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IN PRAISE OF MOVEMENT:

Embodiment of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*

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IN PRAISE OF MOVEMENT:
Embodiment of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*

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Resumo:

O objetivo geral desta dissertação é interpretar o corpo enquanto instância semântica no poema *O Casamento do Céu e do Inferno* (1790), do poeta inglês William Blake. Sustenta-se que uma semântica profunda de *TMHH* instaura uma forma ativa, integrada e franca de viver. Investigaremos a concepção de corpo presente do poema a fim de validar a hipótese de que é possível ter a vida transformada pela leitura de um texto altamente poético. Essa transformação, em última instância, é uma consequência da apropriação do texto pelo leitor. Tal apropriação se dá não só pela via mental, mas de fato pela incorporação do texto literário. O trabalho será realizado com base na hermenêutica de Paul Ricoeur, especialmente na dialética da conjectura e da validação. Já o livro de artista, ramo da arte conceitual do qual Blake é visto como um dos precursores, será apresentado enquanto performance e demonstração dos sentidos de corporeidade vislumbrados pela presente interpretação do poema. Em termos de *embodiment*, o papel da gravura em metal do processo criativo completo de Blake abre-nos possibilidades para um amplo horizonte de metáforas relacionadas às especificidades dessa técnica quando em articulação com o poema.

Palavras-chave: Hermenêutica; Paul Ricoeur; William *Blake; O casamento do céu e do inferno*; Livro de artista; *Embodiment*.

Abstract:

The general objective of this dissertation is to interpret the body as a semantic instance in the poem *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1790), from English poet William Blake. It holds that the depth semantics of *TMHH* establishes an active, integrated, and franc way of living. We will investigate the conception of a present 'body' of the poem to validate the hypothesis that it is possible to have lives transformed by the reading of a highly poetic text. This transformation is ultimately a consequence of the appropriation of the text by the reader. Such appropriation is not only mental, but it takes place in the incorporation, or embodiment, of the literary text. The work will be based on Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutics, especially the dialectics of guess and validation. The artist's book, a field of conceptual art of which Blake is seen as precursor, will be presented as performance and demonstration of the senses of corporeality foreseen in this interpretation of the poem. In terms of embodiment, the role of engraving in Blake's complete creative process opens to a wild horizon of metaphors concerning the specificities of this art in relation to the poem.

Keywords: Hermeneutics; Paul Ricoeur; William Blake; *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*; Artist's Book; Embodiment.

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“In reading a Blake text, one enters a human body.”

Tristanne Connolly

“Do I have to tell you again you must sit like an apple?

Does an apple move?”

Cézanne

INTRODUCTION

A text is something fixed in the paper, so texts certainly move less than apples. The latter grow, mature, and decompose. However, the apples in question here are not the slowly changing fruits, but the steady temporary condition that a painter tries to depict: compared to human models, they have the advantage of stillness. Blake's texts are like the humans that painters and photographers try to depict.

However hard to grasp, movement can be an aesthetic advantage that human bodies have over apples, and part of the history of art consists in the aspiration of capturing movement without killing it. Ancient Egyptian art gave the Greeks techniques that enabled them to capture movement with verisimilitude; the stillness of the bodies in ancient Egyptian art sometimes reminds us of the deads' immobility, though such art was essential to the development of the sense of movement present in Hellenic sculpture. They were not only depictions of daily actions, but works imbued with a certain quality of movement. Correlations are endless: from ancient Greek sculpture to Degas's ballerinas, art has been way in and way out of the matter of the living body. Still art has its place in such discussion; as a matter of fact, the Portuguese name for 'still life' is *natureza morta*, which literally stands for 'dead nature'.

With the rise of technical images, we could think of the photographic experiments of Eadweard Muybridge. Focused on investigating the frames of movement, he photographed innumerable animals and people in movement, creating a sort of protocinema. The praise of movement can be dangerous, especially when taken too idealistically: The knack for movement in futurism, for instance, reminds us that fascism tends to go hand in hand with any current that declares the death of the past, aligning such death with an anxious newness; stillness is not always negative. Eastern martial arts teach the balance between rest and action, while in *zazen*, which consists of staying sat in front of a wall, something as simple as breathing is the key-movement. Op art could also be mentioned; in poetry, Fernando Pessoa's alter ego Álvaro de Campos goes frantic in the traps of industrial movement. Movement can also evidently be tracked in dance and theater; Gregorian chants consist of vibrating vocal chords. Circus and performance arts depend heavily on the body's kinetic nuances. The circus is the oniric place of feats and awe; the sense of allure comes from the living body of the artist. The liveliness of the body should also be a matter of inquiry in order to understand and feel poetry. Marina Abramovic's performances reveal the power of

movement, in a minimalism maximized with presence; movement is so deeply consistent in every human act that it is often unnoticed, in the same way that post-structuralism reminded us that discourse often goes unnoticed in writing. The control, analysis and conscientization over the materiality of the body and its movement should be an essential part of studying any type of self-expression. The body, like discourse, is masked.

Paul Valéry wrote that dance is a form of inner life in which physiology is prevalent. He goes on to define that philosophizing about dance is a way of broadening our understanding of other arts, in the sense that movement, presence, rhythm, and energy are present in any artistic endeavour, whether there is sound around it or not. In the same essay, the investigation of the mystery within the dancer and his dance lead Valéry to the conclusion that dance is the power behind poetry, since real poetry captivates the reader and makes them move.

This is exactly what a poem of the magnitude of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1790)[1] can do. The sense of alignment between thought, emotion, and action that is the verbal and visual input of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* is what can be called a revelation, from which a certain activity in the world appears.

Paul Valéry wrote his philosophy of dance inspired by the art of "La Argentina", a flamenco dancer that he admired. But William Blake defined himself as a poet and a printer, amongst the infinite other things that he was; the poem *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* contains a set of ideas in which the role of the body goes beyond our culturally naturalized dichotomy between body and mind. Materiality is so important to Blake that it surpasses visual and written art, spreading to the core of the concept of what a book is.

There are hundreds of thousands of works about William Blake, and *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* is probably one of the most quoted of his works. I was twenty-two when I first read Blake, and it had a great impact on me. After I finished my undergraduate studies, I decided to make a sort of scientific experiment: Since the body had a crucial role in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, I wondered what I could discover if I embodied some of his principles and tested the efficacy of his ideas within a certain group of body practices. That consisted basically on practicing circus activities, especially hula-hoop, learning how to play the guitar and practicing yoga and

[1] The copy referred to in this thesis is copy F, from 1794 (Relief etching, color-printed with pen and watercolor). The original is available in Pierpont Morgan Library, New York.

zazen. I collected data, trying to investigate the role of energy as a source of self-knowledge, and I knew that I could read Blake in a sort of revelatory way because intuitively that was exactly what I was doing. However, it did not seem plausible to me at that time to associate my individual somaesthetic experience with an academic discourse in such a way that the first comprised the latter. This thesis consists in how poetry can move you, and of how that process is hermeneutic and action-oriented. Ultimately, it proposes that the somatic character of poetry should be looked at.

The first chapter consists of the theoretical foundation of this thesis, which I could only trace after practicing upon the possible intentions of William Blake's work. Paul Ricoeur was decisive in this endeavor, since he connects postmodernism with the revelatory aspect of the poetic language. In order to read Blake as a transformative experience, one must hold some of the religious feeling that was dismissed during the late centuries. Plus, Ricoeur's ideas concerning guess and validation in hermeneutics were important to distinguish the different phases of this work.

Still concerning the power of poetic language, the considerations towards what José Jorge de Carvalho called hieroglyphic language were important for this work. Like Blake, many authors from medieval times built illuminated books. The hieroglyphic language accounts for the wholeness of discourse, calligraphy, iconography, and the book's texture. By considering some aspects of the engraved work *Mutus Liber* (1995, in English 'Silent Book'), I intend to show how copper engraving is a technique in which medieval alchemy was embodied, and how that relates to Blake's illuminated books, especially *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*.

However mixed guess and validation are, the second chapter is more on validation than on guess. Although the focus of this work is *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell,* it is important to understand in which context the work appeared, as well as the ideas in which Blake based his whole poetic project. *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* should be seen as part of a project in which text and image are indistinct tools working for something else. This 'something else' often gains a mystical quotient of meaning, even though the opinions on Blake being a mystical poet are as varied as possible. Northrop Frye specifically suggests at the end of *Fearful Symmetry* (1947) that the answer for this question may be one out of three, depending on what the reader understands by 'mystic' and 'artistic'. The scholar himself did not believe Blake was a mystical.

The objective of this part is to understand to what point his general ideas concerning art and poetry may dialogue with the ideas that would be later in the poem. For instance, contraries and negations are mentioned throughout his work and are distinguished concepts. It is hard to analyze one Blakean poem disregarding the rest of his work due to how cohesive and interconnected his works are. The body–not only the human body as concept and image, but the materiality of the book, for example–will be clarified in this part as well. Thus, the body can be a mote to think about any subject. We tend to think of technology as media, but for Blake, for instance, the eye is considered itself a *medium*. The body in Blake can be seen in many ways, too many, perhaps, so I chose to work mainly with the body as the tactile presence of a Blakean illuminated book and with the text of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*.

The Marriage of Heaven and Hell was an articulated synthesis of topics that however scattered, were already coherent in previous works. More than anything else, the matter of our inquiry is: What is the concept of body presented in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*? It is important to understand 'hell' and 'heaven' as semantic clouds rather than religious signs. We will work basically with the ideas of energy and reason, since this thesis deals basically with embodiment. The first part of our analysis of the poem will focus on energy. The second part will focus on reason, with the considerations he shows towards scientificism and how it was changing epistemology to the point of imposing new questions and demanding new postures from artists and poets. Blake found religion to be a problem for the development of the senses. While religion had not imposed a block on ancient poets, it did on the ones that followed in a more institutionalized context, the latter poets exemplified by Milton. A comparison between Goethe's opinion and Blake's opinion concerning Isaac Newton will be presented in this part as well.

The third chapter is more centered in the guess, which is, it is possible to embody *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* in infinite personal forms. The relation between the content of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* and its execution through copper engraving by Blake is investigated. This is why in this part we will see a correlation between the alchemic steps towards the philosopher's stone and the steps involved in engraving a text (a prophecy of the world's transformation through sensual enjoyment) with corrosives, that is, acids, or what Blake called the 'infernal method.' The strong correlation between the materiality of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* and the poetry and philosophy in it leads us to the artist's book as an instance of meaning

that is really opportune when thinking in Blake's work. *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* as conceptual art is an embodiment of the prophecy it announces.

Artist's books are often dismissed in the literary studies, but cases such as Blake's, with his so-called illuminated books, which were a mixture of medieval illuminated manuscripts and modern printed books, can lead our attention to the blurred realm of words and images. Because of this, all associations derived from an undefined in-betweeness (Connolly, 2002), such as frontier, paper, surface, tissue, borders, and shores, are important to conceive Blake's work as the marriage of two realms that might not be that different, but are also not that similar.

The way that the metal engraving process grew in importance along the making of this thesis is an exemplifier of what further studies related to the topic of embodiment of poetry could look like. They possibly point to the study of the historical relation between roots such as *poïen*, *poiesis*, and *askesis*, and to their current forms poetry, poem, and asceticism, for instance, and to how such considerations can still (or cannot) be relevant within the context of literary studies.

In order to simplify the writing, the poem will be referred to as the following: *TMHH – The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. The following figure is the cover from copy F (1794), available at the Morgan Library and Museum as well as online, in their website.

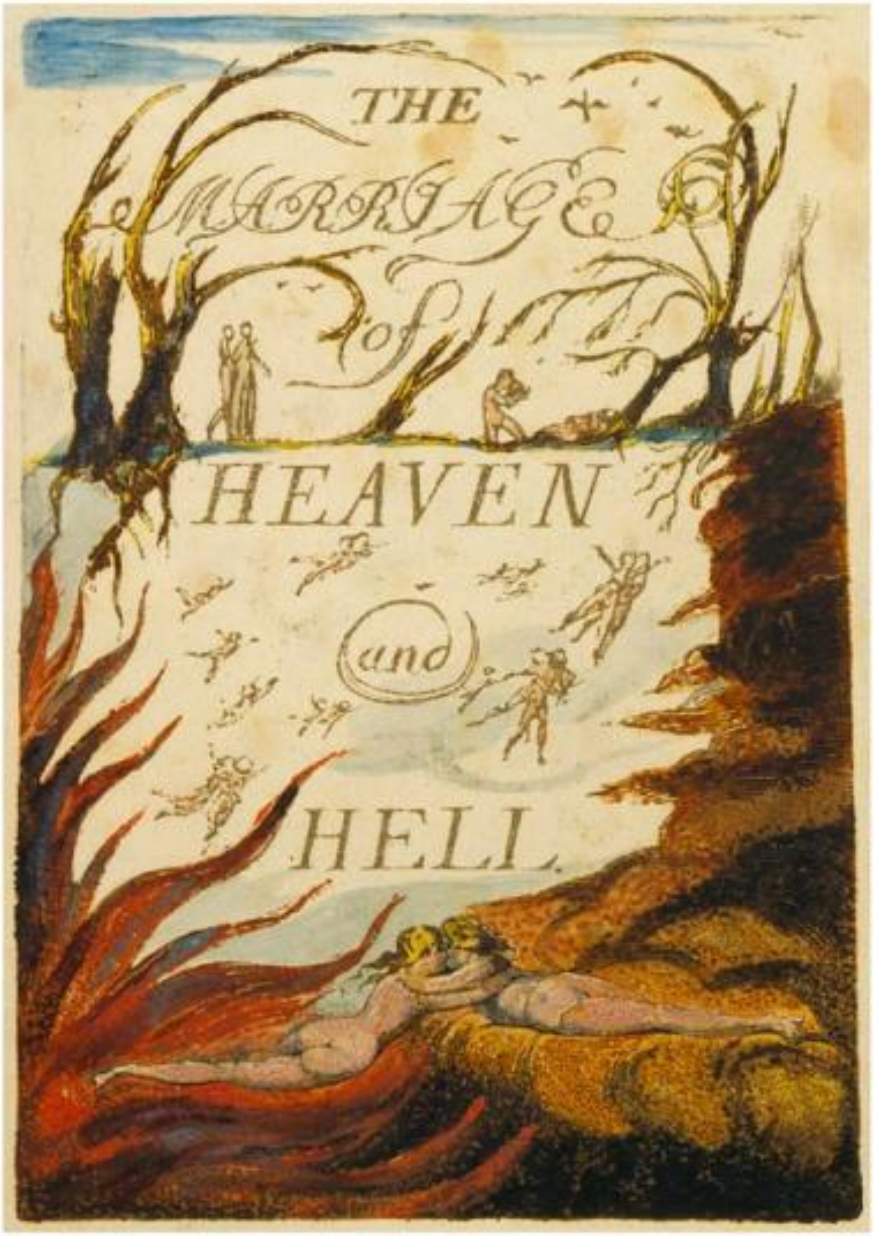
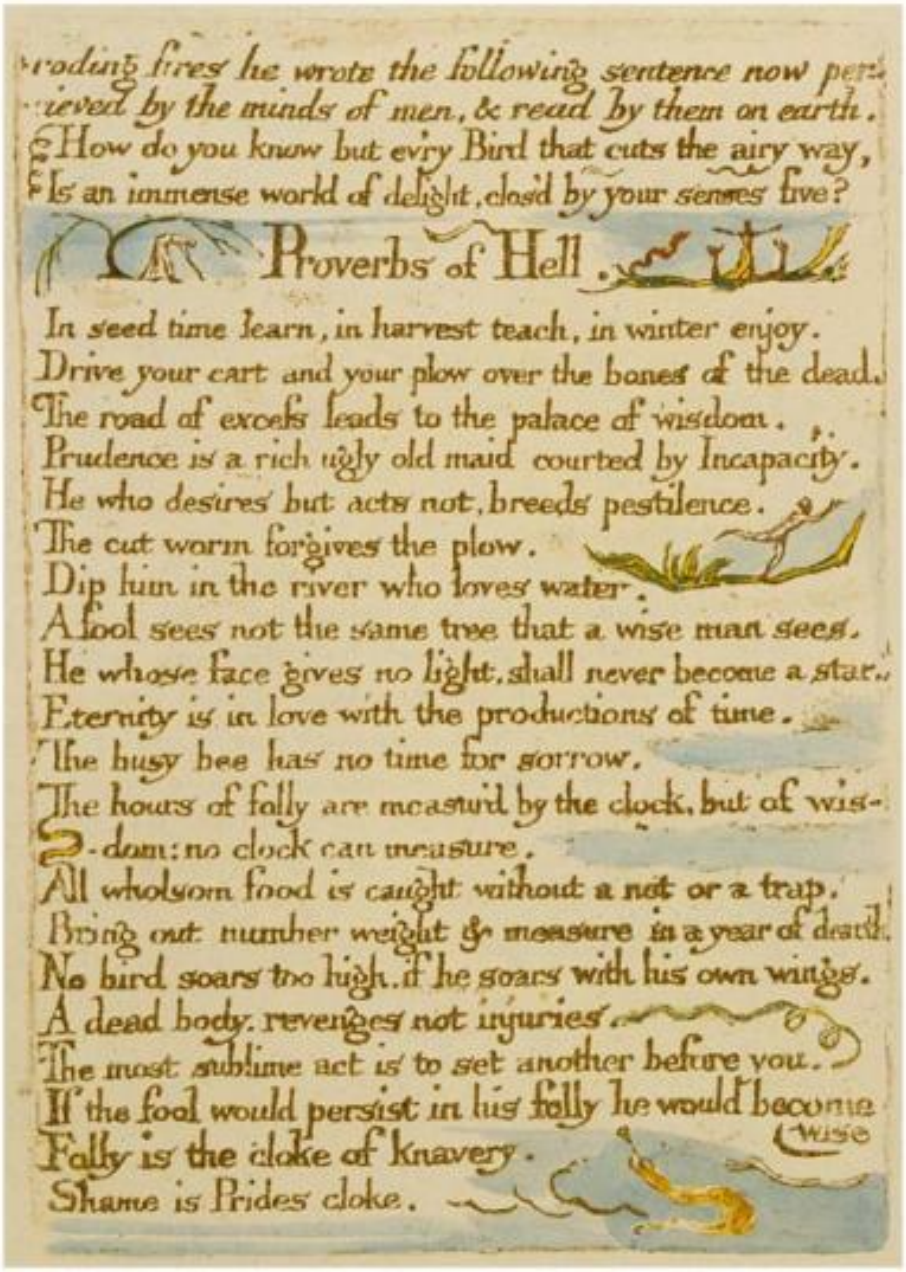


Figure 1


The Argument.
Rintrah roars & shakes his fires in the burdend air;
Hungry clouds swag on the deep
Once meek, and in a perilous path,
The just man kept his course along
The vale of death.
Roses are planted where thorns grow,
And on the barren heath
Sing the honey bees.
Then the perilous path was planted:
And a river, and a spring
On every cliff and tomb;
And on the bleached bones
Red clay brought forth.
Till the villain left the paths of ease,
To walk in perilous paths, and drive
The just man into barren climes.
Now the sneaking serpent walks
In mild humility.
And the just man rages in the wilds
Where lions roam.
Rintrah roars & shakes his fires in the
burdend air;
Hungry clouds swag on the deep.

Figure 2



roding fires he wrote the following sentence now per-
ceived by the minds of men, & read by them on earth.

How do you know but every Bird that cuts the airy way,
Is an immense world of delight, closd by your senses five?

Proverbs of Hell.

In seed time learn, in harvest teach, in winter enjoy.
Drive your cart and your plow over the bones of the dead.
The road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom.
Prudence is a rich ugly old maid courted by Incapacity.
He who desires but acts not, breeds pestilence.
The cut worm forgives the plow.
Dip him in the river who loves water.
A fool sees not the same tree that a wise man sees.
He whose face gives no light, shall never become a star.
Eternity is in love with the productions of time.
The busy bee has no time for sorrow.
The hours of folly are measurd by the clock, but of wis-
dom: no clock can measure.
All wholsom food is caught without a net or a trap.
Bring out number weight & measure in a year of dearth.
No bird soars too high if he soars with his own wings.
A dead body revenges not injuries.
The most sublime act is to set another before you.
If the fool would persist in his folly he would become
Wise
Folly is the cloke of knavery.
Shame is Prides cloke.

Figure 3


1790
As a new heaven is begun, and it is now thir-
-ty-three years since its advent: the Eternal Hell
revives. And lo! Swedenborg is the Angel sitting
at the tomb: his writings are the linen clothes folded
up. Now is the dominion of Edom, & the return of
Adam into Paradise; see Isaiah XXXIV & XXXV Chap:
Without Contraries is no progression. Attraction
and Repulsion, Reason and Energy, Love and
Hate, are necessary to Human existence.
From these contraries spring what the religious call
Good & Evil. Good is the passive that obeys Reason
Evil is the active springing from Energy.
Good is Heaven. Evil is Hell.

Figure 4

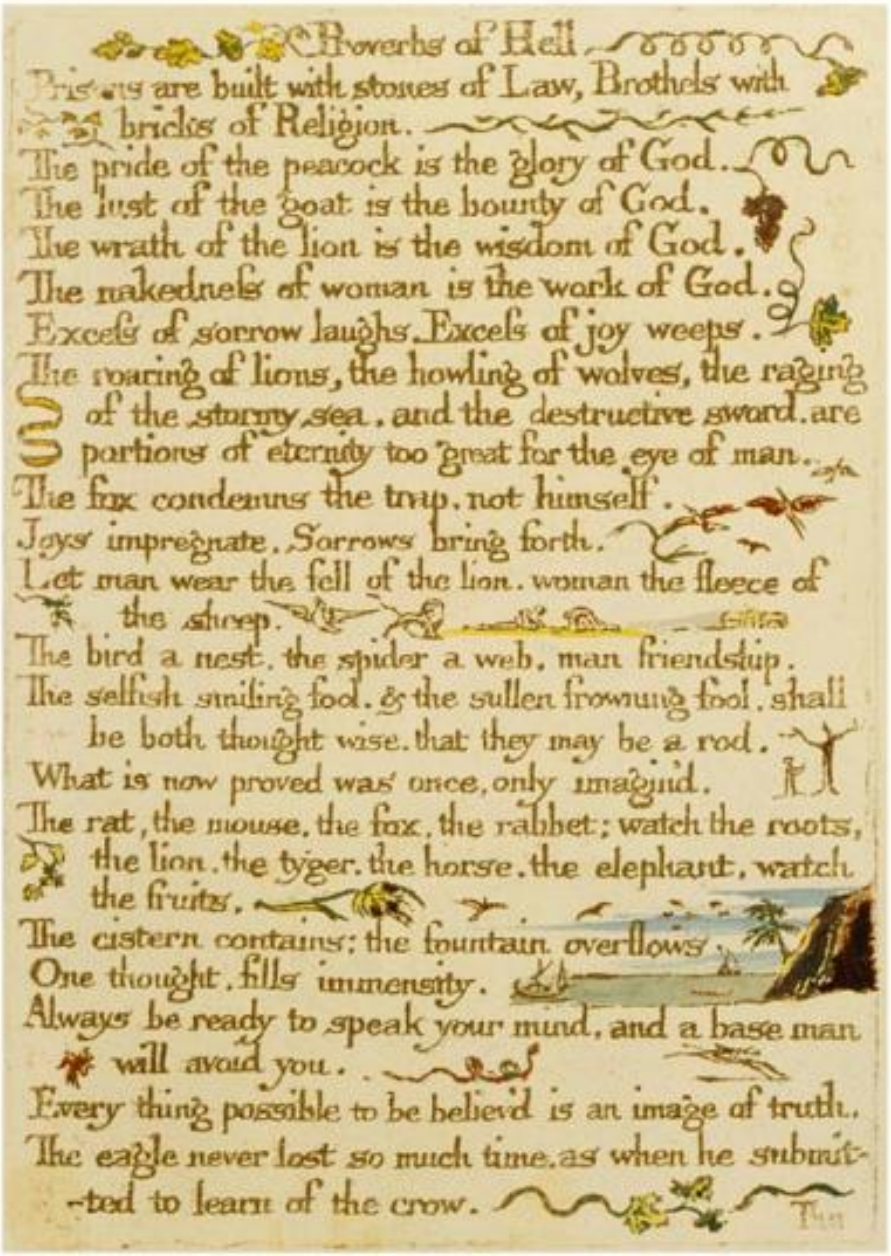

Proverbs of Hell
Prisons are built with stones of Law, Brothels with bricks of Religion.
The pride of the peacock is the glory of God.
The lust of the goat is the bounty of God.
The wrath of the lion is the wisdom of God.
The nakedness of woman is the work of God.
Excess of sorrow laughs. Excess of joy weeps.
The roaring of lions, the howling of wolves, the raging of the stormy sea, and the destructive sword, are portions of eternity too great for the eye of man.
The fox condemns the trap, not himself.
Joys impregnate. Sorrows bring forth.
Let man wear the fell of the lion, woman the fleece of the sheep.
The bird a nest, the spider a web, man friendship.
The selfish smiling fool, & the sullen frowning fool, shall be both thought wise, that they may be a rod.
What is now proved was once, only imagin'd.
The rat, the mouse, the fox, the rabbet; watch the roots, the lion, the tyger, the horse, the elephant, watch the fruits.
The cistern contains: the fountain overflows.
One thought, fills immensity.
Always be ready to speak your mind, and a base man will avoid you.
Every thing possible to be believ'd is an image of truth.
The eagle never lost so much time, as when he submitted to learn of the crow.

Figure 5


The voice of the
Devil
All Bibles or sacred codes. have been
the causes of the following Errors.
1. That Man has two real existing princi-
-ples Viz: a Body & a Soul.
2. That Energy. calld Evil. is alone from the
Body. & that Reason. calld Good. is alone from
the Soul.
3. That God will torment Man in Eternity
for following his Energies.
But the following Contraries to these are True
1 Man has no Body distinct from his Soul
for that calld Body is a portion of Soul discernd
by the five Senses. the chief inlets of Soul in this
age
2. Energy is the only life and is from the Body
and Reason is the bound or outward circumference
of Energy.
3 Energy is Eternal Delight

Figure 6

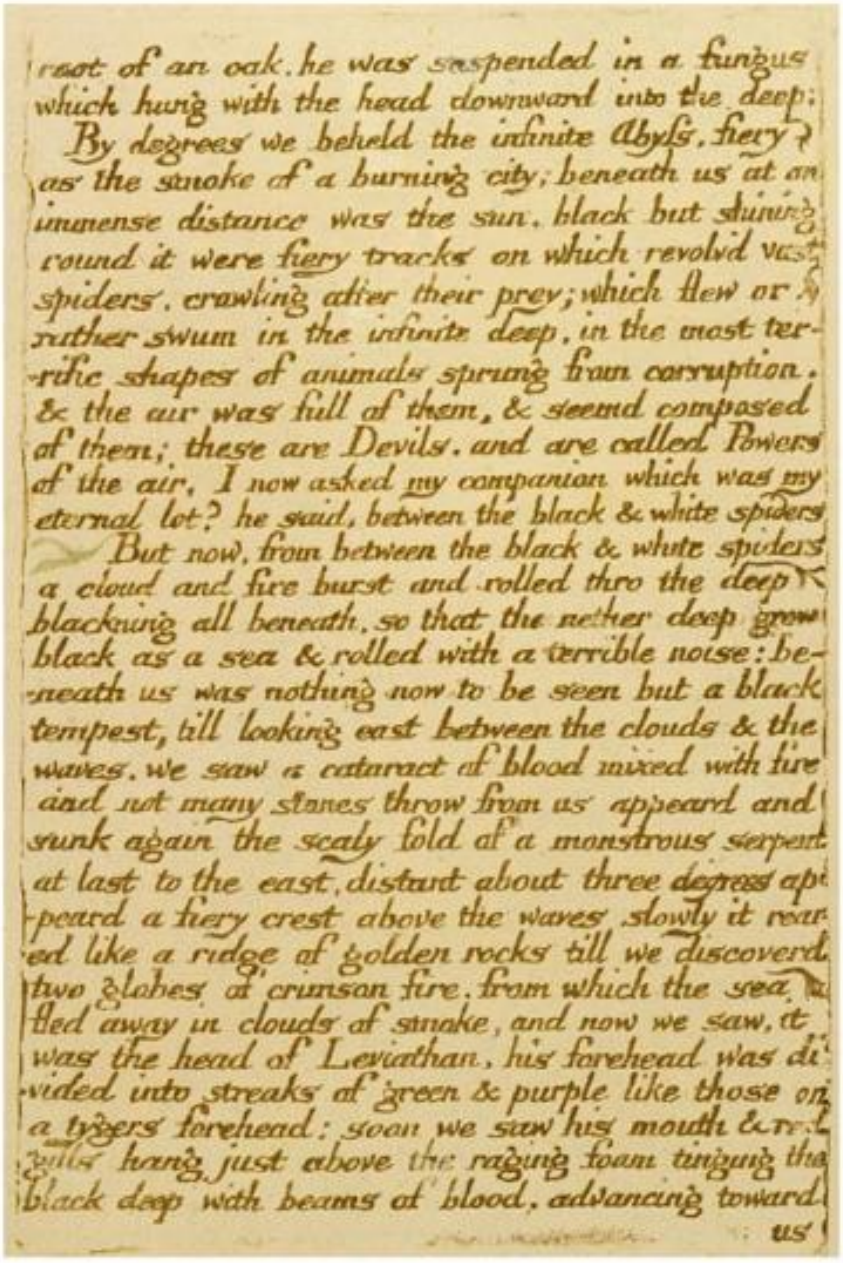

root of an oak. he was suspended in a fungus
which hung with the head downward into the deep:
By degrees we beheld the infinite Abyss, fiery
as the smoke of a burning city; beneath us at an
immense distance was the sun, black but shining
round it were fiery tracks on which revolvd vast
spiders, crawling after their prey; which flew or
rather swum in the infinite deep, in the most ter-
rific shapes of animals sprung from corruption.
& the air was full of them, & seemd composed
of them; these are Devils, and are called Powers
of the air. I now asked my companion which was my
eternal lot? he said, between the black & white spiders
But now, from between the black & white spiders
a cloud and fire burst and rolled thro the deep
blackning all beneath, so that the nether deep grew
black as a sea & rolled with a terrible noise: be-
neath us was nothing now to be seen but a black
tempest, till looking east between the clouds & the
waves, we saw a cataract of blood mixed with fire
and not many stones throw from us appeard and
sunk again the scaly fold of a monstrous serpent.
at last to the east, distant about three degrees ap-
peard a fiery crest above the waves slowly it rear-
ed like a ridge of golden rocks till we discoverd
two globes of crimson fire, from which the sea
fled away in clouds of smoke, and now we saw, it
was the head of Leviathan, his forehead was di-
vided into streaks of green & purple like those on
a tygers forehead: soon we saw his mouth &
gills hang just above the raging foam tinging the
black deep with beams of blood, advancing toward
us

Figure 7

CHAPTER 1

1.1 Praise of Movement in Paul Ricoeur's Hermeneutics

My dissertation is called *In Praise of Movement* for a series of reasons I understood intuitively but could not quite explain. A good explanation for the title is the invitation to the hermeneutic game poetry proposes: More than banal texts, poetry invites for a movement between poem and reader, in such a way that the text only gives itself for those who give themselves to it. That is actually a verse from Brazilian poet Vinicius de Moraes: Life only gives to those who gave themselves (*a vida só se dá pra quem se deu*). It seems fit for the invitation made by a poem, a much more subtle one than that of a television show, for example.

The very book as an object carries the mark of a slow motion, in the way fingers run through it slowly, as well as the eyes, ideally, run slowly through the words. Praising this movement is more about seeing it as a decelerated experience over paper than emulating the qualities of speed.

We then have two praises of movement. One movement is abstract, in the plane of the hermeneutic process, more specifically what philosopher Paul Ricoeur called depth semantics. We move the text and it moves us. Through lexical stratagems such as pronouns and nominal and verbal cases and terminations, the discourse connects with the interlocutor and invites them to a dance. In it, the discourse finally finds its missing counterpart: The listener, the reader, the interlocutor. Until this point we are discussing reading in general.

At the same time, there is the corporeal movement from page to page, paragraph to paragraph, sentence to sentence, word to word. The body moves constantly in the way of maintaining and conserving life, even if we do not see it or become aware of it. On the outside, reading consists of moving the eyes, the hands, sometimes the mouth, contracting the trapezius in the difficult passages. We change the positions of the body as it gets uncomfortable in the activity. It is also possible to shed tears, or to contract the diaphragm in laughter.

There is one remark. Ricoeur warns us that although the methodological movement between the particles of a sentence can be systemized (phonemes, morphemes, etc.), the same does not occur in the leap from the word to the sentence. There is a distinction to be made which coincides with the denomination in the fields of

semiotics and semantics. The methodological movements of the discourse do not obey the same laws as the lexicon. Structuralism, applied to discourse, can generate a basis for the verification of the interpretative guesses of the reader, but on its own it does not speak of the power of the poetic language, of symbols, and of the mythical contents of fiction.

Therefore, a third reason for the title of this work is the fact that poetic language, specifically, triggers movements in directions that didactic and descriptive language does not. In *Interpretation Theory* (1976), Ricoeur mentions Northrop Frye, literary critic and Blake scholar, when referring to Frye's idea that poetic language fires centripetal forces, while didactic and descriptive language fires centrifugal ones. With that, Frye means that literature moves and digs the interiority the subject, while other texts move the subject away from themselves, that is, to the exteriority of the world. The centripetal force of Literature is understood by Frye and then Ricoeur as the core of a high quality hermeneutic, which Ricoeur defines, as said before, as depth semantics. This interaction generates a movement in the hermeneut that takes from ordinary language to poetic language, that is, to "the state of mind structured and expressed in a poem" (RICOEUR, 1995, p. 72). This receptive movement unfolds in the process of exegetic movement, through which something becomes an action in the body of those who read the poem carefully.

But in dialectic terms, we can also understand the title as an alchemical allusion to that which necessarily comes after an opposition reaches the peak of its corresponding psychic content and then, in a pendular movement, goes to the side. We should see this process as especially appropriate in the case of *TMHH*, given that the poem deals with the dynamic between opposites. In that sense, Blake's text interferes in the metaphysical core of the hermeneut by presenting a densely poetic fiction about opposites and the balance between them. The metaphysics of opposites takes us back to our origins, be it the biological, in the union of man and woman, be it the intellectual unfoldings of it, in opposite pairs such as *logos* and *byos*. We can call Blake's metaphor of heaven and hell of what is more proficuous, but the fact is that in it we move into the transforming sphere of myths.

Even if there are many other reasons for the title, the one that originated the project has to do directly with the nature of the practices I have adopted as a philosophy of life after meditating on *TMHH*. An often culturally dismissed mental price of academic work is that of the intimate exposure of the literary critic through the exegesis

of their object of study, in varied degrees. *TMHH* has led me to believe that the bravest way of closing the elaboration of an hermeneutic process is taking practical actions based on the text, as *naïve* or Bovaryesque as it sounds. The integration between opposites in the work seemed worthy of being transposed into the world of physical activity, favoring those in which the union of mind and body were a motto. Thus, my praise of movement comes also and foremost from bodily activities performed with a poetic basis. The last embodiment of Blake's poetic language was metal engraving, which will be discussed in more detail in the last chapter. It is one example of that which Ricoeur defines as the ultimate hermeneutic stage, which is the semantics of action, that is, when something from silence becomes sound again and from the static form of a book becomes movement. The last process triggered by Blake's poetic language was me. Actions imbued in meaning are sort of prizes or a consecration of the hermeneut, that which is personal and non-transferable experience.

1.2 *Was Meinst Du?* (Utterer's Meaning, Utterance Meaning)

Ricoeur (1976) postulates that "interpretation is the process over which the revelation of new ways of being–or, if you prefer Wittgenstein to Heidegger, of new forms of life–gives the subject a new ability to know themselves" (p. 106). With one more step, certain actions in the world can be attributed to the culmination of the hermeneutic process. Therefore, the text is the paradigmatic relation between two happenings: one which motivated the text, and another which is the completion of the discursive arc. The discourse present in the scripture reincarnates into the world through the interlocutor, when they update the meanings in a text by appropriation. The reading is the reallocation of the otherness in the text, that which was present in the hearing of oral dialogue. For this crippling of discourse, reading is a *pharmakon* (remedy) (RICOEUR, 1995, p. 56).

Figure 8

Discourse is multiple and infinite, in that it only completes with the interlocution of the one reading the scripture. This is a peculiarity of the written form. In a dialog, the conditions for an utterance are complete. There is a context, a reason for the utterance, and a reason for the reception. Ricoeur (1995, p. 42) mentions the fact that *meinen* in German (equivalent to *mean* in English) carries a double meaning in the same sentence. Asking '*was meinst du?'* concerns the meaning of an utterance as language and as discourse. Live, the discourse is what it wants to be, even if it is often possible to understand what the interlocutor said but not what they meant.

The lack of spatial referentiality, as well as of utterance referentiality, makes writing a privileged place for the work of the hermeneut. They are not historians reconstituting the past of the utterance in writing; neither romantic hermeneuts who trusted the identification between poet and reader as if the latter could understand the poet better than themselves. The hermeneut in question is the one who sacrifices so that the arc of the discourse is completed. For that to happen–and depending on how

hermetic the text is–the price for accessing a new way of being is a smaller or bigger investment of one's own subjectivity. This will be especially approached in the second chapter, when we speak of the vision of the scholar Tristanne Connolly on Blakean poetics.

Thus, the reference as psychologism or as historicism is not the focus of this hermeneutic, which consists in a dialectic between comprehension (*verstehen*) and explanation (*erklären*). This is analogous to other dialectic relations presented by Ricoeur, as the dialectic between the happening of the discourse and the verbal and textual dialectics between guess and validation. We will see them separately.

Comprehending means gathering the meanings spread throughout the text as act of synthesis. The first act of comprehension is guessing, which is a creation of meaning which can be associated with a fortune telling aspect. Dialectically, comprehension is related to explanation. Which in turn consists not in gathering, but in separating and unveiling the text. While comprehension is more associated with humanities, the explanation is related to hard sciences (RICOEUR, 1995, p. 84). The explanation is associated with grammar, that is, with the materiality of the words in question.

While the first act of comprehension is guessing, the first act of explanation is validation. This should not be confused with verification, since the theme of study in question is subjective. Ricoeur resorts to Hirsch to remind us that interpretation follows the logic of probability, not that of empirical evidence. Explaining a myth is one thing; interpreting it is another.

In Ricoeur's words, "[...] if there are no rules to make valid guesses, there are methods to validate the guesses we make" (1995, p. 88). This is what constitutes this study: a dialectic relation between guess and validation. Therefore, aspects of guess and validation are mixed throughout the text. The next chapter aims at being more validatory and historicist, while the third presents a higher number of guesses. Far from polarizing the pieces in this game, as in romantic hermeneutics, Ricoeur's hermeneutics suggests that the structural analysis performs a mediation role, not one of completion. Without analysis there would be no depth semantics.

Contrary to a didactic or a descriptive text, which has, as we have stated, centrifugal force, the literary text is centripetal: it is a set of potential horizons of meaning. Ricoeur says the text is a "quasi-individual" (1995, p. 90), in the sense that validating an explanation about the text contributes to the scientific knowledge on it. This concerns us because the text, understood as a quasi-individual and, with this, as a

body, takes us to the discussion I wish to start next, that of the artist's book as embodiment. "Understanding a text and following its movements from meaning to reference: from what it says to what it talks about" (RICOEUR, 1995, p. 100).

Maybe not all of the meanings I intend to trace can be well silhouetted, but I believe that this can be a part of the personality in this work. The new order of seeing things that the arrow of the Blakean text points to seems to articulate with a certain blurring of the meanings. In Ricoeur's words, "We are definitely obliged to identify comprehension as some sort of intuitive capture of the subjacent intent in the text" (RICOEUR, 1995, p.100). Poetic diction generates a non-ostensive, non-descriptive reference, but which exactly for not being explicit gives the reader a chance to operate a metamorphosis. In this metamorphosis, the text presents as a birth. Ricoeur's hermeneutic defends that a text gives an authentic "I" to the ego, casting the hermeneut from the *Unwelt* (unworld) to the *Welt* (world).

TMHH seems especially welcome in this conception of hermeneutics, since it is about the conflict of opposites. The poetic diction employed in the mythical universe takes to threshold situations, making us aware of oppositions and inviting us to engage in their dynamism. We are taken by the Jewish-Christian mythologem to an ontology of the subject. The text is about this birth, and about this dynamically being in the movement of opposites in the world. As the text itself has a mythical theme, the meanings of *Unwelt–Welt*, of birth, and of metamorphosis accentuate. This seems to be the extreme context of which Ricoeur talks in the following passage: "The poet, in synthesis, operates through language in a hypothetical level. In an extreme way, we could also say that the poetic project is to destruct the world as we usually take it to be" (RICOEUR, 1995, p. 72).

Ricoeur's view of hermeneutics also concerns us because it finds an interesting point of balance between the two philosophical propositions. On one side, it responds to the deconstructive demands on the philosophical discourse, ruled by an understanding of language as an insurmountable materiality and by the role of linguistic studies. As it identifies the negative side of the non-discursivity of Saussure's concept of language, Ricoeur values the role of linguist Émile Benveniste, which brought light to the utterance. On the other side, Ricoeur does not fall in the trap of an anti-humanistic nihilism, which privileges the paradigms of linguistics instead of the classical and modern paradigms relative to subjectivity. Keeping the proximity between religious feeling (which does not coincide with dogma in any way) and the poetic feeling, that is,

keeping the proximity between myth and metaphor through religious symbolism, Ricoeur ensures hermeneutics a revelatory meaning, which is more than revealing (OLIVEIRA, 2012, p. 372). In Ricoeur's' words,

> Est-ce à dire que nous pourrions revenir à la première naïveté? Non point. De toute manière quelque chose est perdu, irrémédiablement perdu: l'immédiaté de la croyance. Mais si nous ne pouvons plus vivre, selon la croyance originaire, les grandes symboliques du sacré, nous pouvons, nous modernes, dans et par la critique, tendre vers une seconde naïveté. Bref, c'est em interprétant que nous pouvons à nouveau entendre; ainsi est'ce dans l'herméneutique que se noue la donation de sens par le symbol et l'initiative intelligible du déchiffrage. (RICOEUR apud OLIVEIRA, p. 387)

Thus the non-propositional language of poetry, in which the metaphor does not refer to a meaning, but is infinite meanings, imposes active work on the imagination, through which, luckily, *poiesis* is embodied in *praxis*.

1.3 Alchemy and Hermeticism

> You say that I want somebody to Elucidate my Ideas. But you ought to know that what is Grand is necessarily obscure to Weak men. That which can be made Explicit to the Idiot is not worth my care. The wisests of the Ancients considered what is not too Explicit as the fittest for Instruction because it arouses the faculties to act. (William Blake in a letter to Dr. Truster, apud CONNOLLY, 2002, p. 13).

We can ask ourselves which Ancients Blake refers to in that passage. By 'ancients,' does he mean ancient poets, as in Plate 11, who "animated all sensible objects with Gods or Geniuses"? The fact that wisdom is in question in this passage can suggest that he referred to more spiritualized people in the past, which possibly coincides with the alchemic imaginary. The quoted passage is very much like a definition of hermeticism present in the introductory essay of a facsimile book called *Mutus Liber* (1995, in English 'Silent Book'), a manuscript of alchemical iconography from the 18th century. In the passage, it reads

> [...] that which is taught with all letters does not serve, for it would make dispensable the individual experience of search, which should mobilize and sharpen the superior functions of the initiate, such as intuition, ability to feel, ability to put themselves in syntony and correspondence with everything around them. (CARVALHO, 1995, p. 20)

When comparing different versions of Blake's works, one realizes the gradual erasure of the more didactic and descriptive clues. There is, according to Northrop Frye (1947) and Tristanne Connolly (2002), a tendency to erase words from one copper plate

print to the next, replacing words with images. The semantic rather than semiotic use of language originates infinite exegesis. The meanings are many, but not any, since Blakean poetry, as scary as it may seem, has prosody and syntax.

Even if with different objectives, the same occurs when we see books of alchemical iconography. In these books, the iconographic art privileged the image before logic-reasoning, and in every page there was a main figure accompanied by a sentence. There was a comment on each page after it. According to Carvalho (1995, p. 16), examples of alchemical books like those are *The Book of the Hieroglyphical Figures* (1419), by Nicolas Flamel, and *The Twelve Keys of Basil Valentine* (1626), by Basil Valentine. However, as well as Blake's work does not abandon syntax and prosody, iconography does not abandon certain principles. We can see Blake's art associated to this alchemical symbolic world through the concept of hieroglyphic language. While we see hermeneutics as a nautic in Hermes' world, we can add hermeticism as a fascination for this nautic art.

The invention of hieroglyphics is attributed to Thot, Egyptian god analogous to the Greek Hermes. However, Thot was associated to writing as a magical act, not only semiotic. A hieroglyph is the combination of *hiero*, sacred, and *glyph*, which according to Martinez-Otero meant 'to engrave'. The combination of grimoire and grammar was called the language of birds, and it is worth remembering that Blake defined himself as a poet and an engraver, but his work is intertwined in what he calls the Spirit of Prophecy. "Being a philosopher, in the hermetic sense of the term, is learning to speak this language" (CARVALHO, 1995, p15).

Therefore, to comprehend the obscurity of the poetic language present in Blake, we can distinguish letter-writing from image-writing, where the latter is hieroglyphical language. While letter-writing is the linguistic sign, that is, the discursiveness of the rational, exoteric, and grammarly philosophy inherited from the Greeks, image-writing is a combination of a narrative allegory with the hieroglyphic figure. This format, called hieroglyphic-discursive, reached its peak in the first half of the 17th century, basically between 1580 and 1700 (CARVALHO, 1995, p. 17). And as much as Blake admired the works of Shakespeare and Dante (which he mentions in Plate 22), what he did seems to encompass the poetic discourse and the alchemical discourse (in the same plate, Blake mentions Paracelsus and Jacob Boehme).

Blake's books, moreover, in many ways emulate alchemical manuscripts, even if they are different objects. The decline of the alchemical culture takes place in the

beginning of the 18th century, with what Gaston Bachelard and Gilbert Durand called, somewhat in the same way, control of the imaginary. The hieroglyphic language, the very nature of which is ambiguous and polysemic, loses credibility, and the matter is devoid of imagicization. Worth mentioning, the reading and structure of tarot cards can be localized within such discussion.

Ricoeur refers to the iconicity in the following way: every art is the creation of a new alphabet, depending on the expertise of the involved parties. For him, painting in certain periods and groups, as to the Dutch masters, was neither seen as a reproduction of the universe, nor as its production, but as its metamorphosis. And this metamorphosis is, regardless of the area, the result of depth semantics. Iconicity is saying this is a symbol, it is proposing an aesthetic enhancement of reality, rather than a duplication or a replica of it. When the sovereignty of the symbol is assured, we can initiate the hermeneutic game through the most diverse approaches. (RICOEUR, p. 54).

The final point to be made here as theoretical foundations is that in which Ricoeur's hermeneutics coincides with the hermeticism of the alchemic iconographic art. The name of the book that we use to exemplify it here is *Mutus Liber*, which can be understood as 'silent book', even though the Latin root *liber* can also mean 'free'. The active cultivation of imagination is required for that silent book, through the knowledge mobilized by the reader, can speak. We can detain ourselves on the silent book as regarding the hermetic tradition, but it can and it will be read here as fiction.

Ricoeur (1995) says something similar regarding the muteness of texts, especially poetic texts. When writing replaces dialog, it extinguishes the 'utteranceness' of speech, and a world with its own referencialities is created. Writing is, therefore, the privileged place of discourse, especially when poetic diction, with non-ostensive referentiality, non-propositional language, and historical non-descriptivism allows us to give voice to the text in the same measure in which it is mute.

CHAPTER 2

2.1 Contrarieties: Difference between Contraries and Negations

Blake saw imagination as a quality aroused from the semantics of hell, while repetition was derived from the semantics of heaven. Hell can be identified with the body, while heaven with the soul. Good is Heaven. Evil is Hell. However, as Hazard Adams points out in *Thinking through Blake* (2014), there is for Blake a distinction between contrary and negation, which we should be aware of before starting the discussion. In *Jerusalem* (1820), the poet explains that contraries are healthy and necessary to existence. However, dynamics based on negation are problematic, since negation is more rigid than contraries. Contraries dialogue, interact, play, and the existence of one contrary is the premise of the existence of the other. This is why Blakean use of contraries, at least for Hazard Adams, is never destructive, even though the poet has been misunderstood as a Satanist in many circles. Negations, however, are very different. They are a warlike state between contraries that aim at destroying or suppressing their otherness. Negations are totalitarian, delusional and destructive. They can be understood as the drive that one contrary has of believing that the other side does not or should not exist. Adams (2014) mentions that, for Blake, "'Negations' are the illusions of reason's drive for power. Contraries are real until they collapse into negations" (p. 9). Adam also points to the fact that Blake saw the Bible as poetry. The origin of religion and the origin of poetry for Blake were the same: The Spirit of Prophecy and the Poetic Genius were concepts that dealt with the receptivity and creativity of the poet towards nature and societies. The religious institution or priesthood has evidently nothing to do with that, and this is why Blake considered any institutionalized religion to be a corruption of contraries through a process of negation fostered by its interpreters.

When it comes to the relation between energy and reason, Blake presents them as contraries rather than negations. Negations urge to suppress a contrary completely; for example, female and male energy can be seen as contraries, but misogyny and sexism would be negations. According to Blake's words in *TMHH* (2011, Plate 3)

> Without Contraries is no progression. Attraction and
> Repulsion, Reason and Energy, Love and Hate, are necessary to
> Human existence.
> From these contraries spring what the religious call Good &
> Evil. Good is the passive that obeys Reason [.] Evil is the active
> springing from Energy. (BLAKE, 2011, Plate 3)

In *Jerusalem* (2011, Plate 17) he affirms that

> Negations are not Contraries: Contraries mutually Exist:
> But Negations Exist Not: Exceptions & Objections & Unbeliefs
> Exist not: nor shall they ever be Organized for ever & ever:
> If thou separate from me, thou art a Negation: a meer
> Reasoning & Derogation from Me, an Objecting & cruel Spite
> And Malice & Envy: but my Emanation, Alas! will become
> My Contrary: O thou Negation, I will continually compell
> Thee to be invisible (…)

The title *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* suggests a relationship between contraries, not a negation of the semantic cloud from which 'heaven' is the center. Marrying heaven and hell would demand a balancing between them, putting the hellish values on the same level of the heaven's, which for Blake were stability, reason, and order. It would not make sense to discuss the concept of body without discussing the concept of hell and the concept of contrariety. According to Blake, the contraries are necessary to human existence. Heaven is associated with good and reason: it is the passive principle. Hell is associated with evil and energy: it is the active principle. They are presented in a dialectical form. Blake considered priesthood a threat especially because it tended to paralyze the complexity of this web and pose good and evil as the highest forms of accepted contrarieties.

2.2 Energy

TMHH is a poem first published in 1790, in London. It is a satire of *Heaven and Hell* (1758) by Emmanuel Swedenborg, a Swedish mystic Christian part of the Swedenborgian Society, a group which Blake frequented but later discredited. The morals of Swedenborg's interpretations were not in accordance with Blake's beliefs when it came to contrariety. The most evident aspect of this disagreement was the role of hell in that equation and what it represented. *TMHH* is also an argumentation on how both religion and science cannot free men, in the sense that both disregard and imprison the body. The disregard for the body in religion is built on the idea that the body is an

evil force that must be subdued to the soul. For Blake, that idea causes a decrease in a man's creativity, since creativity, according to Blake, spreads from energy, not from reason. Freedom is identified with those whom Blake called ancient poets, who came before priesthood dominated society (the keywords for the discussion were underlined):

> The ancient Poets animated all sensible objects with Gods or Geniuses, calling them by the names and adorning them with the properties of woods, rivers, mountains, lakes, cities, nations, and whatever their enlarged & numerous senses could perceive.
> And particularly they studied the genius of each city & country, placing it under its mental deity;
> Till a system was formed, which some took advantage of & enslav'd the vulgar by attempting to realize or abstract the mental deities from their objects: thus began Priesthood;
> Choosing forms of worship from poetic tales.
> And at length they pronounc'd that the Gods had order'd such things.
> Thus men forgot that All deities reside in the human breast. (BLAKE, 2011, Plate 11)

What we see here in Plate 11 is first the ability to invest a feeling of sacredness in sensible objects through the perception of eternity. That enhanced perception is gained through the cultivation of the senses. According to this excerpt, the role of the poets is to use the sensibility of their body as a mediation between their sense of divine and the inanimate world. The interaction between subjectivity and objectivity, between god and the world, does not depend on priests. Blake also mentions the fact that ancient poets studied the genius of cities and countries, like investigators, analysts, geographers, historians, and researchers do. The senses, then, are not enough for the work of the poet: he or she must also use his or her intellect to reach a higher poetic state. Until here, the senses and the intellect work together as body and mind towards the acknowledgment and the creation of the world, and this seems to be Blake's idea of how ancient poets conceived life. Such interference-free spirituality or directness, however, is lost with the rise of institutionalized religion and its entitlement as the mediator between a higher truth and individuals. Mental deities were dissociated from the natural objects and the places that, according to the poet's imagination, had originated them.

As he advises before, on Plate 10, "Where man is not nature is barren". Barren in the sense of not having a name, in the sense of lacking a consciousness. For Blake, it is the acknowledgment, the awareness, and the imagination of men that make the universe real. Blake thought so in a time and place of Cartesianism and Enlightenment. In abstract terms, he states that in the first period of an epistemological tendency, which Jorge Luis Borges would later call "la triste mitología de nuestro siglo" in the preface of *Ficciones* (1944, p.iii). Blake stated that truth derives from fiction, and not the opposite, which was against the general way of thinking at that time. Blake's belief in the

sovereignty of imagination is invigorating because it makes us remember that deities reside in the human breast and, as so, they can be relived through the restoration of our imaginative skills as a way to promote fun, lyricism, and relief. We create the gods that created us. Without denying the history of thought and how it has shaped our subjectivity, it is still possible to enjoy the forces that Blake would call the 'delights of hell', which have to do with creativity, freedom, and joy. By reading *TMHH*, we can assume that such ability can be called imagination, creativity, Poetic Genius, or even a *franc-parler*[2] – All of those expressions are part of the semantic cloud that Blake called hell. In the end of Plate 3, still as part of the argument, Blake writes that

> Good is the passive that obeys Reason. Evil is the active springing from Energy.
> Good is Heaven. Evil is Hell.

First, he guarantees that the reader understands that the contraries are essential to human existence. In other words but following the same idea, on the last line of Plate 16 he affirms that "whoever tries to reconcile them [the contraries] seeks to destroy existence". On Plate 20, he wrote that "Opposition is True Friendship". All of these verses express Blake's esteem for the dynamic movement between contraries. Contrariety concerns the basis of human life through language; that, in my opinion, fits well with Kristeva's considerations towards the differentiation that babies are able to make between themselves and the world, from a certain point on, and how that is the beginning of language. Except from unconscious states such as in dreams, mentally disturbed states of mind, such as psychosis, or within a certain range of practices related poetic language, contrarieties and the movement between them play a role that consists in the very fundament of language. This will be better explained in the section about the role of the body in the Blakean poetics.

As Blake explains his philosophical point of view, it gets clearer that heaven is not always good and hell is not always evil, and that these contraries are both essential for life. Heaven maintains things, hell destroys. Through this process there is transformation. If this is the case, hell is revolutionary rather than evil.

TMHH was published two years after the storming of the Bastille. Considering different points of views on Blake's political opinions, such as Northrop Frye's,

[2] The term here stands for 'frankness'. In *The Hermeneutics of the Subject* (2004), Michel Foucault discusses how frankness and the *franc-parler* are related to the Greek concept of *parrhesia*. A comment on this topic is present in the final considerations.

Tristanne Connolly's, John Beer's, and David Erdman's, Blake probably took part in protests in England but eventually got disillusioned about revolutions and their intrinsic violence.[3] Although Blake is often associated with alienation or lunacy, the way his work thoroughly dialogues with geopolitical events is another astounding aspect that we unfortunately will not have time to thoroughly analyze in this thesis.

Throughout *TMHH*, Blake gives voice to prophets and angels, but especially to the devil:

> The voice of the Devil.
>
> All Bibles or sacred codes have been the causes of the following Errors.
> 1. That Man has two real existing principles Viz: a Body & a Soul.
> 2. That Energy, call'd Evil, is alone from the Body, & that Reason, call'd Good, is alone from the Soul.
> 3. That God will torment Man in Eternity for following his Energies.
>
> But the following Contraries to these are True
>
> 1. Man has no Body distinct from his Soul for that call'd Body is a portion of Soul discern'd by the five Senses, the chief inlets of Soul in this age
> 2. Energy is the only life and is from the Body and Reason is the bound or outward circumference of Energy.
> 3 Energy is Eternal Delight (Plate 4)

The first error promoted by sacred codes such as the Bible is the idea that the body and the soul are two distinct principles. For him, the body is not the enemy of the soul, but part of it. It is the same with form and content: Form is part of the content, so it is not surprising that from this perspective his books are not only supports for the texts but also practical monuments, when their entire materiality is considered. It is also in this sense that a distinction between image and text is not prolific to the understanding of Blake's creative process—at least the critics I have read did not emphasize this. What this means is that the core of his creation is in the senses and in the intellect all at once, like the ancient poets he admired. He listed his favourite poets and thinkers: on Plate 22, Dante, Shakespeare, Paracelsus, and Jacob Behmen. They appear altogether: writers, poets, physicians, alchemists. Even though poets and alchemists seem to be uneven—from the works of the first ones infinite new works can be made, but from the seconds ones a limitless amount—their creative minds are put in contrast with the lack of creativity and conceited moralism of Swedenborg, who "conversed with Angels who are all religious, and conversed not with Devils who all hate religion, for he was

[3] *William Blake: Prophet against Empire* (David Erdman, 1954) and *William Blake: a Literary Life* (John Beer, 2005) are works that account for this view.

incapable through his conceited notions." (BLAKE, 2011, Plate 21), making the mistake of turning a contrariety into a negation.

In the excerpt before, Blake also states that good can come from the body and evil can come from the soul. His second principle is an illustrated idea: that the body is the center of life and that it irradiates energy, while reason is the circumference that gives form to the energy and determines its vastness. There is a central point and a circumference around it; there is the centrifugal energy flowing from the body and the centripetal boundary flowing from reason. That could be pictured as a hula-hoop moving around a person, a circle-bound growing plant within its possibilities, the electrical expansion and retraction of a heart, or perhaps the idea of expansion and retraction of the Universe present in the The Big-Bang theory. The dynamics proposed by Blake between contraries instill imagination with a praise of movement. Understanding his ideas goes through intuiting them; that is made with sensory stimuli, such as the visual one.

Finally, he states that the third error is to believe that such energy will be harshly punished after death.

Blake saw the Bible as a book of poetry. As poetry, it could be read "in its diabolical sense" (2011, Plate 24). *TMHH* may be considered a make up for the imbalance between the hermeneutic approaches that pervaded History, which had been repressive towards the body in Christianity due to moral concerns.

Regarding the three errors of religion pointed by Blake, he presents a hypothesis for how to solve what he considered a religious misleading: he prophesied that what seemed finite and corrupt would give space to the infinite and holy. As he put it, "This will come to pass by an improvement of sensual enjoyment./ But first the notion that man has a body distinct from his soul, is to be expunged" (Plate 14). Since for Blake the body was part of the soul, an improvement in the abilities of feeling, tasting, seeing, hearing, and smelling meant a consequent improvement of the soul, which could become wider and wiser through the sensibilization of the body. The common sense states that the body has a mind, but such view cannot be found in Blake, not even in vice-versa, because the Blakean vision assumes that body and soul are in different categories of importance: for him, it is the soul that has a body.

From the same period, the German idealism represented by Schiller can tell us something about two different kinds of poetry. According to Anatol Rosenfeld (1963), Schiller despised Goethe's tendency to the particular, as well as the fact that the poet put

too much emphasis on the senses. For him, Goethe's sensual tendency was proof of a *naïve* thinking, which Shakespeare for example, in Schiller's opinion, did not align with. Considering that Schiller was one of the few poets to be taken seriously as a philosopher also, it is no surprise that too much emphasis on the role of the senses and the intuition was a fault in his eyes. In his essay *On Naïve and Sentimental Poetry* (1795), Schiller highlighted two kinds of poets: the *naïve* and the sentimental ones. Their style depended mostly on culture. When mentioning the ancient Greeks, Schiller states that

> With these, culture did not degenerate so far, that nature was abandoned over it. The entire structure of social life was erected upon feelings, not upon a concoction of art; their mythology itself was the inspiration of a *naïve* feeling, the birth of a joyful imaginative power, not of subutilizing reason, like the ecclesiastical beliefs of modern nations; since, therefore, the Greek had not lost nature in humanity, so could he also not be surprised by it outside of the latter and could have no such pressing need for objects, in which he found it again. At one with himself and happy in the feeling of his humanity, he had to stop with the latter as his maximum and take pains to make all else approach the same; while *we*, at variance with ourselves and unhappy in our experiences of humanity, have no more pressing interest, than to fly away from the same and to remove from our sight such an unsuccessful form. (SCHILLER, p. 190, 1993)

The first type was more common among the ancient poets. They were integrated with nature and were still part of its ingenuity. Sophocles, Archimedes, Albrecht Dürer, Cervantes, Dante, and Shakespeare are some of the few *naïve* geniuses the world has had, according to Schiller. Always bashful, but not decent, intelligent, but not cunning, truthful because of nature, not because of moral, modest, but not anxious—so Schiller conceived the *naïve* poet. The inherent goodness of the *naïve* poets is a state in which they are protected from the corruption of the world, thus being able to offer a higher literary experience.

The second type is more common among modern poets. Sentimental poets were the ones who had a sense of loss towards nature concerning their connection with it. That is why their poetry was marked by a feeling of nostalgia. These poets struggle to reach a pre-corrupted state, or allude to it. The abandonment of nature is attributed by Schiller to the degeneration of culture. He points to how gradually harder it would be to see a *naïve* poet in a sick society. So, the sentimental poets are marked by the nostalgia of how feeling naturally was like, and that longing or nostalgia is itself a major feature of sentimental poetry. In Schiller's words, "The feeling, of which we are here speaking, is therefore not that which the ancients had; it is rather of the same kind as that which

we *have for the ancients.* They felt naturally; we feel the natural." (SCHILLER, 1993, p. 195).

This distinction is especially interesting if we remember that, among many other variants and classifications, Ricoeur organizes his hermeneutics, based on the idea of a first and a second *naïveté*. The first would be, as we said, revelatory in a religious way, with a reading process imbued in a sense of truth. This first *naïveté*, he states, has been lost; but he presents as an alternative what he calls a second *naïveté*, which stands between the first dogmatic form of reading and the nihilism and fragmentation of the postmodernist reading. The second *naïveté*, which could be associated to what Schiller called sentimental poetry, is a hermeneutic process which assures for a place where readings of individual and mythological religiosity blend, in a revelation of the text that is a revelation of the self before itself. That path avoids cynicism.

If we conceive Blake and Goethe as similar romantic poets—in the sense that both put great emphasis on the artist's subjectivity and sensorial perception of reality—we can consider that Schiller's reservations also relate to Blake's project.

The *naïve* poet is nature; the sentimental poet seeks nature. Which type of poet was Blake? If we consider that in *TMHH* he describes animals in their natural splendor and vitality, a *joie-de-vivre* but also a wrath which are proper of a man in communion with the good and the evil of nature, we may conclude that surprisingly he was a *naïve* poet among modern poets in modern times. However, it is also possible to identify him as a sentimental poet, marked by the ponderance of how degraded society is. Blake longed for the restoration of a better human and a better world, which means that humankind and the world were considered corrupted. He believed in the transformative power of our desire and defended sensual enjoyment, which means that he considered these characteristics lost. When reading *TMHH*, the feeling of nostalgia and almost of belic defense of a primitive, idealized state of mind adds to the idea of Blake as a sentimental poet.

We can conclude that he was both. On the article *William Blake's "The Tyger:" Sentimental, Naïve Sublimation* (2015), Lauren Lyons suggests that in the poem The Tyger, from *Songs of Experience* (1789), Blake combined both types, *naïve* and sentimental. *Naïve*, because of the direct descriptions. Sentimental, because of the reflective enquiry: What made the tiger? How? When?, and so on. The poem is based on feelings towards the tiger (*naïveté*), but it is also an intellectual inquiry on the origin of the animal (sentimentality).

In *TMHH*, however, Blake longs for the intimacy with nature that ancient poets had, being one with it through their free imagination. That is utterly sentimental, and what is interesting about it—when we think of what Ricoeur called second *naïveté*—is that such a sentimental poem demands or even convokes the reader for a second *naïveté*, which culminates in a revelation that leads to action. The latter is necessarily an embodiment, or the reconstruction of Jerusalem, to use a metaphor.

2.3 Reasoning and Enlightenment

A constant tread of *TMHH* is the criticism towards the enslavement of people by religion and the separation of individuals from their potential creativity (their Poetic Genius, in other words). That does not mean that Blake saw a solution for that problem in the new epistemological condition that had started with Cartesianism around a century before. Science's disregard for the body is for Blake the negation of the metaphysical instance of the subject. Historically, the spirit has been substituted by the soul, the soul has been substituted by the mind, the mind has been substituted by the brain, the brain has been substituted by lobs, the lobs by electric stimuli, and so forth. For Blake, science's disregard for the body has also to do with the fact that the scientific method considers the subjective perception of an event as an intruder that must and can be expelled in order to promote a neutral environment. That subjective perception is manifested through sensorial functions, which are considered deceiving. The problem is, those sensorial functions and their illusions are the matter of an artistic experience, not of the scientific method. For Blake, it is not because religion causes harm to human imagination that science, as religion's historical antagonist, will redeem humankind. But Blake is not centred in the holistic nor in the atomist understanding of the world; he is an in-betweener. This discussion can be made through figures of speech. It is Hazard Adams (2014) who reminds us of the value of the synecdoche for Blake.[4] That figure of speech is a metonym that shows the equivalence between the fragment and the whole: A character that represents or embodies the spirit of a country would be an example of this, which is the case of the giant Albion in *Jerusalem* (1820). A small portion of nature, such as an eye, can be seen as the whole universe and vice-versa. Synecdoches

[4] For more information, check "Synecdoche and Method", reprinted in Hazard Adams' *Antithetical Essays in Literary Criticism and Liberal Education* (Tallahassee: Florida State University Press, 1990), 38–41.

are not just metaphors: “Metaphor can be thought of as horizontal, synecdoche as vertical” (p. 10). In comparison with the synecdoche, the almost moralist nature of non-interchangeable dichotomies is much more common in the scientific effort to understand and catalogue nature. Adams (2014) points out not only to Blake’s use of contrarieties, but to his use of synecdoches. Such understanding of the world proposes connections among everything.[5] One poem that shows Blake’s typical use of synecdoche (vertical connection) and contrariety (horizontal connection) is *Auguries of Innocence*. He starts by inflating the poetical space vertically:

> To see a World in a Grain of Sand
> And a Heaven in a Wild Flower,
> Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
> And Eternity in an hour.

And in the last stanza, the use of contrariety:

> Every Night and every Morn
> Some to Misery are Born.
> Every Morn and every Night
> Some are Born to sweet delight.
> Some are Born to sweet delight,
> Some are Born to Endless Night.

One of the strangest parts of *TMHH* happens from Plate 17 to Plate 20. This Memorable Fancy narrates the encounter of Blake with an angel who tries to convince him that his *post-mortem* destiny is terrible: “Consider the hot burning dungeon thou art preparing for thyself to all eternity, to which thou art going in such career.” Blake then tells the angel that they should compare their lots in eternity in order to realize which one is better. After that, both set off on a journey through a stable, a church, a mill, and finally a cave. Deep inside the cave there is a void, on which both Blake and the angel hold on to by roots. The infinite space starts showing its astronomic beauties, but slowly the images turn into frightening ones, such as tempests, cataracts of blood, and a monstrous serpent, just to mention some of them. When a Leviathan finally appears, the angel decides to go back to the mill, while Blake waits for a while. Soon the terror disappears and he finds himself “sitting on a pleasant bank beside a river by moonlight

[5] It is also Northrop Frye (1947) who points to Blake’s opinion on how terrible it was for an artist to start from a fragment and not from the whole: this critique is more clearly understood when Frye mentions Blake’s reluctance about the idea of creating art from the concept of the beautiful or from the concept of the sublime, as if that was more of an exercise of memory than a creative act that sprouts from a deeper layer of the self.

and hearing a harper who sung to the harp" (Plate 19). When he comes back, he tells the angel that those images were owing to the angel's metaphysics and that it was time to show the angel his eternal lot.

Blake then narrates how he grasps the angel and leads him through the Sun and space. They were protected through the sun because Blake had with him the Swedenborg's volumes. They crossed the space until they found a place to rest in Saturn "and then leap'd into the void, between saturn and the fixed stars" (Plate 19). Suddenly, they saw a stable and the church, and in the altar there was a deep pit into which they descended. There they found monkeys, baboons, and other species all chained, killing and dismembering themselves and each other. Blake continues by saying that "as the stench terribly annoyd us both we went into the mill, & I in my hand brought the skeleton of a body, which in the mill was Aristotles Analytics" (Plate 20). As the angel accuses Blake of imposing Blake's phantasy upon him, Blake argues that "we impose on one another, & it is but lost time to converse with you whose works are only Analytics" (Plate 20). This plate ends with a highlighted sentence, separated from the rest of the stanza, saying that opposition is true friendship. Rather than solving it, Blake believes in movement.

I decided to report this narrative because it shows how Blake considers the systematic reasoning as the opposite of an imaginative mind. Perhaps 'imaginative mind' is not the best choice; science is creative in its own way, but that is not Blake's point. He is focused on the odds of restrict analytics. More than just trying to convince the angel that his lifestyle is better, Blake criticizes the analytical thinking in order to propose that reason is only a part of our human condition rather than the whole. This parable-like story shows that Blake can visit such a 'world', but it shows also that the world of reason, analytics and self-righteousness should be able to see itself from another point of view.

In this "memorable fancy", Blake does not argue with a scientist, but with an angel. The last part of it sounds quite Darwinian: Different primates trying to understand themselves and each other through analysis, which at last is described as a violent process of dismembering the whole. The synecdoque-like frame of mind, so important in Blake's poetics, is dismembered as well. On Plate 19, Blake describes the horrible scenery:

> "Here," said I, "is your lot; in this space, if space it may be called." Soon we saw the stable and the church, and I took him to the altar and opened the Bible, and lo! it was a deep pit, into which I descended, driving the Angel before me. Soon we saw seven houses of brick. One we entered. In it were a number of monkeys, baboons, and all of that species, chained by the middle, grinning and snatching at one another, but withheld by the shortness of their chains. However, I saw that they sometimes grew numerous, and then the weak were caught by the strong, and with a grinning aspect, first coupled with and then devoured by plucking off first one limb and then another till the body was left a help-less trunk; this, after grinning and kissing it with seeming fondness, they devoured too. And here and there I saw one savourily picking the flesh off
>
> his own tail. As the stench terribly annoyed us both, we went into the mill; and I in my hand brought the skeleton of a body, which in the mill was Aristotle's Analytics.

After this gory scene, Blake describes the Angel's reaction to such horror and makes his point on how damaging the excess of systematic reasoning can be:

> So the Angel said; "Thy phantasy has imposed upon me, and thou ought-est to be ashamed."
>
> I answered: "We impose on one another, and it is but lost time to con-verse with you whose works are only Analytics.'*
>
> "I have always found that Angels have the vanity to speak of them-selves as the only wise; this they do with a confident insolence sprouting from systematic reasoning.

Considering that Blake sees religion and science as limited forms and excessively valued forms of perceiving our experiences, the fact that he tried to converse with an angel in that memorable fancy rather than with a scientist is not necessarily important. The point he makes is against an excess of systematic reasoning.

The images of monkeys and baboons behaving insanely and violently is quite shocking, and reminded me of another literary text concerned with the poles of what we normally use to characterize human dignity: our innate ability to feel our environment and revolve in our capacity for joy and liveliness, and our capacity for systematic reasoning. In this primate sense, we can think of Elizabeth Costello (2003), a novel by J. M. Coetzee, as a character whose defense of the animals somehow align with Blake's defense of the legitimacy of energy and the pleasure of the body towards reason and the pleasure of the pure intellect. In the novel, Costello defends animal rights alleging that the scientific method used to understand the thinking mechanisms of the ape ends up transforming its object of study into its own hypothesis, and that such an objectivized conclusion demands an impoverishment from the ape's subjectivity itself. In Costello's argumentation, the ape starts by asking itself 'where is my home' and 'why are they suddenly depriving me from food' and ends with a model that favors the research's demands, that is, 'how can I get the banana'.

The scene of the primates in the last part of Blake's story fosters the idea that analytical thinking alone cannot be considered superior to the "delights of the genius that for fools look like torment" (BLAKE, 2011, Plate 6). The scene also suggests that both of the extremes are harming, with the exception that the first one – Blake's lot, in the opinion of the angel – can be more fortuitously dealt with through an improvement of the imaginative powers. The angel represents not only the Church, that is, an institution able to control people's creativity, but also the analytic philosopher who dismisses the bright side of the malleability of the free poetic vision, and, of course, of what he calls sensual enjoyment. This is also implied in how Blake brought the Angel "[...] the skeleton of a body, which in the mill was Aristotle's Analytics.", and when Blake says that "[...] it is but lost time to converse with you whose works are only Analytics" (Plate 20).

Though Blake may have sounded like a heterodox type of priest when he professes the value of the semantics of hell or as a heterodox type of scientist when he lists the three errors of religions and suggests the dynamics of energy in the Universe, he is critical towards the Enlightenment as much as he is towards religion. In *Visionary Physics: Blake's Response to Newton* (1974), Donald Ault investigates how much Blake despised Newton's scientific approach and the complexity of Blake's reasons for that. One aspect of it is that Blake saw Newton as a threat to the spiritual world and to the

imaginative mind. This satirical depiction of Isaac Newton certainly does not suggest a great admiration for his approach to understand nature:

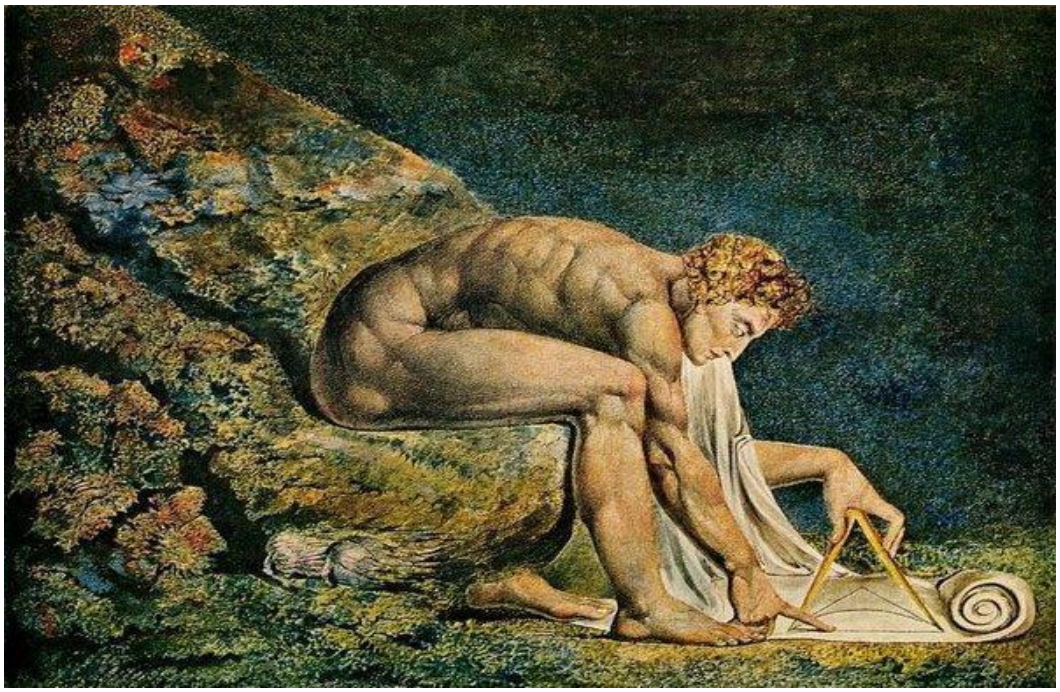


Figure 9: Newton (William Blake, 1795-1805. Tate Britain Museum)

In this colour print finished with watercolour and ink, Newton is at the bottom of a mountain. His curved body makes him part of an even lower layer of the whole. Behind him, there is a starless darkness. There is an aura of blue coldness surrounding him. His concentration on his drawing and the compass seems to absorb him to such a degree that it is as if reality itself had stopped existing, which is quite ironic, since the objective of the drawing is to understand nature. He seems to be bended over himself, in a silhouette that does not inspire expansion, freedom or understanding. At the same time, he is part of the line that limits the mountain which's bottom he is sit at. As Frye (1990, p. 18) puts it, Blake was neither the solipsist and the atomist, since both separated subject and object. The solipsist evaded from the outside through the belief that the self is the only thing prone to be known. The atomist, on the other hand, disregards the whole to concentrate on the particle, so the experience of reality is also damaged by the dissociation of subject and object. For a poet who was adept of synecdoches and believed that the body was embedded in the soul, atomic research with its centralization on the object, as well as the solipsist endeavor centralized on the subject alone were two equally impoverished ways of experience. For Blake, perception was the key, the in-between where life happened. As with religion, Blake's disapproval

of the sovereignty of science as the main epistemological paradigm was related to scientificism's disregard for imagination as a form of knowledge. Frye (1990, p. 19) believes that for Blake there was not a difference between the mental, the imaginative, and the intellectual faculties. That means that the scientific disregard for imagination is for Blake an intellectual fault. Even though we are accustomed to hearing terms such as 'scientific discovery' and 'scientific invention', the scientific practice is basically an exercise of recollecting laws that previous scientists have established. In *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962), Thomas Kuhn explains that normal science consists in knowledge accumulation, and even simple description plays a decisive role on it, mapping the known in order to occasionally find undeniable holes. The revolutionary science occurs when an incongruence becomes too uncomfortable to be ignored. Only then there is a shift of paradigm. Science is superior to dogmatic fields because it carries within the privilege of doubt and the premise of change; but such change only happens under great pressure.

This description does not fit with what Blake understands by the mental, the intellectual, and the imaginative faculties. Blake sees the advancement of science as a threat to art because he considers both science and art as manifestations of the intellectual powers. Such imbalance of importance means for Blake a disregard for creativity and its destructive (thus hellish) nature. The role of energy in Blake's theory of knowledge is centered in the body experience, that is, in the exercise not of memory, but of sensorial perception.

In order to give an example and keep the matter of Isaac Newton as a representer of what Blake despises, it is worth addressing another romantic poet, Johann Wolfgang Goethe. They belonged to the same period in different countries and they show similar ideas concerning the scientific method and the impoverishment of our perceptive ability. Goethe published a study called *Theory of the Colors* (*Zur Farbenlehre*) in 1810, twenty years after Blake published *TMHH*. Goethe's work was fostered by the idea of proposing a different view on colors from the major one, which at the time was a consequence of Newton's experiment with specters. Goethe argues that the premise for that experiment was the creation of an artificial environment, a dark room, so that his point could be proved. For Goethe, the value of a work of investigation about nature that had to retrieve itself from the world was false. He argued that colors do not happen in hermetically controlled environments, and that so finding the truth about them in an artificial scheme could not enrich our view on the matter. Actually, it would cause the

opposite. Like Blake, Goethe believed in the sovereignty of perception and in the improvement of the senses. However mellow such ideas may sound – it is true that the scientific method has empowered people to live more comfortable lives through an unimaginable wide range of technological devices – they do have a point when it comes to sensibility and to permeability. By permeability I mean the ability to adhere psychically to the subtleties of the environment, such as a smell, someone else's feelings, the nature of a social interaction, the tactile feeling of the wind and the sun. For Goethe, the color was not a detached instance floating through space. It happened in the eye. That means that Goethe's effort towards a theory of the color took into consideration the observer, that is, the subject, and not only the object of investigation as an independent being.

This is part of a stream that tried to restore the importance of the personal experience as a legitimate form of apprehension of the world at a time in which commitment with the section between subject and object, observer and observed was not believed in its efficacy to solve problems. Blake has a different view. The times he criticized Isaac Newton and John Locke in his works are many. As Frye (1990, p. 21) puts it, Blake says that we should not see more 'in' the sun, but see more 'of' the sun. I suppose that such claim has to do with our ability to invest ourselves imaginatively into the physiological and technical apprehension of the sun, turning a received experience into an actual act that could sophisticate what the previous plain reception was. The realm of perception seems to be the greater one for both Goethe and Blake, as long as imagination is invested in it. For Blake, man is the most alive of all creatures precisely because of these abilities ("Where man is not nature is barren"). What is interesting about Goethe's case is that he did consider his doctrine (*Lehre*) to be a scientific counterpoint to Newton's experiments with prisms. Blake certainly did not have a scientific ambition nor the proper education for a project of this *envergure*. However, the criticism that both Blake and Goethe somehow promoted towards the impoverishment of sensorial experience over an investment in the value of memory, theory, and the method as a whole is the core of a (scientific?) theory that dwelt in Romanticism.

2.4 Perception

Blake's concept of perception pervades all his theory of knowledge. Such theory was expressed through poetry and this type of language has its own style of articulating thought. The aphoristic language from *All Religions Are One* (1788) and from *There Is No Natural Religion* (1788) is poetic yet philosophical, regarding what Blake believed to be experience, knowledge and the Poetic Genius, among other keywords to his work. Blake wrote that "As none by traveling over known land can find out the unknown. So from already acquired knowledge Man could not acquire more. There fore an universal Poetic Genius exists" (BLAKE, *ARAO*, 2011, Plate 4). Such view of the role of a mysterious creative sparkle in the process of mental or spiritual expansion implies that the active principle of perception is intricate with the imaginative powers of an individual. Together with imagination, perception builds the pillars of Blake's theory of poetry, knowledge and art. Northrop Frye's classic study *Fearful Symmetry* (1947) will be the basis for this section.

Frye reminds us that Blake defined his paintings as visions, and poetry as na allegory addressed to the intellectual powers. That is, his paintings demanded a strong visual sensitivity. Poetry did so as well, but then sensitivity appeared as a puzzle to the intellect. Based on that we can say that he was not a primitivist or a *naïve* artist, although his emphasis in the importance of the senses as part of the understanding is very strong. For Blake, perception was more important than memory. The former was infused by the five senses and thus it was an action. On the other hand, he conceived memory as an abstract exercise detached from the world. Frye shows us that Blake uses the word 'proportion' to exemplify his point. Such word is meaningless in itself, unless it is applied to two specific magnitudes. 'Proportion' is not something in the world, but an abstraction that can only be understood through an example, that is, through embodiment. Frye (1945) gives other examples; categories like height and width also depend on the relationship between real objects to be understood. Volume, space, all of those magnitudes are for Blake an exercise of memory. With his poetry, Blake was willing to sensibilize us for a perceptive and imaginative acknowledgement of reality, which is found in the present.

Frye also points to Blake's criticism of atomism, a philosophical theory whose definition has changed since Ancient Greece. For our purposes, let us just point that atomism became a matter of scientific inquiry especially during the 17th century.

Atomism is nowadays a matter of science rather than of philosophy. However, we must consider atomism's blurred condition between science and philosophy during the eighteenth and nineteenth century. According to Alan Chalmers (2014), "There is no doubt that Newton shared the assumption of the Ancient and mechanical atomists that there is just one kind of homogeneous matter of which all atoms are composed" (2016). The field was further developed with Isaac Newton in England during the 18th century. Blake understood the depth of the epistemological transformations that were occurring throughout the XVIII century and which would be hardened in the following century. Frye explains that Blake's critique of atomism concerned basically atomism's premise that things were atomically alike, or ontologically equal. This idea was problematic in his opinion because it did not take into consideration the perceptive aspect of things as they were. For example, the same tree in a foggy day and in a sunny day were not, for Blake, the same tree. In this point, his revolt against Newtonianism was very similar to Goethe's. Specifically in terms of humanism, the impoverishment and devalue of sensorial experience has probably represented a loss and in this those romantic poets were right

The escalating robotization, automatization, mechanization and bureaucratization of today's life are related to the epistemological paradigm that we live by. It originated in the functionalism of the 17th century's mechanics. This huge technological development offered society a great improvement in health, for example. Perhaps thinking of the historical use of the word 'trash' can clarify what que question posed by Blake was. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, the words 'garbage' and 'rubbish' had their first known use of the 15th century. However, 'trash', which is a much heavier and more pejorative term for general rejects, according to the same dictionary, had its first known use in 1902. By disregarding an holistic view of the Universe and focusing on a mechanicist and atomist approach, Newtonianism created the basis for a praxis whose consequences are not only unimportant, but a social taboo. Rather than cyclic, society's neglect and despise of rejects is a linear phenomenon. Science solves one problem, like excrement disappearing into out bathroom's plumbing, but the latter phase of the process is hardly ever taken into account after it disappears. The worldwide ecological crisis, in fact, has been a topic of research not only for some Blakean scholars, but for scholars of the English Romanticism. The scholar James McKusick, for example, has written about Romanticism and ecology by studying how

nature appeared in the poetry of William Blake, Percy Shelley, Samuel Coleridge, John Keats and William Wordsworth.

Frye (1990, p. 18) calls attention to the fact that Blake even has a specific word for the shadowy memory of a thing. He called it ‘specter.’ When asked to draw a glass, people in general draw the idea of how a glass is, not a glass itself. The same happens when they are asked to draw a house or a heart. In Blakean terminology, what they do is to draw specters, not visions. According to Frye, those specters are also referred to as ‘fantasies’, that is, they are emphatically regarded as illusions. At the same time, according to the same author, ‘mental’, ‘intellectual’, ‘imaginative,’ and ‘fancy’ are all related, and often used indistinguishably. If Blake’s visions are his highest truth, it is essential to understand the role of perception in his philosophy.

Both solipsism and atomism separate subject from object. The former by putting emphasis on the subject, the latter by putting emphasis on the object. Solipsists think that nothing is real and that there are only personal experiences of what we call reality. Atomists disregard the importance of their subjectivity when analyzing a given matter. As we said before, Frye reminds us that Blake was neither of them. Rather than conceiving reality as something existing or non-existing, Blake said that mental things are real on their own. The reality for Blake was imagination. He understood the world in terms of truth and falsehood, not in terms of reality and lies. The truthfulness of imagination and creativity (eternal delight) were for him a consequence of well-developed perceptive skills. The in-between of perception interested him not as an end in itself, since he was not a materialist, but as a bridge to the infinite world. On Plate 14, he professed possibly his most famous quote: “if the doors of perception were cleansed every thing would appear to man as it is, infinite” (BLAKE, 2011). If perception is self-development, the role of the senses is crucial to Blake. In this sense, it is problematic how in the West the body has been philosophically conceived as an object, never a subject. It is Richard Shusterman who reminds us that the functional role of the body regarding spiritual self-development is not humiliating or undignified. The body, which is usually regarded as a passive object, can be seen as a key for self-development when its proprioception is held to a higher degree. We often talk about perception, which is the body perceiving the outside; but we rarely consider the empowered knowledge of the body’s proprioception, which is the body’s ability to feel itself.

On page 21, Frye (1945) quotes Blake, reminding us that “thought is act.” That is, the mind must be understood as an active force, not only a passive receiver of input,

as John Locke emphasized. Such a passive mind was considered a mediocre mind. The mind should be active in imagination: it is imagination that makes the legs move towards something, the hands work towards something. For Blake, a unified perception gives one a higher sense of reality. By putting imagination into perception—by imbuing the senses with the mind—we could see, for example, more 'of' the Sun, not more 'in' the Sun. "Perception is self-development" (FRYE, 1990, p. 23), while appealing to memory and reminiscence in order to live an experience is considered to be in the order of the specters. To see more of the Sun is an art that is sensual and intellectual at once.

2.5 Holistic Experience and the 'Total Work of Art'

When it comes to Blake, one cannot tell if he conceived his work first in terms of image or in terms of text. Such problem can be explained by the fact that he did not distinguish different media as we do nowadays. However unique Blake is, there are similarities that can link him to Richard Wagner's 'total work of art' (*Gesamtkunstwerk*). The term refers to Wagner's operatic endeavors towards an art that was not separated in Aristotelian terms, but rather condensed. The objective was to make the work of art transcend barriers. Such work would mixture poetry, visual art, and sound in the stage. According to the scholar Roger Paulin, there are similarities but also disparities between the total work of art and Blake's work. As Paulin puts it, "Blake's aims were similar in their absoluteness to those of the German Romanticism, but different in their fulfillment" (PAULIN, 1988, p. 55).

Intermediality and transmediality could be mentioned regarding the way Blake used different types of language, but the problem with doing so is that these concepts cannot help us understand how he conceived the work of art as one integrated world, previous to the fragmented world we have lived in. We do not know if or how much he distinguished image from word, and one example of it would be how the letters are part of the visual sensation that the poem causes. On the cover of *TMHH* and along many plates it is possible to see letters becoming leaves and human bodies, as if word and image are natural developments of each other. Such mixtures (should we say 'integration'?) were common in medieval illuminated manuscripts. What Blake does is to ignore the tendency to fragmentation of his times.

2.6 Blake's Reception of Herschel's Telescope

'Imagination' is one of the most important words when it comes to Blakean poetics and philosophy, with perception following it. As we have seen, in *TMHH* imagination is related to the characteristics of hell and to the body. Perception is a sort of door between the inner world and the outer world. It is one of the nameable in-betweenesses of his poetics.

Kathleen Lundeen (2014) wrote a very interesting article analyzing the reception of different British romantic poets of the building of a forty-foot telescope in London by William Herschel in 1789. For instance, Lord Byron, Wordsworth, and William Blake reacted differently to the telescope's popularity among the people and to how scientific advancement interfered in the role of the poets regarding the power to express the infinite. Blake's point of view is pretty interesting: He thought that the eye was already an obstacle between the soul and reality, and that adding a layer – the telescope – to that distance would only make things more difficult. In other words, Blake believed that the role of imagination invested in perception was immense, and that focusing on the medium – the telescope, and even the eye – was a waste.

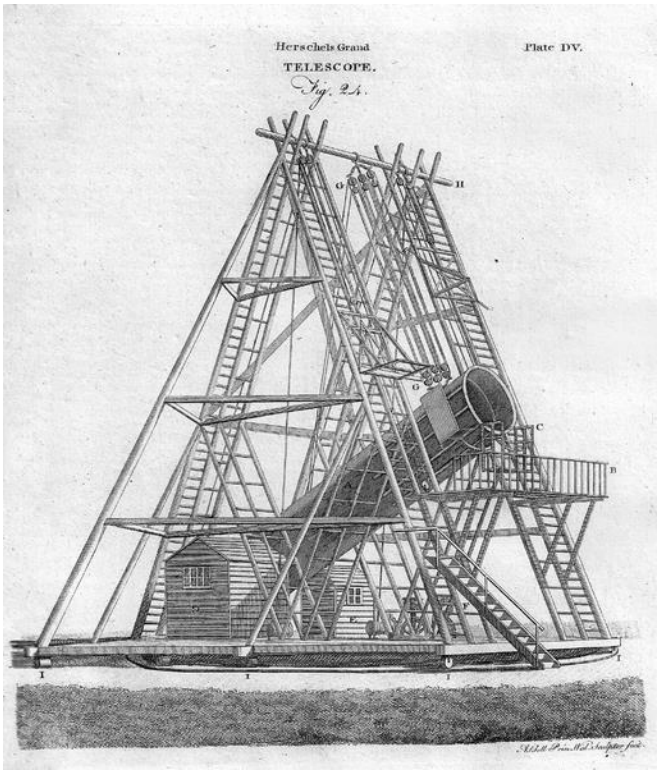


Figure 10: William Herschel's Forty-foot Telescope

The telescope,

> from a Blakean perspective, does not enhance vision; it merely creates an alternative distortion. Blake's argument in opposition to the telescope is compelling: adding a filter to the human eye, which is already an instrument of mediation, will not lead to unmediated perception. Ironically, Blake's observation that "Every body does not see alike" resonates with a statement made by Herschel seventeen years earlier: "Seeing is in some respect an art, which must be learnt. To make a person see with such a power is nearly the same as if I were asked to make him play one of Handel's fugues upon the organ. Many a night have I been practising to see, and it would be strange if one did not acquire a certain dexterity by such constant practice". (qtd. in Lubbock 101) (LUNDEEN, 2014, p. 6)

Based on letters written by Herschel seventeen years before, Lundeen found out that, in the end, Blake and Herschel shared more thoughts than one would think: Herschel felt delusional about the public telescope because people could not understand what they saw. Besides, the people seemed to be more fascinated with the device itself than with what it could show, that is, a spacial reality that had always been beyond regular human perception. Lundeen notes that

> Though Herschel and Blake diverge on the value of the telescope, they both reject the idea that seeing is passive, mechanical, and uniform among all people and argue that it engages the imagination. Any affinity between Herschel and Blake, empiricist and metaphysician, is counterintuitive and, therefore, all the more intriguing. Along with conceiving of seeing in a way that would later be associated with Blake, Herschel (like Blake) participates in both invention and execution, constructing the medium through which he sees the universe.

It was as if that public from the end of the 18th century was devoid of their imagination and perception; in other words, most people were not technically educated to appreciate that astronomic enhancement. In Blake's opinion, the impoverishment of the senses, in the sense that they meant less than scientific knowledge, would lead to a lack of imagination, since it depended on our already corrupted perception of the infinite. Awakening the body, then, would mean recovering the energy responsible for vitality, creativity, and imagination, while abiding to the repetitive paths of memory – a Lockean and Newtonian fault that Blake rejected – would turn our potentially active mind into a more passive one, leading us to an impoverished inner life that, without interfering in our bodily perception, would not be able to deepen our experiences and comprehension.

2.7 Tristanne Connolly and the Body in Blake's Poetics

As we have said, according to Blake the body is a portion of the soul, not the other way around. The body is not very important for Blake; it is simply a part of the soul, not the soul itself and not bigger than it. This reminder keeps us from jumping into conclusions such as that Blake centered his poetics in the five senses, in form and rhetorics rather than in content. His focus was on the in-between of a perception imbued with imagination. Though we could subjugate his ideas to those of other philosophers', Blake has his own theory of knowledge and poetry.

In *William Blake and the Body* (2002), Tristanne Connolly presents the infinity of approaches to the body in the poetics of Blake and the difficulties of choosing which one to study. Everything that we experience depends on our body, so anything can be tackled through the study of the body. As if this was not wide enough, there are many possibilities of studying and analyzing the body in Blakean works. His art is not only in text and in image, but also in the handmade book, that is, the support of his poems and visions was also a consciously made work of art. Connolly (2002) divides these possibilities in three main branches: the body as the book itself, the body as in visual art, and the body in terms of text. Within these, she specifies categories into which the body can be studied in Blake. We can see texts as bodies; investigate the bodies in Blake's designs; focus on the narratives of bodies coming into existence, or being shaped; focus on the appearance of bodies which split or fuse with other bodies; the ideal, eternal body; bodies which dissolve into landscape; and bodies which are also places. I will focus on her first proposal, which is to see Blakean texts as bodies. His poetry is here understood as a stimulus for perception, which on its turn is imbued with imagination and vitality through the Blakean art.

2.8 The Body of the Book

Besides being a poet, a painter, an engraver and an editor, Blake was also a bookmaker. That office became relevant again in the 1970's, when bookmaking became a matter of conceptual art. Seeing the book as a monument, as a sculpture, as an expression of the artist and as an embodiment of ideas has been a trend especially in artistic circles, rather than in literary ones, whose focus is prose. The term 'artist's

book' has been used to define a range of writers and/or artists who conceive the book as a material instance for subjective expression.

Roughly speaking, the illuminated books consist of plates designed, engraved and sometimes painted by Blake[6] so that each book would be unique. Changes in the colors and even in the text and the drawings were common. According to David Bindman in *William Blake: The Complete Illuminated Books* (2011), there are nine complete copies of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. The uniqueness of each book and the fact that its features cannot be reproducible as well as the fact that a deeper fruition of Blake's work depends on facsimile editions fosters the idea of Blake as a book's artist. Artist's books are books in which the craftiness of the book and the visual aspect of the pages are taken into consideration as part of the meaning. They may or may not have words, but what defines them as artist's books is their format and often their irreproducibility. Blake is considered by many scholars and artists to have made the first artist's books in history. The authorial mark, the intricate relation between text and image, as well as the book as an object of art are features that differ Blake's work from previous medieval illuminated books, where calligraphy and iconography mediated text and image.

As we said before, the intention of this work is to focus in one of the many possibilities of understanding and studying the matter of embodiment in Blake's poetry. I chose the one that concerns the book as a body, as a physical and artistic monument or sculpture that in its turn carries bodies in text and in visual art. Such string of thought leads us to the idea of Blake's books as a metaembodiment.

By starting with the materiality of the paper, it is literarily interesting to point to the crossing aspects of paper, canvas, and fabric. I do not think Blake differentiated them as much as a renascentist man or perhaps a medieval man would, so much so that his work is an concomitant mixture of text (within paper), image (within canvas), and body (within cover and back).

If we think of the word 'tissue,' it can mean a range of surfaces. It can refer to paper, such as for instance Japanese tissue, wrapping tissue, or tissue paper; to cloth, as in aerial tissue or aerial silk, a type of acrobatic performance; finally, it can also be understood in a biological way, that is, the surface formed by cells that intermediates the outside environment with an inside organ, being an organ itself.

[6] And often by his wife Catherine. She also assisted with the printing part of the process.

In Portuguese we find very similar words in the worlds of writing, weaving, painting, and even cytology. *Texto* (text), and *tecido* (tissue or fabric) are both formed by lines, and both create a *trama*, which can mean 'plot' in fiction and 'warp and woof' in weaving. It is also interesting to remember that a body tissue, such as the skin, can be sewed. Tissue can also be understood as gauze. There is an expression in Portuguese in which to sew a text well means to harmonize its parts. We can think of 'textual' and 'tissual' as related forms. For Blake, the texture of the paper and the texture of the paint were essential parts of his work—not only in terms of writing and painting, but in the metal engraving process with the use of copper and acids. He is known for being the first and one of the only engravers to use the relief etching technique, which consists of adding paint not in the concave parts of the copper plate, but on the relief, by pressing the paint gently and repeatedly on the relief, in order to form an extremely thin layer of paint during the printing process. Blake wanted his prints to be as soft and diaphanous as possible[7], so that the matter through which he expressed his ideas was always pervaded by a sense of abstraction. Such process demanded really thick paper; should we call it paper, canvas, tissue, maybe skin? All of these imagetic references contribute to the understanding of Blake's poetic project in its tactile sense. To be in his work is like being in the third bank of a river.[8]

We can understand his work in a three-dimensional scale of object. Part of Blake's hermeticism may come from an almost ontological difficulty his reader faces: "If reading a translation is like kissing through a handkerchief, seeing Blake's works in reproductions, even an excellent one, is likewise" (CONNOLLY, 2002, p. 19). His books have orifices of meaning, erased verbal insight: "[Blake] ensures that the reader must desire the text in order to join with it in happy copulation" (CONNOLLY, 2002, p. 19). As Connolly puts it, the skin of the text, its surface, relates to the sense organ of touch. Among all the in-betweenness of Blake's work, Connolly emphasizes that surface is the only border that does not brush.

That is, almost no one really has access to that body of art, inasmuch as one cannot touch a painting that was created to be touched. Blake's illuminated books have the prestige of a charade, a possible conceptual work of contemporary art: An

[7] Sometimes instead of this wonderful delicate effect the prints are quite boldly coloured, and sometimes (especially in the colour printed copies) quite heavy in texture.

[8] A reference to João Guimarães Rosa's short story The Third Bank of the River(A Terceira Margem do Rio, 1962), from *Primeiras Estórias* (1962). The translation of the book title would be 'First Stories', but unfortunately I have not found an edition of this work in English to suggest.

illuminated book that is supposed to arouse the senses, but which cannot be completely sensed. It is like watching a television cooking show, without the smell and the taste. "The untouchability of Blake's books, in libraries and museums or in reproductions, has repercussions for the sexual (or sensual?) relationship of reader and book" (CONNOLLY, 2002, p. 19).

Figure 11

In order to think about the matter of the body in Blake, Connolly rescues Julia Kristeva's ideas concerning the *chora semiotica*, as well as Kristeva's ideas concerning the abject. Such references date back to Kristeva's *Revolution in Poetic Language* (1984) and *Powers of Horror: an essay on abjection* (1982). Connolly is keen on realising how much the semiotic, the symbolic, and the abject from Kristeva's theories relate well to Blake's puzzle.

The poetic language has the advantage of a flexible identity, but it also presents the dangers of a scattered self. Blake's in-betweenness is poetically fascinating but also frightening, especially when reading his latest works, which were more hermetic and demanded a greater personal investment in order to be read. The biggest example of it is *Jerusalem* (1820), where Blake erased many sentences that could facilitate the reader's work and substituted didactic sentences for images, for example, which is visible when comparing his versions. The contingency of his poetry is elevated until it reaches the point of hermeticism, a religious hermeneutic, and even the threat of madness.

2.9 *Chora Semiotica* and the Body of Blake's Texts

Based on the theory of the unconscious, Kristeva defines the *chora semiotica* as the instance which orders the drives. The *chora* is nourishing and maternal, a rhythmic place where there is no thesis and no preposition. It is not signifiance, but the process through which signifiance is constituted. Such instance is deprived of unity, identity, deity, or any sort of wholeness. The *chora semiotica* is subjected to a regulating process which differs from the symbolic law. The *chora* is marked by discontinuity and temporary articulations previous to the linguistic sign. If it is previous to the linguistic sign, it is previous to the distinction between real and symbolic (KRISTEVA, 1984, p. 26). The *chora semiotica* is vocal and gestural, an ordering that is not cognitive. "The kinetic functional stage of the semiotic precedes the establishment of the sign" (KRISTEVA, 1984, p. 27).

That is, *chora semiotica* is a pulsating pre-symbolic and pre-linguistic stage where the subject is generated and negated. Though meaning (*Bedeutung*), the Thetic, and the Subject are instances producible by the *chora*, it remains foreign to them. The *chora semiotica* is a transfer of energy, a "rhythmic but nonexpressive totality" (p. 40). It is made of flow and remarks, only a facilitation. "The sign can be conceived as the voice that is projected from the agitated body (from the *semiotic chora*) onto the facing imago or onto the object, which simultaneously detach from the surrounding continuity" (p. 46).

The device of language, as it appears in artistic practices and in poetic language, is the functioning of the *chora* resumed to a second-degree, the *chora*'s irruptions into the symbolic, where signification (*Bedeutung*) is maintained. This is how Kristeva understands the poetic language as a revolutionary exercise of language which is rarely reached even by poets. Also, the matter of chance *(le hasard*) is remarkable in the theory, since it stands between logic and madness as a poetic device. Kristeva regards

Mallarmé and James Joyce as two examples of writers who could reach and irrupt the *chora semiotica* onto language in the era of capitalism.[9]

So the *chora* is this rhythmic motility that occasionally spreads onto language. Drive and movement are proper of the body, and this is what Connolly (2002, p. 5) means when she reminds us that the *chora* is analogous only to vocal or kinetic rhythm. Since Blake teetered on the edge of madness and lived in a revolutionary period, speaking of the *chora* is perfectly opportune when it comes to his poetics. Besides his own personality and beliefs, he lived in a very frantic political period, which adds for the revolutionary and prophetic tone of his style.

2.10 Hieroglyphic Language and Revelation

His lacunar language, a characteristic that gradually increased over time in his production, makes his poetry opened with gaps and bound to heuristic processes marked by a possible religious inquire, proper of what Ricoeur's hermeneutics dealt with. His hieroglyphic language – if we consider the animals in the first works as in *TMHH* and later the personal mythology that took more and more space – can be subjected to any kind of subjectivity. Blake's poetry can work pretty much like a biblical text, and the quest of his fans can be similar to the quest of knights searching for the holy grail. As Erich Auerbach pointed out in *Mimesis* (2007), the lacunar style of the Scriptures, with its frequent elisions and the lacking of a more neorrealist descriptive tune, fosters a heuristic pursue through the unsaid. This is not surprising, if we remember that the Scriptures were a great influence for Blake, taken as mythology. In *TMHH*, two prophets, Isaiah and Ezekiel, appear as being Blake's intimate friends.

As it occurs within the context of revelation, Blake's texts wish to make the disciple undergo a transformation. Nevertheless, the meanings are many, but not any. One must bear in mind that Blake kept syntax and prosody intact. He demanded his reader to adopt a position: "Blake's deletion of relationship-words from Plate 3 [in

[9] As a curiosity, William Blake, James Joyce, Mallarmé, and, in Brazil, Clarice Lispector are writers often valued in occultist circles, seen as individuals with great sensitivity who were able to reach a mysterious layer of existence and work through language as shamans of the spiritual world. According to some, such as Northrop Frye (1990, p. 8) Blake was not a mystic, since his main concern was the matter and the form of his art, and along all his writings he defined himself as a visionary, not as a mystic. "He was a spiritual utilitarian", Frye (1990, p. 8) points out. Blakean art may cause a sense of awe, discovery and epiphany due to its 'total-work-of-artness,' While the mystical experience is a direct one between subject and the spiritual, Blake lived for the in-between state that we can call the artistic embodiment of the spiritual in form. As an artist, that was the core of his effort.

Jerusalem] requires an added emotional investment from the reader: An admission of what he or she wants to read, wants to believe to be the message of the text" (CONNOLLY, 2002, p. 12). Reading Blake's text as a prophecy or a sacred text can be also said in other words: The end of one state of mind and the beginning of another. After all, 'apocalypses' means revelation, and Blake sees himself as a prophet. In *TMHH*, he prophesied the beginning of a new world through the improvement of the senses. On Plate 14, he described how this new world would appear: infinite. Such transformation "will come to pass by an improvement of sensual enjoyment./ But first the notion that man has a body distinct from his soul, is to be expunged" (BLAKE, 2011, Plate 14). That is, an understanding of his text in a sacred way and thus a magnification of our life experience depends on how one enhances the integration of body and soul. In other words, Blake is demanding a personal commitment from the reader in order to be not necessarily understood, but revealed. "A reader unwilling to fill in the blanks, to participate, to take risk of emotional investment in the text, may be frustrated and repulsed by the demands and the dangers imposed by the orifices of the illuminated books" (CONNOLLY, 2002, p. 12).

2.11 The Abject and the Threat to Identity in Blake

When reading J. J. G. Wilkinson, who published a study of *Songs of Innocence* and of *Songs of Experience* in 1839, Connolly (2002, p. 8) identifies the unsureness of whether Blake presented a sane, conscious use of artistic devices, or a chaotic burst of energy that could lead to madness. Both, I would say. Connolly refers back to Kristeva's insight on poetry and psychoanalysis to distinguish the symbolic from the abject. The symbolic in excess is dangerous, but in general it is healthy, since it enables change and transformation, or a sort of disclosure. On the other hand, the abject affects the self too closely, consisting in a threat to sanity. The abject is related to a primal disgust, repulsion and horror. We could think of it as what we feel before a great amount of pain or a morally obnoxious crime, but the abject can also be understood conceptually as the non-understandable, the lack of meaning. That is, in a simpler layer of interpretation, the lack of satisfying syntax. Connolly resumes that the abject is not a catharsis, but an open wound. Its disrespectfulness of borders is what makes it so threatening.

So the abject in Blake can really be a threat to identity. And, when it comes to identity, it may be worth mentioning the matter of alterity. However common the use of this term is nowadays, for Blake the terminology of identity was quite different. As Connolly puts it, sympathy, through the description of its cousins—'pity' or 'delight'—was seen as a threat to individual identity. The trick is that there would be a false and a true sympathy: the latter was "not enabled by putting oneself in the place of another, but rather by becoming fully oneself" (CONNOLLY, 2002, p. 4).

In *TMHH*, Blake proposes a dangerous adventure which is threatening to identity, but the objective of the adventure is to help one become fully oneself. Once more, Ricoeur's ideas on heuristics as revelation and transformation of the self are proper to the discussion of the effects of Blake's poetics. In other words, or, rather, on another theory, we could say that Blake proposes the undergoing of the subject through an alchemical process which is not necessarily therapeutic, but poetic. One gory example of this is the horror film *Red Dragon* (2002), which tells the story of a psychopath who is obsessed with Blake's painting *The Great Red Dragon and the Woman Clothed with the Sun* (circa 1803-1805) and believes that he can become the dragon by killing people. At some point of the film, he tears the painting apart and eats it.

Connolly then places Blake's illuminated books within this discussion. They are in-between creatures, and thus, threatening: those books are at the same time manuscript and print, hand-done and reproduced, word and picture. I agree with her when she says that they can be understood as abominations. However, there is grammar, there is prosody and, above all, there is a thorough artistic project. Ultimately, there are as many forms of embodying *TMHH* as there are practitioners of what Ricoeur called depth semantics.

2.12 Making Books: Movement Embodiment

In *TMHH*, Blake says that "the tygers of wrath are wiser than the horses of instruction" (1790, Plate 9) —even though the horses of instruction are better than plain stupidity. In the previous excerpt, rather than glorify the glowing vitality that spreads with the wrath of lions, that is, rather than advocate for the human part suppressed by reason, Blake indicates the practical role of language when it is used in an energetic and

transformative way, which is poetry at its best. That excerpt is key to understand how Blake connects the 'powers of the intellect' with the active form of knowledge, that is, imagination: poetic language. There is more wisdom in an expression of poetic vitality than in analytic knowledge, limited by the reading of specters. In a further interpretation, we could say that Blake expects poetry to act in the body and thus in the actions of the reader. We have said that Blake's poetry demands a serious, committed reader. To this reader, there is a promise of an instruction, a transformation. That transformation has to do with how one lives in the material world, that is, how one relates to matter in general and specifically how one relates and uses one's own body.

Blake demands a deep hermeneutic engagement with the text, but also—and especially—with oneself. In *TMHH*, The body is not denied nor glorified, but understood as the space where the senses can be sophisticated. The unity of body and soul is there through the skills of perception. For Connolly (2002, p. 15), body offers meaning, while soul offers form. Language and body are infused with life, which makes *TMHH* a possible praise of movement, vitality, self-revelation and, above all, self-cultivation.

Connolly (2002, p. 15) also points to the parallel between the cooper being consumed by acid and the world being consumed by fire in the final Judgement. She thinks Blake saw the plates as alive, and the text as human. The access to Blake's work was very limited in his time[10]. With the printed versions, it is as if there were new and different incarnations of the books (CONNOLLY, 2002, p. 17). Incarnation, or embodiment, to use a more mundane word, is what we see when the hermeneutic process has reached its zenith and becomes a new body and a new game of physical and intellectual movement in play.

[10] For each Illuminated Book, the number of copies is different. The most up-to-date information about these things can be found on The Blake Archive online, which lists all known copies of each book. According to the Blake Archive, there are 12 known copies of MHH (but only 9 of them are complete).

CHAPTER 3

3.1 The Post-Writing of Vilém Flusser

Although the Czech-Brazilian philosopher Vilém Flusser did not write about artist's books, his ideas apply to them. The artist's book as a cultural phenomenon coincides with drastic changes in the material, informative and technological structure of the Western world, namely the 1970's.

All efforts in the sense of conceptualizing the world—freeing our reception of a mythical-imagetic way of reading it—are efforts in the sense of linearizing time; instead of keeping it circular, as different tribes still experience it. Writing plays a fundamental role in this, as writing conceptualizes images, stretching and organizing them through its linear nature.

Flusser (1997) tells us that image reading is circular, for the eye wanders over the surface. Our eyes are pulled to that which most calls for our attention in the image, and every part of it endorses the whole as it is endorsed by it. The reading of a text, however, is linear. Writing conditions the eye to a straight, horizontal movement, from the left to the right, downwards diagonally to the left to reach the next line, and so on. There is a systemization, a logical, syntactic chain in which what comes before is the cause of what comes next. What Flusser emphasizes—still in the 1990's, before image digitalization and massive virtual imagicization—is the growing supremacy of image over writing. For him, there is an era of the image, which comes before the sovereignty of written communication. A time that is nonlinear is a time in which History, in a straight line, cannot occur, and for that we call it pre-history. Then, dialectically, comes the era of writing, when History itself is made.

The third step—the one we are in—is, for him, post-history: A time in which the concepts that came to codify images into text are in turn reimagicized by technical imagery—as those of photography, for instance. That is, Flusser finds analogous meaning between post-history and post-writing. In fact, not only the image, but the audiovisual appeal of media like cinema and television are slowly ever more decisive in communication than writing.

As much as Flusser's theory seems to be on images, it is paved in writing. Thus, on artist's books, which are a deliberate hybrid between visual and written systems,

Flusser's assumptions on the imagicization of concepts and the conceptualization of art are useful to keep in mind.

3.2 Artist's Book

Although the artist's book has its historical predecessors—among those admittedly Blake's books—it was not until the 20th century that the concept gained strength as a trend in art. The artist's book is an important practice of the 20th century, specially starting in the 1970's. The term was coined by art curator Diane Vanderlip, which in 1973 curates an exhibition called 'Artist's books' at the Moore College of Art in Philadelphia. The artist's book was then thought of as an art gallery. This is still one of its main attributions; art critic André Malraux, for instance, called the artist's book a museum without a wall. One of its powers is the ability to offer a direct relationship between the artist/poet and their reception, avoiding the problems of technical reproducibility emphasized by Walter Benjamin in the beginning of the 20th century, such as the loss of the artistic aura. The sense of the present time, so dear to performance arts, is also embedded in the experience of contact with a book made to be similar to the experience of going to an exhibition.

We can think of the provocative role of the artist's book in the decades when digitalization was about to occur and the typographic printing system was fully developed and stable. The virtualization of the material support of visual and written arts, which generally concerns different levels of paper textures, is part of the series of relevant aspects in the discussion of the artist's book.

With this we describe what it can represent, but its material description escapes us. What is, in fact, an 'artist's book'? The outcome of such answer is as questionable as varied, for as we define it we realize something is missing. When we think of an artist's book, elements as manual seaming, sculpting, visual arts, delicate engraving processes and even the use of photography are either in association with or dominating the bookish territory, usually inhabited by blocks of text in typographic writing. After all, what is a book? When does a book stop being a book? Is a text written on a stone an artist's book? As the artifact called a book—cover, pages, and back cover joined together with glue or thread—is naturalized, we stop thinking of the many different means in which writing can "materialize." Besides, except for children's books, books

are automatically thought of as a set of printed typographic textual blots, one for each page, eventually an image inserted in between the blocs. Regarding the history of books is regarding the history of reading; and the great writers are, clearly, great readers.

According to visual art's Professor at UFMG, Amir Brito Cadôr, the artist's book is first and foremost a book which does not obey a historiography of literature, but founds an independent concept. As much as there may be objections to such definition—of a book as the opening instance of something by and for itself, due to intense self-referentiality—it is fortuitous when thinking of the role of Blake's work as the pastime of the artist's book tradition. After all, the use of metal engravings, the indiscriminate use of writing and images, the almost anarchical way in which the title page presents the information in the book, the importance of the texture of the paper and of the ink—as well as the inherent hybridity of a printed calligraphic art—make Blake's books exclusive events, performances in the shape of a book.

Cadôr (p. 254, 2016) also reminds us that, after the Renaissance, calligraphy as an artistic expression only regains importance in the West in the second half of the 20th century. This coincides with the complete automation and digitalization of the writing process. Blake is an artist who writes calligraphically; at the same time, he often does it through metal engraving, which is the very process by which calligraphy was replaced by typography, as the press is based on pressure of letter-shaped metal pieces against paper. The hybridity in *TMHH* is not only an abstract argument between good and evil, mind and body, but a transposed philosophy, incorporated in text-drawing and calligraphy-press relations.

Another aspect brought about by typography—since it imposes textual standardization, so there can be technical reproducibility—is the notion of correct and beautiful writing, or what we call spelling (CADÔR, 2016). Aspects such as the musicality, prosody, linguistic variety, and auditory interpretation of the words of medieval scribes are flattened and standardized. The arbitrary aspect of writing implies a power dynamic. In that sense, what is arbitrary in the typological method generates distancing from the subjectivity of the body who writes, who does not reach the reader as personally as before. There is a two-fold distancing: visual, born of the motor skill and personality of the scribe, and auditory, as they made phonologically and phonetically based assumptions on proper writing.

Blake's oeuvre is considered one of the pillars of the artist's book. In *A Book of the Book* (2000)—a compilation of literary and theoretical texts concerning the book as

both a mythic and material object—Blake is referenced in the chapter The Opening of the Field, which contains many texts from poets and theorists who thought about the role of the book in art and in literature, such as Maurice Blanchot, Marcel Duchamp, and Max Ernst. In that chapter, the Blakean scholar David Erdman (2000, p.107) defends that the Blakean printed manuscript is, because of its physical exclusiveness, a direct form of communication between artist and reader; that would be one of the reasons to place Blake's work in the faraway corners of artist's books. Another point he makes is the fact that Blake sees the tools and substances used in metal engraving as real beings, which is evident in the metaphorical way he refers to mordents (corrosive acids) as devil's tools. "A Devil folded in black clouds, hovering on the sides of the rock, with corroding fires he wrote [...]" (2000, p.106), for instance, is Blake's way to describe the corrosion of copper by nitric acid, which forms cavities in the plates. Those, in turn, are filled with paint, forming the images and texts of the plates. The extremely intimate relationship between the themes in *TMHH* and the ways in which they materialize place Blake in the history of the artist's book.

Figure 12

In the poem, one of the stanzas is entirely dedicated to a local Printed House which, in the poem, is a chamber of hell. In fact, it suffices to try any engraving project

to realize how much the time it demands, as well as that the range of options, subtleties, and detail this language propitiates verges on the unbelievable, or even insanity.

Two basic points place *TMHH* in the map of the forerunners of the artist's book: First, the use of metal engraving *cuisine* as material imperative to execute and illustrate the philosophical abstractions poetically conceived by Blake. Second, the intrinsicallity of the Blakean book as a mythical and material object which, instead of maintaining a dialog with literary historiography, funds its own conceptualization through self-referentiality.

3.3 Text and Paratext

The book is a coded scheme derived from the processes of the press. In Blake's time, the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century, the structure of the book already had a very rigid form. That structure, slowly standardized since the half of the 15th century, can be indexed as text and as paratext. While the 'text' is relatively familiar—it refers to the textual block inserted in the center of a page —the 'paratext' is a portion of the book that is somewhat unconscious. According to scholar Daisy Turrer (2002, p. 74), the paratext is

> [...] the set of verbal and nonverbal elements surrounding and tieing printed text to turn it into a book. The role of this apparatus—title and subtitles, preface, dedication, epigraph, notes, illustrations, author's and editor's names, introductory essays—is to modulate the text, take care of its reception, and guide its reading.

The scholar works with the idea of in-betweenness to think the relation of the paratext and the artist's book. The threshold is the space surrounding the text and tieing it to make it a book. She reminds us that the paratext is a product of the press, derived from the demands that the typological organization imposes. Thus, the paratext starts a new form of relationship between subject and writing. This new relationship is paved in the preliminary model and structure: The graphic disposition of paratextual elements, such as the title page, becomes more rigid in the 16th century, until it somehow calcifies in the end of the 18th through the 19th century. This is where Blake's production is, and it cannot go unsaid that many times he does not even signs his name in some of the Illuminated books, and when he does, he makes it a point to sign "William Blake, writer and printer." There is no mediation or distance between the illuminated work and the

reader, as it is usually the case with typographic texts. This was not a especially unique doing by Blake, since at the time a manuscript was a way of selecting a chosen group of friends with whom to share a more personal form of poetics. In the material limitations, it was assured that the reading experience was as intimate as possible. This dynamics made sense in a time where unprecedented amounts of books flooded the market at more accessible prices than ever. It is worth remembering, however, that not all texts were approved for publication. In terms of how much the progress of the press in the early 19th century would transform the notions of literature and authorship, it is important to recall that the organization of aesthetically evaluative methods coincide with this abundance of material[11]. Before the publishing of so many authors, the notion of genius and the profound investigation of aesthetics did not have the same importance or function.

Blake himself did not write to be read by crowds, as it can be understood of an oeuvre that only became detached from the imagetic work after his death. While alive, as it has been said, the number of copies of each Illuminated Book varied. What in fact distinguishes Blake is the use, in the end of the 18th century, of a mix of calligraphy, used in medieval manuscripts, and metal engraving, an art form evolved from the press and its mobile types.

Turrer sees the paratext as a "fortified city around the text" (p. 75, 2012), which puts the author in the spotlight, creating a hierarchical relationship between reader and author where before, with manuscripts, there was greater directness. Blake uses margin marks in *TMHH*, one of its few paratexts there: the syllables are constantly separated in the end of some lines, the letters can turn into tree branches at any moment, and the separation in the page between text and image is done in arbitrary and unpredictable proportions. There is no title page, preface, flap, or information on what kind of paper was used. There are no acknowledgements or barcodes. All of that places Blake's subjectivity as the only omnipresent evidence in the work. Blake is an outsider in many ways, but the one we are interested in here is the one in which he places himself as the agent of an anti-establishment art form. Among the many attempts to define what an artist's book is, one that stands out is the idea of the artist's book as a self-managed gallery, independent of any curatorship; the street art of graffiti may be a contemporary

[11] Once the counter-revolutionary response gained force in Britain, such censorship would have applied to Blake too if he had not used such an independent mode of publication. David Worrall discusses this in his introduction to the Blake Trust edition of The Urizen Books. It happens a bit later than the composition of MHH.

analogous example of what Blake tried to do in bringing the book to life. Noninstitutionalized art is, moreover, often seen as 'alive.'

In Turrer's article, our interest rests in the importance given to the notion of *threshold*, which the scholar pulls from thinkers such as Antoine Compagnon, Gérard Genette, Roland Barthes, and Borges. The threshold is the value at stake in the relations between text and paratext; it can be thought of as a frontier in a hierarchy between idea and materiality, textual blotch and margin, and, in a more radical sense, the threshold is the portion which both unites and divides the aliveness of ideas and the dead material. Usually in the work of Tristanne Connolly in *William Blake and the body* (2002), this threshold is called in-betweeness, the unsafe place in which Blake wanders. The threshold can also be thought of as the skin separating the internal body from the external world. The subtleties (etymological and practical) in common between words as text, bodily tissue, textile fabric, painting canvas, weaves, and webbing also form the semantic cloud dominated by the threshold as a symbol. It is from that symbol, even if intuitively, that we leap to a deeper understanding of the Blakean text. The artist's book deals, always, with Guimarães Rosa's third margin.

Perigraphy, another word for paratext, is the enacting which transforms a text in a book, creating spatial limits and legitimizing the author's instance as part of a well organized social hierarchy.

The paratext is all which interposes between what can be called the raw text and the reader: flaps, title page, summary, preface, dedications, catalog information, margins, fonts. If we consider the history of the book, it is observable that the press is what structured and fossilized the book as an object. In Blake's time, what he did in terms of erasing perigraphy was a dissolution of the lack of personalization and an interference in the instance of the book as mediated by institutions.

The paratext, in the century of lights, is a kind of recrudescence on the freedom of the text, and also a way of institutionalizing it and organizing the new volume of editions. In the first steps of the age of the press, the paratext consisted of a title page where all of the information was contained: title, author, printer, date, place. But in the French court, in its turn, considered the standard example to other European countries wanting to print books, the paratext is thickened by the presence of two or three textual evaluators of the kingdom. Usually, these censors were responsible for evaluating whether the content of the book was dangerous in a political, religious, or pornographic

sense, so every thing went through the king's sieve. It is estimated, however, that in the end of the 18th century, over half of the books circulating in Europe were 'pirate.'

It is in such context that Blake takes hold of all steps in the production of his illuminates books, be it in his own will or because of limitations regarding legitimacy, money, and approval of third parties. The first page, that is, the cover, contained all of the necessary paratext between reader and text, in Blake's point of view: title, author and printer. We should remember that the paratext is the instance in the book understood to be a sort of fortress surrounding the text, which protects the reader from an abysmal leap providing some sort of safety apparatus. The paratext, expliciting the insertion of the book in the managed world, also directs the reader, indicating the social status and the ideological effect of the artefact.

However, these paratextual fortresses also refer to a more abstract part of this discussion. In a way, the paratextual construct tempers the tension between the reality of the book as a physical instance and the ideal that it can be the most abstract instance with which we relate. These meanings given to a book sprout from the growing transplantation of reality into bits.

If we think in terms of the writers who debated the notions of finite and infinite applied to the object of the book, we can think of Mallarmé and Borges. This worry ultimately concerns the limit between the abstract and the bodily.

The Book, imaginary work of Mallarmé, had, has, or will have something pulsing, living, which remakes itself all of the time. Borges also raved and played with the (im)possible infinity of worlds and realities, as it can be seen in short stories like *Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius* (1940) and in the dream of the universal library. Blake idealizes and executes a 'total' book, which is a complete world within itself, as a living organism. The threshold or paratext for such body is the paper, understood here as skin. While the paratext is the fossilization of the abstract in the text onto the inert physical form of the controlled book, Blake's proposal is the awakening of the senses by the book as a total work of art. In it, the paratext needs to be de-automatized.

This is why it is appropriate to conceive of Blake's work as an effort towards movement, which ultimately refers to the energy of the living body. The living body, moreover, is one of the images brought about by Turrer in order to think of the phenomenon of the artist's book. The book as a bodily instance proposes the transcendence of the fixed material state, and literature, in the sense given to the book,

is the utopia of fluidity and infinite movement. When mentioning the poets Joseph Joubert and Mallarmé, the scholar points to the fact that both of them searched for

> [...] a book that remakes itself continuously, through an infinite game of possibilities, written and rewritten at the same time, 'being made.' On many of these writers—Kafka, Musil, Borges, Guimarães Rosa in *Tutameia*, it becomes difficult to distinguish the moments where they go from notes, notebooks, pre-publishing states of the book to the book itself. (TURRER, p. 77, 2012)

Even if she does not mention Blake, the poet could figure among the mentioned, if not for the fact that his illuminated books are unique works considering the painting differences and alterations made from one copy to the other, for the fact that the contrast between the total binding of the book as the materiality of the poetic essence gives shape to the abstractionism of a book never made (Mallarmé) or of an infinite library (Borges). In his own way, Blake maximizes the consciousness of literary language by creating contrast and similitude between its effect and the concreteness of the book-body.

A book that defends a minimal state when it comes to the paratext—as in Blake's artist's books—is a book in which time dissolves, for the linear order of the social protocol of the pages has been broken. Regarding the paratext, moreover, it is understood that the presence of the preface is a phenomenon which makes the work start by the end. The preface is a kind of digestion before the ingestion occurs. Among the paratextual elements present in books, the preface is specially signaled as the death of the living textual organism. In the rupture with the paratext and the indiscriminate use of writing and image there is a principle of circularity and organicity in the way of reading and, therefore, in the comprehension.

With this discussion, we want to reach the following point: In his search for making a complete work of art, Blake illustrates what his poetics defends in *TMHH*, which is the combination (always dynamic and fluid) between thought and action. Through his calligraphic engravings and imagetic texts, Blake illustrates how the leap from an idea to a thing possibly takes place. The artist's book fulfills a vital role, for it makes us witnesses of what the embodiment of thought can do. Maybe Blake's poetic project was executed as such with didactic purposes, but regardless of the answer the effect demonstrates it on its own. In other words, Blake de-automatizes paratextual usage so that it does not behave as predicted for the threshold between the-book-in-the-world and the-world-in-the-book. The material consciousness of the book as a book

becomes explicit. It is as if Blake said: We need to join the material and the abstract; the first is a portion of the second ("The body is a portion of the Soul", Plate 4). The artist's book appears as an example of how much the spirit of the poet is embedded in the body of the book. That is why this project's title is ultimately about embodiment.

3.4 Artist's Book and Literature

In the same way that the artist's book is, for the Visual Arts, an attempt to defy the limits of the art gallery and of the book as a stable and neutral textual support, there is a series of cases in the History of Literature in which the aim was to exceed the material limits of the book. Although Blake did not write about the book as a *medium*, the awareness of the poet in choosing printing techniques had always been connected to the ideas that he wanted to forge in a complete work of art, maybe associated to the *Gesamtkunstwerk* (total work of art) idealized by composer Wagner. This consisted of a piece where all forms of art would work together, joining music, image, theatre, etc.

However, to think of the relationship of the book with bodily metaphors, it is necessary to think of the artist's book also in terms of technical reproducibility. Such technology changes our relationship with books completely in the modern era, and as pointed by Walter Benjamin, such reproducibility was a key point for art in the 20th century, considering other technological revolutions such as photography, cinema, and the internet. It is worth reminding that each Illuminated Book had a different number of copies. This was obviously a factor in the late recognition of his work, and such a unit limit is unthinkable for a writer or poet today who wishes that their text is read and appreciated by a larger audience. This deliberate decision was made by very specific reasons, some of which we can probe with theorists like Northrop Frye and Tristanne Connolly. They both highlight that, if Blake had wanted his poems to be read and understood by all, the visual and written language strategies would have been quite different. Frye points to letters in which Blake states he did not wish for a massive understanding, but for a deep one, reached through a reader's filter in the riddles throughout his work, and then with a persistence challenge for the reader. Considering the fact that the few existing copies were read among friends and acquaintances, the Blakean poetic is twice as hermetic, or better, metahermetic, in which not only the

complex personal mythology is a challenge, but also the image-text relation in which such mythology occurs.

First, it is hermetic because the beings present in Blake's texts—Rintrah, for instance, in the opening of *THMM*—are never presented as characters, but as gods or entities whose meaning should already be present in a religious plane. That, evidently, is not accessible for an inexperienced Blake reader, and the attempts to map a Blakean dictionary, as the one made by S. F. Damon, aim at tackling this sort of gap. There is a mix of Christian mythology and personal mythology, which leaves the reader in constant instability regarding the symbols at stake. With the use of personal entities, like Golgonooza, Los, Albion, and Rintrah, the reader's intuition remains active and preserved, diluted in the reception of the text. Such game can be exhaustive, but it is permeated by an aesthetic reading proposal.

Then, in an even more abstract layer, the artist's book instance makes comprehension harder still by means of replacing logical and textual forms with visual shapes. Connolly describes the semiotic path observed between different sketches of plates. Sentences are replaced by images, in the sense that they are received in a more intuitive way than over syntactic and poetic writing. It is not by chance that *Jerusalem* (1810) is considered one of Blake's most hermetic works. Frye shows us that this was deliberate, and that the artist undertook, to the utmost degree, his proposal of a reading of his cosmology that was hermeneutic, revealing, apocalyptic, and mythological, as to not say biblical, process in which the individual puts in a lot of their subjectivity and, in the end, reaches a kind of transformation in exchange.

The limits of the material support of the text and of poetic abstraction were themes for many other poets, such as the ones in the group OuLiPo (*Ouvroir de littérature potentielle*, which roughly stands for *"workshop of potential literature"*). Limitations were seen as a ludic game much more than as metaphysically distressing. The OuLiPo was a gathering of poets and mathematicians interested in the possibilities of poetry through techniques of restrictions, such as palindromes, lipograms (restriction of a letter), anagrams, and many other schemes. Such type of endeavour has been referred to as constrained writing. OuLiPo was created by the writer Raymond Queneau and the mathematician and writer François Le Lionnais in 1960. Queneau's poem called *Hundred Thousand Million Poems* (1961) consists of ten sonnets in which each verse is cut, allowing for an exchange into 10 different poems.[14] Such endeavour would not be

possible without a sharp sense of what a book is/can be—even if the insight for that was a children's book combining different parts of the human body.

When we think of 'permutation poetry,' a practice in which book parts are cut so that parts of the poem become interchangeable, what we have in front of us is an artist's book with highly literary contents. Combinatory poetry—with the thousands of swaps that can sonnets can bring—is a literary form with its nexus supported by the materiality of the book. Although the relationship between the book as a medium and the theme of the written text therein mediated usually do not converge due to theoretic disengagement, the example of combinatory poetry suggest that such engagement can be interesting for the artistic making.

As Literature, Raymond Queneau's book of combinatory poetry *A Hundred Thousand Poems* can be linked to a tradition of attention to the visual disposition of the text and to the notion of intellectual play usually associated to the baroque. But if we think of *A Hundred Thousand Poems* as an artist's book, it inaugurates its own system of meaning, which is explicitly tied to the book as a material object.

Blake's books, however, approached as Literature, can be seen as works that emulate medieval illuminated manuscripts. It is not news that Romanticism brings back medieval values, but Blake did it with incomparable specificity. But if we use Cadôr's view on the artist's book, we will find in *TMHH* a system which is closed within itself and which cannot be understood in relation to, but only in its own specificity. As much as the text in *TMHH* stands on its own while the images in it do not, thinking of the work as conceptual art, that is, in the integrated book, can widen our understanding of what *TMHH* can do to subjectivity.

Another case in which the medium of a book has enormous influence on the text is the case of poet Mallarmé, who in the end of the 19th century created theoretical knowledge on a non existing book called *The Book* (*Le Livre*). The very name of the project in French alludes to its ambiguity: Although *livre* means "book," it sounds close enough to *libre*, which stands for "free." At the same time it refers to a real book and it is an abstraction freed from the spatial concatenation a book imposes.

However, Maurice Blanchot (2000) reminds us that this project of Mallarmé's is contrary to everything Romanticism aspired: For Mallarmé, the book cannot be a materiality imbued with deep truth which can only be accessed by initiated readers. This point of view is better identified with Blake. Mallarmé, on his side, praised the book as an object exactly for its insurmountable negativity: The book he imagined does not exist

and it cannot exist as a sensible materialization. The liberation of the text from the spatial prison of the page idealized by Mallarmé pointed to dance and to music, that is, to the free and kinetic activity of rhythm. The constant breaks in continuity of Mallarmé's poetic, as in *A Throw of the Dice will Never Abolish Chance* (*Un Coup de Dés Jamais N'Abolira Le Hasard*, 1897) even remind us of what was said regarding Kristeva's *semiotic chora*: That the revolutionary power of poetic language resides in its ability to revisit the pre-symbolic level without being devoured and swallowed by the menacing forces of the unconscious. Kristeva mentions special admiration for Mallarmé's poetic work, as for James Joyce's, whom she judges have reached such depths despite living under capitalism.

What we can deem similar between Mallarmé and Blake, according to what Blanchot says of Mallarmé and to what Northrop Frye says of Blake, is that they were both 'spiritual utilitarians' (FRYE, 1990, p. 8). Although they are often associated with occultism, the central matter of the form transforms alchemical and mystical processes into tools for artistic excavation for both poets. Regarding alchemy, moreover, it is important to remember that Blake, in Plate 22, refers to Paracelsus and Jacob Boheme alongside Dante and Shakespeare. We can assume that, for Blake, the work of a great poet and that of a great alchemist is in the same in principle, but one can derive different amounts of meaning from each of them. The literary hermeneutic is infinite, as the alchemic is finite. Of the works of Paracelsus and Boheme, anyone with "mechanical talents" could "produce ten thousand volumes of equal value with Swedenborg's." Whereas "from those of Dante or Shakespear, an infinite number." This shows what is the sovereignty of art for Blake.

However, maybe it is not all that simple. Frye's and Blanchot's views support a modern humanistic posture that evades attacks on scientific seriousness and avoid circulating the strange and fascinating terrain which often constitutes the poetic work. Any exceeding identification that the literary field might have with a kind of mystical scholastic needs to be academically denied, even if there are many similarities despite the various differences.

Finally, can it be said that Mallarmé's non-oeuvre, *Le Livre*, his conceptual art work which even comes before Marcel Duchamp, is an artist's book? Possibly, as much as the ideal rejects the material, materiality is made pungent as an insurmountable limit.

3.5 Why Engraving *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell?*

Before having access to the facsimile version of Blake's illuminated books, I did not know that they were printed with so much purpose. One of my greatest difficulties was to understand the process of engraving without seeing it, solely through imagination. However skillful the description of the process is, it is challenging to make sense of how complex, delicate, multiple, slow, and ancient the techniques of metal engraving are without looking at it. Even if you look at it, you quickly forget. Even if you watch it once, for most people that is not enough to introject the steps involved in turning a visual conception into a leaf of paper engraved by corroded copper.

This was the first reason that led me to practice metal engraving. The second reason was the fact that Blake dedicates a whole stanza to the process of book pressing, describing it as an activity that takes place in hell (*TMHH*, Plates 15 and 16). Before narrating his adventures in a printing house in hell, on Plate 14 he explicitly points to how copper pressing was not casual or merely optional, but chosen for specific reasons that dialog with the contents of the work. In this part there is some of the metafiction associated with artist's books: Don Quixote, in the 15th century, visits the guild where the book telling his own story was being printed. That is, the book becomes a meta-reality, a self-reference extrapolating the relation between time and space.

To further organize the order of ideas, we should first take into account what Blake says in Plate 14 regarding metal engraving:

> The ancient tradition that the world will be con
> sumed in fire at the end of six thousand years
> is true, as I have heard from Hell.
> For the cherub with his flaming sword is
> hereby commanded to leave his guard at tree of
> life, and when he does the whole creation will
> be consumed, and appear infinite and holy,
> whereas it now appears finite and corrupt.
> This will come to pass by an improvement of
> sensual enjoyment.
> But first the notion that man has a body
> distinct from his soul is to be expunged;
> this I shall do by printing in the infernal method, by
> corrosives, which in Hell are salutary and me-
> dicinal, melting apparent surfaces away and
> displaying the infinite which was hid.
> If the doors of perception were cleansed
> everything would appear to man as it is: In-
> -finite.
> For man has closed himself up, till he sees
> all things through narrow chinks of his cavern.

Macrocosmically, we can understand that this discusses how the physical body of the human being is not separate from the soul; but Blake follows by saying he will purge the erroneous notion of such separation "by printing in the infernal method, by corrosives, which in Hell are salutary and medicinal, melting apparent surfaces away and displaying the infinite which was hid." As a metaphor, or microcosmically, think of the object of the book as inseparable of its soul-ideas, that is, from more abstract propositions coded again in writing, in image, in the texture of the paper, etc. I propose that Blake, with the sensual and sensory sumptuousness in his books, illustrates his whole notion of the embodiment of the invisible. We can call it an alchemical process, and it is not by chance that the method chosen by Blake to make himself understood is metal engraving.

The verb he uses to show how much the artistic technique is crucial in the process of understanding is "shall." Why did he not use watercolor[12], or the cheaper and incorrigible method of woodcutting, why did he not simply draw and wrote the manuscripts, or pressed the book in common printing?

We can differentiate two basic kinds of engraving: relief engraving and concave engraving. In the first, the inked part is the part in which there is no interference of the artist, in which what was grooved is the part without ink in the end. Methods such as woodcutting, in which grooves are made in the wood in a way that when it is pressed against paper the paint occupies the upper space in the relief, appeared in ancient China and can be considered one of the first forms of press, as the grooves carved were often ideograms. Lithographs, done by grooving a stone plate, is also relief engraving.

To make it easy to understand, imagine a wood board in which the writing is mirrored. After spreading black ink in through the surface, paper is pressed against the wood. The back of the image will be black, while the letters or images appear white, unless the background has been carved the most.

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[12] As art historian Daniela Pinheiro Machado Kern has pointed out, the creative part of Catherine Blake (Blake's wife) has often been underestimated and silenced in art history. Author as she was of the watercolor of the plates, her role and the role of watercolor in the illuminated books have not been described in the references of this thesis. Thus, a whole field concerning feminist criticism, Catherine Blake and watercolor practices has not been adequately acknowledged yet.

Metal engraving is a concave method, which means that the ink settles in the grooves made by the artist. Those concave marks are made in a copper, zinc, or steel plate. This art is developed at the same time as the invention of the press, around half of the 15th century. Names like Rembrandt and Albrecht Dürer are pivotal in metal engraving. However, it is only on 1737 that coloured metal engraving appears in France, attributed to Jacob Christophe Leblond. Blake was born in 1757, and during the course of his life engraving modifies even further. The first European lithographs are dated from 1796 and attributed to the German Aloys Senefelder (CAMARGO, 1992, p. 13).

It is believed that metal engraving sprouted from jewelry, not from a practice thought of with artistic ambitions. Etching, or the aqua fortis technique, had been present in the 15th century in German armory, with techniques involving metal corrosion by use of acids, also called mordents.

David Erdmann (2000, p. 106) talks about the process of "caving" that the grooves of the corrosion of copper by acid caused in the surface of the plate. For him, Blake saw these grooves—were later the ink would be spilled—as caves from the inside of which the truth would come out. That is, the fact that his text and drawings where all concave, that is, forming grooves in the plate, creates a surprising integration between the prophecy spirit which carried Blake's poetics and that which he believed was done specifically through this method, engraving, and, more specifically, the relief etching.

The previous description of relief engraving is perhaps in other word the description of white line engraving, which Blake sometimes combined with relief engraving (such as in plate 38 of Milton). Relief etching is Blake's own invention, in which the letters and designs to be printed are raised in relief, and the spaces are recessed, by being bitten by the acid; this spaces are the "caves" Erdman discusses. Instead of covering the whole plate with bitumen, he made a resistant mixture that he could write and draw with on the plate. Blake was trained in intaglio engraving; he used this method for his commercial engravings, while the Illuminated Books are done in relief etching, usually with watercolour finishing, but sometimes in colour printing (by applying thick ink in different colours to different parts of the plate).

Before describing a series of possible associations between the alchemical stages of matter and the process of metal engraving, I would like to point to the fact that Blake's specific process consisted in relief etching rather than aqua fortis. That means that he colored the relief, not the low parts of the plate. However, since Ricoeur is part

of the theoretical fundaments of this thesis, I allowed myself to keep my previous analogies concerning the relation between alchemy and metal engraving. Although the factual technique Blake used does not always correspond with typical aqua fortis coloring process, the present work is something new and different derived from a personal investment of imagination towards a hermeneutic creative work.

When researching on alchemical stages—at least in their simplified version, given that according to some alchemists there are more than ten stages—I found this engraving, associated in the text to the *nigredo* (blakness), which we will approach later on. It is, at the least, curious: Erdmann says that Blake saw the grooves in engravings as caves from within which the truth, the message, the consciousness, or whatever it is, would come out.

In the first step, the surface of the copper plate needs to be exhaustively sanded and polished until it becomes a red mirror. After that, several techniques can be used, but Blake refers to aqua fortis in *TMHH*. The polished plate is covered with a thin waxy black layer of bitumen. That plate is then placed over a flame, in such a way that the plate "flambés" and the bitumen adheres to it. With the bitumen adhered, the surface of the plate is covered in a way that resists acid.

The printmaker then scratches through the ground with a sharp point, exposing lines of metal. The part covered in black will be the white part of the printing, and the scratched part will be filled with ink; there will be a color inversion. It is also worth emphasizing that the whole conception of the design needs to be mirrored, for all that is turned to one side will appear turned to the opposite side. Moreover, it is impressive that Blake has written so much and so calligraphically while mirroring, considering the inversion and the details of his work. In these steps alone we can see how the infernal and corrosive method dialogues with the message Blake wants to literally press onto his work: A raw metal is polished until it becomes a shiny mirror, to be then covered by a layer of darkness that adheres to the metal by fire, which flambés the entire surface of the plate until the combustion only leaves the adhered bitumen on the copper. We see it in Blake's poem as well as in the aqua fortis technique a dynamic relationship between opposites that coincides with the principles of alchemy, for diverse reasons. Printer Marcelo Lunardi, with whom I learned metal engraving as a way of understanding the quoted stanza from *TMHH*, usually says that metal engraving is a kind of cuisine: The elements combine, cook, degrade, get flambéd and separated, and there are infinite degrees of textures to be achieved. Such as Frye believed Blake as a poet desired to

restore Jerusalem on Earth through his visions transformed into art, also the engraver desires to achieve a level of visual excellence. In alchemical metaphors, we can think of the search for the philosopher's stone, or of the patient will of transforming raw metal (copper) into a superior metal (the final art).

There is a coming and going between opposites—raw and polished, matte dark and shinny light—which moulds into reality an alchemical and dynamic process between the opposites of which Blake speaks in *TMHH*.

In his work, the object of the book is the sacred place where the abstract in poetry and philosophy finds perfect identification with the immanence in the metal engraving cuisine. The book, here, appears as a body imbued with a soul, which is explained in one of its first propositions in Plate 4: "Man has no Body distinct from his Soul/for that calld Body is a portion of Soul discernd by the five Senses." Culturally and currently, it is assumed that it is the body that possesses a mind. The disposal of the "soul" as a semantic category seems, in the light of Blake's vision, impoverishing in terms of metaphysical experience.

The insistent heavy work necessary to transform the copper plate into a mirror takes us to wanting to contemplate how much of the matte copper can be turned into a homogeneous crystalline veneer. In alchemy, there is a step called *albedo* (whiteness). It articulates the meanings related to the discovery of the root of the problem, a discovery which allows for a sense of rest. The emotional hard work takes us to an insight on the central issue: *albedo* means an acquired ability to deal with the problem in a more purified and positive way.

Without much effort, we can associate the clarity of thinking with the illumination of the copper plate by means of hard work, which is not intellectual. We speak here of copper, but these meanings coincide in a certain way with the alchemical pursue of turning inferior metals into gold.

In alchemy there is also a step called *nigredo*. The moment in which all effort to make the plate shinny is replaced with the black matte of bitumen and then burned in flames (infernal method) seems identifiable with the alchemical step of *nigredo*. There is a pause, a total absence of light, such as a new moon. The combustion took place, the black matte of the bitumen adhered to the luminous principle and something new will emerge from it. In this black, matte, ashy moment, the movement begins and creation itself begins with the use of a pointy object which will cut the darkness and will create new shapes that will shine from that tear, coming out of the shiny plate submerged in

bitumen. It is also said that Hermes Trimegistus wrote the alchemical principles with a pointed diamond on an emerald plate. The comparison of the pointed diamond and the pointed object, and of the emerald plate and the copper plate verges on the obvious. Judging by the dynamic game of opposites that Blake proposes in *TMHH* and by his admiration for the alchemists, that image is of extreme relevance. Moreover, thinking of the image of a prophet philosopher in ancient Egypt who makes propositions on opposites and funds the alchemical philosophy can also bring us to think of the role of writing in terms of joining the physical and the metaphysical. Scratching stones is one of the most rudimentary types of writing and, ultimately, the proto-book.

After establishing a new state of things, be it mirrored and with the colours in negative, the alchemist, cook, or engraver—as preferred—plunges the scene sprouting from the darkness into a bowl filled with corrosive acid, also called mordents. In French, 'mordants' means something close to 'biters,' for it was believed that acid substances 'bit' the metal. Blake more than once refers to the process of engraving as infernal (Plates 14 and 15). Plunged in the bowl for a few minutes—the amount of time depends on the temperature of the room and of how much the cuts made need to be caved in—and mordents, called 'corrosives' by Blake, corrode the unprotected part of the plate.

Blake adopted a different approach from Borges and Mallarmé: Instead of creating a critical wealth of the invisible, the intangible, and the ideal, he believed in and worked for the complete embodiment of that which, in terms of Literature and Art, inhabited his own spiritual world. He firmly believed that matter, when correctly worked on, would not be corruptive, but revelatory. And revelation has the same etymological meaning as the apocalypse, which is the end of a world so that the beginning of a new one can emerge. *TMHH* is a revelatory or apocalyptic book because it foresees the end of the world as we know it:

> The ancient tradition that the world will be con
> sumed in fire at the end of six thousand years
> is true, as I have heard from Hell.
> For the cherub with his flaming sword is
> hereby commanded to leave his guard at tree of
> life, and when he does the whole creation will
> be consumed, and appear infinite and holy,
> whereas it now appears finite and corrupt.
> This will come to pass by an improvement of sensual enjoyment.
> But first the notion that man has a body
> distinct from his soul is to be expunged; this
> I shall do by printing in the infernal method, by

> corrosives, which in Hell are salutary and me-
> -dicinal, melting apparent surfaces away and
> displaying the infinite which was hid.
> If the doors of perception were cleansed
> everything would appear to man as it is, in-
> -finite -
> For man has closed himself up, till he sees
> all things through narrow chinks of his cavern. (Plate 14)

Art as religion is present in Blake's eagerness to purify matter to the point where it becomes a restructuration of the spiritual architecture in the world (FRYE, 1947), capable of restoring the sense of infinity in the affected perception of people. Such purification bringing the spiritual into the world of the five senses is also similar to what is called the reconstruction of Jerusalem, which refers to the Judeo-Christian mythology of returning to Paradise.

It is soon after, in Plate 15, that Blake begins the Memorable Fancy on his visit to a "Printing House in Hell," where he sees "the method in which knowledge is transmitted from generation to generation." He is referring to metal engraving and writing. In that printing house, the corrosives are seen as salutary and medicinal, "melting the apparent surfaces away." There is, therefore, a philosophy behind the reason for Blake's execution of his ideas in metal engraving. Read the entire Plate 15 to understand how some of the images suggest a spiritual function to each step of the metal engraving:

> A Memorable Fancy
>
> I was in a Printing house in Hell and saw the
> method in which knowledge is transmitted from gene-
> -ration to generation.
> In the first chamber was a Dragon-Man, clear-
> ing away the rubbish from a cave's mouth; within, a
> number of Dragons were hollowing the cave.
> In the second chamber was a Viper folding around
> the rock and the cave, and others adorning it with gold,
> silver and precious stones.
> In the third chamber was an Eagle with wings
> and feathers of air, he caused the inside of the cave
> to be infinite; around were numbers of Eagle-like
> men who built palaces in the immense cliffs.
> In the fourth chamber were Lions of flaming fire
> raging around and melting the metals into living fluids.
> In the fifth chamber were Unnamed forms, which
> cast the metals into the expanse.
> There they were received by Men, who occupied
> the sixth chamber, and took the forms of books and
> were arranged in libraries.

There are some points here to be made. The Dragon-Man is clearing the rubbish of the cave and hollowing it. In other words, we can assume that the Dragon-Man is sanding and polishing the copper plate, and that the dragons are working in the job of deepening the grooves in the metal plate, conceived, in the poem, as caves from where the truth comes out (ERDMAN, 2000, p. 106). The cave's mouth sounds like a way of specifying that this is still work done in a superficial layer. See in further detail what Erdman says about metal engraving and the material making of the book as poetry:

> In Blake's description, in Marriage 15 of "A Printing house in Hell" the immediate subject of text and pictures is Illuminated Printing, allegorically described. Each metal plate, cut and burnt into by tool and fiery acid, is a "cave", each process that the cave goes through is a "chamber" in the printing house. And the result of the process, the surface of paper printed and colored, which we also call a plate, is a "cave" too. The reader-spectator enters it to find the immense palaces which the poet-artist is building for his delight… In the teamwork of eagle and viper, depicted at the bottom of Plate 15, the serpent's tongue performs the function of lightning, but the eagle holds him so high in the air that his words are cut on clouds, not rocks. The "cave" that mediates between copper and cloud of visions represents "the minds of men", that is, the "cavern" through which man "sees all things". (ERDMAN, p. 106, 2000)

In the plate before, Blake states that "man has closed himself up, till he sees all things through narrow chinks of his cavern" (Plate 14). If, as Erdman assumes, Blake saw his own book as a cave, we realise the importance of the object for Blake; it is the most material door to the immaterial, the great threshold.

In alchemical terms, we can say Blake believed until the end in the transformation of inferior metals into gold—copper, by means of the correct "infernal" methods, becomes an illuminated book.

3.6 Gallery

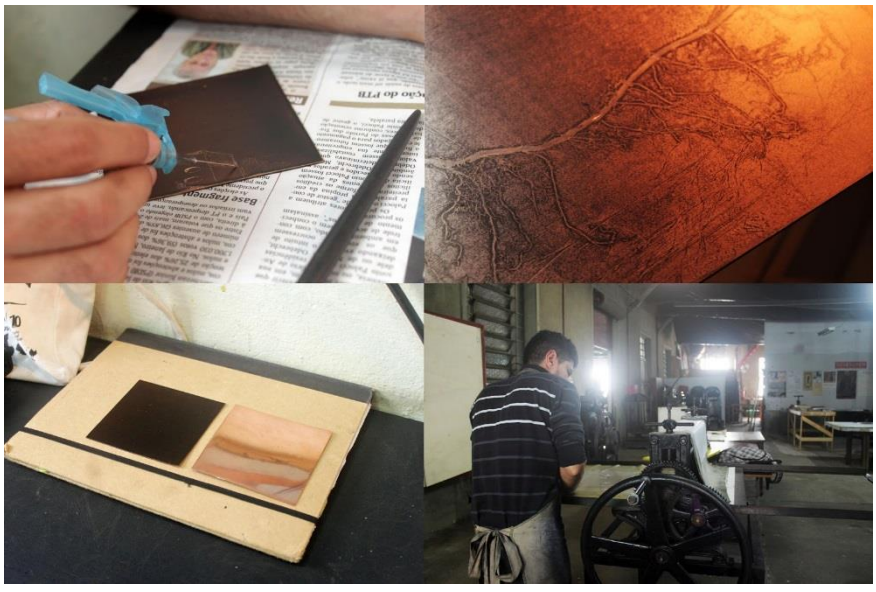

Figure 13: In the upper left corner, an engraver scratches the bitumen from the plate. In the upper right corner, an inked plate that was partially protected with soft varnish from the corrosion of the acids. In the bottom left corner, two copper plates in different stages: the right one is

polished and ready for receiving an adhering bitumen layer, as shown in the left plate. In the bottom right corner, the printer, Marcelo Lunardi, advises and assists less experienced engravers.

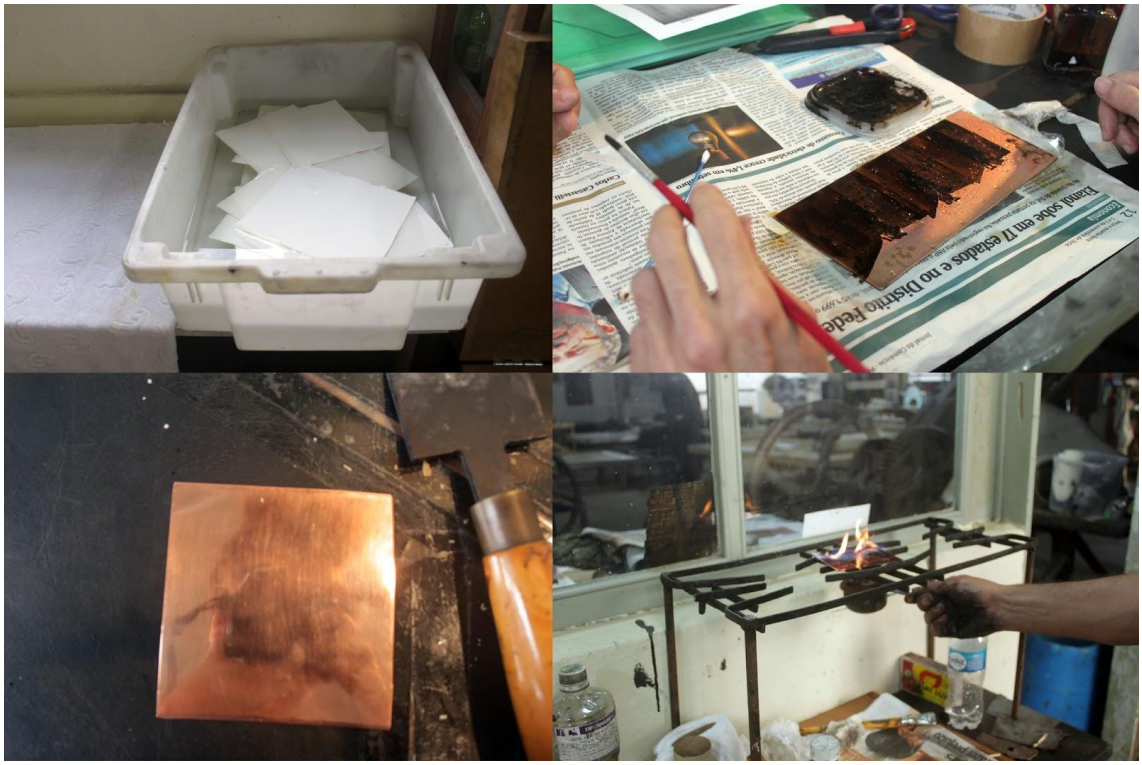

Figure 14: In the upper left corner, pieces of paper with a high grammage are kept in water, so that the oil of the ink will detach from the paper during the pressing. In the upper right corner, a plate is covered with bitumen, which will protect the copper from corrosion. The plate in the bottom left corner has just been polished and looks like a mirror. In the bottom right corner we can see a plate being flambed, so that the bitumen dries and adheres to the surface.

Figure 15: Copper plate in the press. After the dampened paper covers the plate, the first test is ready to be printed.

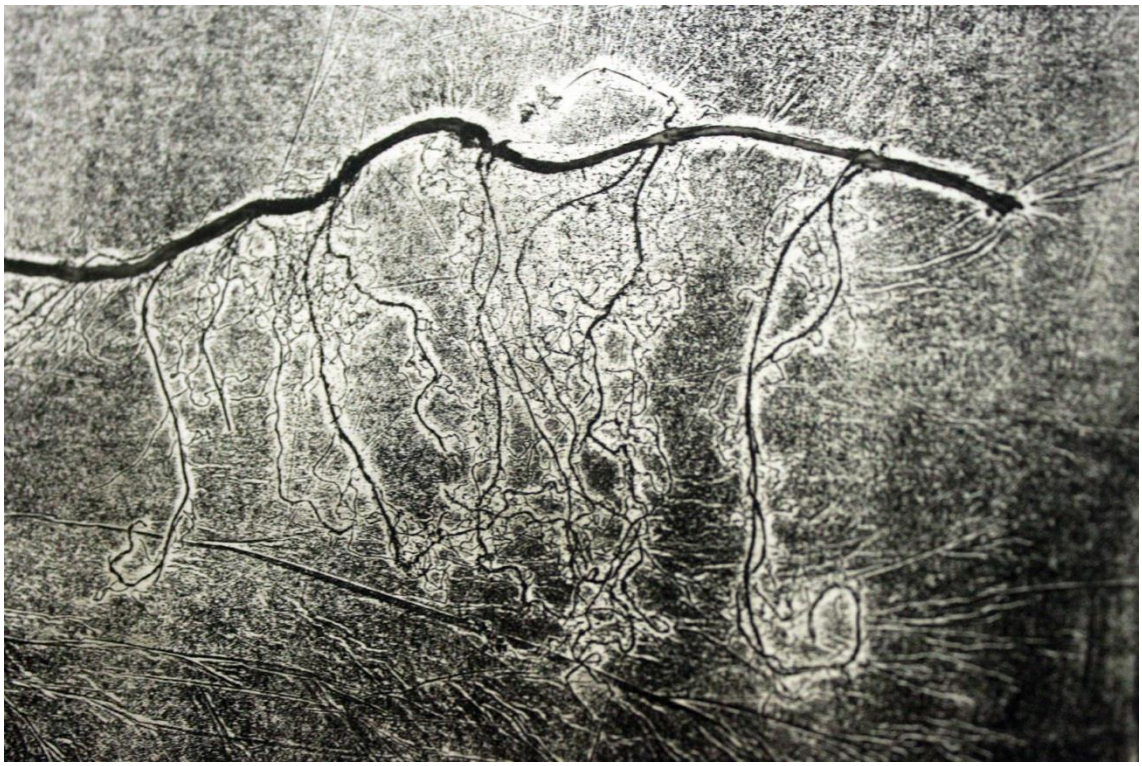

Figure 16: In this work, we can see the high sensitivity of metal engraving techniques.

3.7 The Book and Bodily Metaphors

Although the mixture between text and image was common in the Middle Ages, it did not represent a statement in art historiography—at least until 1941, when the invention of Gutemberg's press introduced movable types in practices that had been calligraphic until then. This detail is crucial if we think of text and images as two organically realizable expressions, interchangeable by one hand movement, which before the Renaissance was that of a copyist, not that of an artist—at least not as we understand artists contemporarily. The mobile types represent a padronization of writing elements that used to be more personalizable; typography, occupying the place of calligraphy, was a technical advancement in the ways of knowledge reproducibility. As much as possible, the technique was not developed far from the humanist moulds, after all, the change occurred in the Renaissance.

Remember that Blake's last book is called *Jerusalem*, for the idea of the Blakean book as an architectonic construction is an interesting one. The proportion of the type letters from the Renaissance on and the structuring, in the same period, of the press was, according to Cadôr (p. 219, 2016), based in the ancient writings of Roman architect Vitruvius. In them, the proportions of the temples were determined according to human proportions. In the retrieval of classic values done by Renaissance typists, this extends to the shape of letters. Vitruvius treaties were inspirational to the design of letters for mathematician Luca Pacioli and artist Albrecht Dürer. Mathematics and writing are united, thus, based in the classic temples, which had in turn anthropomorphic character.

The book as a metaphor for the body, if we think of it that way, is an architectonic metaphor. This does not only mean that one can live inside a book as one lives inside a body or inside a house, but that the book has a bodily and topographic character. Although our theme is not the book Jerusalem (1820), the fact that in it the giant Albion can be understood simultaneously as the individual and as England tells us something about these relationships between the book, the human body, architectonic construction, and topography.

Although there are many traces of anthropomorphism in many human creations, it looks like the book exceeds itself as a place for metaphors alluding to the human body. When defending this intimacy between the human body and the book, Cadôr (p. 221, 2016) highlights the use of terms that refer to the embodiment of the book and the importance of the human body for its construction. Some of the terms don't make sense

in English, since it was written in Portuguese, but still there are many analogous functions between the body and the book. Terms like heading, footnote, text column and spine still make sense in English, while other terms such as flap ("orelha," or *ear* in Portuguese), and the title page ("folha de rosto," or *face's page* in Portuguese) do not coincide. Regardless of small dissonances, a topography of the book as a body remains visible. Words like *chapter* (*capítulo* in Portuguese) and *capital letter* still reverberate the same origin.

The hybridity of languages and techniques makes Blake a central figure in the history of the artist's book, as affirmed by theorists such as David Erdman. As he points out in *A Book of the Books* (2000), Blake defined himself as a poet and illustrator. He made a point out of stating that the whole process of the creation of the book started and ended with him (unless we consider the origins of the materials used). In terms of craftiness, Blake's books can evidently be associated with the History of the artist's book, as it has been said by Erdmann and Conolly, who treat the Blakean artifact with three-dimensional, organic materiality—which is in turn part of the context of Art History, according to Erdmann, and of human vitality transmuted into a book, as suggested by Connolly.

The term 'artist's book' was not used in Blake's time, the beginning of the 18th century—some of the first mentions of the term come from French in the end f the 19th century, when marchands and editors such as Ambroise Vollard and Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler started to realize the luxury value of a book that was of difficult or impossible reproducibility in the market of arts. In other words, the book as an instance of art appears more as an amplification of the visual market than as a search for a widening of the creative horizon coming from the writers. This makes works that walk different paths, such as the novel *The Rings of Saturn* (1995), of German writer W. G. Sebald, especially interesting. This is book composed of occasional images that illustrate scenes or historical references mentioned in the work. If compared to an artist's book, the opposite way: The lack of proportion of the role of Literature in the work denotes the auxiliary role of the visual arts. The sovereignty of Literature, there, seems intact.

However, the sovereignty of the text is not a value to be preserved in the conceptual and ideally inaugural game of the artist's book. Erdman (p. 221, 2000) reminds us that Blake's text stands on its own, while the images in *TMHH* don't. The manifesto *The New Art of Making Books* (1975), from Mexican conceptual artist Ulises

Carrión, can help us think about the dialectic relationship between the body of the book and Literature.

Although Carrión's position on the role of the Literary text, as the scholars of his time, is perhaps radical, his argument on the book as space is relevant when we look at Blake's work, in his claim for a reading of the book as an object of meaning, not only as a medium. We could say he defends a kind of literacy of the space of the book, not only of the text. This argument is especially opportune for poetry, since in this specific genre the spatiality of the book is more prone to be deautomatized. However, Carrión's posture concerning the future of Literature, which is that it is faded to disappear, seems too apocalyptical.

3.8 Further Considerations

3.8.1 On the Hermeneutics of the Subject

The Hermeneutics of the Subject (2004) is a collection of lectures taught by Michel Foucault at the *College de France* in the 1980's. Some of the issues dealt with in the book are relatable to aspects of *TMHH*. The poem stands for aspects of the self that are neglected in religion and in analytical thought—imagination, energy, the creative aspect of destruction, self-awareness risen from the body. The latter aspect is especially interesting in the light of Foucault's studies on hermeneutics of the subject. As a poet from the romantic period (though not a typical romantic), Blake showed a nostalgia for the times in which wisdom and personal perception were more important than knowledge. Such nostalgia matches with what Schiller defined as sentimental poetry. It is during the 16th and 17th centuries that such shift takes place (FOUCAULT, 2004, p. 374). Foucault also mentions Goethe's *Faust* (1808), in which the character longs for a time when science was not bigger than spiritual wisdom (FOUCAULT, 2004, p. 375). A reason for this nostalgia is the eminence of a logic of knowledge that is supposed to be not even partially subjective. From such a knowledge, the subject cannot acquire any self-transfiguration (Foucault, 2004, p. 375). There were attempts at a reconstitution of an ethics and aesthetics of the self; Foucault (2004, p. 305) mentions Montaigne in the

16th century, and Nietzsche, Dandyism, Baudelaire, and anarchy in the 19th century. Blake is certainly part of this thread, as will be further demonstrated.

The lecture of February 10th 1982 has some interesting ideas that relate well with Blake. When Foucault quotes Epicurus, it sounds like what *TMHH* caused in me.

"Superior, independent men, who are proud of their own assets, not of those that come from circumstance' is the objective of *physiología*" (EPICURUS *apud* FOUCAULT, 2004, p. 293). The concept of *physiología* contributes to a lifestyle that is centered in the body, since it means a natural philosophy or a science of nature. Epicuro regards general culture as a luxury of free men, but still insufficient. His vision of *physiología* consists in a knowledge towards nature that is used as long as it is useful. Rather than general and useless culture, *physiología* is a notion that makes one act in liberty (FOUCAULT, 2004, p. 294). We could understand it by remembering how pleasurable it feels to invest the adequate amount of strength to make a ball fall into court when playing a game such as volleyball or tennis. Such notion comes from practice, as well as our arm's sense of direction does. Another example would be the cat's ability to catch their prey in the perfect attack, or the bird's ability to sing. The freedom of the body is present in the culture of remarkable feats, as it can be seen on Youtube videos of parkour or skyscraper climbing. *Physiología* is not limited to proprioceptive consciousness, but includes the physical knowledge of the world (not in a theoretical scientific form, but in a pragmatic one). As Foucault (2004, p. 293 294) puts it, Epicurus praise of *physiología* was in the sense of cultivating freedom. Depending on one's own assets rather than on circumstances could foster superior and independent men. Not being scared anymore; that could have pros and cons. Gaining courage, intrepidity, and audacity would lead one to face danger, but also authorities. All of those things are also alluded in *TMHH* and in Blake's poetics as a whole. The praise of energy and liberty in Blake is similar to the almost heroic epicurean understanding of *physiología* as brought by Foucault. *TMHH* defends honesty, wisdom, and awareness of nature, the daring valorization of the body as a part of the soul, which could be considered nowadays to be analogous to the self.

Another articulation worth mentioning between Blake and the *Hermeneutics of the Subject* is the idea of a truthful form of speaking ("Always be ready to speak your mind and a base man will avoid you" BLAKE, 1790, Plate 8). Freedom with words is the greek word *parrhesía*. Such *franc-parler* is characteristic of philosophers who try to not necessarily convince others, but to speak their minds completely and honestly. That

is the idea of parrhesía. Blake may not fit into this category, since he was a poet and thus, he was concerned with the form in which his message would be passed. However, the impression that his poetics leaves is that of an extremely frank message containing a set of principles, and that is similar to the parrhesía. That is done in a way so honest and open-hearted—which is a *sine-qua-non* condition of *parrhesía*—to the point of sounding *naïve*.

Also, Blake's style of language is coveted in a mist of prophetic wisdom. Foucault points to how important that concept is in this discussion. Saying something useful prophetically is, in Greek, *khresmodoteîn*. Physiology's parrhesía is then stating what is truthful and what must be done; the efficacy of such message depends on the hermeticism of the language (FOUCAULT, 2004, p. 295). The hermeticism of the prophetic language, then, is crucial. Blake's definition of poetry fits well here: 'Allegory addressed to the intellectual powers while it is altogether hidden from the corporeal understanding is my definition', writes Blake, 'of the most sublime poetry.'

After TMHH, Blake starts his more prophetic works. As Foucault (2004, p. 296) puts it, "To prophetically tell to only a few who are able to understand the truths of nature, which could effectively change your way of being, that is the art and freedom of the physiologist. It is an art close to prophetic formulation. It is an art also close to medicine, whereas it is oriented by an objective and the transformation of the subject."

3.8.2 On Somaesthetics

When I started thinking of how to develop a written form to what I was pursuing, I wanted to find a dense and philosophically coherent theory which could account not only for theory itself, but which considered practice and factual exercise as part of it. I was lucky enough to oracularly stumbleupon *Somaesthetics: a disciplinary proposal,* by Richard Shusterman, when I was designing this project.

I suppose that it is not common in Western thought to study and discuss body practices within a philosophical approach. That sounds a little strange if not shocking, since the basic ancient objective of philosophy is to enhance a subject's potential to a better and more fulfilling life. Such life can only be lived within a body and therefore strategies philosophically related to the body should be part of this pursuit.

Shusterman's proposal of an interdisciplinary field called somaesthetics is innovative. By adding complexity to body practices and embodiment, it fosters a way of thinking that traditional Western philosophy dismissed. To start with, Shusterman chose the word 'soma' rather than 'body' exactly because the body has been understood as an external object, deprived of many of its idiosyncrasies. The word 'soma', derived from the Greek, appears as a way of focusing and rescuing the most important aspect of the body: the fact that it is the space where ambiguity reigns. The body is both subject and object; both psychic (or should we say mental, soulful, spiritual?) and material; both irrational and capable of learning. This certainly complicates any attempt at a totalitarian theory. Shusterman also highlights, in *Thinking through the Body* (2012), that one other reason for the historical philosophical neglect towards the body lies on the fact that the body calls us violently to our own mortality, which may be a topic too terrifying to think of if compared to the metaphysics of the spirit and of the eternity. Plus, he points to the fact that the body has always been associated with the second category, after the spirit, the mind or the soul; it has, thus, been associated to women, who are conceived as the second sex, as Simone de Beauvoir pointed out. A similar hierarchical relation between opposites can be seen in terms of colonialism; the mind is the colonizer, while the body is the colonized, that is, the place where a given group of ideas will be put into practice. These associations concern the status of the body in culture. These hierarchical contrarieties foster the vision of the body as the center of weakness and futility; also, they enrich an imagery of the body as a tool used for performance centered on the ability of appealing to others rather than an instance full of proprioception, that is, able to perceive itself. Culture has simplified the body into an object. As Shusterman (2012) points out, the fact that the body is seen as a tool is not the problem; the body is indeed a tool, among other things. The problem is understanding this toolness of the body as something degrading.

The same has not happened in other cultures, especially Eastern ones. There we can see the huge and varied roles of the body as the instance where philosophy is materialized: *zazen*, yoga, tai chi, and a range of martial arts are examples of it.

The field of somaesthetics is divided in three branches: analytical, pragmatic and practical. The first accounts for the theoretical approach that one can have towards the body. This is basically where we can situate most thinkers who gave importance to the body as an instance. Some of them developed also a pragmatic proposal and even practiced it—that is the case of Michel Foucault, as Shusterman highlights in *Body*

Consciousness (2008). Foucault was a key element in the process that took place in the 20th century, that of rediscovering and relocating the body within Western philosophy. However, Shusterman (2008) considers that Foucault's emphasis on the body as a power battlefield and the sadomasochistic practices that he believed to be liberating may not be the best that westerns could get, especially if we take into consideration how therapeutic and wider than a matter of sex Eastern mind-body practices are. Other philosophers that Shusterman considers to be essential in this discussion are Simone de Beauvoir, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Wittgenstein and William James, all of them for different reasons. However, except for Foucault, who made a pragmatic proposal and practiced it, Shusterman reminds us that they all enriched only the analytical branch.

The pragmatic branch consists of a proposal of practice. It must be supported by a theory, which was developed in the analytics. Examples of pragmatic somaesthetic proposals are the manuals of yoga, for instance, or the design of a diet (as long as the diet derives from a philosophical core of ideas concerning the welfare of the subject and a method coherent to the theory). We could also include here books through which you can study the meridians in order to learn acupuncture or do-in. Sadly, it is not surprising how few somaesthetic pragmatist projects we can find in modernity. One of the reasons for this is the separation between philosophy and medicine.

If we consider the ancient Greeks, it is easy to find the integration between medicine and philosophy. In *Saturn and Melancholy* (1964) Erwin Panofsky, Raymond Klibansky and Fritz Saxl investigate the different ways in which melancholy was conceived throughout history, which takes us to how psychosomatic ancient Greek's medicine and philosophy were integrated. Perhaps the theory of the four humors (sanguine, choleric, melancholic and phlegmatic) is an example of a somaesthetic analytic work, while a prescription on how much sunlight a majoritarily melancholic person should ideally be exposed to could be seen as the pragmatist aspect of it. Practicing such advice would be the practical aspect of somaesthetics.

We could also consider Seneca, when in *De Tranquillitate Animi* (On the tranquility of the mind) he gives practical advice based on stoic premises. Not having books to show off nor having many slaves (only two was enough, according to him) are also examples of pragmatist somaesthetics. As we can see, somaesthetics is not necessarily about ethics, but about turning an idea into practice. Whether it is a good idea or not, is up to the subject to decide.

Following the analytical and the pragmatist aspects of somaesthetics, there is the third part of Shusterman's proposal. This is the practical part. This is probably the most interesting aspect of his proposal, since it demands the reader to actively exercise. Once the body as a tool is deprived of its pejorative weight, one must transform their practices according to the ideas. We do that all the time, even if the analytic aspect of our practices is not very clear. Veganism is a good example of it. Conceiving animals as sentient beings which deserve respect could be an aspect of the analytical part of the vegan somaesthetic; reading vegan recipes and watching vegan cuisine videos could be the pragmatist part of it, but nothing of this has value if the subject involved with it does not put any effort on effectively quitting animal consumption. Ideas are placed in the core of our practices.

Another example—this one given by Shusterman in *Body Consciousness* (2008) is Foucault's project. The thinker pointed to the fission between word and discourse that happened in 600 B.C., which is associated with the division of form and content, of word and idea. Based on Nietzsche, Foucault was keen on revealing the level of discourse that we carry in our bodies: our words as bodies and our physical bodies as well. For him, challenging power in medical and legal terms meant gluing language and discourse, and that is a sort of body consciousness development. According to him, we should use not only embodied discourse (words), but our bodies to defy power patterns. In order to do it, heterodox sexual practices were part of his proposal. Since Foucault's gay sadomasochistic practices would hardly fit everyone, Shusterman emphasizes Eastern practices, the Alexander technique, and the Feldenkrais method.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The basic thing to be said as finalization of this investigation would be Paul Valéry's definition of dance as "a general poetic of the action of living beings" (p. 15). He also reminds us that metaphors can be seen as pirouettes of the ideas. The poetic language, with its figures of speech, frees us from the practical world and so we are able to form our own private cosmos, a privileged place for the spiritual dance. Praising movement means accessing the depths of dance present in every art. When a musician plays, even if there is no sound, we can admire the meaningfulness of their movements; the same is true for a painter with their eyes wandering, long breaths and brushes, and even for a poet typing, completely absorbed in front of a computer screen.

When Blake describes a bird cutting the airy way, the wrath of the lion, or the sorrowlessness of a busy bee, he is using metaphors as pirouettes of the spiritual dance. In this sense, the poetic language can help us dive again in a bodily and pulsating liveliness, perhaps similar to the pre-symbolic state that Kristeva defined as *chora semiotica*.

One of the possible continuities of this thesis could be the investigation of the intricate relationship of dance and poetry, which may not be an absolutely new topic, but it is most necessary. William Blake's, Mallarmé's, Paul Valéry's, and James Joyce's engagement with dance and/or the *chora* are just some of which this thesis points to.

Another topic that deserves much more study is the book and its varieties within the context of Art History, especially in Latin America, where illuminated manuscripts and other European forms of text supports were not produced. Other *media* or other types of storytelling could be researched. If the history of the books is ultimately the history of reading, focusing on *media* that are not hegemonic, such as, for instance, Aztec types of books (YOUNG, 2000) or even oral cultures could be very interesting.

Without doubt, somaesthetics is a burgeoning field in aesthetics world-widely, but in Brazil it is still pretty unknown, not only in literature, but among philosophers as well. Further investigations on the field would lead to many interesting studies.

Personally, I will keep considering the aspects through which metal engraving can be articulated with literature, especially with poetry. The burgeoning of this field in my life is something that I own to the semantics of action, which is so imbued in poetic language. Metal engraving is an extremely complex form of art in every aspect. It comprises a myriad of tools, chemical substances, techniques, machines, and it also has

infinite levels of detail, texture, and tonality that can be attained. Unlike writing, where all you need is pen and paper (or keyboard and screen), or painting, where it is enough to have a canvas, some brushes and some paints, engraving is like a cuisine, that is, a process that makes you really dive into the senses and that takes an incredible amount of time and labour. In my opinion, compared to writing, metal engraving is an alchemy in which the doing is more fascinating than the done. As with dance, the realization of the work of art is the work of art. The matter of action is central and inflated; the final object is first a pretext, and later a souvenir of what we can call an alchemical, *zen*, or performative experience.

Turning abstractions into concreteness, or, in other words, embodying ideas is not a new topic at all. Further studies derived from this thesis could also be the theme of ascesis and how it can relate to poetry, since the concept is proper of the philosophical field. Foucault distinguishes ascesis from asceticism, saying that the first is philosophical and more personal, while asceticism is its doctrinaire form, more common is religious environments. For him, ascesis was more present in ancient Greece and Rome, and asceticism rises as the Catholic Church's set of practices. A question would be, considering these two discourses, where poetry fits, or what is its role concerning ascesis and asceticism. We know that logical propositions are not the matter of poetic language, but reading it can end up being an ascetic practice.

The Marriage of Heaven and Hell is densely metaphorical, and metaphors say "it is" and "it is not" at the same time. They redescribe reality. The fact that metaphors are creative and anew, when they do not fossilize into dictionary forms, makes us think that they are an exquisite form of liveliness and such liveliness accounts for their performative nature and transformative power. Even when they are fixed in a book, they are manifestations of energy, like dance. In this sense, studying artist's books as a phenomena related to a will of awakening the matter of the book to redescribe its liveliness was also important during this path.

After all, and especially in *TMHH*, the nature of poetic language flickers like light in a glass of water. Those fleeting revelations are beauty praising movement.

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