

Tamás Baranyi:

“What Is Man!”

The Gates of Paradise and Jungian
Psychodynamics

(Supervisor: Dóra Janzer Csikós, PhD)

‘When you make the two into one, and when you make the inner like the outer and the outer like the inner, and the upper like the lower, and when you make male and female into a single one, so that the male will not be male nor the female be female, when you make eyes in place of an eye, a hand in place of a hand, a foot in place of a foot, an image in place of an image, then you will enter the Kingdom of Heavens’

(The Gospel of Thomas)

Introduction

William Blake’s famous series of engravings entitled *For the Sexes: The Gates of Paradise*, despite its many thought-provoking parallels with phenomena relating to the psychodynamics of the Self, has not yet been subject to much research of the kind. Diana Hume George was the first scholar to interpret the etchings in terms of psychoanalytical theory in her study *Blake and Freud*, in which she claims that “*The Gates of Paradise* provides a summary representation of what I perceive to be the problematic elements in Blake’s portrayal of females and values for feminine principles.”¹ She convincingly uses Freudian terminology to prove that the etchings show how ambivalent sentiments Blake had toward women.

However, the objective of this study is to prove that the work also articulates many ideas later emphasized by Jung, providing an early account of the Jungian concept of the stages of life and his theory of psychodynamics.

Jungian Psychodynamics

To understand how psychodynamics work we must first refer to Jung’s well-known iceberg representation of the psyche. Contrary to Freud, for whom the Unconscious is a mere by-product of the Ego containing all the repressed sexual fantasies, he argued that its role is much more complex. It has a personal layer, which is similar to the one in Freud’s concepts, yet there is a much less accessible layer, the Collective Unconscious, in which all the ancient memories of humankind are stored in a complicated, symbolic manner. This layer is not a by-product of the Ego, but *vice versa*. The Ego only develops as the person adapts to the society around him. This process generates tension between the two layers. “Every psychological phenomenon” in June K. Singer’s words, “is based on the existence of opposites within a single entity.”²

The Self is the totality of the psyche, representing unity as opposed to the fragmented existence of earthy life. The aim of human life is to eventually find this state of unity. This is called the *individuation process*.

The term *individuation* is defined by Jung as “the process by which individual beings are formed and differentiated”³ He also asserts that “The aim of individuation is nothing less

than to divest the self of the false wrappings of the persona on the one hand, and of the suggestive power of primordial images on the other.”⁴

Our main goal in life would be to reach the point when we are liberated from our unconscious projections. The psychodynamic processes play a key role in this. The process can be traced throughout the different stages of human life: birth, childhood, early maturity, middle age, and late maturity, and finally: death. Jung relied heavily on ancient spiritual lore when stating: that “[o]ur life is like the course of the sun. In the morning it gains continually in strength until it reaches the zenith-heat of high noon. Then comes the enantiodromia.”⁵ This latter term Jung borrowed from Heraclitus; he described it as a compensatory process when contrary psychological forces clash to re-create a balanced state.⁶

To understand this we must not forget that, according to the principles of analytical psychology Consciousness emerges with the development of the Ego, which in the first half of life is gradually separated from the Self to be able to function in the physical world. The period of *separation* results in mid-life crisis, when the unconscious contents are so strongly repressed by the “tyrant” Ego that they are forced to emerge in the form of severe depression which, by leading to resignation, makes us think of our lives in a more profound manner, and ultimately leads us towards the process of *reunification*, the recollection of the fragmentary portions of our psyche. This turning point is referred to as *enantiodromia*, which literally means “running counter to.” This is the process when, after a long-term one-sided tendency we are pushed into the opposite direction.⁷

The Unconscious is characterized by unity. The Ego is responsible for reasoning, and its reasoning is based on the opposition of thoughts and differentiations. Yet the Unconscious does not work in the same fashion. On this level the contraries are the two sides of the same coin. As we can also perceive it in our dreams, time and space behave in a different way. For the Ego the resulting relativity of its basic principles can be confusing and unacceptable. These conflicts arise during the life of every human being, waiting to be reconciled.

The Gates of Paradise and Psychodynamics

If we turn to *The Gates* similarities with the above-mentioned ideas are not difficult to find, as Blake’s intention seems to have been to depict the different stages of human life, even if in a rather obscure way. As we are going to see, all the major symbolic elements of the

individuation process, such as the appearance of number four, a journey, a subordinate state to the Unconscious (symbolized by the feminine principle), and re-birth are present in the work.⁸

Unfortunately we cannot rely on Blake’s own comments on the work due to the fact that we are not in the possession of any of his letters from the period of the first edition of the series, and he did not refer to it in detail in any of his later letters. Yet we have some knowledge of what might have been going on. In Ackroyd’s biography⁹ it is mentioned that after the death of his beloved brother, Robert, William inherited his notebook, into which he soon started to draw different emblems and to write poetry. Soon after Robert’s death their mother also passed away. As a consequence, it is not surprising that in his sketches one of the main topics is death, and a tentative title in the notebook - *Ideas of Good and Evil*- suggests that he was already concerned with theological-philosophical matters. He began drawing in 1787, and worked on until 1793, when he decided to do a kind of a selection.

Out of sixty-four emblems only seventeen made it into an engraved album with the first title: *For Children: The Gates of Paradise*. Only five copies of this survived, two of which were in the possession of Blake’s friends, Henry Fuseli and George Cumberland. This version was much later to be revised, presumably in 1823. They were supplemented with texts and, with the probable aim of targeting a broader spectrum of readers, he altered the title: *For the Sexes: The Gates of Paradise*.¹⁰ These last efforts imply that this work may have been of particular importance for him.

G.E.Bently Jr. observes in his biography that the work can be related to Renaissance emblem books: “The series is plainly the human journey (...) But there is no moral, as we expect from emblem books, and there’s precious little explanation of the designs-until Blake revised [them] and added ‘The Keys of The Gates.’” Bentley also argues that despite this process of revision the work is left unfinished.¹¹

The final version of the series is comprised of seventeen emblems with supplementary texts: all in all, twenty-one plates. This number might have some significance – just like all the other details, since Blake believed that “as Poetry admits not a Letter that is Insignificant so Painting admits not a Grain of Sand or a Blade of Grass Insignificant.”¹²

Number twenty-one is made up of two main numbers: two and one. One stands for divine unity, as opposed to two, a Satanic symbol of the opposition between the Creator and the Creation. This notion is of an ancient origin. Already Plutarch mentions in his study entitled *Isis and Osiris*, that Plato, like the Egyptians, claimed that the right side and the odd numbers relate to the gods, whereas the opposite of these to the “demons.”¹³ This idea of

contrary states also manifests itself in the technique by which Blake produced his engravings: white figures appear out of a black background, unquestionably showing an opposition between two contrary states, the material and the spiritual. This parallel is underlined by Morton D. Paley’s observation that for the later versions Blake reworked the series by “creating stronger contrasts of light and darkness.”¹⁴ In addition, if we add the two numbers we get three, which is probably the most sacred number, uniting the eternal oppositions mentioned above.

Let us now take a look at the individual plates.

The Origins of Life and Birth



Plate 1

As is well-known, both Blake and Jung showed profound interest towards spiritual traditions. “Blake’s readings” – as Kathleen Raine observed – “of Gnosticism, Alchemy, Cabbalah and other branches of the excluded knowledge covered much the same as Jung’s own.”¹⁵ As a consequence, both of them believed in metempsychosis, or at least in a certain form of prenatal existence. The first plates depict this stage, the descent of the soul into earthly life.

The frontispiece shows a worm and a chrysalis on a leaf, presumably an oak-leaf. The tree is a very complex symbol, representing both birth and death or eternal, cyclical development.¹⁶ The caption: “What is Man!” underneath the emblem suggests that the scene depicts Humankind. The two creatures show two contrary states: the worm, an instinctive, material being, consuming the leaf of the tree, whereas the chrysalis shows a different aspect, implying that this creature can turn into a butterfly, that is, an elevated spiritual being.¹⁷ We must also note that the butterfly is also the traditional symbol of the psyche. According to Damon, the worm may signify mortal flesh for Blake as well, as Bildad says in the Book of Job that “man is a worm”¹⁸ (see *Job XXV: 6*)

One must also bear in mind that they are on the top of a tree. The tree is the Jungian symbol of the development of the human psyche, with its roots in the soil and its foliage in the spiritual realm.¹⁹ Humankind partakes of both realms.

The worm can be related to another creature: the snake. Both animals are theriomorphic symbols. As every primitive, cold-blooded or invertebrate creature, it represents the instinctive functions of the human organism. From a Jungian point of view, it is a symbol of the Unconscious.²⁰ A negative aspect of this is the well-known identification of this creature with Satan. As such, it can be identified with the shadow, our innate opposite, the Evil. Blake might also have been partly conscious of this analogy between the two creatures, since in *Tiriël* we can read the following: “Serpents, not sons, wreathing around the bones of Tiriël! / Ye worms of death, feasting upon your aged parents flesh!”²¹

The fact that the chrysalis has the face of a child is also significant since, as Jung himself put it: “... the Child symbolizes the human psyche before or after the emergence of consciousness.”²²

Summing it up, in this image we are shown the unconscious dual energies of the human psyche, not yet manifested in the material realm. This notion of duality may be related to the symbol of *uroborus*, which is the most evocative archetypal image of the pre-ego stage of infantile development.²³

The inscription underneath: “The Sun's Light when he unfolds it / Depends on the Organ that beholds it” may refer to the solipsistic ideas of Berkeley. These words may imply that all these energies create the world; all the physical aspects of what we perceive can be derived from these principles. Blake might have been influenced by Neoplatonic traditions as well; it was Plotinus who first mentioned that perception works similarly to the power of the sun.²⁴

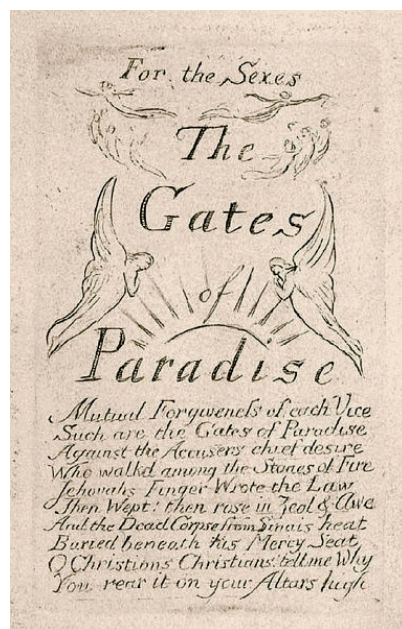


Plate 2

After the frontispiece we find a short poem bearing the title “*For the Sexes.*” Apparently, it invokes not only the sexes, but all the analogies behind the two contrary states of the human psyche. “Mutual Forgiveness of Each Vice/ Such are the Gates of Paradise”: this message, which is an interpretation of the teachings of Christ, can also be looked upon from a psychological point of view. “Mutual Forgiveness” may signify the effort to find harmony between the above mentioned contrary states. This could be a reference to Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, in which the loss of the original blessed state is signaled by the animosity between Adam and Eve. As Geoffrey Keynes put it: “the forgiveness of sins is one of the foremost means of accomplishing the gender equality of the Utopia of Eden.”²⁵

This implies a major parallel between this notion and the Jungian view of psychodynamics. According to Jung, all animosity and warfare can be derived from internal conflicts. Blake’s principle of forgiveness may refer to the idea that the Ego can find its own “opposite” in the Unconscious in the shape of the shadow archetype or in the archetype of the anima/animus, and by accepting these elements and by making them conscious, we get closer to “Paradise,” that is, the ultimate aim of the individuation process.²⁶

In Blake’s mythology the aspect of the Ego is Jehovah who is but the Gnostic Demiurge (Urizen) who created this physical world with his reasoning powers, and is forever endangering the real God, Jesus, who is the “Creative Imagination,” with his accusations and

commandments. ”Jehovah’s Finger wrote the law... O Christians Christians tell me Why/You rear it on your Altars high.” Blake is aware of the fact that the key in the process of the human individuation is the balancing of these two forces. For him life should be a cosmic fight against Jehovah or Urizen, as this world, being material and driven by reason, is in his hands.

The figures above the poem are also worth mentioning: two angels are turning towards each other and the Sun, which is a common symbol of unity – being a circle akin to mandalas – and of life-giving energy. Above them, over the inscription “*For the Sexes,*” the figures turn in the opposite direction, showing how the two contrary states grow apart. The positioning of these spirits is also significant: separation is demonstrated at the top, which can be related to the Ego, whereas the rising Sun, representing Blake’s spiritual sun and so love and unity, is below.



Plate 3

The first numbered etching in the series depicts a woman under a tree, collecting babies from the ground, as if they were fruits which have fallen from the top. We should note that the attention from the foliage is now drawn to the roots. The inscription underneath says: “I found him beneath a Tree”, which is a Biblical reference to the Fall of Man. The worm/child from the spiritual realm has fallen to the ground, representing the ancient Gnostic or Neoplatonic idea that the soul is entrapped in the corporeal world from its birth. The woman figure here represents the negative aspect of the anima figure of the Collective

Unconscious. She is the Mother of Humankind, who – deceived by Satan –, ate from the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and so was cast out from Paradise. The knowledge of good and evil represents that reasoning state of the Ego, whereas Paradise stands for the unconscious state, where “all contraries are one.” She is hiding the children in her veil: the soul is wrapped up in a physical body, which prevents it from seeing the spiritual realm.²⁷ In *The Keys of the Gates*, the accompanying poem for this emblem, we can read about this process: “My Eternal Man sat in Repose” signifies Adam, or the animus of the Collective Unconscious, unaware of what is going on between Eve and Satan. “And She found me beneath a Tree/A Mandrake...” She is under a poisonous tree, showing the opposite of birth: by generating physical life she paradoxically generates death. “Serpent reasonings us entice/Of Good& Evil: Virtue&Vice” obviously shows the emergence of the Ego out of the Unconscious.

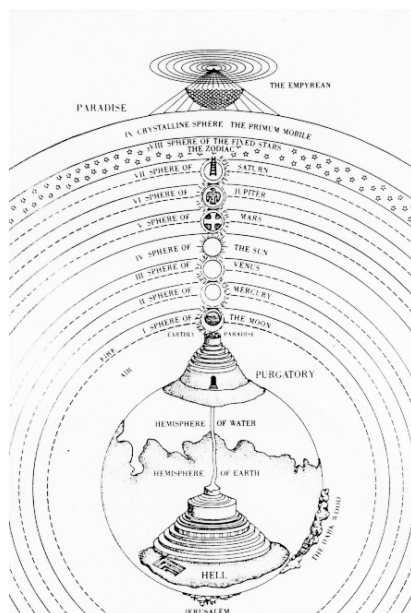
Damon argues that for Blake the Tree of Life may have symbolized the phallus.²⁸ Such sexual symbolism makes sense if we consider that the tree is a traditional symbol of both genders.²⁹ We should also note that it is a mandrake, the root of which resembles the human form and also has been used as an aphrodisiac. Damon also argues that it symbolizes birth.³⁰ In the light of this, we can see how the masculine and the feminine elements are both present together with the archetype of the child.³¹



Plates 4–7

In the next four emblems we can witness how the soul is entrapped in the realm of the four elements: water, earth, air, and fire, traditionally believed to represent Blake's Four Zoas: Tharmas, Los, Urizen and Luvah.³² Damon also mentions that they are a symbol of the Fall of Man.³³ This tetradic arrangement of paired oppositions can be traced back to Empedocles, according to whom the four basic elements “mixed and separated in accordance with the dictates of a great archetypal pair of opposites, Love and Strife.”³⁴ Even in medieval times the universe was represented in spheres according to the ancient doctrines- the first spheres are water and earth, above which the air, or the sky, is situated. Fire, according to the Pre-Socratic philosopher Anaximandros, is the last sphere. It can be observed in the form of stars, being

holes in the canopy of air through which one can witness the cosmic flames. In medieval times, Christians added to this view the hidden land of angels and ultimately, that of God. The four humours of Hippocrates could be easily adapted to this tetradic view, and a monk at Ramsay called Byrhtferth also complemented the macrocosmic concept with that of the four stages of human life: *pueritia* (childhood), *adolescentia*, *iuventus*, and finally *senectus* (old age).³⁵



Dante's View of the Universe

By following this tradition Blake also implies a parallel with human life, i.e. how the human soul is emerging from, or is entrapped into the physical world.

Water is the main arche of life for Thales, the pre-Socratic philosopher. For Jung, it is one of the main symbols of the totality of the psyche, the Self.³⁶ Blake might have been aware of such associations; which would explain why it is mentioned prior to the rest. It is depicted, as all other elements here, a hermaphrodite. According to Jung, androgynous figures always symbolize the Unconscious, representing the *coniunctio oppositorum*. According to Godard, for Blake such figures are a satanic symbol: “its appearance seems whole, yet ever at odds

within himself – an hermaphroditic abomination of Ulro, horrible to contemplate.”³⁷ Water is pouring into a lake in the form of rain, in which the figure can hardly see its own face. This shows how the human spirit or soul becomes invisible in its bodily shape.³⁸

In the emblem of “*Earth*” the feeling of entrapment and claustrophobia is depicted in the figure resembling Laocön. According to Erdman, it also depicts a feeling of comfort, a safety from harm.³⁹

In “*Air*” we can see how the Ego has emerged out of the Earth, i.e. the Unconscious, but now, being aware of its nakedness, is covering itself in shame. It might represent the top of the *Ego-Self Axis*, and the tragedy of the separation from unity by the birth of reasoning powers. In addition, around the figure we can see fourteen stars, number one representing ethereal unity, whereas the number four next to it shows how this unity is divided into the quaternity of the corporeal world. (Four points of direction, four humours, the number of the cross, and the four elements as well.)

“*Fire*” is shown as a figure with scales, that is, akin to the image of the Snake, Satan. For Blake this figure shows best the idea of creative energy. From a Jungian point of view this emblem unquestionably represents the flow of the libido, or what he termed later *psychic energy*, which is more or less under the control of the reasoning Ego. This eternal animosity is depicted by the figure’s carrying a shield and a spear.

In *The Keys* we read the following:

*In Doubt which is Self contradiction
 A dark Hermaphrodite We stood
 Rational Truth Root of Evil&Good
 Round me flew the Flaming Sword
 Round her Snowy Whirlwinds roard
 Freezing her Veil the Mundane Shell*

Satanic doubt creates an internal tension within the psyche, and so brings forth earthly life, the “Mundane Shell”. The material realm is called “her Veil”, expressing that it is only an illusion created by the negative anima image, akin to the eastern idea of the Samsara.

The Infantile Stage, Adolescence, and Early Maturity: Ego-Self Separation.

In the next image a winged child is climbing out of the shell of an egg, the “mundane shell,” representing birth and the first stage of human life:



Plate 8

The child here still represents innocence, or the psyche before the emergence of Consciousness, leaving the “holy center,” the *temenos*. Here, although the seeds of opposition are innate within him, he is still in the blessed unconscious state of unity, since the Ego is not yet fully formed. This is still the infantile stage of the human psyche, in terms of Jungian terminology. As Jung put it: “The infantile stage of the psyche is not yet aware of any problems. The psychological birth, and so a conscious differentiation from the parents generally takes place only at the stage of adolescence, as sexuality enters the picture.”⁴⁰ The former one he called the monistic, the latter one the dualistic, stage. He also emphasized the importance of the latter, as “deviation from the instincts and opposition creates the psyche.”⁴¹ For Blake, however, this is a tragic moment. The original unity becomes more and more fragmented as the soul gets involved in the land of Ulro. This idea is expressed in *The Keys*, in a rather negative tone, warning us of the risks of corporeal existence.

*When weary Man enters his Cave
 He meets his Saviour in the Grave
 Some find a Female Garment there,
 And some a Male woven with care
 Lest the Sexual Garments sweet
 Should grow a devouring Winding Sheet*

A parallel can be drawn here between Blakean and Platonic ideas. Life is a “Cave” or a “Grave,” where physical objects are only the shadows of the eternal forms. Although the child is yet unaware of it, his body is already a fragment of the unconscious unity: it represents only one aspect, one sex. The last lines express how this body carries death within itself. The physical world is the world of mortality, this body is born to die one day.



Plate 9

In the next etching the above mentioned dualistic stage is depicted in the shape of a youth, as he is carelessly chasing angels in the field. Diana Hume George discusses the sex of the “angels.” “If the uppermost figure is viewed as feminine, she may be the soul that escapes into eternity while her natural sister, the mortal body, lies dead. If that figure is male, the three form Blake’s inverse trinity of fallen human, cast out emanation, and spectrous selfhood.”⁴²

The scene may imply that the boy now has started to differentiate himself from the outside world, as he seems to show no moral interest in the angels around him. The inscription underneath reads: “What are these? Alas! The Female Martyr! Is She also the Divine Image?” The boy, more and more identifying himself with his sex, views the angels as birds, representing innocence and freedom, the unconscious state of the human psyche. Now that the Ego is evolving the unconscious contents appear to him in the form of the opposite sex, that is, the anima. He has killed one of the angels through his carelessness, which represents the separation of the Ego from its “opposite” to ensure its being. The last question

implies he is not aware of the fact that the anima is also part of the “Divine Image,” that is, a part of the central archetype.



Plate 10

Adolescence, when one becomes fully aware of one’s own sexuality and a differentiation from the parents takes place, is represented by the next emblem, in which the youth, now naked and a sexually potent being, is pointing a spear against his father, who is exclaiming “My Son! My Son!” The father, the Paternal Logos is the Lawgiver to the child; his love is “conditional upon the adoption of certain values,” as opposed to the mother whose love is “absolute and unconditional.”⁴³ The adolescents create their own identities, and their Egos become fully formed by turning against the father’s values.

In the *Keys* Blake emphasizes the same idea: “In Vain glory” the Ego comes forth, takes over the role of the father, representing in childhood the reasoning power of the Ego. The father accepts his fault: “thou treatest me / But as I have instructed thee”.



Plate 11

On the following plate we can witness the boy setting a ladder against the Moon. Damon mentions that “[t]he original place for the Moon was the Man’s heart, center (Am 66) but when the Man was divided, the Moon became separated.”⁴⁴ With the loss of Paradise, the original place of which was also found in the heart of Man,⁴⁵ he also lost “his own Moon.”

For Jung, depictions of our satellite usually represent the mystical, instinctive side, the anima of the Collective Unconscious, as opposed to the Sun, which stands for the animus. In alchemy, the reconciliation of these two opposing principles is referred to as the “Chemical Wedding.” The youth, now perfectly aware of his sexuality, is instinctively drawn towards the opposite sex. Behind him a woman and a man are standing, embracing each other, yet he turns his back on them, facing the Moon. This may be symbolic as well: because of our earthly garments the wished-for reconciliation is ultimately impossible: the other half remains unattainable.

Middle Age: Mid-life Crisis and Enantiodromia



Plate 12

In the next image we can see the same person drowning. According to *The Keys*, it represents the ocean of time. The boy has fallen into it by his entrapment into the world of generation through sexuality. He is now getting older, fully aware that he is being “devoured” by the physical world.

Now we have reached the point of mid-life crisis on the *Ego-Self Axis*, when the Ego feels total isolation and separation. In Blakean terminology, the Orc cycle is coming to its end, the principle of fire or energy, Orc, has now been trapped, and is now becoming similar to Urizen.⁴⁶



Plate 13

The depression which follows this crisis can be witnessed in the next image, in which the youth is now an old man of “Aged Ignorance,” cutting the wings of an angel who is trying to escape his hands, running towards the Blakean spiritual sun, representing imagination and unity. The emblem is akin to the archetypal notion of passing time and death symbolized by an old bearded man in the act of corrupting the beauty of youth or even devouring small children (Saturn, for instance). Blake depicts the same idea in a very similar manner. The inscription beneath the image says: “Perceptive Organs closed, their Objects close,” which is also one important aspect of Berkeley’s epistemology:⁴⁷ since what we perceive depends on our perceptive organs, we cannot know whether they exist or not without our perception. The old man, symbolizing reasoning, does not want to accept the joys of innocence, that is, his memories of the unconscious unity and by doing so he rejects his very existence as a soul.

In the next engraving, which shows many resemblances to a scene in Blake’s illustrations to Dante’s *Divine Comedy* entitled *Ugolino and His Sons in Prison* (unfinished)⁴⁸ we can see what this separation from the Unconscious causes: the reasoning man is now in the prison of his senses. He does not want to take into consideration the existence of the spiritual world, therefore he is now completely detached from it: “And in depths of my Dungeons/Closed the Father&the Sons” The inscription underneath identifies this old man with the priests and Jehovah. The man cries out: “Does thy God O Priest take such vengeance as this?”



Plate 14

Late-life Transition and Late Maturity: Ego-Self Reunification

In the next image comes the turning point. Every person reaches this stage in life, when they start to recollect their “other half”, and the *reunification* process begins. One of Jung’s followers, Jolande Jacobi puts this in the following way:

“Once the psyche reaches the midpoint of life, the process of development demands a return to the beginning; a descent into the dark, hot depths of the unconscious. To sojourn in these depths, to withstand their dangers, is a journey to hell and “death”. But he who comes through safe and sound who is “reborn,” will return, full of knowledge and wisdom”⁴⁹

This is represented as a person on his deathbed. The family is around him, and they all see the same vision: a man is hovering over the body, with his hands pointing to two different directions: with his left hand upwards and downwards with his right. The left side, according to the ancient symbology, is the feminine, the evil part, and yet he points upwards to heaven with it, and vice versa. With his gestures he expresses the unity of the unconscious and refers to the *coniunctio oppositorum*. In that realm nothing is separated, and the two contraries exist

in harmony. The caption underneath reads: “*Fear and Hope are-Vision.*” The Ego has now started to pay attention to the source where the two contrary states, this time called ‘Fear’ and ‘Hope’ merge. With the appearance of the vision as a form of the *transcendent function*, which tends to emerge when the tension of opposition between Consciousness and Unconsciousness cannot be upheld any further, the balance is now being restored. The person on his deathbed represents suffering, which is indispensable for our self-discovery. As David I. Tresan explained “[o]nly through loss and suffering is one faced in the most real way with the need to reconstruct a world or to die...”⁵⁰ The lines of *The Keys* refer to the same notion: “But when I did descry / The Immortal Man that cannot Die / Through evening shades I haste away / To close the Labours of my Day.” The speaker is now seeking his home of unity, the Unconscious: the Immortal Man is the Unconscious represented by the archetype of the Wise Old Man.



Plates 15–16

This idea of reunification is represented in the next engraving, “*The Traveller Hasteth in the Evening.*” This image is a recurrent figure in Blake’s oeuvre, and it is inextricably linked to one of his poems entitled *A Mental Traveller*,⁵¹ in which Blake similarly describes the “Land of Men & Women too”.

Travelling, from a Jungian point of view, particularly a solitary one, is usually the symbol of the process of individuation, which is an aim attainable even in our lifetime. For Blake, however the only way of getting back to the realm of the “Immortal Man” is death: this is a paradoxical notion of *reunification*. Even in alchemy, the prerequisite of the Prima

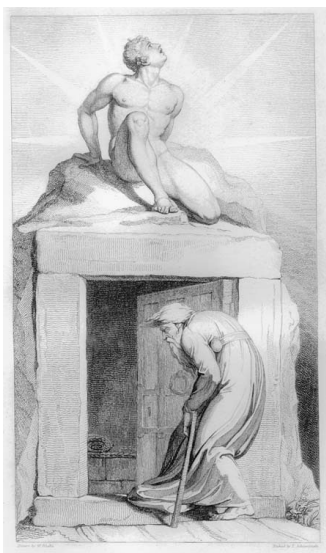
Materia is “the death of the King.” To be able to ascend from the flesh, we need to get rid of it. That is, ultimately, we need to turn away from the physical realm to be able to experience the spiritual one.

In the last but one image, which is also a recurrent one in Blake’s oeuvre, this notion is carried further. An old man is almost blown towards the door of death, as if returning home from a long journey within unfriendly circumstances, represented by the stormy winds. The cave or grave can also be interpreted as the Unconscious. The Ego is returning to its former state of union.



Plate 17

This idea is more accentuated in other versions, where the door leads into a rock, into a cave, whereas a youth is sitting on the same rock, looking upwards at the sky. The youth is now striving towards the upper realm, or we could say, towards Consciousness and the physical realm, but the starting point and the finish is fundamentally the same. This concept brings us back to the themes of the frontispiece.



Death's Door

The last engraving is a return to the first imagery. We can see a woman holding a rod, sitting on the ground beneath a tree, as a worm is wreathing around her. Next to her human heads are buried in the ground. The inscribed lines underneath are taken from the *Book of Job*: “I have said to the Worm: Thou / art my mother and sister.”(XVII:14)⁵² In a Jungian framework, as the figure of the worm can ultimately be taken as the symbol of the Self, this may signify the Ego's acceptance of its unconscious origins.



Plate 18

This may also be justified by the fact that the worm is seen withering around an anima figure, which is one of the main representatives of the Collective Unconscious.

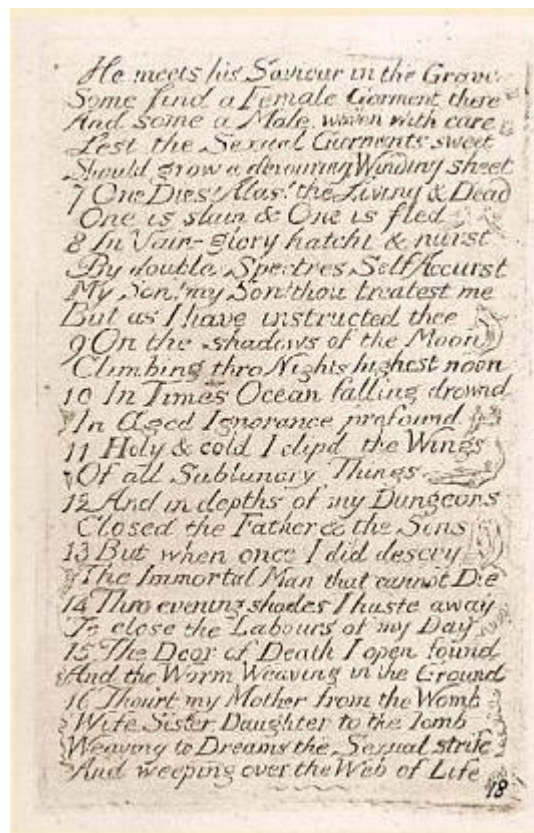
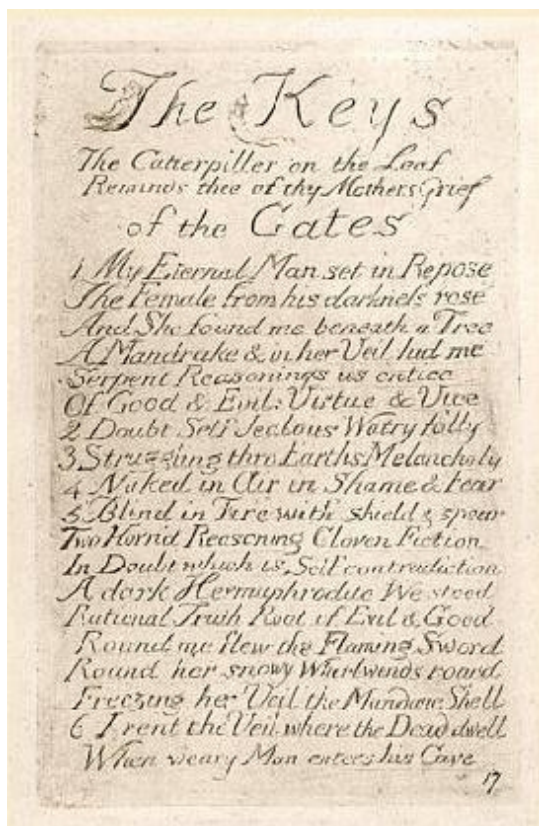
This scene represents the last phase of *reunification*, the acceptance of the two contrary states, “Womb” and “Tomb” as one. For Blake, as a man, the Unconscious is represented by the anima, and the shadow. He sees them as equals. They are the source and that is where he returns after his death. As he puts it in *The Keys*:

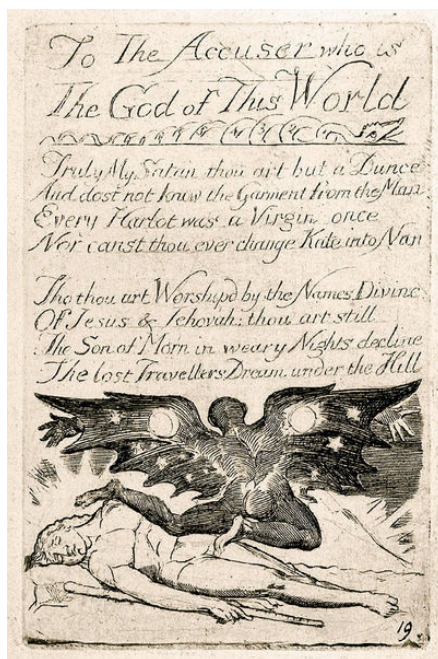
*The Door of Death I open found
 And the Worm Weaving in the Ground
 Thou art my Mother from the Womb
 Wife Sister Daughter to the Tomb
 Weaving to Dreams the Sexual strife
 And weeping over the Web of Life*

Damon points out that the female figure is Tirzah, known since Blake’s earlier poems as the mother of the mortal body.⁵³ However, she may also be a symbol of the land of Beulah, which “(...) is the realm of the Unconscious. It is the source of poetic inspiration and of dreams.” This could be justified by the fact that in the previous image we can witness a person entering his grave. For Blake, that is the exact place where Beulah can be found: “Beneath the bottoms of the Graves, which is/ Earth’s central joint/ There is a place where Contrarities are Equally True” (See *Milton* 30:1, *Jerusalem* 48:14).⁵⁴ Beulah also serves “as an intermediary between Eternity and Ulro (the world of matter)”.⁵⁵ This identification also makes sense in the light of *The Keys*. As Wayne C. Ripley points out in a recent review: “Beulah is a necessary place of repose in Blake’s later works, and it remains the highest state achievable by man after the fall from Eden. While the male characters march, fight, and proclaim, the women in Beulah do much of the labour in restoring Eternity.”⁵⁶ Magnus Ankarsjö also points out the importance of the ultimate “together-ness” of male and female forms in Blake’s prophetic writings.⁵⁷ *The Gates of Paradise* is no exception. Contrary forces reunite and create “Blake’s threshold to eternity.”⁵⁸

As is usual in Blake, this common source of Humankind cannot be described by simplistic notions of duality. She is the gate to unity but, as all doors, has two sides: in this sense, it is also a gate from the eternal existence to the corporeal one.

The last poem emphasizes this negative side: *To the Accuser Who is the God of this World*; This ironic poem represents the ancient Gnostic idea of Jehovah as a mere creator of the mortal coil, the fallen, physical world. Jung, as we have seen, identifies the image of Jehova with that of the Ego. The Ego is “the tyrant” which does not know “the Garment from the Man”, that is, it does not want to accept the existence of a non-physical aspect to being. With his laws he is “the Accuser,” the opposite of the state of “Forgiveness”, which is the only way towards reunification. The image under the poem depicts Satan as he is seen by the “Traveller” in his dreams. His black figure with his wings stretched out with the Moon and the Sun shows separation. We can also see seven stars, three on his right wing, and four on the left. The number three represents the first “divine” number, a returning from duality to a new unity, whereas four, as we have already seen, signifies the physical sphere. The idea of life as a dream is akin to the ancient Platonic concept, the cave metaphor. By finding our way out of the cave we discover the real world in the sun.





Plates 19–21

Bibliography:

- Ackroyd, Peter. Blake. Vintage, 1999.
- Ankarsjö, Magnus. William Blake and Gender. McFarland&Company, 2006.
- Bentley, G.E., Jr. The Stranger from Paradise-A Biography of William Blake. Yale University Press, 2001.
- Bloom, Harold. Blake's Apocalypse. Anchor, 1965.
- Damon, S.Foster. A Blake Dictionary: The Ideas and Symbols of William Blake. University Press of New England, 1988.
- . Blake's Job. E.P.Button&Co., 1969.
- Edinger, Edward F. Encounter with the Self: A Jungian Commentary on William Blake's Illustrations of the Book of Job. Inner City Books, 1986.
- Erdman, David V.(ed.) Blake-The Complete Illuminated Works with a Plate-by-Plate Commentary. Dover, 1992.
- . The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake. Anchor, 1997.
- Frye, Northrop. Fearful Symmetry-A Study of William Blake. Princeton University Press, 1969.
- (ed). Blake :A Collection of Critical Essays. Prentice Hall, 1996.
- Gallant, Christine. Blake and the Assimilation of Chaos. Princeton University Press, 1978.
- George, Diana Hume. Blake and Freud. Cornell University Press, 1980.
- Godard, Jerry Caris. Mental Forms Creating. William Blake Anticipates Freud, Jung and Rank. University Press of America, 1983.
- Jankovics, Marcell, Hoppál Mihály et al.(ed).Jelképtár. [Dictionary of Symbols] Helikon, 1988.
- Janzer Csikós, Dóra. ” Four Mighty Ones Are in Every Man.” Akadémiai Kiadó, 2003.
- Jung, C.G..Mélységeink ösvényén. [Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious] Gondolat, 1993.
- . Aión. [Aion:Researches into the Phenomenology of the Self] Akadémiai Kiadó, 1993.
- . A szellem jelensége a művészetben és a tudományban. [Spirit in Man, Art, and Literature] Scholar, 2003.
- . A filozófusok fája-Képek a tudattalanból. [Alchemical Studies] Édesvíz, 2000.
- . Mandala. [Alchemical Studies] Édesvíz, 1999.

- . A nyugati és keleti vallások lélektanáról. [Psychology and Religion: West and East] Scholar, 2005.
- . Two Essays on Analytical Psychology. [Collected Works of C.G. Jung Vol. 7.] Princeton University Press, 1972
- Keynes, Geoffrey (ed.). The Complete Writings of William Blake. The Nonesuch Press, 1925.
- . Blake's Vision of the Circle of the Life of Man. Studies in Art and Literature (ed. Dorothy Miner) Princeton, New Jersey, 1954.
- Mayes, Clifford. "Correspondence on Jung on Young People," *Encounter*, Winter 2003, Volume 16, number 4. 12.
- Paley, Morton. D.. The Traveller in the Evening: The Last Works of William Blake. Oxford, 2003.
- Raine, Kathleen. Blake and the New Age. George Allen and Unwin, 1979.
- Segal, Robert A. The Gnostic Jung. Princeton University Press, 1992.
- Singer, June. The Unholy Bible. Harper&Row, 1973.
- Stevens, Anthony. On Jung. Routledge, 1990.
- Szász, Ilma. A Ponttól a mandaláig. Mandala art, 1992.
- Trisan, David I. "This New Science of Ours, Part II." Journal of Analytical Psychology. Winter 2004.
- Ripley, Wayne C. "Jeremy Tambling. Blake's Night Thoughts.", *Blake: An Illustrated Quarterly*. Volume 41, number 3. Winter 2007–08.
- Witcutt, W.P. Blake. A Psychological Study. Hollis&Carter, 1946.

Hyperlinks:

-Definitions:

-Plates 1–21: Blake, William. For the Sexes: The Gates of Paradise. Copy D, c.1825. The William Blake Archive. Ed. Morris Eaves, Robert N. Essick and Joseph Viscomi. 24 October 2007

-Dante's View of the Universe: <http://abyss.uoregon.edu/~js/images/dante.gif>

-Death's Door: www.lehigh.edu

References:

- ¹ D.H. George, *Blake and Freud*. Cornell University Press, 1980. 185.
- ² June K. Singer, *The Unholy Bible*. Harper&Raw Publishers, 1970. 232.
- ³ C. G. Jung, “Definitions,” CW 6, par. 757. See <http://www.psychceu.com/Jung/sharplexicon.html>
- ⁴ C. G. Jung, “The Function of the Unconscious” CW 7, par. 269. See <http://www.psychceu.com/Jung/sharplexicon.html>
- ⁵ C. G. Jung, *Two Essays on Analytical Psychology*. (Collected Works of C.G.Jung Vol. 7.)Princeton University Press, 1972. 74.
- ⁶ Anthony Stevens, *On Jung*. Routledge, 1990. 140–141.
- ⁷ C. G. Jung, “Definitions.” par. 709. See <http://www.psychceu.com/Jung/sharplexicon.html>
- ⁸ C. G. Jung, *Mandala*. Édesvíz, 1999. 48.
- ⁹ Peter Ackroyd, *Blake*. Vintage, 1999. 140–141.
- ¹⁰ Ackroyd 140–141.
- ¹¹ J.R. Bentley, *The Stranger From Paradise*, Yale University Press, 2001. 140–142.
- ¹² See *A Vision of the Last Judgement*
- ¹³ Plutarkhosz, *Íszisz és Ozirisz Európa*, 1986. 29.
- ¹⁴ Morton D.Paley, *The Traveller in the Evening-The Last Works of William Blake*. Oxford, 2003. 8.
- ¹⁵ Kathleen Raine, *Blake and the New Age*. George Allen and Unwin, 1979. 11.
- ¹⁶ Hoppál Mihály, Jankovics Marcell et al., *Szimbólumtár*. Helikon, 1988. 60.
- ¹⁷ S. Foster Damon, *A Blake Dictionary- The Ideas and Symbols of William Blake*. University Press of New England, 1988. p.150.
- ¹⁸ Damon 451.
- ¹⁹ C. G. Jung, *A Filozófusok fája-Képek a tudattalamból*. Édesvíz, 2000. 57.
- ²⁰ C. G. Jung, *Aión*. Akadémiai Kiadó, 1993. 158.
- ²¹ David V. Erdman (ed.), *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*. Anchor, 1997. 99.
- ²² C. G. Jung, *Mélyiségeink ösvényén*. Gondolat, 1993. 207.
- ²³ Anthony Stevens, *On Jung*. Routledge, 1990. 67.
- ²⁴ See par. VI in *On the Three Original Realities*.
- ²⁵ Geoffrey Keynes, *Blake’s Vision of the Circle of the Life of Man*. Studies in Art and Literature (ed. Dorothy Miner)Princeton, New Jersey, 1954. 131.
- ²⁶ Stevens 44.
- ²⁷ Damon 149.
- ²⁸ Damon 410.
- ²⁹ Hoppál 60.
- ³⁰ Damon 261.
- ³¹ Damon 410.
- ³² Damon 117.
- ³³ Damon 117.
- ³⁴ Stevens 68.
- ³⁵ Stevens 70.
- ³⁶ Jung, *Aión* 58.
- ³⁷ Jerry Caris Godard, *Mental Forms Creating. William Blake Anticipates Freud, Jung, and Rank*. University Press of America, 1983. 88.
- ³⁸ David V.Erdman, *Blake-The Complete Illuminated Works with a Plate-by-Plate Commentary*. Dover, 1992. 270.
- ³⁹ Erdman 270.
- ⁴⁰ Erdman 270.
- ⁴¹ Erdman 270.
- ⁴² D.H.George, *Blake and Freud*. Cornell University Press, 1980. 187.
- ⁴³ Stevens 81.
- ⁴⁴ Damon 288.
- ⁴⁵ Damon 322.
- ⁴⁶ Harold Bloom, *Blake’s Apocalypse*. Anchor, 1965. 483–484.
- ⁴⁷ Northrop Frye, *Fearful Symmetry-A Study of William Blake*. Princeton University Press, 1969.18–23.
- ⁴⁸ Erdman, *The Complete* 274.

⁴⁹ Robert Segal, The Gnostic Jung. Princeton University Press, 1992. 24.

⁵⁰ David I. Treasau, This New Science of Ours, Part II, *Journal of Analytical Psychology*, 2004, 49. 374.

⁵¹ Erdman, The Complete 275.

⁵² Erdman 276.

⁵³ Damon 150.

⁵⁴ Damon 42.

⁵⁵ Damon 42.

⁵⁶ Wayne C. Ripley, Jeremy Tambling. Blake's Night Thoughts. (Review), *Blake-An Illustrated Quarterly*. Volume 41, number 3. Winter 2007–08.

⁵⁷ Magnus Ankarsjö, William Blake and Gender. McFarland&Company, 2006. 3.

⁵⁸ Ankarsjö 11.