

## overSEAS 2013

This thesis was submitted by its author to the School of English and American Studies, Eötvös Loránd University, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts. It was found to be among the best theses submitted in 2013, therefore it was decorated with the School's Outstanding Thesis Award. As such it is published in the form it was submitted in **overSEAS 2013** (<http://seas3.elte.hu/overseas/2013.html>)

# **ALAPSZAKOS SZAKDOLGOZAT**

**Tatár Csilla**

Anglisztika alapszak

Angol szakirány

**2013**

**CERTIFICATE OF RESEARCH**

By my signature below, I certify that my ELTE B.A. thesis, entitled A posteriori Fall: Representations of the Fall in Blake's Songs is entirely the result of my own work, and that no degree has previously been conferred upon me for this work. In my thesis I have cited all the sources (printed, electronic or oral) I have used faithfully and have always indicated their origin. The electronic version of my thesis (in PDF format) is a true representation (identical copy) of this printed version.

If this pledge is found to be false, I realize that I will be subject to penalties up to and including the forfeiture of the degree earned by my thesis.

Date:.....

Signed:.....

EÖTVÖS LÓRÁND TUDOMÁNYEGYETEM

Bölcsészettudományi Kar

# ALAPSZAKOS SZAKDOLGOZAT

*A posteriori bűnbeesés – A bűnbeesés ábrázolása Blake Dalaiban*

*A Posteriori Fall – Representations of the Fall in Blake's Songs*

**Témavezető:**

Dr. Komáromy Zsolt

egyetemi adjunktus

**Készítette:**

Tatár Csilla

anglisztika alapszak

angol szakirány

**2013**

Table of Contents:

1. Introduction.....	1
2. Aspects of the Fall.....	3
3. Fall in the <i>Songs</i> .....	8
4. Towards Redemption.....	18
5. Conclusion.....	20
Works Cited.....	23

## 1. Introduction

When reading William Blake, one might recognize a variety of ideas and symbols appearing in his works, but there is one notion that seems to underlie them all. This notion may not always be pronounced, but it certainly is a reality undeniably present in Blake's thinking; therefore, if one attempts to understand his works, it is not to be neglected. The notion underlying a number of ideas that *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* displays is the Fall of man.

This biblical concept appears to be central to Blake's thinking, as he presents a number of aspects of what he means by the Fall. These aspects may not, at first, seem apparent in the *Songs per se*, but they are most certainly recognizable in another major work of Blake's: *The Four Zoas*. By way of consulting critics' approach to this work, one can see how Blake introduces four characters representing aspects of the soul there. All four of them are in a fallen state, because they are dimensions of a unity torn apart—this is demonstrated by their fight against each other. Keeping in mind how they interact with each other, what perspective they view the world from, and what perspective they provide together, the supposition that *The Four Zoas* gives an overview of how Blake understands the Fall might give ample reason for the introduction of the Zoas into a discussion about the *Songs*—if one wishes to grasp the general sense of the Fall there.

Although the fallen nature of man may not be quite so overtly depicted in the *Songs*, it shall be argued that it is nevertheless presented by the two states of the human soul—innocence and experience. One should bear in mind that, in this reading, neither state is ideal, as both of them are means of displaying the fallen condition. Thus, whoever the speaker may be in any particular song, he is telling his story from a fallen point of view—all the speakers are.

That the speakers are of a fallen state means that their respective poems—analysed individually and considered together—provide insight as to how the Fall is to be detected and understood in the *Songs*. When looked at one by one (but never out of context), they display a variety of characteristics that may be attributed to the Fall. Some of them are derived, for example, from the fact that the speakers of Innocence and Experience are subjects to the workings of time and physicality—a phenomenon that shall be presented by the poem “Ah, Sunflower!”. Other aspects lie in the presence of sorrow and inequality in the *Songs*—“The Divine Image”, for instance, can be read in such a way so as to represent this. Yet another characteristic feature is the constant presence of guardian figures (this is particularly true of the *Songs of Innocence*, e.g. “The Shepherd”). Another important lead to the notion of the Fall as an underlying factor is the presence of the fig-leaves on the plate introducing the *Songs*; its implications shall be presented with “The Garden of Love”. These characteristics shall serve as arguments for the presence of the Fall in both Innocence and Experience.

The idea shall also be discussed that although innocence and experience are of fallen nature, their condition is not insurmountable. When the two states interact with each other, they engage in an imaginative interplay which eventually brings about a change of perspective. What this change means is that the fallen man gains a higher level of perception and understanding with the help of his imagination. By this change, man will find a quality in him that will be able to override the Fall—a quality that is capable of freeing his soul, thus allowing him to leave the fallen state behind and find a higher form of unity with his ultimate imaginative being. When this change of perspective occurs, the soul is redeemed of its fallen condition.

## 2. Aspects of the Fall

To understand the general sense of the Fall in the *Songs*, one can consult critical interpretations of *The Four Zoas*, which might be able to give the reader a more complete understanding of what Blake's idea of the fallen state of the human soul is. An approach to connecting the two works is adopting the readings of the Zoas that Norman Nathan and Northrop Frye provide in *Prince William B: The Philosophical Conceptions of William Blake* and *Fearful Symmetry: A Study of William Blake*, respectively, and finding out how these aspects appear in the *Songs*. Working by their reasoning, one can find several connecting points between the two works, thus gaining a more thorough understanding of the fallen state.

Blake's *The Four Zoas* shall now be presented along the lines of Norman Nathan's reading. According to him, the Zoas present four sides of the soul: perception, reason, emotion, and imagination—all of which are subject to the Fall (*Prince William B* 37). Despite the fact that they stand for different aspects of the same unity, it is characteristic of them to be fighting for power over each other in their fallen forms. When either of the Zoas becomes too dominant, the fallen soul imprisons itself. When none of them assumes superiority, they work together and create a perspective for the so far fallen man that enables him to override his condition (Nathan *Prince William B*)

The first of the Zoas is Los-Urthona who stands for "visionary fancy" or the imaginative aspect of the mind (Nathan *Prince William B* 44). His importance can be explained well by showing what the other three Zoas come to when devoid of his power. By presenting those states of existence, one can develop an accurate account of the vital role that Los-Urthona's ability plays.

The second of the Zoas presented here is the first one who falls, namely Tharmas. According to Frye, before his fall, Tharmas had "the power to create life at will"; therefore, after his fall, "only an automatic "natural" cycle of life and death is left to the fallen world,

the collapse of Tharmas produces the world of time or “circle of destiny” (*Fearful Symmetry* 278-279). Thus, Frye tells the reader that the mechanical and temporal nature of human perception of life is a direct result of the Fall. One might think of this fall as the act of setting the scene, because from this point on, everything takes place in time. This is supported by the fact that the Zoas have an “eternal name” and a “time name” (Frye *Fearful Symmetry* 277). Since man sees everything through the restraining concept of time and as part of a mechanism, it is evident how essential elements temporality and automatism are to the fallen condition.

Time brings two substantial characteristics to the fallen world that both appear in the *Songs*: linearity and circularity. (The following passages do not attempt to fully analyze the poems; they serve as representations for the features pointed out.) In *Songs of Innocence*, for example, “The Ecchoing Green” presents the reader with how these two characteristics determine the workings of nature and human perception. For one thing, one can see that kids are playing outside at the start of day: “The Sun does arise, / . . . / While our sports shall be seen” (lines 1-10); but, as it is natural in the fallen realm, time inevitably passes, and so they arrive at a point when play is no more: “The sun does descend, / And our sports have an end:” (23-24). Another thing to note here is the presence of generations: young ones, as well as old ones make an appearance; thus, exemplifying not only the linear progression of time, but also the cyclic nature of fallen life—what happened to the elderly in the past is happening to the children in the present:

Such, such were the joys  
 When we all girls & boys,  
 In our youth time were seen  
 On the Ecchoing Green. (17-20)

This way, the poem shows the reader how the human mind in its fallen state comprehends both the linear and the cyclic properties time brings to the physical world.

Circularity and automatism can also be found in *The Songs of Experience*. “Ah, Sunflower!” is an example that displays both of these properties the Fall brings about. The poem reads: “Ah, sunflower! weary of time, / Who countest the steps of the Sun,” (1-2). Although the poem is not primarily concerned with this theme, one cannot deny that, as the flower is a part of nature, it exists in and is subject to time, and as a creature of the fallen world, it is also a representation of how mechanic laws inevitably influence the existence of natural beings.

The third Zoa to be presented is Urizen. His main ability is mental power; therefore, after his fall, it is the malevolent use of this capacity that manifests itself in the fallen condition (Nathan *Prince William B* 38). As Nathan says, “Urizen in his divided state attempts to destroy imagination in man by means of laws and moral codes” (*Prince William B* 88); this claim, he supports with “London” from *Experience*:

In every cry of every Man,  
In every infant’s cry of fear,  
In every voice, in every ban,  
The mind-forged manacles I hear. (5-8)

In such circumstances, reasoning power serves as an instrument for the attempt of regulating the residents of the fallen world. When reason deprives man of his imagination, it assumes a power solely of its own that not only influences, but downright forms the mental and physical states of man. Thus, reasoning power is a mental faculty that, when ruling by itself, enslaves the mind of fallen men.

When Urizen is in eternity, he is “the “Prince of Light” or the true sun”, but in the fallen world, he is part of nature’s circularity and brings doubt to men’s life (Frye *Fearful*

*Symmetry* 285). As such, the fallen man who opts for Urizen in his fallen state applies his reasoning power for an understanding of the natural world devoid of imagination. Therefore, Urizen's presence in, for instance, "The Voice of the Ancient Bard" as "doubt" and "clouds of reason" (4) is quite evident. This bard in *Experience* warns the youth what reason without imagination is like—a cloud over the minds of the fallen man preventing him from seeing more than what nature has to offer:

Tangled roots perplex her ways -  
 How many have fallen there!  
 They stumble all night over bones of the dead,  
 And feel they know not but care,  
 And wish to lead others, when they should be led. (7-11)

When "Doubt is fled and clouds of reason, / Dark disputes and artful teasing." (4-5), man will see the ". . . opening morn - / Image of truth new born;" (2-3), but as long as he allows Urizen to rule, the fallen man cannot change his condition.

The fourth Zoa is Luvah, who—in Norman Nathan's reading—stands for emotion. In his unfallen state, Luvah is an energizing power and this characteristic he retains even after his fall (*Prince William B* 74). Despite this, Luvah is not all benevolent: Frye has pointed out that his fall is closely connected to that of Urizen's (*Fearful Symmetry* 286); therefore, the complicated relationship they have should be given some thought as part of the discussion about Luvah.

The complexity of Urizen and Luvah's relationship is exemplified here with "The Garden of Love": the reader can see the outcome of their constant fight for control over each other in the fallen world and, according to Frye, "Urizen always gains mastery over Luvah" (*Fearful Symmetry* 287). (The emphasis, though, is on the fact that this generalization is only applicable to the fallen condition.) In the poem the reader can have a glimpse of Luvah's

world: it includes plays, flowers, joys, and desires. However, through his reasoning power, Urizen brings institutionalized religion to the fallen world—thus overpowering Luvah: “A Chapel was built in the midst / Where I used to play on the green.” (3-4). One can conclude that it is characteristic of the fallen soul to be led by unimaginative reason rather than by either states of emotion.

Nevertheless, there are poems in which Luvah is in power and rules enhanced by imagination. Such a poem is “The Divine Image” from *The Songs of Innocence*: here, Urizen does not rule, and as Heather Glen points out, the “conception of goodness grows out of the experience common to all human beings” (*Vision and Disenchantment: Blake’s Songs & Wordsworth’s Lyrical Ballads* 151). That is, the fallen man is capable of creating his own idea of morality through “the process of communal value-formation” (Glen *Vision and Disenchantment* 163). Although one should not forget that men are still in a fallen state, social interactions and signs of creativity are crucial steps towards an imaginative life.

Unfortunately, Luvah does not bring out imagination only—another possibility is that he loses the fight against Urizen. This scenario entails the disappearance of love simultaneously with the appearance of jealousy, as the poem “My Pretty Rose Tree” from *The Songs of Experience* exemplifies it. One character is led by Urizen’s reasoning power and the other by Luvah’s jealousy—the state of, as Frye calls it, “the natural man” (*Fearful Symmetry* 72). This emotion is an unimaginative one (Nathan *Prince William B* 86), and as such, it supports the fallen world of natural beings rather than the imaginative life of those aspiring to a higher state of existence.

Once one has an understanding of the three latter Zoas, the importance of Los-Urthona becomes clear: regardless of what status he has in eternity, he brings imagination to the fallen man. It has been pointed out above that with the fall of Tharmas, man lost his power of creation at will; therefore, it is now Los’s power of imagination that allows him to have a

creative perspective of life. When Urizen assumes power devoid of Los-Urthona, reason serves solely the understanding of the fallen world (i.e. the natural world of time and physicality). When Luvah is without imagination, Urizen overpowers him and hatred and jealousy dwell in the human heart. Although Nathan says that man is mostly without imagination (partly due to the work of the fallen Zoas) (*Prince William B* 78), he also points out that it is “never completely lost to man, for there can be no existence without imagination, the basis and essence of being” (*Prince William B* 109) Thus, it is this power that—when used properly—can help man regain the unfallen state.

The perspective the Zoas provide the reader with enables one to see how the fallen condition and redemption are to be understood in Blake’s works. Some characteristics of the fallen condition are the circularity or linearity time brings, the authoritative reasoning aspect of the soul, and the jealous love of the fallen man. *The Four Zoas* also tells the reader that despite their tendency to assume superiority in the minds of men, the coexistence and interaction of the aspects of the soul constructs a condition that allows men to override the unwelcome state they are placed in.

### 3. Fall in the *Songs*

As one can see from the discussion above, a great number of features the Zoas represent appear in the *Songs*. Since these features tell the reader about the different aspects from which the fallen condition and the key to redemption may be grasped, one might surmise that their appearance in the *Songs* suggests that the Fall has a significant role in these poems as well. When looking at the songs as a whole, one will see that the Fall appears to be an underlying concept to the themes depicted in them individually.

Northrop Frye has suggested that the main difference between *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience* is that the former represents the unfallen state of the human soul,

whereas the latter stands for the fallen state (*Fearful Symmetry* 42). However, one might argue that there are reasons to believe otherwise: innocence and experience can both be viewed as fallen conditions. Six arguments shall be presented subsequently, three of which require the incorporation of some of the ideas appearing in the *Zoas*, as presented by Frye and Nathan. (Making use in the *Songs* of features pointed out in the chronologically later *Four Zoas* can be justified by the generally held view that Blake's thought constitutes a coherent whole, his various works all displaying the essential elements of his thinking.) The last four arguments shall be exemplified by discussions of poems from both *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience*; and implications of the first two shall be discussed afterwards.

The first argument arises from an important concept *The Four Zoas* draws attention to: perspective. On the basis of the fact that each of the *Zoas* represents a different aspect of and perspective on the fallen soul, one might argue that the two contrary states in the *Songs* also stand for more than merely the unfallen and fallen characteristics of man. When one sees that the *Zoas* provide an understanding of the Fall as divided aspects of the same unity, one might consider treating the two states in the *Songs* as such, too. This way, they present the reader with two perspectives on the fallen state—the innocent and the experienced.

The second argument incorporates two elements of the Fall from Frye's reading of *The Four Zoas*. As it was pointed out above, Tharmas's fall is representative of how man lost the power to create at will as a direct result of the Fall. According to Frye, it is Urthona who is assigned the task of rebuilding man (*Fearful Symmetry* 286). Thus, his power of vision or fancy is a necessity to the fallen world. To phrase it in a more direct fashion: it is precisely because of the Fall that the ability to imagine becomes so immensely significant. If one is willing to place this idea in the context of the *Songs*, the view of innocence as "the world of imagination in its pitying, tender, sympathetic, and feminine aspect" (Frye *Fearful Symmetry*

235) suggests that this state is, after all, a fallen one. (It is not to be forgotten, though, that imagination in its unified strength is a vital element to redemption [*Prince William B* 109]. As a source of creative power, imagination is the only divine quality in men [the importance of which is to be discussed later on]. What is being suggested here is merely the idea that were innocence not a fallen state of existence, imagination would not be quite so important for it.)

A third argument arises if one accepts the significance of the formerly presented notions of time and physicality. According to Nathan, the physical world exists of God's mercy; that is, God created the Earth to moderate the fall of man; he also points out that time exists for similar reasons: since without time, the Fall would take place in eternity, God created time in order to reduce the sufferings brought about by the Fall (*Prince William B* 139-141). As it was argued for before, both of these notions are present as underlying factors in the songs of both states. As long as the creatures in the states of innocence and experience exist in time and physicality and understand the world accordingly, they undeniably belong to the fallen realm.

As it was stated above, from the third argument on, discussions of poems exemplify the arguments presented. The first poem to be dealt with is one already mentioned earlier on in a similar context: "Ah, Sunflower!". It has been touched upon before that this particular poem is illustrative of how earthly beings are subject to time and circularity, but another notion, physicality, appears to be quite central, as well. The narrator, the Bard, contemplates upon the desires he attributes to the sunflower, "a perfect symbol of the 'vegetable' life rooted in this world and longing to be free" (Frye *Fearful Symmetry* 74). Apparently, the sunflower is "weary of time" (1) and wishes to go where the Youth and the Virgin arise and aspire. According to William J. Keith, the poem can be read in two ways: an optimistic interpretation is to say that the song "consists of straightforward aspiration" and as such, leads towards the "golden clime" (3); the other, more sinister interpretation says that

regardless of how badly the sunflower desires freedom, it can never be attained (“The Complexities of Blake’s ‘Sunflower’: An Archetypal Speculation” 63). This latter view seems to be accepted by Glen, who says that the images show “fruitless longing” and that the flower “can only ‘count the steps of’ that Sun towards which it forever points, only ‘seek after’ that which it will never reach” (*Vision and Disenchantment* 186). It seems as though objects of the natural world cannot but desire to transcend their own physicality, thereby entering the state of eternity. The two opposing readings Keith gives suggest that it mostly depends on the reader’s disposition how successful the sunflower’s attempt can be.

The former argument assumes a certain level of similarity between the states of innocence and experience; this assumption is further strengthened by the fourth argument. Keeping in mind that these are two different states, one can still detect connections between them. Apart from the features connecting the two states together mentioned above, there are other observations that suggest a closer relation between innocence and experience than one would normally assume to be there. Although *Innocence* presents the reader with a sense of happiness and tranquillity, thus creating a seemingly joyous and peaceful world; this state is, nonetheless, more complex than and not quite as tranquil as it might appear at first. As Robert F. Gleckner points out, the perspective of innocence is “prevalingly happy – with elements of experience constantly insinuating themselves” (“Point of View and Context in Blake’s Songs” 11). This amounts to his remark that “the note of sorrow is never completely absent” (“Point of View and Context in Blake’s Songs” 11). Given this and Frye’s substantial statement that “as long as a single form of life remains in misery and pain the imagination finds the world not good enough” (*Fearful Symmetry* 236), it seems justified to not treat the innocent state as a completely perfect or ideal one. Furthermore, there is also the presence of inequality to be accounted for: when one praises compassion and charity in the human character, behind it always lies the disturbing notion that something is, after all, not quite right. Glen phrases it

thus: “In no real sense can ‘hospitality’ be an adequate symbol of community, for implicit in the concept is a division between those who dispense and those who receive” (*Vision and Disenchantment* 119). So long as charity and compassion are cherished, inequality and sorrow are implied. Although experience is traditionally looked at as the fallen state, from the above argument follows that innocence is not unfallen either.

There are poems, such as “The Chimney Sweeper” and “The Little Black Boy” that introduce notions like sorrow and inequality to the innocent state, and there are others which can be read as indirectly built upon them. Although they are never pronounced (let alone emphasized) in the song, “The Divine Image” does seem to integrate such notions. At first, the reader might observe the uplifting characteristics of the poem only (some of which were mentioned formerly as part of the discussion about Luvah and the beneficial nature of social interactions.) Nonetheless, one should not forget to look at the implications of these virtues, as well.

Some of the basic values and concepts that appear in the course of the poem shall now be presented. Glen points out that the first two lines of the poem (“To Mercy, Pity, Peace and Love / All pray in their distress;” [1-2]) suggest equality among men: when in distress, all pray (*Vision and Disenchantment* 151). Then in the second stanza, the reader learns that these “virtues of delight” (3) together are God and men as well, which shows a strong connection between the two:

For Mercy, Pity, Peace and Love  
Is God our Father dear;  
And Mercy, Pity, Peace and Love  
Is Man his child and care. (5-8)

Then, in the third stanza, the Piper reveals that men’s concept of God originates in his own conduct, thus making it clear that it is, after all, men's inherent divinity that one turns to in

difficult times. The fourth stanza further strengthens this belief: “Then every man of every clime / That prays in his distress, / Prays to the human form divine” (13-15). Glen draws attention to alternations that occur in the last stanza: for instance, it is now the human form (and not the human form divine) that all men must love (and not pray to) (*Vision and Disenchantment* 155). It should also be noted that Peace is no longer present:

And all must love the human form

In heathen, turk, or jew;

Where Mercy, Love and Pity dwell

There God is dwelling too. (17-20)

The four virtues, what they form, and how they form it are, of course, crucial to all human beings given that they seek to understand and embrace the divinity within them, but the bases on which they are built cannot be overlooked (especially if one remembers Frye’s aforementioned statement of life being “not good enough” for imagination in certain conditions.) (A problem with innocence could be that creatures of this state cannot but be oblivious towards what later experience will criticize in an unforgiving manner in “The Human Abstract” and “A Divine Image”.) The first problem is the presence of men’s distress in the happy state of innocence. This is connected to Donald A. Dike’s discussion of concerns over Mercy and Pity: he writes that “mercy and pity . . . , and God along with them, are predicated on a kind of status quo of human distress, twice cited as the occasion of prayer” (“The Difficult Innocence: Blake’s Songs and Pastoral” 368). Adding to Dike’s concerns, Glen says that mercy is “dependent on inequality” and pity on “the misery it sought to soften” (*Vision and Disenchantment* 158-159). Then, the concept of peace also rouses concerns: this virtue is argued to be “the least essential and most ambiguous of the values to which men appeal: ‘the human dress’ might equally be an ornament or a disguise” (Glen *Vision and Disenchantment* 157). (Interestingly, at one point, Glen interprets the absence of peace at the

very end of the song as bringing about an “edge of threat” (*Vision and Disenchantment* 156).) Even if innocence is blind to these difficulties, the reader cannot be (since, as many critics noted, innocence is not written for the innocents but of them.) Therefore, of the four virtues, even in the *Songs of Innocence*, only love can remain intact. (But, as Glen emphasizes it, love will eventually be subject to “deformation” in Experience [*Vision and Disenchantment* 160].)

(Another argument that could be applicable to this song incorporates Nathan’s discussion about the status of emotions in the lives of fallen men. Nathan says that because they are fallen, men lost most of their imagination, and it is through emotions that they can regain that former power (*Prince William B* 78). If it is, in fact, in these principles they together create in “The Divine Image” that men find their divinity (or imagination), then based on Nathan’s reasoning about the importance of emotions, these innocent men are in a fallen condition. But, as it was pointed out earlier, they are also on the right track towards redemption.)

Before the introduction of the fifth argument, a possible counterargument to the fourth one should be dealt with. One might say that it is the working of elements of experience that corrupts innocence and it is not, by itself, a bad state. (At this point, it could be useful to note that “by itself” or on its own, innocence cannot be said to be good either. It would, by default, be neutral, but not good or bad. If one is to make a moral judgement over innocence, it is only possible if there is another state that it can be contrasted with. In this context, Innocence needs its complementary contrary.) Even so, these elements are said to be there in the state of innocence. The question is how they appeared in a supposedly unfallen state. There seems to be no logical answer to this question, because an unfallen state—by definition—should not contain anything of fallen nature. One, then, seems to have no other choice, but to abandon the idea of the innocent state being unfallen. The assumption that innocence is also of a fallen world could solve the mystery of such emotions as sorrow

appearing in this state. In support of this, one can consult with what Frye says about the state of experience: “Blake never forgets to see behind all the cruelty of man the fact of his fall” (*Fearful Symmetry* 236); thus, if elements such as inequality and distress can appear in innocence also, they are there as the results of the Fall.

The fifth argument is built upon the notion of protection that G. E. Bentley Jr. presents the reader with, and it concerns the state of innocence mostly. (To be more precise, guardians are present in the state of experience as well, but they have a different, restrictive role.) He writes that all the speakers of Innocence “speak from a sense of protection, of safety, of being in their proper places in an ordered universe” (*The Stranger from Paradise* 132). He, then, continues by saying that “each is protected by something outside himself; it is this sense of protection, rather than the reality of protection, which brings joy and peace. These innocents do not know that there is nothing outside themselves to protect them” (*The Stranger from Paradise* 132). (But since in Blake’s thinking, the creations of our minds are just as real as the creations in the reality of the outer world, Bentley concludes his account of this phenomenon as follows: “it is not society but vision which sustains them” [*The Stranger from Paradise* 132].) The source of protection is projected to the various guardian figures appearing in the *Songs*; thus, making the creatures of innocence fragile and helpless in themselves. As Dike says, “Everyone is incomplete and needs help . . .” (“The Difficult Innocence: Blake’s Songs and Pastoral” 362). Even though their state of mind allows the creation of the sense of protection (which in itself is an imaginative act—and as such, it is a building force of the human mind), these creatures of innocence assume protection to be coming from the outside, which makes them all the less powerful and all the more dependent.

Mothers, nurses, priests, angels, shepherds (and even the Piper) assume the role of guardian. From the innocent point of view, they are—though watchful—mostly happy and tranquil; that is, they are a part of the innocent state. “The Shepherd”, because of its truly

innocent nature, can exemplify how the presence of a guardian affects (or allows) the innocent state. The first stanza, Glen says, introduces the reader to “natural freedom” (*Vision and Disenchantment* 4):

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. (1-4)

This is a notion that seems to be behind the idea of free “play” that so frequently appears in the state of innocence (Glen *Vision and Disenchantment* 110-165). However, in the second stanza, it turns out that this freedom is dependent upon the presence of the guardian whom the innocent creatures can look at as a protective entity:

For he hears the lambs innocent call,  
 And he hears the ewes tender reply;  
 He is watchful while they are in peace,  
 For they know when their Shepherd is nigh. (sic) (5-8)

This is supported by what Dike writes about the shepherd and the nurse: “Their presence attests that while the lambs and children need freedom, they need it with the crucial qualification that it be safe. Unrestrained desire is cherished, but the unrestrained desire even of innocents is seen . . . to have its dangers: to be not entirely reliable or self-sufficient, to need help” (“Difficult Innocence”). Based on these ideas, it seems justified to say that Innocence is a highly dependent state of being, and as such, its status as an idyllic one needs to be reconsidered.

The last argument originates in the illustration that serves as a title page for both sets of songs. According to F. W. Bateson, this plate “shows a young Adam and Eve, naked except for the fig-leaves . . . , cowering in agonized terror before the leaping flames of God’s

wrath” (“Notes on Blake’s Poems” 182) Even though he says that the plate seems to be illustrative of the state of experience rather than innocence (“Notes on Blake’s Poems” 182), one can argue that Blake did not place this specific plate before both the states—and not only experience—by chance. As Blake was particularly careful with his design, one cannot escape the idea that regardless of which state the plate might seem to represent more evidently to the reader, it is placed there to be representative of everything that is to come after it—innocence included. The presence of the fig leaves, thus, gains ever-increasing significance: since it is a sign of the Fall, one can rightfully suppose that both innocence and experience are states of the fallen man. Besides, both figures are bending low under the rage of God, and they could both be understood as representing either of the two states, thereby telling the reader that Innocence and Experience are together in the Fall.

The burden of the symbolic presence of fig leaves seems to be quite predominant in “The Garden of Love”. It was mentioned earlier on that in this song, the moralizations of reason replaced love and play. As the poem goes on, it is revealed that the source of the new principles of morality is not open for the visiting man; moreover, regulations are stated in a fashion so as to suggest that they are most probably not open to individual ideas or questioning remarks whatsoever: “And the gates of this Chapel were shut, / And “Thou shalt not” writ over the door;”. There is no “communal value-formation” anymore (*Glen Vision and Disenchantment* 163); visitors of this realm are instructed to obey the rules of reason. The poetic persona then turns to the scene of his former plays, only to discover the devastating changes that have taken place:

So I turned to the Garden of Love  
 That so many sweet flowers bore,  
 And I saw it was filled with graves  
 And tombstones where flowers should be; (7-10)

The garden of love has turned into a garden of death: love has been entombed. The prohibition of free love thus eliminates the only value from “The Divine Image” that was considered uncorrupted and remained whole in Innocence.

The six arguments support the proposed view of the Fall as an underlying principle in the *Songs*. These were perspectivism borrowed from the Zoas, imagination as the cherished power of the fallen condition, the concepts of time and physicality, the presence of unholy circumstances and emotions, the necessity of guardians in innocence, and the depiction of the Fall on the common title page of the two states. Each of them adds to one’s understanding of the Fall, but the somber mood they leave the reader with is not just towards Blake; therefore, perspective and imagination shall be discussed briefly hereafter in a fairly different light.

#### 4. Towards Redemption

The view that innocence and experience are both parts of the same unity has been presented previously and shall be discussed in more detail subsequently. Blake directs the reader towards this idea with the subtitle he gave the *Songs*: “Showing the Two Contrary States of the Human Soul”. On this view, innocence and experience are complementary states, since they together form what Blake calls the “human soul”.

Although very different from one another, innocence and experience are both modes of experiencing the same fallen world. One of them seems to be exceptionally happy and somewhat oblivious to the miseries of the Fall, the other exceedingly somber in its judgment of the fallen condition, missing out on all the cheerfulness of the other state; therefore, even though they exist in the same world, Innocence and Experience seem to be representing two almost entirely different realities. For some clarification on the connection between them, one can consult Frye’s explanation about Blake’s way of thinking on this matter: “nothing is real beyond the imaginative patterns men make of reality, and hence there

are exactly as many realities as there are men” (*Fearful Symmetry* 19). Accordingly, the Piper of Innocence and the Bard of Experience by perceiving the physical world (in the particular mode they are capable of) create their own worlds of it also - this is how one can speak of the world of innocence and the world of experience. But Frye also points out that “Blake does not deny the unity of the material world” (*Fearful Symmetry* 20); therefore, it is not to be forgotten that the two states reflect upon the exact same reality whilst creating their own.

Both worlds the two states create are real, even though they are vastly different and contradictory. Keeping in mind the aforementioned arguments for the fallen nature of the states, it can still be stated that the reality of innocence is largely (and probably rightfully) considered by many critics to be a higher state of existence than experience. The tone of this perspective is a happy one, thus adding a cheery light to the already joyful content. But, as C. M. Bowra explains it, Blake “saw that though this state of childlike happiness . . . is wonderfully charming, it is not everything and it cannot last” (“Songs of Innocence and Experience” 146). Alongside Innocence, there stands Experience, and it perceives and creates the reality of a disillusioned existence. Bowra says that these songs tell the reader “how what we accept in childlike innocence is tested and proved feeble by actual events, how much that we have taken for granted is not true of the living world, how every noble desire may be debased and perverted” (“Songs of Innocence and Experience” 147-148). Hence, in this state, suffering, secrecy, jealousy, prescriptive morality, hypocrisy, and inequality surface openly. However, he also points out that experience, even in all its gloominess, seems to have something vital in it that innocence simply lacks: “compelling passion” (“Songs of Innocence and Experience” 147). It seems as though both states are in want of something that the other one has.

Therefore, acknowledging that both realities have validity does not amount to saying that it is up to the “human soul” to decide between them—if one wishes to live a more

complete life than either states on their own could provide, that is. In support of this stands Bowra's argument about Blake's possible intention with the contrary states; according to him, Blake "sought some ultimate synthesis in which innocence might be wedded to experience, and goodness to knowledge" ("Songs of Innocence and Experience" 155). This view is also supported by Nathan's remark: "Ideally, the contraries are interacting and complementary ends of a reality" (*Prince William B* 156). If and when there is interplay between the two states, the human soul sees the fallen world from a new perspective.

This new perspective, thus, synthesizes the perspectives of innocence and experience. Of this synthesis, Bowra writes that "the soul passes in its cycle to a fuller, more active life in the creative imagination" ("Songs of Innocence and Experience" 155). This synthesis manifests itself, for instance, in art, as it is "based on sense experience, yet it is an imaginative ordering of sense experience" (Frye *Fearful Symmetry* 24). Therefore, since Blake says that "Imagination is the Divine Body in Every Man" (*qtd. in* "Songs of Innocence and Experience" 144), when fallen men use their imagination in this new perspective, they find the divine quality within. When their own divinity is unveiled to them thus, men enter the state of eternity, thereby leaving the fallen condition (Nathan *Prince William B* 142-143). They are redeemed by their own power of imagination.

One can see that although the two contrary states have valid realities of their own, they are by no means perfect by themselves. The Fall is yet weighing on both states of the *Songs*, and it shall prevail until the creation of a new perspective by incorporating both innocence and experience redeems the soul.

## 5. Conclusion

In the present paper, it has been argued that *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* display certain features that lead the reader towards the supposition that the Fall is an

underlying principle in the poems. Even though the songs do not emphasize the notion of the Fall *per se*, the various characteristics and ideas appearing in them imply that it is, in fact, a central notion to them. By supposing the centrality of the Fall, one can arrive at a view on the *Songs* somewhat different from the traditional one.

To detect signs of the Fall in the *Songs*, one can consult critics' reading of *The Four Zoas*, which provides a way of approaching Blake's view on the Fall. As it has been argued, when Tharmas, Urizen, Luvah, and Urthona assume authority over one another, they serve as aspects representing the fallen human soul. As the fight between the aspects the Zoas symbolize is present in the *Songs*, to surmise its representativeness of the Fall there seems justified. Besides giving the understanding of the Fall as the division of the soul, however, the Zoas' importance to the *Songs* also lies in the fact that with their interaction, they symbolize how the soul is redeemed when its aspects are in unison. Thus, when the division and unity as key concepts to the Fall and to redemption are transferred to the *Songs*, new perspectives arise.

Besides the perspective the Zoas provide, it has been argued that the songs display a number of characteristics pointing the reader towards the idea of the Fall as a fundamental feature. Given this, the fallen nature of the soul is not specific to only one of the two states—arguments based on six assumptions supporting this view have been pointed out. For one thing, the two states, when divided, provide two perspectives on the Fall. The second idea suggests that a state in which imagination is the only divine quality, implies the existence of that state in the Fall, since the inability to create by one's will is characteristic of the fallen man. The third idea concerns the fallen soul which—for it lacks the ability to perceive eternity—perceives the world through the concepts of time and physicality. The next argument is based on and tries to account for the presence of sorrow and inequality in the states. Another argument has its basis in the suggested dependence of innocence—an idea

derived from the frequent appearance of guardian figures. The last one of the arguments rises from the visual representation Blake provides for the *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*; the plate introducing the two sets of songs suggests that both are to be looked at as depictions of the fallen human soul. These arguments support the view that the notion of the Fall underlies the songs.

With the Fall in mind, new meanings unfold in the poems that eventually point towards a life beyond the restrictive moralities implied in the concepts of good and evil. This life is the result of the interplay that creative imagination allows to occur between innocence and experience. When one sees beyond what the two states are in separation, he will have a new outlook on life, a new perspective that allows him to realize the power of divine imagination that lies within every one of the fallen souls. In that realization, the soul is redeemed of the Fall.

## Works Cited

- Bateson, F. W. "Notes on Blake's Poems." *William Blake: Songs of Innocence and Experience*. Ed. Margaret Bottrall. Houndmills: Macmillan Education LTD, 1970. 175-188. Print. Casebook Ser.
- Bentley Jr., G. E. *The Stranger From Paradise: A Biography of William Blake*. New Haven: Yale UP, 2003. Print.
- Blake, William. "Ah, Sunflower!" Ed. David V. Erdman. *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*. The William Blake Archive, 1996-2011. Web. 9 Apr. 2013.  
< <http://blakearchive.org/> >.
- . "London." Ed. David V. Erdman. *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*. The William Blake Archive, 1996-2011. Web. 9 Apr. 2013. < <http://blakearchive.org/> >.
- . "The Divine Image." Ed. David V. Erdman. *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*. The William Blake Archive, 1996-2011. Web. 9 Apr. 2013.  
< <http://blakearchive.org/> >.
- . "The Ecchoing Green." Ed. David V. Erdman. *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*. The William Blake Archive, 1996-2011. Web. 9 Apr. 2013.  
< <http://blakearchive.org/> >.
- . "The Garden of Love." Ed. David V. Erdman. *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*. The William Blake Archive, 1996-2011. Web. 9 Apr. 2013.  
< <http://blakearchive.org/> >.
- . "The Shepherd." Ed. David V. Erdman. *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*. The William Blake Archive, 1996-2011. Web. 9 Apr. 2013.  
< <http://blakearchive.org/> >.
- . "The Voice of the Ancient Bard." Ed. David V. Erdman. *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*. The William Blake Archive, 1996-2011. Web. 9 Apr. 2013.

< <http://blakearchive.org/> >.

Bowra, C. M. "Songs of Innocence and Experience." *William Blake: Songs of Innocence and Experience*. Ed. Margaret Bottrall. Houndmills: Macmillan Education LTD, 1970. 136-159. Print. Casebook Ser.

Dike, Donald A. "The Difficult Innocence: Blake's Songs and Pastoral." *ELH* 28.4 (Dec., 1961): 353-375. *JSTOR*. Web. 20. Oct. 2011.

Frye, Northrop. *Fearful Symmetry: A Study of William Blake*. New Jersey: Princeton UP, 1947. Print.

Gleckner, Robert F. "Point of View and Context in Blake's Songs." *Blake: A Collection of Critical Essays*. Ed. Northrop Frye. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987. 8-14. Print.

Glen, Heather. *Vision and Disenchantment: Blake's Songs & Wordsworth's Lyrical Ballads*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1983. Print.

Keith, William J. "The Complexities of Blake's "Sunflower": An Archetypal Speculation." *Blake: A Collection of Critical Essays*. Ed. Northrop Frye. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987. 56-64. Print.

Nathan, Norman. *Prince William B: The Philosophical Conceptions of William Blake*. The Hague: Mouton & Co. N.V., 1975. Print.