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William Blake's Guided Development of the Psyche: Augmenting Readerly Perception

Senior Paper

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“Man’s consciousness was created to the end that it may (1) recognize its descent from a higher unity; (2) pay due and careful regard to this source; (3) execute its commands intelligently and responsibly; and (4) thereby afford the psyche as a whole the optimum degree of life and development.” – C.G. Jung

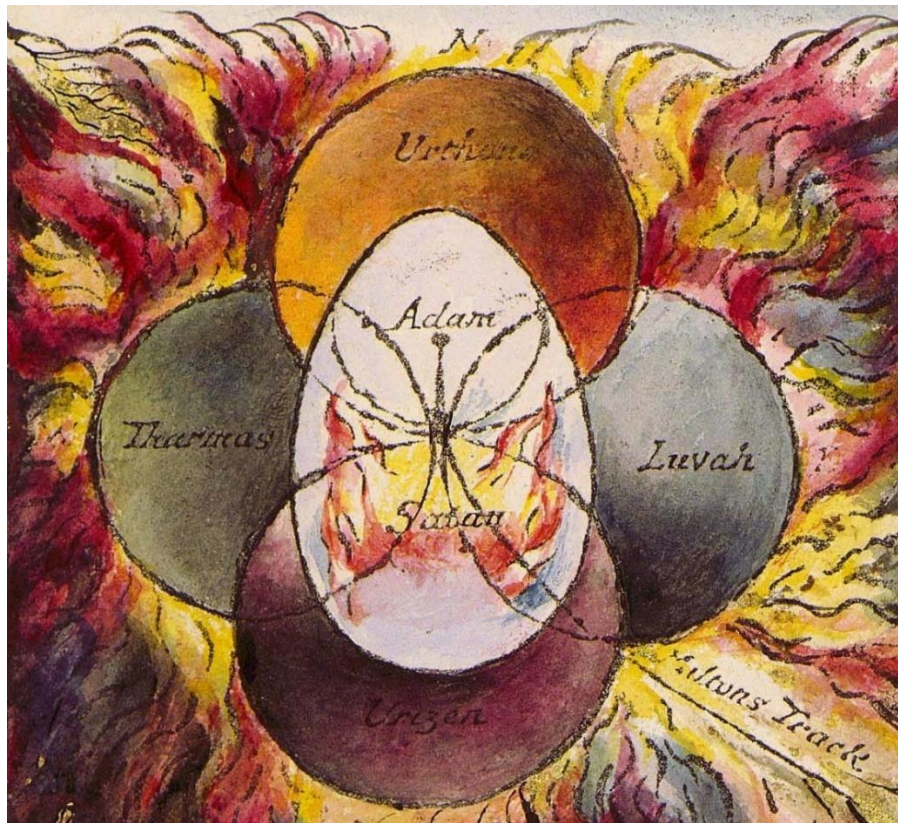
Human beings are all faced with the peculiar existential predicament of being tethered to a certain historical and cultural moment, and within that seemingly finite span of time where our lives are acted out, we must face the arduously individuated course of our perceptive development. Late 18th century British poet and visual artist William Blake was keenly observant of this temporal situation and of the difficulties inherent in attempting to live in accordance with what he referred to as *poetic genius*: “...Poetic Genius is the true Man... the body or outward form of Man is derived from the Poetic Genius.” (Blake 98). This neo-Platonic formal conceptualization of the poetic genius matches up thematically with the first aspect of Jung’s statement regarding the optimal conditions for life and development; In Blake’s view, the poetic genius *is* that higher unity from which human consciousness springs. Any outward expressions of humanity (art, literature, philosophy, religion, etc.) are dictated by the imaginative capacity of the inner-individual and by that imaginative capacity’s connection to ultimate, non-temporal reality.

Blake wrote at lengths about the ways in which most people’s mental faculties are atrophied, one-sided, and in dire need of a paradigmatic shift. In the Age of Enlightenment, reason had become the most privileged of man’s capacities for relating to material reality, but Blake’s own cosmological rendering of the order of the world rails against that pervasive intellectual instinct. For him, the imagination was the most important tool in the human being’s perceptive arsenal – by it, all other sensory faculties are corralled. In this way, Blake is an

outsider to the intellectual and artistic movements of both his own time and to the trends of our cultural and historical moment. His poems, paintings, and engravings were obscure and unpopular during his lifetime, and it was only well after the fact that his work came to be viewed as participating within the larger canon of “great” British literature. This unpopularity can be easily attributed to a few factors, including: the inaccessibility of his preferred artistic medium since much of his work is large and engraved on copper-etched plates, the inaccessibility of much of his poetry’s arcane language, and his subversive ideologies, like his disdain for organized religion and its associated moral absolutism.

Through producing a body of work which is so purposefully dense, difficult to access, and daunting to the unexperienced, Blake takes on the task of a mystic visionary artist – one who imbibes his artwork with an idiosyncratic depiction of the spiritual totality of the human form. One contemporary analog to this approach to art can be found in the visual art of painter Alex Grey, known for intermingling scientifically-detailed anatomical imagery with both spiritual and psychedelic-inspired motifs. Blake’s poetry and art bring to light observations and musings that are inherently shrouded in esoteric mystery, like codes that can be decoded only by the uniquely-honed perceptive capacities of the individual that interacts with them. When one encounters the ineffable in direct experiential terms, it can never be adequately relayed to another person just by way of description – it is like discovering a center to reality that can only be talked *around*. These kinds of mysteries must be tackled (or ignored) by each and every person, and Blake believed that human beings are endowed with four differing and interrelating modes of perception which individuals can use to better interpret lived experience. He named these the Four Zoas: *Tharmas*, *Urizen*, *Luvah*, and *Urthona*. As my essay unfolds, this fourfold conceptualization of the psyche will become indispensable as it relates to how Blake gives his

audience the chance to train themselves to arrive at a perceptive dynamism which enables that aforementioned “optimum degree of life and development.” (Jung 253). I assert that Blake’s canon of poetry and art operates as its own cipher to its embedded codes pertaining to the material and spiritual totality of the human condition. Through encountering his art, one begins to slowly unlearn the kinds of socially disseminated perceptive habits that discredit humankind’s imaginative capacities.



Above, the Zoas are depicted in a tethered, interconnected manner in Plate 33 from Blake’s epic poem, *Milton*, dating from the latter part of his career, around 1810 (523). Blake draws from biblical and classical sources in order to construct this mythographic abstraction of the composite elements of human awareness. The ancient Greek word Zoa as it appears in Revelation is commonly translated into “beast.” These biblical “beasts” appear in groups of four, both in the Old and New Testaments, once in the Book of Ezekiel and once again in John of

Patmos' Revelation. Blake takes this biblical imagery and reconstitutes the symbols to represent, "the four fundamental aspects of Man: His body (Tharmas – west); His reason (Urizen – south); His emotions (Luvah – east); His imagination (Urthona – north)." (Damon 553). The Plate on page three depicts the cardinal directions and their association with each Zoa. On the left and bottom (both directions with negative associations extrinsically tied to them, such as left-handedness, deviancy, or Hell), there resides the body (Tharmas) and reason (Urizen), respectively. It is on the right and the top where the emotional (Luvah) and imaginative (Urthona) capacities find themselves. This spatial depiction of the Zoas reflects Blake's own intellectual and philosophical uneasiness towards the Enlightenment trend of favoring the findings of the material or purely reasoned sides of humanity's perceptive capacities. Instead of praising reason as the key that unlocks all of reality's wonders, Blake gives primacy to the intuitive, more individuated capacities of the human psyche. It is important to note that all of this is not to say that Blake despised reason or the physical body, but rather that he found great distress in the fact that they were dominating their respective binary pairs in intellectual discourse. In other words, he saw the Enlightenment trend toward favoring rationality as ignoring the necessary interrelation between all four Zoas that is necessary for a holistic cognitive map of reality.

The Zoas are a complex mythological tool utilized by Blake to condense and reunify the seemingly paradoxical states of the human psyche's composite elements. Take for direct instance the natural opposition between Urthona and Urizen – they diametrically and directionally oppose one another, but they are both integral elements of the intellect which are to be *appropriately* implemented in order to help create a functioning, well-rounded cosmological framework for reality. Understanding intuitively and emotionally the complex push and pull between reason and

imagination (i.e. confronting the *nonrational* nature of the dualism inherent to the world of experience) gives the Blakean-influenced perceiver an advantage over one who is stuck in a place of stubborn alignment to either one binary extreme or the other. It is in the resolution, or unification, of binary paradoxes where Truth (or ultimate reality and fullest humanity) is found.

The Zoas, all the while being a textual artifact, also relate to a functioning capacity of the human intellect. In other words, not only will utilizing the strengths of each Zoa help parse Blake's denser poetry, but it will also become a useful tool for interrelating with one's own experiences of lived reality. This essay will use Blake's Four Zoas as the necessary critical apparatus by which to understand how to meaningfully encounter his poetry and visual art – One simultaneously learns how to implement the interplay of their own Zoas upon Blake's art and poetry *and upon their own life*, bringing themselves to communion with the divine reality that imbibes human life. For the human creature that experiences reality in a temporally-bound fashion and who refuses to acknowledge the possibility that learned, socially-imposed methods of interpreting experience may not be adequate enough to perceive the eternity that people naturally inhabit, Blake's works operate as a tool (à la meditation) to guide one to the unlimited potential that is contained, or constrained, within the human mind.

This aforementioned communion with eternity is man's highest state of perceptive awareness: "I give you the end of a golden string / Only wind it into a ball / It will lead you in at Heaven's gate / Built in Jerusalem's wall." (Blake 716). This quote is from the beginning of the fourth chapter of *Jerusalem*, Blake's last work chronicling the life trajectory of the primordial man, Albion – the Blakean mythological figure from whom the Four Zoas emanate. Albeit in Blake's typically obscure fashion, I contend that he is expressing his overarching authorial endeavor here in this chapter's introductory piece of verse. Through granting his readers an

augmented perception of reality (through the metaphorical conduit that is the “end of the string,” which is presumably connected to Heaven’s gate), he gives his readers the necessary tools with which to wholeheartedly encounter the non-temporal, transcendent reality which undergirds all human experience.

In order to show the ways in which the development of readerly perception is tended to by Blake throughout his oeuvre, I am going to begin the methodical analysis of his poetry and visual art through his best-known work, the *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* (compiled in 1794), working up to the swansong of Blake’s authorial efforts in *Jerusalem*. Through all of the poems and excerpts from *Jerusalem* that I intend to analyze, I will demonstrate how the Four Zoas are being specifically favored, engaged, or downplayed, illustrating how they strengthen certain aspects of readerly perception. This analysis should lead, ideally, to the harmonious unification of these four modes of awareness which can bring about the perceptual shift which demonstrates Blake’s truth that, “if the doors of perception were cleansed everything would appear to man as it is, infinite.” (154). Scholar Jonathan Kerr highlights this feature of Blake’s work by noting how many commentators recognize, “...Blake’s [notion of the] infinite as a sign for his enlivened, visionary movement toward imaginative or spiritual harmonization...” (56). Many scholars find difficulty in dealing with Blake’s slippery conceptualization of the infinite, expressing desires to connect it to natural science of the time (likely due to their own Enlightenment-style biases towards an all-encompassing rationalism). My own argument wishes to ease the difficulty of encountering Blake’s concept of infinity by positing that he is calling readers to become profoundly acquainted with their own interior experiences of what some call “the imaginal realm,” or what Jung and Edinger would refer to as the “collective symbolic unconscious,” or what Blake himself would sometimes call the “Poetic Genius.” In engaging

dialectically with the higher unity of human consciousness, learning to hone one's awareness toward a dynamic interrelation of the seemingly contradictory elements of the psyche, one is able to mentally, physically, and spiritually flourish instead of stumbling confusedly through life.

Written and engraved in the late 1780s, the first half of *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* is comparatively much easier to read and encounter than the later "Prophetic works" of Blake (which begin with *Tiriel* in 1789 and end with *Jerusalem* written from 1804 to 1820). Its poetic form frequently mimics the simplicity of nursery rhymes from the period, almost certainly as a way of illustrating some of Blake's nuanced cosmological ideas in a more palatable manner which call to mind the conceptual innocence that the poems and engravings dwell upon. The subtitle for the collection of *the Songs of Innocence and of Experience* is *Shewing the Two Contrary States of the Human Soul*, which presents the work as a sort of treatise pertaining to the intrinsic duality of humankind. In this light, it becomes interesting that they were initially not bound together as a complete work, but later had to be merged (or unified) by Blake as the second half was completed. This would turn the duality of *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* into a microcosmic representation of the development of perceptive faculties in waking life – Duality is thrust upon the mind of the innocent and must be overcome and unified by the experienced mind who has learned to master their own perceptive capacities by way of controlling the interrelation of their Four Zoas. The poems contained within this collection seem acutely worried about the issues surrounding productive development of the minds, bodies, and spirits of children in the late 18th century. Some poems spring from a place of deep hope and pastorally-tinged optimism, while some deal directly with quite bleak, oppressive, and repressive subject matter.

Structurally, the *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* are composed of nineteen poems in the Innocence section and twenty-six in the Experience section. Perhaps of most interest to myself are the paired poems, those poems in both sections of the work that share a thematic or titular resemblance. These poems directly illustrate Blake working through the difficulties of paired-opposites, with the differing inflections of meaning being dependent upon whether or not the poems are supposed to represent innocence or experience. Reflecting upon innocence, I would like to return the conversation to the foreground of Jungian psychoanalytics, through the lens of his student Edward Edinger's book *Ego and Archetype*. On page 11, he outlines the notion that the infantile ego lives in a state of oneness with the unconscious source of the collective human psyche, "Children share with primitive man the identification of the ego with the archetypal psyche." In other words, children in their innocence to the future of their lived, social reality, identify their self as undifferentiated from the source from which it sprang. Blake's notion of Innocence is aligned in interesting ways with the notion of ego identification with the archetypal psyche – Edinger posits that it is through, "the reality encounters which life provides... which are constantly contradicting unconscious ego-assumptions" that the ego's identification with its superconscious source is unlearned (12). For Blake, Innocence is the natural psychological state of the human creature that is made to be forcibly unlearned as one is socially coerced into donning the "mind-forg'd manacles" that Experience bring (216). When one re-learns to see beyond the perceptive limitations that are imposed upon them, they return to that perception of the self that is attached to a higher unity (or a divine reality, as I named it earlier).

To demonstrate the interrelation between the Jungian process of individuation (the process by which the ego learns to self-regulate to the point where it reaches that aforementioned

“optimum degree of life and development”) and Blake’s development of the perceptive capacities through the Four Zoas, I will begin by examining one of the paired poems from the Innocence section entitled “The Nurse’s Song.” (ibid. 253). This poem interacts jovially with the same psychological subject matter that was introduced in the previous paragraph, depicting a scene of dialogue between a young child at play and his Nurse who is attempting to persuade the child to come in from his day of play and exploration. The child, not yet ready to accept the limitations on his carefree habits, protests, exclaiming, “... let us play, for it is yet day / And we cannot go to sleep / Besides, in the sky the little birds fly / and the hills are all cover’d with sheep.” (Blake 121). In engaging in this dialogue with the Experienced Nurse, one whose life has already been marred by the perceptive blinders which disconnect adults from the higher unitive reality (where the individual ego experiences no separation from archetypal ego), the child is arguably igniting within her a remembrance of her once complete, whole state where life’s wonder filled her, and where play was the one of the only expressions of self. She tells the child, “... ‘go and play till the light fades away / And then go home to bed.’ / The little ones leaped and shouted and laughed / And all the hills ecchoed.” (ibid 121). Whether or not she is conscious of her reasoning for allowing it, she reinforces the child’s connection to the source-spring of self and indulges in his desires to revel in his innocence while it still naively persists. Exposure to oppressive social realities have not yet polluted his perceptive capacities.

The version of “The Nurse’s Song” in *Songs of Innocence* engages most directly with two perceptive faculties. The first Zoa engaged is exemplified through the Nurse by way of Luvah, or her emotional side. The Nurse, in observing the children innocently play to their heart’s content, finds her own heart stilled and calmed: “When the voices of children are heard on the green / and laughing is heard on the hill / My heart is at rest within my breast / And everything else is still.”

(Blake 121). She finds great joy and a sublime peace in observing the untainted actions of pure agents of innocence, a rare occurrence in life. The second engagement with a Zoa is associated with the child's capacity of Tharmas, which is tied to bodily senses, instinct, and power. In the poem's action, he does exactly what a small child *should not* do and exclaims against his nurse's order to cease his play and go to bed – A good child should always be obedient to their caregiver, as per traditional biblical moral teaching. It is precisely within his willful disobedience, which is kindly allowed due to the nurse's empathy for the child's innocent state, where the child finds his desires satiated. He used his energy associated with the faculty of Tharmas to perform a small rebellion against one of his childhood authorities, thus reaffirming his ego's connection to its higher unity and illustrating in a small, benign way Blake's stark rejection of overly lawful moral restriction.

It is during this depicted early stage of cognitive development where all other desires are seemingly superseded by the wish to prolong the ecstatic reality of revelry. The agent of innocence at that moment possesses what later becomes an impossible desire within social restraints: For every moment to be a moment of play. A more austere, restrained worldview has not yet been thrust upon the child by engagement with inhibiting social institutions and religious dogma. In Blake's later work, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* he goes so far to say that, "Those who restrain desire, do so because theirs is weak enough to be restrained." (149). The depiction in "The Nurse's Song" of an unrefined infantile ego operating only upon its instinct toward play, an act with no material social utility, expresses Blake's notion that if one expects to flourish as a human, desires should never be ignored or restrained. Such behavior is not only a sign of weakness of the will associated with an atrophied capacity of Tharmas, but will also lead to confused, withered individuals with no connection to their natural bodily desires.



If “The Nurse’s Song” from *Songs of Innocence* is about a successful act of youthful rebellion, “Nurse’s Song” from *Songs of Experience* (shown in the engraving above) paints an image in stark contrast to the Tharmas-affirming message of its innocent pair. It depicts a child who has no explicit agency connected to the exercise of his will and instinct; He doesn’t even possess a voice in this poem, despite appearing significantly older in the accompanying visual representation when compared with his depiction in the engraving for the innocent “Nurse’s Song” (Plate 38 shown above). One would presume that with age would come more agency, rather than less. Here, Blake is illustrating that the role of the doting Nurse is one of the contributing factors to the atrophying of the child’s capacity for Tharmas. In being groomed by his experiences of social reality (as well as by the ever-present influence of his Nurse), he loses sight of the necessity of fulfilling his bodily desires and begins to fall into the socially-created

trap of following orders rather than working to enact the fulfillment of his own wishes. The once-innocent child's transition to a jaded, detached adult has been initiated and depicted cleverly through his newfound lack of a voice. His individuality that was present in his innocence and in his wholeness of being (associated with his ego's connection to archetypal ego), has already been snuffed out even before his childhood has ended.

Beginning with the same imagery of the first poem in the pair, "When the voices of children are heard on the green..." but quickly changing into an altogether different tone, the second "Nurse's Song" depicts a rather neat binary opposition to its earlier pair (Blake 212). Not all of the paired poems from *Innocence* and *Experience* line up as clearly oppositional as these two examples. Yet readers may still trace how Blake works through issues of development and individuation when interpreting his poems from either collection. Blake gives his readers an insight into how he believes their own Zoas should be favored by focusing on the jaded, emotionally detached Nurse in the second "Nurse's Song," removing any trace of the voice or will of the once innocent child and establishing a contradictory tone which rails against precisely what the first "Nurse's Song" affirms. This second Nurse may be read as a stand-in for the societal pressures and institutions of power that would rather create weak-willed followers than autonomous agents of intelligence, will, and individualism. If one has the proper insight into what these paired-poems are depicting, the child in this second poem operates as a warning sign to readers. He does exactly what the Blakean subject *should not* do; He begins to accept his ego's separation from the unitive source (or the "Poetic Genius") and allows his will to be determined for him.

While the two "Nurse's Songs" offer a clear connection that illustrates how Blake trains his readers, other less-obviously connected "innocent" and "experienced" poems—like "The

Blossom” and “The Clod and the Pebble”—also offer similar instruction for the reader, even though they do not seem as readily connected. On the surface (especially in regard to titles), these two poems don’t seem immediately linked in a clear way. It may even take a few readings of the *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* before their ties become clear enough for the two to be meaningfully compared. “The Blossom,” as a poem wears its formal simplicity as a disguise for its subtlety, describing the relationships between a blossom and the sparrows and robins that land in its tree. The poem is composed of two stanzas of six lines each, with one stanza dedicated to the sparrow and to the robin, respectively. The speaker is presented ambiguously, possibly being an observer of the natural moment, or likely being the blossom itself, as evidenced by the instance of “my” in the recurring lines, “Near my bosom,” (Blake 115). The blossom (or the speaker) sees the sparrow deftly maneuver through its environment, “swift as arrow,” and also encounters a robin that sobs, indicating its sorrowful existence. The Blossom remains a “happy” blossom regardless of the state of either bird. This likely reflects a conception of nature’s indifference to humans’ emotional responses to it.

Since the subject of the poem isn’t a human figure, how is a reader supposed to engage with its meaning in relation to the nuanced utilization of their Zoas? As astute readers of Blake, it becomes our task to analyze the ways in which human perception is fundamentally implicated even in our interpretations of natural, non-human events. Naturally and inescapably, we project what we know about human relationships onto non-human relationships – precisely as an expression of our own learned perceptive habits. The birds are each representative of ways in which humans can respond to the intrinsic challenges of life, either stoically and efficiently like the sparrow, or in a lamenting manner like the robin. From this understanding, “The Blossom” can be read as a poem comparing two kinds of attitudes towards life filtered through the

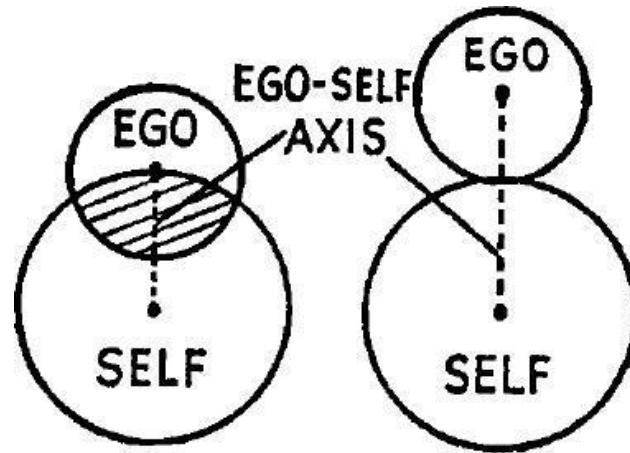
perspective of an agent of innocence (this time a non-human agent) – the Blossom itself. It is in poems like this one where Blake’s proto-Romantic qualities begin to shine through. Interestingly though, rather than simply exalting nature as being elevated above humanity, what Blake does in “The Blossom” is utilize natural imagery as the foreground for the interplay of human traits. These non-human relationships Blake depicts are just as significant as human relationships in helping readers utilize their Zoas in an interpretive capacity.

Seeing how Blake’s goal is to grant his readers the ability to perceive the infinity that undergirds finite, mundane reality, it would follow logically that Blake would not be able to illustrate the true boundaries of perception in a manner that is constrained entirely to the scope of human, socially-organized limits. The workings of the social, natural, immanent, and transcendent spheres each have the peculiar power of illustrating how one’s perceptive faculties can be brought to their potential heights. Northrop Frye touches upon this notion in an essay entitled “Blake After Two Centuries,” where he summarizes Blake’s stance that, “all forms are identified as human. Cities and gardens, sun moon and stars, rivers and stones, trees and human bodies--all are equally alive, equally parts of the same infinite body which is at once the body of God and of risen man” (60). Seeing how the infinite contains within its spiritual *body* (as opposed to a strictly Platonic, *immaterial* soul) all relationships, contraries, and dualities, Blake’s own metaphysics of infinity helps to contextualize poems like “The Blossom,” that depict innocence through non-human vessels. Through the sparrow, readers are shown a bird that is made “merry” through its diligence and deft navigation through its environment. Through the robin, readers are given a bird that is simply, “pretty,” who weeps at its station in life. Life itself, as represented by the happy Blossom, retains an impartiality that has enough room to house both

birds despite their differing qualities. When bringing in the next poem in this paired set, the kinds of relationships presented in “The Blossom” begin to become clear.

“The Clod and the Pebble,” being the pair from the Experience section, deals less abstractly with the same thematic material that was presented in “The Blossom”. Abstraction seems to be a common companion to Blake’s depictions of imaginative (Urthonic) capacities, with concreteness frequently accompanying the poems that deal with rational (Urizenic) capacities. Each poem in this particular pairing considers relationships of love through their respective subjects, but from wildly differing vantage points. In “The Blossom,” readers encounter the kinds of attitudes possessed by sparrows and by robins, noting how they interact with their generative source of energy, the titular blossom. Not much attention is paid to any explicit duality in that poem, rather, mere variances of animal disposition are treated. In “The Clod and the Pebble,” though, duality plays a crucial role in the presentation of the same thematic material that works through notions of the different kinds of love. This duality explicitly present in this poem aligns nicely with my assertion that “experience” in the Blakean sense most closely resembles the movement from wholeness of Self/ego to dualistic multiplicity (recalling ideas of Jung and Edinger).





This same duality of perception which grows out of the original unity of Self is presented by the above diagram from the first chapter of *Ego and Archetype*, illustrating the movement of the subject's identification with higher Self to that of the small, Experienced ego (Edinger 5). When a human subject becomes "Experienced," it has socially learned to stop identifying with its generative source (which exists beyond time), the same source that Blake and other mystics urge others to reconvene with in order to perceive reality fully. In "The Clod and the Pebble," this notion is shown in the clear duality between the personified clod of clay's conceptualization of love and its counterpoint expressed by the pebble. The clod of clay sings, "Love seeketh not Itself to please, / Nor for itself hath any care, / But for another gives its ease, / And builds a Heaven in Hell's despair." (Blake 211). Its song is one of *Agape* love, love that gives all that it can and more, taking Hell and transfiguring it to become a Heaven. It is directly contrasted by the "warbling" of the pebble of the brook which states, "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." (211). For subjects in the Experienced social world (here represented by two personified elements of nature), perspective is not based in some *real* sense of a monolithic totality regarding love, or any comparably nebulous concept. Perspective is rather based on individual predisposition and the natural variances of exposure to stimuli. In other words, love as

a monolithic concept is neither accurately or inaccurately described by *either* the clod or the pebble. What Blake's readers are thus made to intellectually encounter is the idea that life-experience itself makes conceptualizing reality inherently subjective. In line with this, both extremes of the presented dualistic spectrum (from selfless to selfish love) are equally validated by the lived experiences of each individuated ego. Blake offers no explicit criticism or exaltation of either vantage point expressed in "The Clod and the Pebble."

Dualistic extremes are also treated in the last pair of poems I will analyze: "The Divine Image" from *Songs of Innocence* and "A Divine Image," which was engraved in 1791, but not included in *Songs of Experience* until after Blake's death. These two resume the trend of Blake's paired poems sharing titles and negatively-mirroring each other's content. To begin with "The Divine Image," it paints a picture of the characteristics of humankind and God, drawing heavily upon the notion that Man and God are fashioned in the same image. The poem locates divinity within the innocence of the subject – specifically through the qualities of mercy, pity, peace, and love. The second stanza equates "God, our father dear," with "Man, his child and care," explicitly through those *human* concepts of mercy, pity, peace, and love (Blake 117). This understanding presents an interesting unification of the common binary opposition of God and humankind: A unification which operates as a complication of the traditional Christian sense that humanity is plainly lesser than divinity.

In "The Divine Image," Blake is positing that the qualities people most associate with God are really aspects of the "human form divine" which he describes by saying, "Mercy has a human heart, / Pity a human face, / And Love the human form divine, / And Peace, the human dress." (117). At this moment, Blake implores his readers to merge their senses of Urizen and Luvah in a pseudo-Daoist synthesis. Reason and emotion are typically thought of as being

contrarian, incompatible modes of perception, but when contemplating the entwined nature of God and Man, one must deeply engage in peaceful, open emotional states (connected to their innocence), and one must also logically connect the source of those emotions to God, or the transcendent unity, that immanently operates through human forms and concepts. In this way, there would be no Man without God, and no God without Man. Possessing this knowledge of divinity leads one to what could be termed a “conscious innocence” that is associated with being able to control seemingly conflicting perceptive capacities. The Innocent mind *feels* its higher unity, while the Experienced mind *reasons* through evidence to support or refute those internal feelings. Typically, social life forces the Innocent mind to unlearn ways of understanding one’s own perception that would grant them access to any deeper reality – Blake’s authorial task is to help that once-Innocent mind relearn those atrophied modes of perception and action.

On initial readings, it may seem that “A Divine Image,” the Experienced pair, conflicts irreconcilably with what is being expressed in “The Divine Image.” As we’ve learned from Blake’s perceptual training regimen though, this tension eventually becomes clear as an interesting mystical representation of divinity in its non-binary totality. While the innocent subject would be more than keen to *only* ascribe divinity the most noble, kind, and peaceful elements of the human mind, the experienced subject knows that the sheer potential for ugliness within humankind is just as unlimited and as far-reaching as mercy, pity, peace, and love are. In “A Divine Image,” Blake sharply and violently contrasts those four emotional states depicted in “The Divine Image” with four diametrically opposed states: cruelty, jealousy, terror, and secrecy. These behaviors, instead of being presented as socially-acquired (as a lot of Experienced pairs have treated their themes), are illustrated to be just as intrinsic to the capacities of humankind as the good-natured inclinations. If a transcendent, higher unity works through human form in an

immanent manner, it follows logically that it must operate through human beings in their twisted and oppressive capacities as well as their peaceful and loving ones.

Humanity simply cannot operate under the cheery delusion that divine reality is one-sided, only favoring our own socially-codified moral preferences, and Blake is illustrating that non-binary mystical notion of divinity when he writes, “Cruelty has a Human Heart, / And Jealousy a Human Face; / Terror the Human Form Divine, / And Secrecy the Human Dress.” (221). Prompting the same combination of reason and emotional awareness as in the previous poem, Blake strategically makes his reader contemplate the nature of their assumptions about the qualities and interrelations of God and self. It is only within contact with what makes the psyche deeply uncomfortable which pushes the Blakean subject to be able to begin to comprehend the wordless “Truth-the-Fact,” to borrow phrasing from Aldous Huxley, who says, “Truth-the-Fact cannot be described by means of verbal symbols that do not adequately correspond to it. At best it can be *hinted at* in terms of non sequiturs and contradictions.” (128). In these two poems, Blake presents “Truth-the-Fact” as a unified totality by way of the seemingly contradictory states of the inborn capacities of humankind. Mercy and Cruelty *both* have human hearts, Love and Terror are *each* the Human Form Divine, etc. These dualistic oppositions all spring from the same place: The human creature, the seat of self-aware perception. “Truth-the-Fact,” a clever phrase coined to describe the ineffable truth of higher unity, operates beyond the confines of humankind’s preferred dualistic spectrums (i.e. from mercy to cruelty, or from love to terror) but simultaneously contains them all.

With all this information in mind, it finally becomes pertinent to mentally plow forward into Blake’s swansong, the epic poem *Jerusalem*. The most ambitious project undertaken by Blake, *Jerusalem* spans over one hundred plates, being split into four parts. The section I will

focus on for analysis is the last chapter, entitled “To the Christians”, which proclaims in its prose introduction: “... That to Labour in Knowledge is to Build up Jerusalem, and to Despise Knowledge is to despise Jerusalem & her Builders.” (Blake 717). This building of the Holy City, in light of my overarching argument, comes to represent the varied work of the Blakean subject towards perceiving non-temporal, transcendent reality. Blake is essentially saying that if one despises the arduous course of perceptive development, one is unknowingly scorning the very path by which they could achieve their fullest human potential. To paraphrase Blake himself, if one will not cease in the mental fight for perceptive clarity, they can be one of the architects of a social reality that acknowledges its true relationship to the higher unity that undergirds it (481). In this way, *Jerusalem* as a poem works to undo the damage of the Biblical Fall of Man, the mythological event which infamously introduced duality to humankind’s perceptive faculties. In *Jerusalem*, readers follow Albion, the primordial man, as he progresses from disunity to unity. In the culminating action of the poem, all is reconciled into one divine body, an actualization of the aforementioned “Human Form Divine” (117).

The catalyst for this ultimate reunification can be attributed to Blake’s characterization of Christ, who appears to Albion in Plate 96 as “the Good Shepherd By the lost Sheep that he hath found...” (Blake 743). Albion goes on to identify Christ as “the Lord, the Universal Humanity,” and even goes so far as to proclaim that the “Divine Appearance was the likeness and similitude of Los” (ibid 743). Los is an emanation of Urthona, the imaginative capacity, and he is regarded by Blake as an eternal prophet. For Albion to express that Los and Christ are appearance-wise one in the same is certainly a serious matter. In this sense, Los and Christ share an archetypal resonance, and Blake seems to equate the two figures for that very reason. Albion and Christ’s ensuing conversation centers around the mystery of self-sacrifice that is central to both

Christianity and to Blake's own self-constructed mythologic cycle. Christ himself utters to Albion, "...if God dieth not for Man & giveth not himself / Eternally for Man, Man could not exist; for Man is Love / As God is Love; every kindness to another is a little Death / in the Divine Image, nor can Man exist but by Brotherhood." (ibid. 743). It is in dialogue with Christ where Albion realizes fully what it means to give oneself up for others – that every small human act of selflessness is calling to mind the great sacrifice made by Christ as "The Universal Humanity," and is doing work to bind all humankind together in solidarity. This binding or unification that self-sacrifice affords is the ultimate end goal for the Blakean subject. When learning to hone one's perceptive capacities through the interrelations of the Four Zoas, the perceiver is all the time learning how to most optimally engage with their reality in order to reach the conclusion that it is selflessness which brings about the redemption that undoes the Fall of Man.

After Christ finishes speaking to Albion, a cloud separates the two beings and Albion is left in a headspace of terror, not for himself, but for his friend, Los/Christ. He has learned well. His first inclination was not for himself or his own safety, but for the security of another. It is only when the wisdom of Los/Christ is internalized when Albion's "Self was lost in the contemplation of faith / and wonder at the Divine Mercy & at Los's sublime honour." (Blake 743). Immediately after this encounter, Albion initiates the process of reunification which revivifies the connection between the earthly and the divine. This course of action speaks to the fact that the task of perceptive mastery has finally been achieved. In this state of selflessness Albion has attained, all four of the Zoas "...arose into Albion's bosom. Then Albion stood before Jesus in the Clouds of Heaven, Fourfold among the Visions of God in Eternity." (Blake 744). There is no longer any sense of tension between the natures of each Zoa, instead, together

in unity they are used by Albion to constitute the new Divine Body. On Plate 99, this Divine Body is described as:

All human forms identified, even Tree, Metal, Earth & Stone: all / Human Forms identified, living, going forth & returning wearied / Into the Planetary lives of Years, Months, Days & Hours; reposing / And then Awakening into his Bosom in the Life of Immortality. / And I heard the Name of their Emanations: they are named Jerusalem. (747).

Blake is describing the Utopia to end all utopias. For him, as well as for the serious reader of his work, it is not simply a pipe-dream or a thought-experiment. Rather, it is the highest potential for not only the individual perceiver, but for the totality of the human species. This new Divine Body has been predicated on an ego that deeply knows its identity as tethered to the higher source from which life springs and has moved beyond attempting to comprehend intellectually the tensions and paradoxes of dualistic human perception. This then, has become our goal as readers and as humans: To build a Jerusalem wherever it is we stand.

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