

Inner Fragmentation: Blake's Quaternary of the Divided Man and Jung's Archetypes

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Abstract

From ancient Greek philosophy down to the modern Western one, the idea of totality and of balance within unity has crossed boundaries of time, displaying man's need to delineate the whole and define its constitutive elements. Thus, macrocosm and microcosm were explained through the theories of the four elements, four qualities, four humors and so on. We encounter the same quaternary in William Blake's poetry, which deals with the inner "spiritual world" of man, and in Carl Gustav Jung's works, which investigate the "psychic life" of man. The goal of the present paper is to draw correspondences between Jung's archetypes of the collective unconscious and Blake's Albion, the divided man. The poetic universe of Blake bears the characteristics of a deeper layer of the psyche.

Keywords

Blake, Jung, archetype, collective unconscious, Zoa

Wholeness and integrity are considered of crucial importance when it comes to the workings of the mind. The psyche is sane when all of its functions are balanced and when all elements coexist in harmony and work attuned. The absence of one element or its expansion beyond regular bounds determines the fall of cohesion and the collapse of the entire psychic structure, which translates often as a catastrophic experience. Most readers of William Blake will probably agree that the prophetic books deal with the fragile human nature and tell the tragic story of man's inner fragmentation and the dire consequences that follow it. The reading of the long poems feels like a journey into the human psyche and a probing of the deeper layers of the unconscious. It is a dark, agitated labyrinthine world that pulsates with an incomprehensible life of its own. From this nebulous and floating Blakean universe surface figures much akin to Carl Gustav Jung's archetypes. The striking similarity between many of Blake's

characters and Jung's personifications of the unconscious is one reason that justifies drawing correspondences between them. Both explore the inner reality of man – one calls it 'psychic life' and the other 'spiritual world'. What the "prophet" infers through poetic insight and imagination, the psychiatrist claims to have discovered through empirical studies carried along many years. To the common reader who finds Blake's poetry hard to understand, Jung's archetypes represent an easier way of access to the meaning encoded in the prophetic books. Jung provides us with a guiding thread that brings order in Blake's poetry. The gain is therefore obvious and considerable.

Another reason that authorizes one to apply Jungian assumptions to Blake's text is the semblance of the latter to the structure and content of a dream, as it has already been suggested. It ensues therefore that Blake's text can be viewed as unconscious content, as a deeper layer of the psyche projected outwards in the form of a written vision/dream and respectively, some of Blake's characters correspond to archetypes of the collective unconscious. Moreover, Blake's main characters strongly resemble similar forms appearing in mythology and in various artistic manifestations, such as painting and literature, therefore they do not belong to the poet's personal unconscious. As Jung noticed, personifications of the collective unconscious have a wide occurrence across times and spaces, they represent a common ancestral spiritual heritage of man.

Blake's longest prophetic books "Jerusalem" and "Vala or The Four Zoas" abruptly introduce the reader into a chaotic state of things and denounce the fall of Albion, which is the source of all the unhappiness and evil. Once glorious and powerful, Albion the Giant Man, the father of all mankind, is fallen into division. He is a "perturbed man" (*J I: IV.22*)³², "all is confusion: all is tumult" (*J II: XLIII.82*). In psychological terms, this "division" of man and the ensuing state of confusion signifies a dissociation of the psyche and a loosening of the links between the psychic processes. Concerning the nature of the psyche, Jung warns:

³² This paper will use the following abbreviations for William Blake's poems and prophetic books: "Jerusalem" (J), "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell" (MHH), "Vala or The Four Zoas" (FZ), "The Book of Urizen" (Ur).

The original state is one in which the psychic processes are very loosely knit and by no means form a self-contained unity. Moreover, psychiatric experience indicated that it often takes only a little to shatter the unity of consciousness so laboriously built up in the course of development and to resolve it back into its original elements. (Jung 1960:174)

The psychiatrist further adds that “psychic wholeness comprehended in the unity of consciousness is an ideal goal” (Jung 1960:175). Therefore, this division, this “fallen state” of Albion is less exceptional than one might be led to think.

In this disorganized “outside spread within” (*J I: XVIII.2*), otherwise said, in Albion’s psyche, Blake distinguishes the first quaternary structure – “the Four Regions of Human Majesty” (*J I: XVIII.1*), that is, the four Zoas- Urizen, Luvah, Tharmas and Urthona, who are the chief characters in Blake’s mythology. The Zoas, principles of life, bear a strong resemblance to what Jung actually called “forms of life” in his book “Psychological Types”. The four functional types that he identifies are *thought, feeling, sensation and intuition*. They refer to the particular way of the subject in approaching the object, to his manner in the course of an action. The functional type determines *l’habitus réactionnel*, the fashion in which a man perceives the world and adapts to its requirements. With these four types, one reaches, as Jung put it, a totality: *sensation* ascertains what exists in reality, *thought* allows people to understand the signification of that which exists, *feeling* gives it the affective value and *intuition* indicates the past and future possibilities of that which presently exists (Jung 1996: 218).

Clearly, each functional type corresponds to one Zoa: Tharmas fulfills the function of sensation, Urizen, that of thought, Luvah accomplishes the function of feeling and Urthona stands for the intuition. Ideally, the Zoas should cooperate harmoniously and assist each other in their work, aspiring to bring man to happiness and personal fulfillment. Unfortunately, this is not the case as they are “in opposition deadly and their wheels in poisonous/ And deadly stupor turn’d against each other loud & fierce” (*J III: LXXIV.5-6*). Blake renders in apocalyptic language the inner fragmentation that occurs and the dismal state of Albion.

Apparently, as Jung remarks, all the basic psychological functions seldom or never have the same strength or grade of

development, in one and the same individual. As a rule, one or other function predominates, in both strength and development (Jung 1923: 434). Thus, there is a superior, highly differentiated function, which is more prominent, and inferior functions, which are less differentiated. The superior function constitutes the conscious standpoint, it is “always the expression of the conscious personality, its aim, its will, its achievement” (Jung 1923:426). It plays the principal role in an individual’s adaptation or orientation to life (Jung 1923: 412). The inferior functions nonetheless, also manifest themselves from the side of the unconscious. If the superior function gains too high an ascendancy, the other inferior functions become repressed and take a regressive character. They will mix up with archaic and infantile contents from the unconscious, assuming thus a destructive character and coming to light in a symptomatic form (Jung 1923:425-26).

This state of affairs sounds like a fairly accurate description of Albion’s situation, whose “endless labyrinth of woe” (*J II: XXVIII.19*) is caused by the discord between the Zoas, “divided into Four ravening deathlike Forms” (*J II: XXXII.35*). They are fighting because the balance between them has been disrupted by the immeasurable rule of Urizen, “Prince of Light”. He represents the conscious standpoint of Albion, which assumes dictatorial power and aims at exclusive validity among the contents of the psyche: “My strong command shall be obeyed/ For I have placed my centinels in stations each tenth man” (*FZ I: 21.33-34*).

As a result, the other Zoas rebel against his dominion and though he manages to maintain his empire for a long time, they suffer and are constantly trying to undermine and escape his rule- Luvah (*feeling* as directly opposite to the function of *thought*) is “walked in robes of blood” (*FZ II: 33.15*), as he fights against Urizen, Tharmas is “in endless torment” (*FZ IV: 47.15*) and Los, otherwise merciful and magnanimous, is divided, fighting with Enitharmon, planting “divisions in the soul of Urizen & Ahanian” (*FZ II: 34.3*). These three Zoas engage in what Jung named a compensatory reaction from the side of the unconscious, which manifests its opposition towards the repression of the less differentiated functions.

In the end, Urizen’s fate is doomed because only by reason alone man cannot reach truth and realize individuation. After all, “every intellectual formula can be no more than a partial truth and can never lay claim to autocratic authority” (Jung 1923: 441). Jung

repeatedly warns that in the long run, the prolonged predominance of one function may lead to a nervous collapse because of the imbalance and of the counter-influence of the opposing unconscious contents. Urizen loses his majesty and the universe created by him disintegrates when he casts out the last remaining piece of sensible emotion standing by him, his emanation Ahaniah. Most probably, Blake intended to illustrate Urizen's fall as a critique directed at the hyper-use of reason during his age. His attitude parallels that of Jung in this sense as in many others.

Besides the quaternary structure constituted by the four functions which have been previously discussed, there is a second fourfold structure identified both by Jung and Blake in man, and rendered in scientific and respectively poetic terms. What Jung denominates as personifications of the collective unconscious, Blake views as elements forming the Universal Man, before his fall into division. He deplores their fallen state that seclude man from Eternity: "Such is my awful vision./ I see the fourfold Man. The Humanity in deadly Sleep,/ And its fallen Emanation. The Spectre & its cruel Shadow" (*J I*: XV.5-7).

Thus, the four constituents are the *Divine Humanity*, the *Emanation*, the *Spectre* and the *Shadow*. The Emanation occupies an outstanding place in all of Blake's poems. Damon Foster describes her as the feminine portion or "counterpart" of the fundamentally bisexual male. In Eternity the sexual division no longer exists. The Emanation is an active part of the individual, though without a will (Damon 1988: 120). Given the fallen state of Albion, the emanation is presented as being divided and separated from man in most instances. Not only does Albion have his feminine counterpart, Jerusalem, but also each Zoa has an emanation. Blake defines them as "the female hid within a Male" (*J III*: LXXV.15). The emanation corresponds to Jung's notion of *anima*, which he describes as the omnipresent and ageless image of woman (Jung 1959: 13), she is "a personification of all feminine psychological tendencies in a man's psyche" (Franz 1964: 177). The anima is a spontaneous product of the unconscious that takes personified form in man's dreams, visions or fantasies (Jung 1959: 13-14). When there is tension between the conscious and unconscious (this situation has been described above), the anima, harmless till then, confronts the conscious mind in personified form and behaves rather like a system "split off from the personality, or like part souls" (Jung 134

1959: 20). This autonomous character of the separated emanation from man is often emphasized by Blake: “two wills they had, two intellects & not as in times of old. [...] Envyng each other, yet desiring, in all devouring Love” (*JIV*: LXXXVI. 61, 64).

The division between man and his emanation evolves into a problematic and hostile relation between them, translating into a genuine war of the sexes. Thus, Enitharmon sings “in sweet intoxication”:

‘This is Woman’s World [...]
Till God himself become a Male subservient to the Female’ [...]
She spoke in scorn & jealousy
[...] her bosom in milky Love
Flow’d into the aching fibres of Los, *yet contending against him*
In pride, sending his Fibres over to his objects of jealousy.
(*JIV*: LXXXVIII.16, 2122, 28-30) [my italics]

When she separates from Los, she flees from his arms “in perverse and cruel delight” (*Ur* VI.3.) Jung states that the animosity surrounding women expresses itself in the form of opinionated views, interpretations, insinuations, which all have the purpose of severing the relation (Jung 1959: 16). Blake’s constant critique of the “Female Will” runs parallel to the psychiatrist’s formulations and expresses itself in almost the same words, referring to “will”, “power” and “righteousness”.

Consequently, the emanation’s/anima’s actions can be highly damaging and dangerous for man because instead of helping him, she departs from him and poses obstacles deepening the gap between them. She embodies emotional life and sensitivity, she stands for the maternal Eros and without her, man is robbed of these essentially humane qualities and behaves like a “dark spectre” (*JIII*: LIII.25).

However, just as there is a negative side of the anima, there is also a positive one. Man needs to reconcile with her and be re-united to her because, as Marie Louise von Franz states, the anima can help man discern facts that are hidden in his unconscious, she puts a man’s mind in tune with the right inner values and thereby opens the way into more profound inner depths. The anima plays the role of guide, of mediator to the world within and to the Self (Franz 1964:180-183). The striking resemblance between Jung’s concept of anima and Blake’s concept of emanation holds true in the positive aspects, too:

When in Eternity Man converses with Man, they enter
Into each other’s bosom (Which are Universes of delight)

In mutual interchange; and first their Emanations meet
Surrounded by their children; if they embrace & comingle,
The human four-fold forms mingle also in thunders of intellect;
But if the Emanations mingle not,
[...] they roll apart in fear;
For Man cannot unite with Man but by their Emanations.
(*JIV*: LXXXVIII.3-10)

Only when each Zoa is united to his emanation and Albion is united to his bride and emanation Jerusalem, is man complete and able to approach Divine Vision which represents wholeness (in the spiritual and psychic sense).

Another component of the divided man that separates from him is the shadow, which has multiple meanings in Blake's work. According to Damon Foster the shadow may appear as "a reflection or projection of something else" (Damon 1988: 369). In the prophetic book "Jerusalem", Vala, the bloodthirsty emanation, is "the shadow of Jerusalem" (*I*: XII.19); in turn, Jerusalem, the ever weeping emanation, is the "lovely shadow of Sleeping Albion" (*III*: LX.37) and the whole "World of Mortality is but a Shadow" (*III*: LXXI.19). Apparently, the shadow designates the copy of an original, a pale reflection which is less than the actual entity.

On the other hand, the shadow refers to suppressed impulses and desires, as Blake himself suggests: "Those who restrain desire do so because theirs is weak enough to be restrained [...] And being restrain'd it by degrees becomes passive till it is only the shadow of desire" (*MHH* 47). It is in this sense that one can identify Blake's concept of "shadow" with the same term employed by Jung, though the correspondence is not as obvious as in the previous cases. For Jung, the shadow represents "the dark aspects of the personality", the relative evil of man's nature (Jung 1959: 8, 10). It is only a part of the unconscious personality, not the whole of it, because the unconscious is constituted not only by repressed contents. Marie Louise von Franz stresses that:

Whether the shadow becomes our friend or enemy depends largely upon ourselves [...] The shadow is not necessarily an opponent. [...] Whatever form it takes the function of the shadow is to represent the opposite side of the ego and to embody just those qualities that one dislikes most in other people. (Franz 1964: 173)

She speaks of projected qualities that one sees and dislikes in others, but fails to acknowledge them in himself. Thus, the shadow can be either positive, when man for various reasons chooses to stifle valuable, good qualities or attitudes because he cannot integrate them into his life, or negative, containing impulsive acts of aggressiveness or other bad tendencies. Either way, the shadow is rejected by the ego and it is in this repression and in this stubborn denial that its negative manifestation consists of. The shadow is an important figure that should not be ignored because it entails man's intimate, innermost desires and tendencies, be they good or bad. On the contrary, man should make an effort to bring it to consciousness, to listen to its voice and to learn from it, so that he can integrate it into his personality and thus enrich it.

In the same vein, Blake does not necessarily assign a positive or negative value to the shadow. He mostly intends to emphasize its usefulness and crucial role in man's realization of individuation: "thus he [*Albion*] spake/ Idolatrous to his own Shadow words of Eternity uttering:/ 'O I am nothing when I enter into judgment with thee!/ If thou withdraw thy breath I die & vanish into Hades'" (*J II*: XLIII.45-48). Indeed, man cannot live without fostering desires and hopes – his life would be devoid of charm and motivation. Desires and impulses constituting the shadow define man's innermost nature and even if he manages to shovel them in his unconscious, they will surface and manifest themselves nonetheless.

The Spectre is the third component that separates from Albion and, as Blake illustrates it, it proves to be the most dangerous of all. The poet defines it as "the Reasoning power in every Man & when separated / From Imagination, [...] it thence frames Laws & Moralities/ To destroy Imagination, the Divine Body, by Martyrdom and wars" (*J III*: LXXIV.10-13). Not only is Albion haunted by his Spectre, who aims to achieve absolute power, but also one of the Zoas, Los, has to contend incessantly against his Spectre in order to save himself and Albion. The Spectre corresponds to Jung's concept of *Ego*, "the conscious factor par excellence" (Jung 1959: 5). The psychiatrist repeatedly accentuates the difference between *Self*, which is the total personality and the *Ego*, the conscious personality, which does not coincide with the former. The ego is "by definition, subordinate to Self and is related to it like a part to the whole [...] It finds its limits [...] in the subjective inner world, where it comes into

conflict with the facts of the self” (Jung 1959: 5). In poetic terms, Blake makes this distinction between self and ego by comparing the Spectre with Satan, who separated himself from God, the metaphor of the all-comprising Self, demanding to be “worship’d as God by the Mighty Ones of the Earth” (*J* II: XXIX.18). Jung warns that the ego having a significant part to play in the psychic economy, “its position there is so important that there are good grounds for the prejudice that the ego is the center of the personality and that the field of consciousness is the psyche per se” (Jung 1959: 6). However, as he warns us, this is an erroneous viewpoint.

Blake constantly rejects this prejudice by denouncing the possible harmful effects of the spectre that “devours [...] Human Perfection” (*J* I: VI.14). Just as the field of consciousness is capable of indefinite extension, so is the spectre capable to extend his power indefinitely over man and rule his life, robbing him of Imagination, that is, of the possibility to explore his inner and outer life through some other channel than the mental one. That is why Los heroically fights against the mighty Spectre striving to keep its power within certain limits. He does not annihilate the spectre though he is strong enough to be able to do it. Yet he is firm and makes a priority task of keeping it under control. The demarcation of the ego’s influence is vital for the balance of elements within the psychic reality. Otherwise the ego might become inflated and assimilate the self – a situation which Jung catalogues as “psychic catastrophe” (Jung 1959:25). In other words, the unconscious is limited, its influence is decreased and it cannot bring anymore its useful contributions. It is the case of the rising spectre that becomes “insane and most deform’d” (*J* II: XXXIII.4) in man, disrupting his inner balance.

Fortunately, the inner balance is restored due to the fourth member of the quaternary, Albion’s *Humanity*, which corresponds to Jung’s notion of *Self*. As it has already been suggested, the archetype of the self expresses the totality of one’s personality, the psychic nucleus, of which the ego is only one constitutive part. Franz states that the self stays with man throughout his life, it exists beyond the consciously realized flow of time and it is simultaneously omnipresent. This omnipresence manifests itself in that the archetype can take the form of a gigantic, symbolic human being who embraces and contains the whole cosmos, a symbol which conveys the idea of a total oneness of all human existence, beyond all individual units.

Otherwise said, it is the basic principle of the whole world (Franz 1964: 199-200). Blake's Albion, the "Eternal Man" is one form through which the idea of totality, of self is expressed. In Albion the whole of mankind is contained. His four divided Zoas testify his being a unity/wholeness, as "the natural unhampered manifestations of the center are characterized by fourfoldness" (Franz 1964: 200).

As Jung has shown in his numerous case studies, the archetype of the self can appear in more than one form. In Blake's major prophetic books, the Divine Vision/Divine Imagination is another symbol that signifies the self, in agreement with the Christian tradition. Christ is the ultimate, supreme symbol of totality. He exemplifies the "archetype of the self" and is "the true image of God, after whose likeness our inner man is made" (Jung 1959: 37-38). The same is said by Blake, who perceives man as the "Brother image of the Eternal Father" (FZ IX: 133.28). At the beginning of "Jerusalem", Jesus tells Albion "I am in you and you in me, mutual in love divine" (I: IV.7). It is as though the self whispers to man's conscience, knocking at the soul's door. But Albion fails to hear his voice and it is precisely because of this that his fall into division and doom follows. His terrible split signifies *une perte de l'âme*, it is a consequence of the fact that he refuses to acknowledge Christ's existence and to receive him into his bosom. As long as Albion is estranged from the Divine Vision, his (psychic) components depart from him and his sense of wholeness is compromised. His deadly sleep represents the dissociated state of his psyche, a loss of the true meaning of life. The resurrection into unity takes place when Christ descends to Albion and saves him, reestablishing harmony. The psychological equivalent of this is the integration of contents from the collective unconscious into the field of consciousness, the solving of a psychic conflict due to the positive influence of the self, through which the process of individuation is realized. The self functions as an organizing center from which this process emanates – a "hidden regulating or directing tendency at work, creating a slow, imperceptible process of psychic growth. [...] Gradually a wider and more mature personality emerges, and by degrees becomes effective and visible to others" (Franz 1964: 161). Thus, redemption is parallel to the process of individuation, whose goal is "the realization of [...] uniqueness in the individual man" (Franz 1964: 162). The author further mentions that the process of individuation is often triggered by a wounding of the personality

and the suffering that accompanies it (Franz 1964: 166). After the initial shock and the prolonged suffering, Albion manages to come to terms with his inner center and achieve individuation.

In conclusion, it might be said that Jung's scientific work and Blake's poetic one bear a striking resemblance. The poet's prophetic books tell the story of Albion's inner fragmentation, his fall into division and his resurrection into unity. Jung's work deals with man's psyche and its various manifestations. The atmosphere predominating in the poems reminds one of the pulsating life of the unconscious with its dark side. Blake's divided Albion displays a fourfold structure at two levels. At the first level, the four Zoas constituting Albion correspond to the four functional types identified by Jung – thought, feeling, sensation and intuition. At the second level, Blake's quaternary structure consists of emanation, shadow, spectre and humanity. These poetic characters are discussed at length by referring to Jung's archetypes of the collective unconscious – anima, shadow, ego and self. The redemption of Albion parallels the process of individuation in its goal and expression. Both authors exhibit in their work a desire to define (human) totality and its constitutive elements, asserting that wholeness is made up of four components and inner balance dwells in their consonance and harmonious cooperation.

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