirty years old when he began to write Song of Innocence which is amazing because in order to compose such songs, one would have to, himself, be so deeply dyed in such spontaneous innocence.

⇒ The finest poems of the Songs of Innocence are those in which there is some admission of the hardships which actually face the innocents of the world; but, in these poems the innocent view can be seen as easily transcending adversity.

⇒ The tree of innocence is large and healthy, its branches entwined in a natural embrace; but it anticipates the fall in the serpentine creeper that often winds about its trunk. The tree of Experience is dry and dying, its withering branches from round arches or flat, inhibiting horizontals.

⇒ Songs of Innocence are introduced and sung by the Piper, Songs of Experience by the Bard, superficially there seems to be little to distinguish from one to the other since the piper clearly exhibits imaginative visions and the Bard "Present, past and future sees"

⇒ Yet for each, the past, present and future are different; for the piper the past can only be the Primal Unity, for the present is Innocence and the immediate future is Experience; To be Continued...