

The William Blake Tarot of the Creative Imagination

Created by Ed Buryn

Based on the works of William Blake





*I rest not from my great task!
To open the eternal worlds,
to open the immortal eyes
Of man inwards into the worlds of thought.
– William Blake (1757-1827)*



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Author's Note: Throughout this book, all quotations, unless otherwise attributed, are by William Blake, retaining his original spelling but with punctuation and capitalization modernized for easier reading.

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The Triumphs

The Soul's Journey.
Experiencing fall and regeneration.
The Cycles of Eternity.

The Creative Process Suits

Painting

The Embodiment of Inner Vision.
Giving form to spiritual light.
Path of Sensation & Spirit.



Science

The Challenge of Self-Understanding.
Striving to know self & world.
Path of Intellect & Learning.



Music

The Celebration of Life Force.
Feeling with heart & soul.
Path of Love & Beauty.



Poetry

The Expression of Eternal Truth.
To speak from prophetic inspiration.
Path of Individuality & Revelation.





Chapter 1

Tarot and Blake

[The soul's] presence will be secured all the more readily when an appropriate receptacle is elaborated...something reproducing it, or representing it and serving like a mirror to catch an image of it.

– Plotinus

The Tarot cards are...a picture book of essential truths, setting forth figuratively those fundamental verities about which all enlightened faiths are in common agreement.

– Manley Palmer Hall

About this Deck

The William Blake Tarot of the Creative Imagination is a practical and inspirational tool for personal creativity that features the art and ideas of William Blake (1757-1827). To most people, Blake is a man much acknowledged but little understood. His personally liberating ideas and penetrating social vision have made little impact outside of intellectual circles. This is unfortunate because society at large would greatly benefit from more familiarity with Blake. He is a prophet whom we have greatly honored but barely heard.

This deck represents something really new for Blake – a way to take him home and ‘play’ with him, to get acquainted with him as never before possible. It is an attempt to free Will Blake from intellectual bondage. Unlike textbooks and critical studies, the Blake Tarot presents his ideas and images in a manner that is easy to absorb, and a lot more fun. Most of all, the Blake Tarot is a portable spiritual toolkit that you can use every day to creatively solve problems, to ponder personal issues, and gain meaningful insights into some of life’s mysteries. It enables you to put Blake’s amazing art to practical use, rather than just passively admire it. Combining the ‘hands-on’ accessibility of Tarot cards with the imaginative insights of Blake is like putting wings on an angel: now let the spirit fly!

The William Blake Tarot consists of a set of 23 archetypal cards called Triumphs, plus a set of 56 Creative Process cards in four suits named Painting, Science, Music, and Poetry – which are Blake’s four primal expressions of the imagination. In conventional Tarot, the archetypal cards are called the Major Arcana and the suits are called the Minor Arcana. These terms are avoided here because ‘arcana’ means ‘secrets’, which do not apply to the modern concept of Tarot or to William Blake. While the Tarot may have been considered occult or secret in the past, modern Tarot seeks to share its wisdom with everyone.

Because Blake and Tarot are natural partners, this deck ‘marries’ them – an act of imagination in the service of imagination. This is befitting because most of Blake’s own works were reinterpretations of the works of other poets and artists. Now, Blake himself is reinterpreted here through the medium of Tarot. Although the Blake Deck is completely true to the ancient tradition of Tarot, it is specifically designed to shed spiritual light on everyday issues and problems through the lens of creative processes and the arts – for as Blake asserted, “the whole business of man is the arts.”

The Creative Imagination

Imagination – literally the ability to see images in the mind – is the vision of the soul. -The contemporary archetypal psychologist James Hillman said that “Imagination is the natural function of the soul.” And, “by soul, I mean...the experiencing through reflective speculation, dream, image, and fantasy – that mode which recognizes all realities as primarily symbolic or metaphysical.” This is also the quintessential Blakean idea, coupled with the knowledge that imagination is also eternal: “vision or imagination is a representation of what eternally exists, really & unchangeably.”

Although the Blake deck is completely true to the ancient tradition of Tarot, it is specifically designed to operate through the lens of creative processes and the arts – for, as Blake asserted, “the whole business of man is the arts.” Blake’s basic theme is that art arises from the personal identity of the artist. Creative projects of any kind are the expression of this personal identity. ‘Art’ is not what the public, nor the critics, say it is. In fact, art is life, a unique personal creation that is enriched by imagination and infused by spirit. Thus when Blake talks about the arts, he is talking about living creatively, and not about being an artist. Ours is a culture that pays lip service to individuality (and hence identity) but in fact fears and often punishes the truly individual consciousness. We are made to believe that ‘art’ requires special ‘talent’ and/or special ‘imagination’ – as if these were in short supply, when in fact they overflow in every human being. Everyone is an artist, but only a few possess sufficient freedom, courage, or foolishness to artistically assert their identity. For anyone wishing to overthrow society’s archaic and limiting ideas about the nature and value of art, which is life, Blake is an eminently suitable mentor: “The nature of my work is visionary or imaginative; it is an endeavour to restore what the ancients called the Golden Age.”

Every individual life is a myth created by the person who lives it. Particularly through the use of creative imagination, life can be made sacred and happy. It is not necessary to practice the arts; what is necessary is to practice the consciousness of the arts. As film director Lina Wertmüller once said, “You can’t learn art; what you can learn is the freedom of art.”

About William Blake

Engraver, artist, poet, musician, visionary, and mythologizer, William Blake was the most contradictory of men. He is considered radical, yet all his work is rooted in traditional sources. While forming ideas that were uniquely his own, he drew freely from classical sources. Called insane and incomprehensible by his contemporaries, modern commentators have proven the extraordinary inner logic and consistency of his works. He never attended school, yet was among the most knowledgeable and wide-ranging intellects of his time. He is considered England’s foremost religious painter, but he did not attend any church and despised religion. Although he regards “Jesus” as man’s savior, he was not even Christian: “I know of no other Christianity and of no other Gospel than the liberty of both mind & body to exercise the divine arts of imagination.”

Blake’s life, at least outwardly, was uneventful. Trained early as an engraver, he never had any other occupation. He remained married to one woman all his life, had no children, never traveled, and made few friends. He was able to make a modest living at first, but his income gradually declined as his idiosyncrasies alienated him from his clients. But inwardly, his life was exciting. At the age of 9, he saw the first of his mystical visions – a tree filled with bright-wing angels “be-spangling every bough like stars.” He experienced visions throughout his life, from which he cre-



ated thousands of graphic works in the form of etchings, drawings, and paintings. Using a method of engraving that he invented – combining both images and text on copper plates and then coloring the prints by hand – he self-published almost two dozen classic books. A precursor of English Romanticism, he is considered one of our greatest poets. In 1993, his poem, “The Tyger,” was chosen by a literary board as the most popular of all time.

Although perennially optimistic and personally happy, Blake at times expressed his disappointment at having a scant audience and barely enough income to survive: “How I did secretly rage! I also spoke my mind.” He was a true prophet who knew that the future belonged to him, however ignored and misunderstood during his own lifetime.

For all that, Will Blake was a ‘regular guy’ who liked an occasional pint of ale, a countryside walk, and a song to sing while he worked. He recognized and accepted his own genius without succumbing to egotism or the desire to have power over others. “I should be sorry if I had any earthly fame, for whatever natural glory a man has is so much taken from his spiritual glory.” Finally, he was a tireless worker who made maximum use of his prodigious talents, sustaining a continuous creative output from the time he was 12 until he died at 69.

Blake and Tarot

The Tarot is part of the western mystery tradition that goes back to the ancient Chaldeans and Egyptians. It is based on what we today call synchronicity, which is the notion that all things happening at a given moment are related to each other in a meaningful way. The corollary to this is that we can learn about unseen things by examining other things related to them, especially via symbols that connect the unseen with the seen. Essentially, this is what magic is also about. A belief in the power of symbols naturally flows from the exercise of human imagination – which, as Blake asserts, is God.

The Tarot is a self-integrated collection of traditional symbols in the form of a deck of cards. The earliest mention of Tarot cards was in 1442 in northern Italy, although playing cards (which may have been Tarot cards) date from a century earlier. Early Tarots were primarily used for gambling and playing games (especially *tarocchi*, a card game that is still current today in parts of Europe). It was not until 1781 in Paris that the cards assumed anything like their modern significance. In that year, a French Protestant clergyman named Court de Gébelin proclaimed in his book, *Le Monde Primitif*, that the Tarot was the remains of an ancient Egyptian book of wisdom. Inspired by Gébelin, in 1783 a fortune-teller named Alliette – who practiced under the name of Etteilla (his name reversed) – invented a method of cartomancy using a ‘corrected’ Tarot pack that he called the Etteilla Tarot. This created a sensation, initiating a fortune-telling craze that has (more or less) lasted to this day.

At the same time that the Tarot was developing as an esoteric system in France, William Blake was in his early 20’s, newly married, and had just published his first book of poetry. England was at hostilities with France, which was an ally of the Americans in their battle for political independence. In 1782, the American Revolutionary War ended, but peace in England was short-lived, for within seven years the French Revolution began, and soon after England and France once again battled each other in the bloody Napoleonic Wars. Such was the background of the birth of modern Tarot and the young manhood of Will Blake.

While the continent seethed with political, philosophical, and religious intrigues, all intercourse between France and England was not only forbidden, but considered seditious. Therefore,

no news of the exciting Tarot vogue in Paris reached England or Blake. Added to this, England had banned (in 1684) the importation of all foreign playing cards, seizing and destroying any that were found. As a result, in England the Tarot had no pre-existing history and no foothold whatever. Furthermore, the intellectual climate there during the Age of Enlightenment and then the Victorian Era offered no place for anything so un-British. It was not until the 1880's, when translations of Eliphas Levi's magical texts stimulated interest in the French Occult Revival, that Tarot found any appeal in England (except possibly with a few foreign gypsies). This was more than 50 years after Blake's death. Finally, in 1888, with the advent of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, Tarot began to be systematically studied and used. The first Tarot in the English language was published in December, 1909 – the so-called Rider Pack, designed by A. E. Waite, with art by Pamela Colman Smith. This is an incredibly late date for an important metaphysical tool that had already been available elsewhere for at least 450 years. Since then, the Waite-Smith deck has become the most popular Tarot in the world.

The foregoing history, a kind of counter-Tarot conspiracy, adequately explains Blake's ignorance of Tarot, even though he was aware of the other intellectual, spiritual, and metaphysical currents of his time, including qabalah, alchemy, and astrology. Had Blake known about Tarot, as a natural mystic and symbolist, he conceivably might have designed a deck of his own. As it was, lacking any information about this highly developed symbol system, he proceeded to invent and illustrate his own functional equivalents. He even worked from many of the same sources and impulses as the Tarot designers of the Renaissance. In any case, Blake's own system – his mythology of divided Albion and the Four Zoas – is a mythic parallel to Tarot as a spiritual system, and the two systems are now joined in this deck. Blake would appreciate that these cards, which personify universal archetypes and gods, actualize his "visions of the eternal attributes, or divine names, which...ought to be the servants, and not the masters of man."

In creating this Tarot in William Blake's name, I have attempted in good faith to accurately represent his ideas and make appropriate use of his images. I can only hope he would approve of the result. I like to imagine that in the following quote, he is actually instructing the users of this deck:

*If the spectator could enter into these images in his imagination ...
or could make a friend & companion of ... these images of wonder ...
then he would meet the Lord in the air & ... be happy.*



Chapter 2

Blake's System

*I must create a system, or be enslav'd by another man's;
I will not reason & compare; my business is to create.*

Introduction

The William Blake Tarot embodies the essence of William Blake's philosophical system. In the context of Tarot, this adds a powerful layer of meaning to all the cards, greatly enriching and expanding the traditional interpretations. This deck does not replace any of the old meanings; it gives them a new myth and a new outlook.

Possibly Blake's greatest achievement was as a mythologizer, for he invented a mighty pantheon of characters – mythological, supernatural, and historical – who, throughout most of his works, symbolize and enact man's spiritual journey. He single-handedly created an entire mythology, on much the same scale of grandeur as that of the Greek and Roman gods. Yet unlike theirs, Blake's system reflects modern psychology and addresses contemporary issues. Moreover, it seeks to liberate the soul and make man divine, whereas the ancients proclaimed man's powerlessness at the hands of the gods.

The value of learning Blake's system is that it gives us both a motive and a method for dealing with the imaginal world. His motive is liberation of the spirit; his method is the practice of art. After meeting his basic characters and learning the principles they represent, you will 'see' the world in a different way. Blake baffled his contemporaries because he was 200 years ahead of his time; his system is for today. Blake's ideas provide a method for releasing your imagination at the same time as they reveal a spiritual view of life unlike that of any other writer or artist before or since.

While it is true that Blake's entire system is dauntingly complex, this deck takes just the essential characters and ideas, and gives them to you to play with. Everyone should feel free to interpret or appreciate Blake in their own way.

Even scholars who have spent careers studying Blake disagree about the identification and meaning of his characters and plots. This is a measure of his greatness, for Blake represents different things to different people. In fact, Blake belongs to everyone, more so now than ever.

His wonderful art, enthusiasm for life, his wit and verbal expression, and his love of humanity – are impossible not to appreciate. In my descriptions of the cards in the succeeding chapters, I follow the mainstream of Blakean interpretation, with occasional personal speculations and revisions. The Appendix recommends some basic books from which you can learn more, if you wish.

*Those who have been told that my works
are but an unscientific and irregular eccentricity,
a madman's scrawls, I demand of them to do me the justice
to examine before they decide.*

The Four Zoas of Albion

Blake's system is based on his mythological character, Albion, an ancient term for England, and by extension, everyman. Derived from the Celtic root meaning 'white', Albion might originally have referred to the 'white goddess' of the moon, or perhaps the chalk cliffs of Dover. Blake's Albion is the universe personified as a person, specifically a fourfold divinity who lives in eternity in a state of organic unity. In essence, Albion is the human soul. His unity is broken when his constituent parts divide against each other. As a result, Albion falls to earth, where he goes into a deep sleep, or coma.

Albion's four parts or divine energies are called by Blake the Zoas, and his entire mythology is about their interactions and their epic struggle to reunite. Blake derived the term from the Greek root for 'alive, living'; that is, the eternal parts of man, or as Blake called them, "lives in eternity." The Zoas stem from the 'living beings' of the Bible, the four 'beasts' of Revelation; and in astrology and astronomy correlate with the constellations – the creatures of the Zodiac.

They are named Tharmas, Urizen, Luvah, and Urthona, and respectively represent the body, mind, emotions, and spirit of Albion. Each of the Zoas also has an Emanation, or female portion: Vala and Enitharmon are the most important of these in the Blake Tarot. Like the Zoas, Albion has an Emanation, named Jerusalem, and she appears in the deck also.

Each of the Zoas is associated with one of the eternal arts. According to Blake: "In eternity the four arts: Poetry, Painting, Music and... Science, are the four faces of man" – and thus these arts become the four Creative Process Suits of the Blake Tarot.

The Suits cards of the Blake Tarot describe the gifts and opportunities of the four eternal arts: Painting – Science – Music – Poetry

The Suits cards, taken in numerical order, describe the psychological states associated with Blake's primal arts. These cards are sequentially described in Chapters 4 through 7. The symbols of the suits, called 'glyphs', are the 'instruments' of their suits *and* their arts because this deck emphasizes *doing* or achieving. Thus:

 Palette	 = Painting (physical world)	(Water)
 Compass	 = Science (mental world)	(Air)
 Lyre	 = Music (emotional world)	(Fire)
 Scroll	 = Poetry (spiritual world)	(Earth)

The four elements – see above – are similarly associated with the Zoas. The elements are the natural forms in which the eternal energies have disguised themselves.

The fall and eventual regeneration of the Zoas is the central theme of Blake's myth. The fall of Albion occurs when the Zoas rebel against and war with each other, seeking "selfhood" and dominion over the others. The division of these "eternal senses" creates the fallen world of "time



and space," in which materialism becomes the ground of existence instead of imagination. So, the Zoas, along with a few other figures such as Jesus and Satan, are the protagonists of the story described by the Blake Triumphs.

The Triumphs cards of the Blake Tarot describe the spiritual fall and regeneration of the Zoas.

The Blake Triumphs, taken in numerical order, combine the traditional Tarot tale of the Fool's Journey with Blake's myth of the four Zoas, resulting in what I call the Soul's Journey. This story unfolds in the descriptions of the Triumphs that follow next in Chapter 3.

As you proceed through the card descriptions in the following chapters, you will find Charts 2-1 and 2-2 to be useful summaries of Blake's ideas within the context of Tarot.

Chart 2-1: Correspondences of the Blake Triumphs relates the Blakean Triumphs to the traditional Tarot, briefly describes them, and indicates how the Zoas are represented in the deck. For novice Blakeans, this usefully codifies the concepts of the Zoas; it is a schematic that makes them easier to assimilate. In Chart 2-1, note that the Zoas appear twice in the deck, first in their fallen forms and then in their regenerated forms. This is fully explained in the card descriptions in the next chapter.

Chart 2-2: Correspondences of the Creative Process Suits is the master chart of Blake's system. It corresponds the four suits to a wide range of symbols and ideas, and is a dense compendium of information about Blakean ideas and related Tarot concepts. Chart 2-2 should also prove helpful when interpreting the cards during readings, as it contains many ideas and referents for unlocking associations that might otherwise escape notice. The order of the suits in this chart, and throughout this book, is always Painting first, then Science, Music, and Poetry. This follows Blake's order, and gives internal consistency.

The Back Design of the Cards

The illustration on the verso of each card is from the title page of the Illustrations of the *Book of Job*. Blake depicts seven angels that he calls the Eyes of God, referred to in the Bible as the "seven eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro through the whole earth."

For Blake, the Eyes represent the issue of justice, and they characterize various aspects of dealing with or dispensing it. The first angel, at the top right, is Lucifer ('Bright Star'), shown descending to earth as the fallen angel. Newborn, he is innocent but selfish, and becomes an aspect of Satan. The next angel beneath him is Molech ('King'), the executioner of children, whose attempts to deal with life are clumsily destructive. Next comes Elohim ('Mighty'), the judge, who holds a scroll to indicate he has a conscience, and so invents guilt. At the bottom is Shaddai ('Strength'), the accuser, who looks back and blames the others. Now beginning to ascend, the next angel is Pachad ('Fear'), the appalled, with scroll and plume to record his dismay. Higher yet, also with a scroll, is Jehovah ('He creates'), the moralist who upholds the law.

All these aspects of God fail to change anything because they uphold earthly justice, a system of error that promotes guilt, sin, and vengeance. The final angel with wings upraised for spiritual ascent, back turned to the others, is Jesus, the Savior. He looks toward the spiritual world within, and his revolutionary response to justice is forgiveness and mercy instead of vengeance.

Correspondences of the Blake

Traditional Arcana		Blake Triumphs		Figure(s) Depicted	Represent(s)	Zoa(s)	Symbolizes
-	(no equivalent)	00/∞	Eternity	Albion asleep	Humanity's dream of eternity	-	-
0	Fool	0	Innocence	Tharmas with dog	Materialization of the soul	Tharmas	Fallen body
1	Magician	I	Magic	Hermes-Anubis with Jupiter	Magus/psychopomp (Egyptian)	Urthona (as Los)	Fallen inspiration (TIME)
2	High Priestess	II	Mystery	Triple Hecate	Goddess of magic and witchcraft (Greek)	Urthona (as Enitharmon)	Fallen inspiration (SPACE)
3	Empress	III	Nature	Bathsheba with sons	Seductress and mother (Biblical)	Luvah (as Vala)	Fallen emotion
4	Emperor	IV	Reason	Urizen	Tyranny of the mind. Single vision	Urizen	Fallen intellect
5	Hierophant	V	Religion	King George III with angels	Tyranny of religion	-	-
6	Lovers	VI	Knowledge	Adam and Eve with Rafael	The earthly (fallen) Eden	-	-
7	Chariot	VII	Experience	Plough of Jehovah	Realm of Generation: materialism. Twofold vision	-	-
8	Justice (or Strength)	VIII	Assessment	Luvah	The call to spiritual awakening	Luvah	Emotion Regenerating
9	Hermit	IX	Imagination	Los	The light of Imagination	Urthona (as Los)	Spirit Regenerating
10	Wheel of Fortune	X	Whirlwind	Ezekiel's vision	The Zoas and God in whirlwind	The four Zoas	Process of Regeneration
11	Strength (or Justice)	XI	Energy	Tharmas with animals	Communing with the animal self	Tharmas	Body Regenerating
12	Hanged Man	XII	Reversal	Urizen	The upset of reason	Urizen	Intellect Regenerating
13	Death	XIII	Transformation	Time destroying Humanity	Time looks backward and forward	-	-
14	Temperance	XIV	Forgiveness	Jesus with angels	Merciful self-forgiveness	-	-
15	Devil	XV	Error	Satan with acolytes	Realm of Ulro: delusion	-	-
16	Tower	XVI	Lightning	Accuser destroying Job's family	Self-doubt and the destruction of ego	-	-
17	Star	XVII	Stars	Milton (with Jobin border)	Communion with the universe	-	-
18	Moon	XVII	Moon	Family and friends	Realm of Beulah: subconscious. Threefold vision	-	-
19	Sun	XIX	Sun	Jesus with children and angels	Realm of Eden: brotherhood. Fourfold vision	-	-
20	Judgement	XX	Liberty	Jerusalem	The call to spiritual awakening	-	-
21	World	XXI	Union	Albion	Unified Humanity	-	-



Correspondences of the Creative Process Suits

* Suit of:	Painting	Science	Music	Poetry
* Represents:	Body/Matter	Mind/Thought	Emotion/Love	Imagination/Spirit
* Suit symbol:	♂	♂	♂	♂
* Window Keyword:	FORM (Inner Vision)	STRUCTURE (Knowledge)	VIBRATION (Energy)	PROPHECY (Truth)
Element:	Water	Air	Fire	Earth
* Element Keywords:	Body of Water	Vapour of Thought	Flame of Feeling	Spirit of Earth
* [Waite/Smith Element]:	[Earth]	[Air]	[Water]	[Fire]
* [Waite/Smith Suit]:	[Pentacles]	[Swords]	[Cups]	[Wands]
Zoa:	Tharmas	Urizen	Luvah	Urthona (Los)
'Zoa Keywords:'	'The Parent Power'	'King of Pride'	'Prince of Love'	'Prophet of Eternity' (TIME)
Occupation	Shepherd	Ploughman	Weaver	Blacksmith
Emanation:	Enion	Ahania	Vala	Enitharmon
Emanation Keyword:	Desire	Pleasure	Nature	Inspiration (SPACE)
Direction:	West	South	East	North
Creative Arts:	Graphic Arts, Sculpture, Crafts, Sports, Martial Arts, Ceramics	Architecture, Engineering, Physics, Astronomy, Astrology, Philosophy	Music, Dance, Weaving, Cooking, Perfumery, Chemistry, Alchemy	Literature, Oratory, Theater Arts, Psychology, Mythology, Agriculture
Vision:	Single	Twofold	Threefold	Fourfold
Degraded Arts:	Medical and Surgical Arts	Technology, Politics, History	Legal Arts, Economics, Mathematics	Religion, Ritual, War
Anatomy:	Body (Sensuality)	Head (Selfhood)	Heart (Forgiveness)	Loins [Genitals] (Creativity)
Sense Organ:	Tongue (Speech) + Touch	Eyes (Vision)	Nostrils (Scent)	Ears (Hearing)
Divided Man:	Shadow	Spectre	Emanation	Humanity
Realm:	Generation (Existence)	Ulro (Delusion)	Beulah (Subconscious)	Eden (Brotherhood)
Satan's Quaternity:	Death (of the Body)	Night (of Reason)	Sin (of the Emotions)	Chaos (of the Imagination)
* Jungian Function:	Sensation	Thinking	Feeling	Intuition
Tetramorph:	Ox	Lion	Man, Angel	Eagle
* Archangel:	Raphael (Healing)	Gabriel (Truth)	Uriel (Salvation)	Michael (Amity)
* Evangelist:	Luke	Mark	Matthew	John
* Triumphs (Fallen):	0-Innocence	IV-Reason	III-Nature	I-Magic and II-Mystery
* Triumphs (Regenerated):	XI-Energy	XII-Reversal	VIII Assessment	IX Imagination
Location:	Circumference (Body)	Zenith (Brain)	Center (Heart)	Nadir (Subconscious)
Dimension:	Outward	Height and Depth	Inward	Breadth
Celestial:	Earth (Senses)	Stars (Intellect)	Moon (Love)	Sun (Imagination)
Ruling:	Vegetation	Matter	Men	Gods
Metal:	Brass (Society)	Gold (Wisdom)	Silver (Love)	Iron (War)
Divinity:	God (Father)	Satan	Jesus (Son)	Holy Ghost
Small Animal:	Worm (Mortality)	Butterfly (Resurrection)	Dove (Love)	Eagle (Genius)
Large Animal:	Elephant (Sexuality)	Horse (Reason)	Tiger (Emotional Wrath)	Lion (Spiritual Wrath)
Supernaturals:	Nymphs	Fairies	Genii	Gnomes
Desires:	Lust	Hunger	Love	Friendship
City:	York	Verulam (Canterbury)	London	Edinburgh
Country:	Ireland	Wales	England	Scotland
Continent:	America (Materialism)	Africa (Slavery)	Asia (Reaction)	Europe (Imagination)
* Color:	Blue	Yellow	Red	Green
* Concerns:	Wealth	Death	Love	Power
*	Security	Ego	Fantasy	Self
*	Work	Knowledge	Passion	Commitment
* Motto:	I do	I think	I feel	I desire
* Mode:	Literal, Tangible	Deductive, Logical	Inductive, Psychological	Spiritual, Mystical
* Creative Process	Manifests →	Changes →	Reacts →	Masters
* Imaginative process:	Produces	← Utilizes	← Nurtures	← Conceives

* Correspondences marked by asterisks are not specifically Blakean.

Chapter 3

The Blake Triumphs

**THE SOUL'S JOURNEY
EXPERIENCING FALL AND REGENERATION
THE CYCLES OF ETERNITY**

Every natural effect has a spiritual cause.

The Blake Triumphs, which correspond to the Major Arcana in conventional Tarot, are so named to emphasize and dramatize the motive of all of Blake's works, which is to triumph over the "Satanic mills" of materialism that ceaselessly strive to crush the human spirit.

The Borders of the Triumphs

The borders of the Triumphs are from Blake's *Illustrations of the Book of Job*. This work is his crowning achievement, published when he was 68 years old, one year before his death. Job consists of 21 engravings telling Blake's version of Job's story, plus the title page, for a total of 22 pages – the same number as the Major Arcana of the Tarot. The *Illustrations of the Book of Job* embody Blake's wisdom and artistry in one singular achievement. Because its theme of the fall and redemption of man parallels that of the Tarot, the borders from Job are adapted here as the borders of the Triumphs. Their sequence was determined by their symbolic associations with the Tarot; the original placement is noted by a small number in the upper right corner of each Triumph.

The Cycles of the Triumphs

Blake divided his 21 *Illustrations of the Book of Job* into three cycles of seven each, based the Eyes of God, which tell Job's story through each of the eyes in succession. The Triumphs are also divided into three cycles as shown in Chart 3-1, which is a useful summary of the Triumphs sequence, listing the cards according to their cycles and naming the major characters.



The Cycles of the Blake Triumphs

Cycle of:	Segment:	Eternal Figure:	Represents:	Blake Triumph:	Border Color:
Matter	The Fall	Tharmas	Instinct	<i>0–Innocence</i>	BLACK
		Los/Urthona	Time	<i>I–Magic</i>	
		Enitharmon/Urthona	Space	<i>II–Mystery</i>	
		Vala/Luvah	Feelings	<i>III–Nature</i>	
		Urizen	Mind	<i>IV–Reason</i>	
	Worldliness	-	(Spirituality)	<i>V–Religion</i>	
		-	(Choice)	<i>VI–Knowledge</i>	
-		(Exhaustion)	<i>VII–Experience</i>		
Awakening	Regeneration	Luvah	Compassion	<i>VIII–Assessment</i>	Printed in dark BLUE ink
		Los/Urthona	Truth	<i>IX–Imagination</i>	
		The Four Zoas	Vision	<i>X–Whirlwind</i>	
		Tharmas	Strength	<i>XI–Energy</i>	
		Urizen	Self-Awareness	<i>XII–Reversal</i>	
	Transformation	(Time)	Transformation	<i>XIII–Transformation</i>	
		Jesus	Imagination	<i>XIV–Forgiveness</i>	
Spirit	Dark Night of the Soul	Satan	Selfhood	<i>XV–Error</i>	Printed in dark RED ink
		Satan (accuser)	Self-Doubt	<i>XVI–Lightning</i>	
	Revelation	-	(Inspiration)	<i>XVII–Stars</i>	
		-	(Intuition)	<i>XVIII–Moon</i>	
		Jesus	Enlightenment	<i>XIX–Sun</i>	
		Jerusalem	Freedom	<i>XX–Liberty</i>	
		Albion	Unified Man	<i>XXI–Union</i>	

The 00/∞ Eternity card, which can appear anywhere in the cycles, has no border

The Eternity Card

00/∞—Eternity



00 Eternity 00

The *Eternity* card has no equivalent in other Tarot decks. Its dual numeration (double-zero or infinity) indicates that it transcends numbers. This image is from the painting called *Jacob's Dream*, based on the book of Genesis, showing Jacob and his ladder to heaven. In Blake's myth, this is Albion asleep on the Rock of Ages. His Zoas have divided, and he lies stricken in spiritual limbo. Fallen from eternity, he is now a mortal man, and his four "eternal senses" – the four divine arts of painting, science, music, and poetry – have become his body, head, heart, and genitals. Albion represents our own sleeping consciousness, dreaming eternity as our ultimate potential.

Albion remains asleep throughout the soul's journey, unable to awaken until his divided soul is regenerated and his Zoas, the "four faces of man," are reunited. However, his vision of eternity is very much alive in his dream – and Albion's vision is what this card is about. *Eternity* represents mankind's hopes for divine spiritual consciousness, and for living in a world of shining imagination and everlasting truth. For Blake, eternity is an exciting intellectual realm filled with the "fury of poetic inspiration," from whence "all the passions emanate uncurbed in their eternal glory."

The shephook in Albion's hand represents his mortal innocence. Exalted beings carry symbols of the arts (spiritual sustenance) upon a celestial stairway that literally represents the arts as man's connection to eternity. The luminous, numinous sun is the "divine imagination," the god in every human, which shines within us day and night, the ultimate reality from which all things are created.

This card is always significant in a reading, because its declaration of spiritual reality and creative imagination is meaningful in any context. *Eternity* can be a wake-up call to a spiritual issue in the reading, a promising opportunity to try something new and imaginative, an announcement of a something wonderful happening, a prophecy of angelic or artistic communication (perhaps via a dream or daydream), the advent of a serendipitous occurrence or heavenly 'coincidence', or a sudden awareness that life is a spiritual adventure, and not just a material process. This is always an auspicious card, even when reversed, because eternity is irreversibly divine.

KEYWORDS: AWARENESS OF SPIRITUAL DESTINY • ARTISTIC POWERS • A HEAVENLY OUTLOOK • IMAGINATIVE OPPORTUNITY • PROPHECIC PORTENTS. SPIRITUAL ELATION •



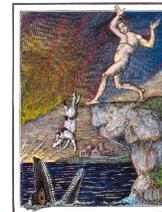
THE SOUL'S JOURNEY

The Blake Triumphs tell a story about the spiritual progress of human consciousness. This is the Soul's Journey, which now begins...

The Cycle of Matter

This cycle consists of eight cards, of which the first introduces the seven that follow.

0–Innocence



0 Innocence

Innocence corresponds to the *Fool* in conventional Tarot. It represents the soul's entry stage into terrestrial consciousness, following its descent from eternity. The innocent soul is naked, an unadorned spiritual essence viewed at the literal dawn of its journey through the stages of life, and the cards of the Triumphs. He (she) is as yet unaffected by society, symbolized by the distant city towers. Awed by the challenges, the soul hesitates on the white Rock of Ages. Now the leaping dog (instinct) becomes a key element in the composition. The dog senses that the crocodile, half dragon and half serpent, embodies both magical and mystical knowledge. Although dangerous, the only way to encounter him is to leap into his element, crossing the threshold from potentiality to actuality.

Blake's image was probably inspired by the constellations of Orion ('beautiful man') of Greek mythology, Canis Major (containing the dog-star Sirius), and Hydra (Serpent). Blake was quite familiar with the constellations, and a glance at a star-chart shows that they line up exactly as Blake pictured their representative characters. (Interestingly, the Hebrew name for Orion is Kesil, which means Fool).

In the Blakean interpretation, the naked figure is **Tharmas**, the western Zoa of **Matter**, appearing in the world of Generation as eternity's fool. (Blake, a notorious punster, perhaps derived Tharmas's name from 'thermal' for body-heat, or from 'torso' or 'thorax' plus 'arms'.) Tharmas is "the parent power," the generative Zoa in the Cycle of Matter. Tharmas presides over the art of **Painting** because it studies and depicts the forms of matter. His element is **Water**, the first element mentioned in the Bible, associated by Blake with the material world and the human body because both are mostly composed of water. In addition, the body is like water in its transitory nature. In the card, Tharmas is shown reacting to the beauty and terror of material existence in Blake's metaphor of the "sea of time & space" – but elementally Tharmas is the sea – the material man in his own element. Traditional occult wisdom holds that matter is the manifestation of spirit, which is literalized in this card.

KEYWORDS: INNOCENCE OF OUTLOOK • PROSPECT OF ADVENTURE • NEW PHASE OF LIFE • TRUSTING IN ONE'S INSTINCTS • DEALING WITH FOLLY • LEAPING INTO THE UNKNOWN •

Even at this first stage, many souls choose not to leap, satisfied with simply being here. The soul desiring further development now bravely takes the plunge, and commences the soul's journey...

I—MagicI *Magic*

Magic corresponds to the Magician in conventional Tarot. It represents the first worldly state, in which the soul discovers the outer or celestial energies, and learns how to channel and transform them into the energies of earthly existence. The *magus* (Persian for ‘mighty one’) is the dog-headed Egyptian deity Anubis, his feet straddling the Nile and channeling celestial energies to earth from Sirius, the dog star, called Sothis by the Egyptians. Anubis as the psychopomp or ‘conductor of souls’ was often identified with Hermes, and so he is also called Hermanubis. The ancient Egyptians revered the star of Sothis-Sirius because its celestial movements signaled the flood of the Nile, and became the basis of the Egyptian (Sothic) calendar. Plutarch says Sothis was another name by which they called the Nile. Traditionally this card depicts the Hermetic axiom, “As above, so below”; here it becomes literal as both star and river bear the same name.

Because 0 represents potentiality while 1 represents actuality, the combination of the first two cards forms a binary system that defines duality, which is matter in time. The two pyramids at the right symbolize this duality. They also symbolize the *conjunctio*, the marriage of the primal essences of alchemy: the sulfur and mercury as *anima* (soul) and *spiritus* (spirit) that underlay the material world. In the background is the winged god of rain and thunderbolts, Jupiter Pluvius to the Romans, who represents the fertilization of the Nile, the source of life. The sistrum (the rattle of Isis) on the left riverbank represents vibration as the energy of life, and its four rattles represent the elements as the alchemical tools of the magus.

In the Blakean interpretation, the magus is Los, the manifestation of Urthona, the northern Zoa of Imagination. Like Anubis, Los is also a conductor of souls, and this is his fallen or lesser aspect as a ‘Druidic’ magician and active agent of materialism rather than the spiritual force he later becomes. Los, in separating from eternity, creates the new phenomenon called Time, and his major role here is that of time-lord, symbolically represented by the river of life flowing between his legs. As time, Los is a gift from eternity because he is the means by which spiritual unity will ultimately be reestablished. Time creates a way for truth to ultimately prevail, and so Los is a beneficial agent even though he practices pagan magic at this stage. Being the creator of time, he is associated with the art of Poetry or prophecy, which is truth through time. His element is Earth, symbolizing that imagination is the only solid and lasting reality. Note how different this is from the traditional tarot meaning of element Earth which denotes Materialism not Spirit.

In the border, the ram and bull at the corners represent the primal masculine energy associated with *Magic*, while the ram-heads on the altar imply pagan sacrifices required to propitiate the forces released in this card. The fire of life beneath the waters of time create the alchemical clouds that represent the spiritual body of man. The tent beneath the clouds encloses this world of matter, blocking the view of true spiritual reality.

KEYWORDS: ABILITY TO CONCENTRATE • WILLPOWER. BEING IN CONTROL • CHANNELING OF ENERGY • ARCHETYPAL COMMUNICATION • MAGICAL AND OCCULT POWERS • DUALITY • TIME AND TIMING • ASSERTIVE IMAGINATION •

At this stage, the fledging soul undergoes great expansion of personal consciousness and power. It is a magical achievement, sufficient for many seekers, who gladly stop here. For those who choose to go on...

II *Mystery***II—Mystery**

Mystery corresponds to the *High Priestess* in conventional Tarot. It introduces the feminine principle, represented by the triple goddess Hecate, who evokes the lunar power of the subconscious. Her sacred colors are white, red, and black to symbolize her womanly aspects of maiden, mother, and crone; her phases are the crescent, full, and waning moons; her rulership is over heaven, earth, and underworld. Her left hand (the sinister and materialistic side) rests on a book also being touched by her right (spiritual) foot, signifying that its knowledge, although occult and mysterious, is in touch with the spiritual realm. Hecate communes with the crocodile energy of card 0, gazing at its figure to her right. Hovering near her head is a cat-faced bat, her ‘witch’s familiar’ or totem creature, along with a raven, an oracle of magic. Her hair is long and flowing, a symbol of her power over men and nature.

This image of the triple goddess is suggestive of the female genitalia – the flanking figures representing naked labia, her skirt as a ‘veil’ over the vulva, and the triple heads the hooded clitoris – the whole assemblage symbolizing the vagina or yoni, the gateway to the female mysteries, framed by the arch of palms (virility) in the border. This imagery also correlates with the concept of Isis ‘veiled’, the goddess in her underworld aspect – called Nephtys, the consort of Anubis of card I.

In the Blakean interpretation of the card, the woman is Enitharmon, the Emanation or “female portion” of Los, and also his wife and sister. Her name is derived from those of her parents, Enion and Tharmas. The appearance of Enitharmon marks the point in the fall at which the soul assumes gender and becomes sexual. In dividing from Los, the lord of time, Enitharmon becomes the priestess of Space, which is the physical environment of mortal life. She represents the sense of pity for man’s state, a divine attribute needed to reestablish spiritual unity. She is a spinner who weaves the “triple female Tabernacle” (genitalia) from whence comes the living flesh. Enitharmon is willful and independent, declaring that “this is woman’s world...let man’s delight be love, but woman’s delight be pride.” Being the partner of Los and creator of space, she too is associated with Imagination and Poetry, which create eternal time and space.

In the border, angels symbolize the invisible and mysterious forces linking the worlds of spirit and matter, and recall Shakespeare’s lines: “... we Fairies that do runne, By the triple Hecates teame, From the presence of the Sunne, Following darknesse like a dreame.” The date palms and wheat stalks symbolize her as the provider of spiritual sustenance, while the roses and lilies together signify the sexuality and fecundity associated with the feminine principle.

KEYWORDS: PSYCHIC OR INTUITIVE KNOWLEDGE • ARCHETYPAL SEXUALITY • PROUD INDEPENDENCE • LUNAR INSPIRATION • SPATIAL ISSUES • COMPASSION FOR OTHERS • PRIDE IN FEMININE • . RECEPTIVE IMAGINATION •

In the presence of *Mystery*, the soul discovers sexuality and mysticism. Many seekers are captivated at this stage, and stay here with the goddess. For those who choose to go on...

III–NatureIII *Nature*

Nature corresponds to the Empress in conventional Tarot, and is the outcome of Magic and Mystery, of masculine energy and feminine intuition – her attribute is emotion. Nature is symbolized here by the biblical figure of Bathsheba, King David’s favorite wife whom he took in adultery when unable to resist her beauty. This card represents motherhood, and we see Bathsheba with the first two children she bore to David. She gazes lovingly at her first-born son on her left (sinister) side, the child that died as punishment for David’s sin. His left foot leads him into the water (of oblivion), and he is flanked by three lilies of sorrow.

Bathsheba’s second son is on her right, with his right (spiritual) foot leading away from the water. This is Solomon, who became the great king of Israel, and he is flanked by three roses of glory. Both types of flowers also symbolize the archetypal sexuality of this card, and hint at the harlot aspect of Bathsheba. However, prostitution was anciently considered a sacred and healing activity of the goddess.

In Blakean iconography, the woman is Vala, the Emanation or female portion of Luvah, the eastern Zoa of Love. Luvah and Vala are associated with the art of Music because it rouses the passions; their element is Fire. Vala is the embodiment of nature, and represents, on one hand, the irresistibility of natural beauty (the feminine qualities) – and on the other hand, the danger and delusion implicit in nature (as the projection of matter). In Blake’s mythology, Vala is the cause of Albion’s fall, seducing him in Beulah and then giving birth to Urizen, the first-born child of the realm of Generation. Thus, in the Blakean interpretation, the child at Vala’s left would be the spectrous Urizen. In her fallen form, Vala represents the illusion that the physical world is real, and her evil is that she seduces man away from true spiritual reality. Blake also calls her Babylon, the Harlot. Her ‘unveiled’ nakedness emphasizes both her beauty and her power: “The nakedness of woman is the work of God.”

The stream of water signifies the sensual aspects of nature and its creative forces. Vala as nature, like her soul-sister Hecate in II–Mystery, has three aspects: she is mother – healing and nurturing; consort – sexual and passionate; and deceiver – secretive and treacherous. As in conventional Tarot, Vala represents Isis ‘unveiled’, the creatrix mother of life.

In the border, musical instruments and fruiting grapevines suggest the artistry and creativity associated with this card, while the communing angels emphasize the sense of pleasure that is traditionally associated with this card.

KEYWORDS: MOTHER EARTH • MOTHERHOOD • FERTILITY • SEXUALITY • EMOTIONS • ABUNDANCE • ATTRACTIVENESS • ALSO: DECEPTION • ILLUSION •

At this stage, the soul gets emotionally involved with goddess nature, and many love-sick seekers want nothing more. For those who choose to go on...

IV *Reason***IV–Reason**

Reason corresponds to the Emperor in conventional Tarot. It depicts the seemingly godlike form of Urizen, who is Blake’s southern Zoa of Mentality, the “eternal mind.” His name may be a multiple pun on ‘reason’ or ‘horizon’, and ‘Uranus’. Urizen, driven by self-doubt, fails to understand the need for a balance of forces, and selfishly desires to dominate eternity. Urizen is associated with the element Air and the art of Science, so he has a lofty ability to explain, quantify, and manipulate reality – but Urizen is also orthodox, moralistic, stubborn, and egotistic. He is the aspect of deity that, if unchecked, can degenerate into Satan. Supremely dualistic,

Urizen represents good intentions and blind egotism, intellectual wisdom and implacable patriarchy, expansion and contraction, dynamism and stasis. Wielding his compasses as a classic symbol of this dualism, Urizen measures all things, but without compassion and true understanding. He is the “king of pride.”

Like the jealous and vengeful god of the Old Testament, he is the author of absolute law, which is justice without mercy. Urizen is called the Spectre, and the adversary of spiritual consciousness. Another mocking Blakean name for him is Nobodaddy, from ‘nobody’s daddy’.

Sometimes associated with the sun god Apollo, Urizen is shown leaning out of the sphere of eternity into the void, in the act of measuring out what Blake calls the “mundane shell,” which is the visible sky as the astral projection of the fallen world. Urizen extends his compasses downward with his left (sinister) hand, and the cosmic wind that blows his hair and beard also comes from his left.

Despite his dictatorial traits, we can also see him as the traditional Tarot figure of the kingly father who benevolently directs the actions of his subjects and children, defines limits, sets boundaries, and asserts the law.

In the border, two books of knowledge connected by a scroll of inspiration are tended by an angel who represents the holy spirit, or Comforter. These symbols have a dualistic meaning. On the one hand, they literally illustrate that truth and knowledge are linked by imagination, and presided over by love – all shown connected to Urizen through his compasses. On the other hand, these books represent Urizen’s dreaded metallic books of brass (laws) and iron (war), impaled on the compass points of reason. When limited to finite perception, they deny the infinite and introduce error; when unlimited, they offer loving direction.

KEYWORDS: RATIONALITY • PATRIARCHY • AUTHORITY • REPRESSION • ORTHODOXY • ASSERTION • POSSESSION • DEFINITION • FALSE DIVINITY • SELFHOOD • DUALISM •

At this stage, consciousness realizes that it can control and define itself, wielding its intellect to create and enforce. Many seekers, fascinated with power, find it logical to stop here. For those who choose to go on...

V-Religion

V Religion

Religion corresponds to the Hierophant in conventional Tarot. Religion is the logical segue to reason, developing as its metaphysical counterpart. In Blake's time, its leading form was Deism, or "natural religion," which logically deduces the necessity of God, asserts the inborn goodness of man, and denies the possibility of miracles or divine revelation. Deism was espoused by leading English thinkers of the 17th and early 18th century (and by Voltaire and Rousseau in France, and Franklin, Jefferson, and Washington in America) – but to Blake it was an abomination. He asserted that man's supreme faculty was not reason but imagination – the spiritual fountain from which all true religion flowed. In this sense, "all religions are one." But generally speaking, 'religion' was to Blake a dirty word, referring to the spiritually corrupt churches and preachers that he called "fiends of righteousness," whose moralizing was hypocritical and produced spiritual error. Moreover, Blake believed that God (Jesus) could be personally or directly experienced through gnosis – eliminating the need for preachers, popes, and all spiritual intermediaries.

In this card, religion is mockingly symbolized by George III, the unpopular but long-enduring English monarch (and head of the Church of England) during both the American and French Revolutions, who eventually went insane. This image is also a political jibe, because Blake ardently (and seditiously) sympathized with the American revolutionary cause, and the early ideals of the French Revolution. Derisively called "Albion's angel" by Blake, the king wears a papal tiara and bat wings, symbolizing the unholy collusion of church and state. Dressed both as priest and king, he sits on a Gothic throne resembling a cathedral. Like Urizen in card IV, he floats on a cloud while on his lap he holds open the book of brass (law).

The angels represent the queens of England and France who bow to natural religion, their wing tips touching the bat wings. The crossed and lowered scepters held by the angels are like Urizen's compasses; they signify worldly control and insincerity, emphasized by the serpents crawling from beneath the angels' gowns.

In the border, flames of false religion rise from the sea of time and space, chasing crowds of shamed angels to the heavens, while two crucified angels at the corners represent betrayed love and piety looking away.

Although the imagery of the card is overwhelmingly negative, it makes the statement that humanity's spiritual needs must be addressed, and thus stems from a positive impulse. Blake rejects traditional religion for being worldly and corrupt. His denunciation only underlines the importance he placed upon the influence of leaders and teachers in educating people to see the beauty and divinity of life.

KEYWORDS: SPIRITUAL NEEDS • CONVENTIONAL MORALITY • TRADITION •

RULES OF OBEDIENCE AND LOYALTY • FEELING BETRAYED BY THE SYSTEM • CORRUPTION OF RELIGION •

TEACHING AND LEARNING •

This stage of worldly religion is unholy, but brings a sense of security to those who seek spiritual consciousness within a rational framework, convincing many seekers to righteously stop here. For those who choose to go on...



VI Knowledge

VI-Knowledge

Knowledge corresponds to the Lovers in conventional Tarot. It represents the three types of knowledge within the human psyche: conscious, unconscious, and superconscious – represented by the first man (Adam), the first woman (Eve), and an archangel – in the lush garden of physical Eden. The card depicts the interrelationship and integration of these states, which can also be called: masculine, feminine, and divine. The archangel, with its wingtips joined as if in prayer, is Raphael ('healer of God'), who symbolizes healing and mediation. Raphael urgently dialogues with Adam and Eve, asking them to heed the advice of God and thus be 'good'. Eve, the central figure in the drama, submissively serves fruit and wine but pointedly looks at Adam instead of Raphael; meanwhile Adam gestures as if to say, 'I'm sorry, but it's out of my hands'. We know that Adam and Eve both disregard the divine counsel, and listen instead to the serpent who girdles the 'Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil' behind Eve's head.

This card is about choice and responsibility, from which arise both individuality and maturity. In terms of biblical morality, Adam and (especially) Eve make the 'wrong' choice by committing the original sin, which is disobedience to God. But Eve's choice is motivated by a deeper understanding than dialectical reasoning or orthodox morality can comprehend. Her disobedience expresses humanity's spiritual need to gain knowledge of good and evil, of sexuality, and of the material world – in order to ultimately transcend them. Note that both Adam and Eve have their right (spiritual) feet forward, while Raphael puts its left (sinister) foot forward; Raphael also points with his left hand to heaven, while his right hand points to the forbidden tree – all these stances and gestures subliminally support the spiritual correctness of Adam and Eve's choice. The arching framework of lilies, in combination with fruiting date palms and grapevines, form the traditional symbols of paradise, while the combination of roses and lilies at the corners represents innocent love.

Knowledge is the true start of the revolution that will eventually overthrow natural religion and lead the soul back to eternity. To Blake, the downside of Eve's choice is that her action usurps God's power to judge good and evil, thus creating the system of human justice with its terrible error of vengeance. However, Blake also maintained that error always has value because it exposes what needs to be corrected.

In the border, the serpent god Leviathan writhes upon the sea of time and space, intertwining with the rising spirals of flames and briars while angels at the upper corners look down and wonder. This complex combination of symbols represents both sin and the burning-up of sin, both death and rebirth, and the interplay of matter and spirit as an ornately beautiful drama.

KEYWORDS: SELF-KNOWLEDGE • SELF-INTEGRATION • CLARIFYING AND MAKING CHOICES •

TAKING RESPONSIBILITY • MORAL FREEDOM • CARNAL KNOWLEDGE • MARRIAGE •

INFLUENCE OF OTHERS •

Knowledge brings self-satisfaction, along with many dangers. Consciousness now realizes the potential for its own divinity, and learns about ecstasy. Many seekers stop here to enjoy the physical fruits of Eden. For those who choose to go on...

VII—Experience

VII EXPERIENCE

Experience corresponds to the Chariot in conventional Tarot. It represents the culmination of the material quest, completing the stages of the Cycle of Matter. In this card, the bizarre and flame-girded vehicle represents the fleshly chariot of experience persevering in the hellish world of matter. With wheels and traces formed of three serpents, drawn by two oxen with the manes of lions and faces of men with spiral horns, upon whose backs are gnome-like eagles, here is a strange but appropriate symbol of all the contradictory and monstrous forces ruling the fallen world at the end of its cycle of material evolution. Humanity, represented by the

aged and weary couple riding the chariot, is physically and spiritually spent within a burnt landscape. This is Adam and Eve at the end of their worldly journey, having started with high hopes in the physical Eden and now come to the last stage of Generation, Blake's vegetative realm. Here, "life lives upon death & by devouring appetite all things subsist on one another."

The strange creatures pulling the chariot lead with their left feet, and yet their spiral horns are crowned with laurel wreaths of victory – a traditional meaning of this card. As distorted forms of the Zoas (recognizable by their features of ox, lion, man, and eagle), their powers throughout the journey so far have won many material victories and conquests, which are evident in their harsh but human faces. Materialism, which is Generation, does offer protections and comforts for those who strive. Its mills have subjugated nature and its consciousness has even expanded into "twofold vision," which is Blake's term for the perception of human values.

Although acknowledging success on the material plane, this card emphatically shows the ultimate victory to be Satan's and not Humanity's. Still, Experience is a necessary phase on the way to regeneration. One of the mysterious hands at the tips of the spiral horns reaches back for the eagle-gnome's pen (at the center of the image) – a sign that the poetic imagination (of which the pen, eagle, and gnome are all symbols) is still functioning, and the other hand may yet redirect the chariot and bring new life to its passengers.

In the border, a bat-winged Satan stands in mastery over the globe, sword in his left hand, looking back over the Cycle of Matter, well satisfied with his handiwork so far. Stricken angels lie upon the corners, and flames and thunderbolts lick at the lower edges of the card, signifying major turmoil. Is this defeat or cleansing?

KEYWORDS: MATERIAL POWERS • MATERIAL VICTORY • SPIRITUAL DEFEAT • AMBIGUITY • MATURITY • COMPLETED DEVELOPMENT • WORLDLINESS • CONTROL OVER NATURE • CONTROL OVER INSTINCTS AND EMOTIONS • EGO-CONCERNS •

The seeker who is pleased with material success may well stop here. The majority of mankind is content within Satan's mastery of this first cycle. Yet, for those who choose to go on, a breakthrough is in store...

**The Cycle of Awakening**

The second cycle, with its seven cards in which the soul becomes aware of spiritual reality, now begins...

VIII—Assessment

VIII Assessment

Assessment corresponds to Justice in conventional Tarot. Initiating the Cycle of Awakening, this card addresses the need for personal reconsideration as the first step in the process of spiritual regeneration. It questions whether and how the damaged soul can continue its journey.

A key aspect of the naked man – who represents compassion, not justice – is that the traditional sword of vengeance is replaced by a scroll of imagination. This concept is revolutionary because it imaginatively replaces judgement with forgiveness. Furthermore, the scales that Assessment raises with his right hand are not evenly balanced (as always portrayed in other decks), but clearly weighted in the direction of the scroll. This symbol means: Be imaginative! Forgive yourself and others! Judge not according to man's justice but according to divine inspiration and love!

The numbering of Assessment as VIII instead of XI corresponds to Marseilles-style decks rather than decks using the Waite-Smith variant, in part for historical correspondence with decks of Blake's period.

In the Blakean interpretation, this represents Luvah, the Zoa of Emotion. His name is a pun on 'Lover'. In III–Nature, we met Vala as his fallen Emanation. Now, in this card Luvah himself appears as the loving and compassionate instigator of spiritual regeneration. Luvah, the "prince of love," is frequently associated by Blake with Jesus, who in turn represents forgiveness and imagination – both of which are necessary for the soul's breakthrough into the later Cycle of Awakening. Luvah walks naked in beauty upon the empty shells of men's souls abandoned on the materialistic shore of the sea of time and space. He steps through a Gothic gateway symbolizing spirit, inviting us to go further along the soul's journey. There is no veil or hindrance at the gate; its transparency is the freedom of the spirit to choose its own way.

In the upper border, recording angels note the choices made, and eagles below symbolize the imagination; the clouds are the spiritual body of Humanity.

KEYWORDS: SPIRITUAL REALIZATION • IMAGINATIVE DECISIONS • THINGS NOT IN EQUILIBRIUM • WEIGHING INTANGIBLES • CONCERN WITH BEING FAIR OR JUST • INSPIRED NEGOTIATIONS • FORGIVENESS OF SELF AND OTHERS • MORAL SITUATIONS •

Seekers who are complacent or satisfied can go no further, and sink down to join the skeletal shells. For those who choose to go on...

IX-ImaginationIX *Imagination*

Imagination corresponds to the Hermit in conventional Tarot. Here is the light that illuminates life in its innermost depths and mysteries. We see a hermit-like figure with a globe of holy fire entering a doorway and peering into the darkness. We can fearlessly face the unknown to find our spiritual selves, using divine imagination as our guide.

The figure is Los, who first appeared in *I-Magic*. Los is Blake's mythic personification of Urthona, the Zoa of Imagination. The name Los is the inverse of Sol, which means 'Sun', and is the homonym of 'Soul'. Thus Los 'mirrors' both the sun and soul. In card I, Los as time is part of the Cycle of Matter as the fallen magus who manipulates matter. Now, in the Cycle of Awakening, Los assumes his heroic role as the "prophet of eternity," the living force of imagination that provides the means to reunify Albion. Blake figuratively shouted in all his works that imagination is the most vital faculty of both man and god, and is therefore the vital link between them. We dream God and God dreams us. More than that, imagination is god within man, and is the only god. "Man is all imagination: God is man & exists in us & we in him."

In this card, Los is clothed as a night watchman, prudently wearing a work coat, felt hat, and sandals – the search for truth is garbed in simplicity and humility. Los's left hand, having pushed open the door, is raised as if in recognition. Perhaps he sees the isolation and introspection he must experience during the journey. In his right hand, "the red globule is the unwearied sun by Los created, [the]...light of light." He steps (with his right foot) through a doorway into what seems a dark tomb, the death of materialism that is the gateway to eternity. Los's hair is blown back by the breath of spiritual life invisibly flowing toward him, and like Luvah's gateway in the previous card, Los's doorway is of Gothic design – the "living form" of the true church: the Ageless Wisdom.

In the border, two spiraling ladders of symbols recapitulate the path of consciousness from bottom to top: The pastoral innocence of the lambs and their shepherds gives way to the vanity of the peacock (left) and the mimicry of the parrot (right). Above them come a series of larks in their nests, which in Blake's system symbolize new ideas. Then these ideas must be tested in smoke and fire, signifying pain and suffering that make the angels weep. Persevering higher, at last come the living Gothic arches that vault to heaven through clouds of divinity. The entire border design itself forms a Gothic arch that frames the central motif. Imagination is the grand gate that connects man to the divine, for it rests on earth and arches to heaven.

KEYWORDS: UNLIMITED IMAGINATION • INTROSPECTION • INNER CONVICTION • PASSAGE OF TIME • TIMING • THE INNER TEACHER • OCCULT WISDOM • SPIRITUAL JOURNEY • FACING THE UNKNOWN • SELF-GUIDANCE • PREPARATION AND PRUDENCE • DEATH OF THE EGO-SELF •

For seekers without imagination, the danger is too great, and they dare not step through the door. For those who can imagine going further...

X *Whirlwind**X-Whirlwind*

Whirlwind corresponds to the Wheel of Fortune in conventional Tarot. It signifies change, and reveals reality to be a whirlpool of energy in which anything can happen. Unlike fortune or fate, Whirlwind is a guided spiritual force that activates the Zoas or eternal forces within man, now for regenerative purposes. Ezekiel in the Bible says, "I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north." The north is associated with Los. It is he who unleashes the cyclone, the soul-twister that stirs up when man's true potential for divinity is revealed. Within the whirlwind are the four 'beasts' of the Book of Revelation – the highest cherubim, the 'living creatures' witnessed by the prophets. In their fourfold nature, they bear the faces of the ox, lion, man, and eagle – the tetramorphs of the four Zoas. "These are the four faces towards the four worlds...in every man." The card image does not depict the animal faces, illustrating instead the biblical lines: "They four had one likeness: and their appearance and their work was...a wheel in the middle of a wheel...full of eyes round about them four."

Above is God on his throne, with his right arm upraised in blessing or greeting. Although the Old Testament god is depicted, in Blake's system God is Jesus – and Man – and Imagination: "The eternal body of man is the imagination; that is, God himself, the divine body, Jesus: we are his members." In this sense, God is a universal symbol for our own divinity. The starry eyes whirling within the wheels may be the "members," who are us. Or the eyes are the ideas of the soul, whirling with holy energy.

In the upper border, the Eyes of God shape the wheel of the whirlwind, and crown God-Jesus-Man-Imagination with an angelic halo that is itself a metaphor of man's spiritual evolution. At the base of the border, we see the forest of error felled by the force of impending change, while Ezekiel ('God strengthens') gazes up in wonder.

KEYWORDS: CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES • CYCLES AND TURNING POINTS • CIRCULAR THINKING • SHIFTS OF FORTUNE • GATHERING OF RESOURCES • THE DANCE OF LIFE • NEW OPPORTUNITIES • WHIRLING IDEAS • CHANGES OF SEASONS • SPIRITUAL CELEBRATION •

The vision of the fourfold forces is awesome to behold, and many seekers stop here in dizziness from the sight. For those who choose to go on...

XI–Energy

XI Energy

Energy corresponds to the Strength card in conventional Tarot. It symbolizes the stage of physical renewal, as inner strength arising from the body itself, and from animal intuition at the deepest level. The forms of the Zoas are again depicted; they are even arranged in their proper symbolic order: the ox of Tharmas at the left of the tree (west), the lion of Urizen at the base (south), the man of Luvah in front (east), and the eagle of Urthona above (north) – see Chart 2-2. The symbolic reappearance of the Zoas here emphasizes that Energy is both the outcome and the continuity of Whirlwind. That they are arrayed around the oak tree signifies the strength and endurance of the energy of nature.

All the animals in this card represent instincts and intuitions that are mediated and mastered by the human figure of Tharmas, the Zoa of Body. Tharmas is shown filled with the renewed energy of life, and this “energy is eternal delight.” The original inscription to this illustration says of the animals, “Their strength, or speed, or vigilance, were giv’n in aid of our defects” (William Hayley) – in other words, the animal forces are our allies.

More than that, however, Tharmas is the ally of the animal forces; that is, he is the means through which they ‘speak’ – and in this sense, this card is also about the energy inherent in metaphor. Tharmas, whose sense organ (Chart 2-2) is the tongue, assumes the qualities of the animals by speaking for them. Because the first function of speech is the communication of the soul, the animals are metaphors for the range and power of the multidimensional human soul. (In metaphor, saying ‘I am a lion’ makes me a lion and personifies its qualities within me; by contrast, allegory says ‘I am like a lion’ and thus means I am not really a lion and only pretending. Metaphor releases energy, while allegory weakens it.)

Traditional to this card, the lion is featured, and reclines at man’s feet to signify that its fabled strength is under his command, and he can draw on it at will. Note also that Tharmas’s symbolic animal (Chart 2-2) is the ox of strength and patience, which appears at the lower left; and in reference to his calling as a shepherd, the ram of virility appears at the lower right. In speaking for the animals Tharmas demonstrates that he understands (and loves) his bodily instincts and physical capabilities, and they listen to his dictates.

This card marks the midway point of the soul’s journey, and so it repeats the border motifs of card I to symbolize a new beginning through the second decanate of cards.

KEYWORDS: LUST FOR LIFE • SENSUAL DELIGHT • ABUNDANCE OF VITAL ENERGY • INTEGRATION OF CAPABILITIES AND INSTINCTS • PHYSICAL ENDURANCE AND COURAGE • MULTIDIMENSIONALITY. METAPHORIC EXPRESSION •

A strong sense of animal satisfaction may lull many seekers into stopping here. For those with the energy to go further...



XII Reversal

XII–Reversal

Reversal corresponds to the Hanged Man in conventional Tarot. This card represents the upset of reason and the reversal of old views. Urizen, the Zoa of Mind, limited by pride and error, is the last of the Zoas to reappear in the Cycle of Awakening as part of the process of regeneration. He must do something radical, yet still act within his nature: thus this handstand of the soul. Both active and passive, it is a creative expression and synthesis of Urizen’s dualism. The Tarot Hanged Man is passive and defenseless in his suspension. By contrast, the regenerate figure of Urizen now uses the metaphoric strength acquired in XI–Energy to position the soul into dynamic balance instead of mere suspension. His pose is physically static, but its sense of contained energy is wonderfully dynamic. In this prelude to Transformation, the soul chooses to reverse and reinvent itself, rather than be controlled by nature anymore.

Reversal also has the meaning of undergoing a reverse; that is, being upset or overthrown, suffering defeat, loss, or depression. In this possibility, we see the soul swept off its feet and clinging to retain balance while being buffeted by the winds of change and personal challenge. Archetypal psychologist James Hillman has defined the soul’s ability to create abnormality, suffering, and illness as pathologizing. Although frightening, this ability is necessary because we can reach the gods through affliction. This situation represents an opportunity to regenerate the soul by seeing things differently, especially to find new meanings and get closer to the underlying spiritual basis of the matter. Blake said that “every natural effect has a spiritual cause.” Therefore anything that helps us see the cause is beneficial.

In the lower border, various malevolent symbols – toadstools (death), thorns (pain), thistles (uselessness), and lily of the valley (poison) – are unavoidably exposed to the seeker in the midst of his upside-down adventure, while raindrops or tears drip from the clouds beside his hands. Like much else in this card, these are ambiguous symbols whose meaning can only be determined in context. They could be interpreted as departing aspects of the forlorn material world, difficulties or pathologizing being experienced in the present situation, or harbingers of worse things just ahead in the future.

KEYWORDS: REVERSAL OF THE ESTABLISHED ORDER • COMMUNING WITH THE INNER SELF • UNCONVENTIONALITY • RITE OF PASSAGE OR INITIATION • CHAOTIC MEDITATION • PSYCHIC ISOLATION • MYSTICISM • DEFEAT, MARTYRDOM, SELF-PITY • PATHOLOGIZING AS A WAY OF COMMUNICATING WITH SPIRIT •

This contrary exercise is enough to dissuade many seekers, who choose to suspend things here. For those who can face going further...

XIII—Transformation**XIII** *Transformation*

Transformation corresponds to Death in conventional Tarot. It represents the impermanence of materialistic consciousness, and the prospect of imminent transformation – one way or the other. Before the soul can return to eternity, the concerns of the material self must be cut away, if not by choice than by time itself. This card signifies a major change in consciousness, necessary at this point in the journey. Change is inevitable in any case, and the vegetative world is a hopeless cause – “the grave is heaven’s golden gate, and rich and poor around it wait.” The demise of one thing is the dawning of something else. Energy cannot be destroyed, only transformed. The release of energy previously imprisoned in old forms endows this process with great drama and power. However, this card is primarily a metaphor for mystical, not physical, death – it points to the need for transforming oneself during this lifetime, beginning with this moment, as an essential step in the process of spiritual initiation.

In this collaged card, we see two aspects of time, combined at the hip in the form of a rather grotesque angel. Its blue persona holds “time’s enormous scythe, whose ample sweep strikes empires from the root,” harvesting the life of the past. Loss must always precede the coming rebirth. Simultaneously, time’s lively red persona, wings raised high, looks the other way – into the future and new life. The people shown in the card are the same as those depicted in 10 of Painting, and most are oblivious to their fate.

In the lower border, the thistles in the previous card are now joined by various remnants of defeated humanity and artifacts of hard times: the shephook of innocence is fractured by the march of time, the pitcher of life broken by time’s scythe, and the overgrown fountain of fertility abandoned to frogs and the locust’s scourge. Overhead, bat-winged angels cavort in the clouds, while others at the sides dangle spiders from threads of fate. There is no escape from the decay of worldly things, except through transformation into a new regime of belief.

KEYWORDS: UPROOTING OF LIFE • CHANGE. CHANGE OF CONSCIOUSNESS • PRUNING AND CUTTING AWAY • INTENSE EXPERIENCE • GETTING BACK TO BASICS • ELIMINATION. LETTING GO • SURRENDER •

Those unable to accept the pain of new beliefs, who would rather endure the pain of their dying beliefs, now give up the ghost right here. Those who can accept going further find that surrender brings renewal...

**XIV** *Forgiveness***XIV—Forgiveness**

Forgiveness corresponds to Temperance in conventional Tarot. It represents the quality of mercy depicted as Jesus, who now appears as the soul’s guide through the infernal regions yet to come. Jesus is Blake’s symbol for the human imagination, the divine power in man. To Blake, Jesus is not a religious or church figure, but the personification of an idea. Forgiving error in oneself and others is an idea so creative and powerful that most people cannot even imagine it. Forgiveness has far-reaching implications in both everyday and artistic life – because if you do not forgive others you cannot know the feeling of true joy; if you do not forgive yourself, you cannot function as an individual. Forgiveness is imagination in action. It is the root and the vine of all healing, the place of communion with all that is holy.

Blake’s view of the historical Jesus disagrees with the Christian version. A lifelong Bible scholar, Blake stated that Jesus was a bastard who died a hopeless sinner. He criticized Jesus’s politics and labeled the resurrection a lie. Nevertheless, Blake was profoundly inspired by Jesus’s idea of forgiveness of sin, for it repudiated the pernicious laws of Mosaic morality, eliminated the necessity of war and violence, and rendered the judgement of good and evil irrelevant.

Forgiveness conceptually incorporates Temperance – as in the traditional card of that name. Dealing with matters in a moderate or proportionate way (temperance) is suggested here by Jesus’s hands extending over the “ambrosial fruits fetched from the tree of life” (bread) and “ambrosial drink from the fount of life” (wine) offered by angels below. It also refers to strengthening or toughening, with the fire of the sun providing spiritual tempering. And it relates to mental disposition or temperament, exemplified by the angelic choirs.

In the border, the shepherds at the corners and the small angels above suggest patience at this time. Forgiveness has the power to cast out all error. It takes Transformation a step further into the alchemical transubstantiation of bread and wine into body and blood.

KEYWORDS: CREATIVE SOLUTIONS • COMPASSION • HEALING AND BEING HEALED • WORKING WITH AN INNER GUIDE • MANAGEMENT OF RESOURCES • BLENDING AND HARMONIZING • PROPORTION AND TIMING. ALCHEMICAL ARTS. RENEWAL •

Needy of forgiveness, many souls linger here to feel safe. For those who can accept going further, here is the key that unlocks the next cycle...

The Cycle of Spirit

Having now been tossed, turned, transformed, forgiven, and tempered, the soul may justly feel satisfied that spiritual awareness has been achieved. However, the most difficult stages are yet ahead, as the final Cycle of Spirit begins...

XV–Error



XV Error

Error corresponds to the Devil in conventional Tarot. It introduces what is traditionally called the Dark Night of the Soul, where Satan (“the prince of this world”) appears within oneself as selfhood (“reasoning and doubting”), which Blake equated with spiritual fear. The soul sinks into Ulro, Blake’s term for the lowest point in material existence, a state of “deepest night [and] dread sleep [filled with] unreal forms...productive of the most dreadful consequences...even of torments, despair, eternal death.” It is at this point in the journey, just when the soul is finally releasing itself from its old beliefs, that error reasserts itself in primal ferocity. In these dark regions, Satan – who is a state of mind, not a being – declares his egotism: “I am God alone: there is no other.” He uses fear and ignorance to keep the seeker in the state of “opacity,” blocking the light of imagination and mercy, the true gods within oneself. To Blake, error represents the delusions of materialism and worldly morality that engulf the individual in darkness. Error tries to negate Forgiveness.

In this card, we see that error is not in the individual alone. Satan counsels here with his numberless potentates, demonian spirits, and powers of the elements. Girded with flames, he speaks about how to tempt and defeat imagination (Jesus); that is, the divine spirit of forgiveness within man. Satan’s accomplices represent all the forces in society that readily reinforce and propagate error, the vast support system for the false god who deludes the individual at every step. Today these forces include the media, governments, corporations, and other civil organizations that promote violence, immorality, materialism, and stupidity. In the card, Satan’s left (materialistic) hand holds his phallic scepter of sovereignty over the flesh, and with his left foot elevated, his right hand mockingly makes the chironome (hand-sign) of the horned phallus. The spears at left and right represent deadly powers, while the single spear held by the foreground figure on the right is a weapon against mercy, reminding us that Jesus was pierced with a spear. A female spirit at the left wears a net that symbolizes the snare of sex as another of Satan’s weapons (Compare this card to VI–Knowledge, its traditional analogue, VI being the numerological reduction of XV.)

In the border, souls at the upper corners struggle to ascend or just hold on, but are held back by bat-wings of delusion and chains of selfhood, even though they are not fastened to anything. Beneath, we see a raven treading on a serpent and an owl grasping a mouse, flanking two scrolls. These symbols of mortality and superstition can devour the imagination.

KEYWORDS: SELFISHNESS • PRIDE, EGO • IGNORANCE AND FEAR • GUILT AND TEMPTATION • BOUNDARIES AND LIMITATIONS • SELF-IMPORTANCE AND LACK OF COMEDY • OBSESSION WITH SEX, WEALTH, AND POWER • TRAPPED IN MATERIALISM • INNER PANIC AND PANDEMONIUM

The path here is treacherous and requires focused attention upon the truth. Many souls cannot find it in themselves, and give up here. For those who can accept going further...



XVI Lightning

XVI–Lightning

Lightning, which continues the Dark Night of the Soul, corresponds to the Tower in conventional Tarot. It illustrates the biblical story of the destruction of Job’s sons (on the right) and their wives (on the left). Their sins include adultery and dissipation (the concubine lying below, with timbrel and lyre) and gluttony (the goblet and plates at lower right). Job does not yet realize the Accuser is in his own mind, and that the god he self-righteously worships is actually Satan – his own pride. In Blake’s myth, Satan also represents the evil that can result from unrestricted rationality, when Urizen (Zoa of Reason) degenerates into the Spectre (unimaginative mind). An example of the Spectre is today’s scientific community, which society worships as a false god, a deification of reason that creates terrific spiritual error.

Lightning has a dual interpretation: On one hand, this is a vision of hell in which we see our own inner guilt projected as Satan, vengefully punishing our failures but simultaneously devastating our human qualities and family values. However, the scene is illuminated by a lightning flash of insight – allowing us to penetrate the darkness and suddenly realize that the Accuser is our own self-doubt. “I in my selfhood am that Satan: I am that evil one,” declares the enlightened soul. The flash of lightning is also a pun on ‘light’ning’; that is, the lightening of the ‘dark night of the soul’. Healing oneself can now take place through forgiveness, an imaginative act that banishes accusation and prefigures divinity.

Alternatively, all the figures in the card can be considered en masse to represent a state of error, a neurotic psychological structure still the same hell of our own making. Merely illuminating this shaky edifice of ego brings it crashing down. Taking responsibility for our own suffering is the electric idea that strikes Satan from behind, shattering his dominion and collapsing the tower of ego and its errors within. This depicts the sacrifice of selfish beliefs, which can stimulate pain and anger, even though necessary. The flames symbolize the old errors burning away and liberating energy for a new life.

The collapsing temple is of post-and-lintel design, denoting Blake’s Druidic or false religion. Satan hands are outspread in mock divinity. At his feet, Job’s eldest son balances on a staircase of spirit, and tries to save his wife (love) and child (innocence) but his efforts are futile. At the lower right, one son in death mimics the Tarot Hanged Man in martyrdom. In the border, the scorpions and the serpent’s scales, the dark clouds and licking flames – all identify this as the Spectre’s domain. But steps at left and right show the potential for spiritual elevation – and there is fresh new growth appearing at the base of the tower. In this card the state of error is personal, whereas in the previous card it was societal.

KEYWORDS: THE BREAK-UP OF RIGID STRUCTURES • SPIRITUAL AWAKENING • A BOLT OF INSIGHT FROM ABOVE. PURIFICATION • LIBERATION AND RELEASE • UNEXPECTED CHANGES • DISASTER • HUMILIATION • SHATTERED RIGIDITY AND CRYSTALLIZATION • RELEASED ANGER •

Some seekers are afraid of the light’ning, and stay here with the dark wreckage of their lives. For those who can accept more light...

XVII—Stars

XVII Stars

Stars corresponds to the Star in conventional Tarot. The light of the astral intelligences reveals the path once again; the worst of the darkness is over. The soul's inner eye now opens to the grandeur of eternity's firmament. This card depicts the poet John Milton (whose epic *Paradise Lost* starred and made Satan famous at the time) communing with the constellations from his underground bower of poetry. Although Milton in his old age is completely blind and subterranean, his mind sees and communicates perfectly with the divine energies of the universe. With his arms and fingertips upraised as if absorbing energy, he glows in gnostic ecstasy.

At his left (intellectual) arm is his book of knowledge and lamp of imagination; while at his right are the spirits of herbs and flowers, as well as symbols of human love. At the bottom left, lilies and roses are personified by two pairs of figures: in one, a hovering woman resurrects another from the earth; and a dancing couple embrace beneath an arch of baby angels, signifying perfect love. Underneath the book, a reclining mother nurses her twins. All these figures symbolize and express his inner vision as he speaks his poetic prophecies. By contrast, above him on the surface we see many other people beseeking the stars, but being spiritually blind they can only wail in frustration. Without inspiration, they fail to understand that what they desire from the stars is within them, and not beyond reach above them.

This scene illustrates the final lines of Milton's *Il Penseroso*:

*And may at last my weary age
Find out the peaceful hermitage
The Hairy Gown and Mossy Cell
Where I may sit and rightly spell
Of every Star that Heaven doth shew
And every Herb that sips the dew
Till old experience do attain
To something like Prophetic strain*

When Blake painted this picture, he too was approaching old age, and so it can be seen as a psychic self-portrait showing Blake in his own cave of creation, filled with love and writing inspired books of prophecy, while his contemporaries seek but fail to grasp his vision.

In the border below, another aged figure about to awaken. This is the biblical Job represented as sleeping Humanity, with his hand resting on a scroll of inspiration. Streams of angels urge him to open his inner eyes and soar together with them, weaving through the constellations, upward into inspiring visions of eternity.

KEYWORDS: SPIRITUAL REGENERATION • ENDLESS INSPIRATION • MULTIDIMENSIONAL PERCEPTION • CLAIRVOYANCE • NATURE WORSHIP • PUBLIC RECOGNITION • SELF-ESTEEM • ALTRUISTIC IMPULSES AND DESIRES • LIVING YOUR OWN VALUES •

The inspiration of the night sky is heaven enough for many star-struck seekers, who are content to stay here. For those whose opened eyes can accept the vision of even more...



XVIII MOON

XVIII—Moon

The Moon corresponds to the card of the same name in conventional Tarot. It sheds the light of lunar understanding upon a beautiful but perilous stage in the path. The Moon represents the use of the subconscious mind for intuition, dreams, and creativity – going inside yourself using what Blake calls “threefold vision,” a type of perception that fuses thoughts and feelings. In the card we a family of pilgrims beside a moonlit bay, endangered by a pair of “fiends” hidden in the darkness. This scene is Blake's realm of Beulah, ruled by Luvah and the emotions – a state of spiritual repose, artistic creativity, and open sexuality. Beulah, a place of perpetual night illuminated by the moon, specifically represents the dream world in which contraries such as peace and danger are equally true – a description of the subconscious mind. In dreams, the soul tells its tale without the censorship of the ego, and thus we can learn about our own psychic realities.

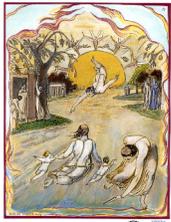
The figures lurking in the shadows, behind the rock beneath the Druidic oak, are the enemies of intuition – the twin fiends of reason and morality, the forces of society and worldly consciousness, the “dishumaniz'd terrors, synagogues of Satan [and]...monstrous churches of Beulah,” which are the gods and religions of this world. Their furry garb and primitive nature shows that they also represent the personal fears, nightmares, psychological shadows, and dark emotions within one's own mind, which are encountered at this stage of the journey. This card signifies a descent into the shimmering sea of emotions, risking both inner delusions and societal disapproval, seeking the rewards of inner peace and spiritual communion. The soul finds itself in a strange landscape that can easily generate feelings of sorrow and loneliness, or a disturbing sense of alienation from what was familiar and comforting before. However, the lambent moon gives light that signifies the ability to confront one's fear with creative insights and solutions.

In the border is Blake's “forest of the night,” from his most famous poem, “The Tyger.” The forest, and its arching clouds of mortality, symbolize error because they block the view of the spiritual sky above. Intuition is the faculty that enables the soul to find its way through the woods. The child suggests that something innocent and precious is being born, which the sterile creatures want to steal for their own.. It also symbolizes the human ability to evolve from brutishness into innocence through the transformative power of dreaming.

KEYWORDS: DEVELOPMENT OF PSYCHIC ABILITIES •

WORKING WITH DREAMS, FANTASIES, AND VISIONS • FACING SUBCONSCIOUS FEARS • SELF-DECEPTION • BEWILDERMENT • FEELING ALONE • GOING WITH THE FLOW • DEEP CELLULAR CHANGE • EVOLUTION • SOUL-RETRIEVAL •

This moonlit space is enchanting, and many decide to remain here, lost in their own minds. For those who can accept going further...

XIX-SunXIX *Sun*

The Sun card corresponds to the card of the same name in conventional Tarot. It represents enlightenment, symbolized by the spiritual sun as the source of the river of life. This scene exemplifies Blake's "fourfold vision," the state of mystical ecstasy in which he sees the sun as "an innumerable company of the heavenly host crying, 'Holy, Holy, Holy.'" This is the spiritual Eden, a state of surpassing joy and beauty, arising from complete confidence in one's direction. The central figure is Jesus, who glides upstream between the banks of innocence (left) and experience (right), with the tree of life growing on each side "and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of nations". On the left shore, a woman picks the fruit of the tree and another swaddles her child, while on the right shore two elders of wisdom stand with a child of innocence. In the background, the two shores are spanned by the sun, signifying that innocence and experience are joined at their source by imagination.

The children in the river represent the spirit and soul reborn as Adam and Eve, reminding us of Jesus's words, "unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." Jesus is not fully immersed in the river, as are the children, signifying his divine status. In the right forefront, a prominent woman with shears stoops to sever the thread of life and the cord of remembrance – the last attachments to old consciousness. She walks on the surface of the water, showing that she is not part of mortal life; she is Atropos, the Greek fate who cuts away the material flesh. To her, this is the 'river of forgetfulness', called Lethe. Soaring in front of the sun is St. John, an emblem of energy, coming to greet Jesus – a triple emphasis that "this world of imagination is the world of eternity." Note that St. John's right arm connects (the river and sun), while fate's left hand disconnects.

In the border, flames provide light from all directions, and their warmth symbolizes eternal love. In this card, humanity completes its development and reaches its perfection in the brotherhood of spiritual Eden.

KEYWORDS: ENLIGHTENMENT • DELIGHT • LIBERATION FROM OLD FORMS • RECOGNITION OF YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS • ENJOYMENT AND HAPPINESS IN LIFE • REALIZATION OF SPIRITUAL GOALS • FOURFOLD VISION, OR MYSTICAL SIGHT • RETURN TO THE SOURCE • IMAGINATION REALIZED •

The soul now puts aside its journey, having at last achieved the joy of enlightenment. The seeker now rests, basking in light. Yet, there can be more, for those who are accepted...

XX *Liberty**XX-Liberty*

Liberty corresponds to Judgement in conventional Tarot. In this collage of two images, we meet Blake's character of Jerusalem, the Emanation of Albion. Named for the holy city of peace, she represents mystic union with God, the divine vision that is man's liberty. This card is God's command to wake from the "sleep of Ulro," which is normal existence in the heavy world of matter, and liberate oneself into the mystical view of life without end. A flaming angel at the right blows its curved trumpet, which is the call to liberation and awakening: "A mighty sound articulate – awake ye dead & come." Hearing the call, the spirits of the dead in all their forms rise from the earth and issue from beneath the mantle of existence in the sky; and some dance beneath the moon in lunatic frenzy – including the leftmost one who looks over his shoulder towards the waiting gallows.

In the center, Blake's resplendent figure of Jerusalem, a metamorphic butterfly representing the spirit of human liberty, ascends upon a plume of flames. As the Emanation of Albion, Jerusalem too has been sleeping but now awakes. Her long hair streams forward, expressing her allure, and her arms are extended in loving acceptance of the entire universe before her. Embedded in her wings we see the sun, moon, and stars that represent the energies of the three previous cards, now combined in a single radiant symbol of the human capacity for spiritual transformation.

Although this card is sometimes associated with the concept of Last Judgment after physical death, its meaning for Blake is quite different. Judgment, or human liberation, occurs whenever error is eliminated, and this can happen at any time, individually or societally. For Blake, liberty must precede the ability to choose; with the ascension of Liberty, man is finally free to determine his own thoughts and actions.

In the upper border, angels with instruments amplify the call to awaken all souls. In the lower border, all the symbols relate to liberation: the living wheat of the spirit, the book of forgiveness that says, "love your enemies," and Blake's artistic tools – his palette, brushes, and graver, flanked by scrolls of inspiration.

KEYWORDS: A CALLING • AWAKENING TO FREEDOM • REBIRTH • METAMORPHOSIS • JUDGEMENT OF ONESELF AND OTHERS, AND BEING JUDGED • CHANGE OF STATE • RITE OF PASSAGE • DESIRE TO CREATIVELY MERGE WITH SOMEONE OR SOMETHING •

For those who have been called and are ready, Blake's message is: "awake thou sleeper...Albion awake. The trumpet of judgment hath twice sounded..."

XXI-Union

XXI Union

Union corresponds to the World in conventional Tarot. This represents the ultimate stage in the soul's journey, wherein all duality resolves into unity. The card shows Albion standing on the same rock as in the Eternity and Innocence cards – but now he is spiritually reassembled and his Humanity fully awakened. At the end of Blake's prophetic epic poem entitled *Jerusalem*, Albion sacrifices ("annihilates") himself for Jesus, throwing himself into the "furnaces of affliction," an act of love that inspires the Zoas to finally unite and restore Albion to eternal life.



00 ∞ Eternity 00

00/∞-Eternity

We return to where we began. Eternity in its aspect of infinity (∞) follows Union as the epilogue to the soul's journey, for eternity is the soul's destination after its regeneration.

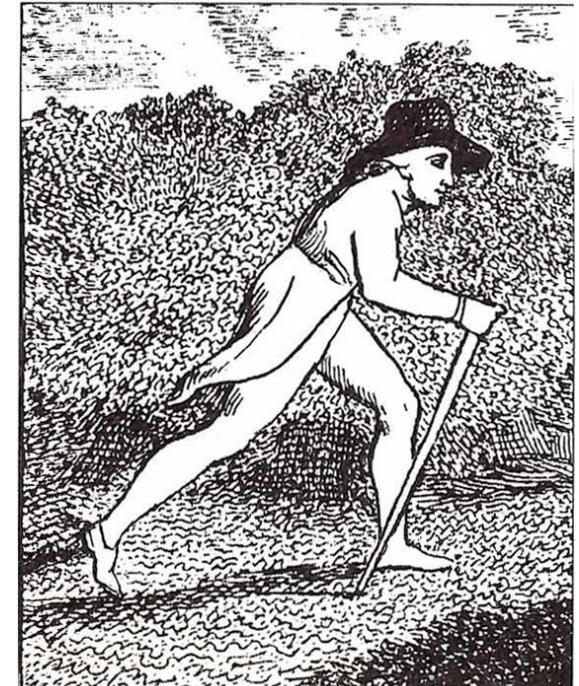
Albion is most of all a metaphor for a subjective state of mind, our own individual self-image. His spiritual regeneration shows our own possibilities for rebirth, for self-integrating into a new and sacred being. Although naked at the end just like at the start, the soul has undergone an inner evolution of consciousness, from descent and darkness to liberation and redemption. Although it appears the same, a revolution has occurred.

In the Tarot, this image portrays the joyful surrender with which the soul completes the journey. In the border, depictions of creation from Genesis flank Albion, the supreme creation. The upper left oval shows the creation of light on the first day; the middle oval shows the firmament dividing the waters on the second day; the lower left oval shows the gathering of waters to create dry land on the third day; then the upper right oval depicts the creation of the sun, moon, and stars as the lights of heaven on the fourth day; the middle oval shows the creatures of the sea and air being created on the fifth day; and the lower right oval shows the creatures of the land being created on the sixth day, along with man who is given dominion over all. Albion's pose expresses wonder and gratitude for these fruits of God's imagination.

This entire card is a fourfold vision of the world, with Humanity as the measure and master of all things. Below him in the border are symbols of the fate that Albion has transcended: Leviathan in the sea of time and space, and the worm of death coiled around a shrouded corpse. In the the border, two angels hold scrolls of inspiration. The left angel looks at the stars of Pleiades (the 'flock of doves' sacred to the goddess), symbolizing the feminine portion; and the right angel looks at the stars of Orion, symbolizing the masculine portion. These same stars are also in XVII-Stars, and so the hope expressed there during the Dark Night of the Soul now comes to fruition in the triumph of Union. The cloud joining the two angels is the unified spiritual body of man.

KEYWORDS: HUMANITY AWAKENED TO ITS DIVINITY • A NEW SPIRITUAL BEGINNING • INFINITE POTENTIAL • COMPLETION OF EFFORT • THE RAPTURE OF LIFE • SELF-ACTUALIZATION • UNIFICATION OF ALL THE ELEMENTS • ACCEPTING RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOURSELF AND YOUR CIRCUMSTANCES • SELF-SACRIFICE FOR A HIGHER GOAL •

The story of the soul's journey – man's quest for wholeness – is now told; imagination makes all things possible.



Chapter 4

The Suit of Painting

THE EMBODIMENT OF INNER VISION
 GIVING FORM TO SPIRITUAL LIGHT
 THE PATH OF SENSATION & SPIRIT

Painting admits not a grain of sand or a blade of grass insignificant...

Characteristics of the Suit

The Creative Process Suit of Painting represents the physical manifestation of divine imagination. It corresponds to the Suit of Pentacles in conventional Tarot. Its symbol is the artist's palette and brushes. Tharmas, the Zoa of Matter, presides over this suit. Painting is associated with manifestation or work, with the senses of taste and touch, and with manual precision such as used in drawing and surgery. The cards in this suit portray situations and states of being that pertain to the human body, its functions, and instincts, or to things in the vegetated world, to natural objects, to money and materiality – in short, to anything that is created and has physical form. Its element is Water, which is fluid and plastic, like the physical arts and the physical body. Also, the body and the world of matter are composed mostly of water. When pertaining to works of art, Painting specifically includes all the two-dimensional graphic arts such as painting, drawing, etching, and so forth. It also includes the three-dimensional arts such as sculpture and ceramic arts, and many crafts based on form. Anything based on the body, such as sports and martial arts, and the forms of nature is included in this suit. For Blake, the medical and surgical arts are also part of Painting, although as “degraded” or fallen forms because they deny imagination.

Basically, the Suit of Painting expresses one's inner vision, not the replication of nature. The true painter-artisan-manifester gives form to what he or she ‘sees’ in the eternal world of the imagination, not to what is mechanically perceived in the created world. “No man of sense can think that an imitation of the objects of nature is the art of painting.”

Imagination is the immortal power of forming images in the mind, and Painting is the mortal power of manifesting those images within time and space. But all created things are bounded by dimensions and time; they are finite and temporary, and eventually die or disintegrate. By contrast, images conceived by the imagination are boundless and timeless, for they partake of eternity and are man's portion of the divine.

The painter of this work assets that all his imaginations appear to him infinitely more perfect and more minutely organized than any thing seen by his mortal eye.

The upper borders of all the suit cards depict the clouds that Blake associates with the body – which, formed of water (matter) gives the illusion of substance but is vaporous and readily evaporates, and it blocks vision of the infinite. The lower borders of all the cards depict the flow of water (matter) in various forms, sometimes anthropomorphically in the forms of faces and human limbs that appear in the flow. The inner edges of the card borders are blue to symbolize the element of water. The faint designs of floating figures in the Symbol Windows are eternal Form seen with the inner vision that characterizes this suit; these myriad forms express Blake's belief that all things are human. Taken as a whole, the cards of this suit are instructive in that they present a workable plan for achieving material success.



The Number Cards

The ten Number Cards in the Suit of Painting are drawn from diverse works of Blake's, and suggest the range of his literary and symbolic subject matter.

Ace of Painting – Generation



This card depicts a naked woman grasping two starry phalluses that snake upwards from the sea of time & space and yet belong to the unformed angels that hover over her. This image of the generative forces of materiality was one of Blake's last works, and shows his own gift for creativity undimmed by age. The woman is the prophet Enoch's vision of “the daughter of men,” and the angels are her own inner vision, which will impregnate her and generate all the forms and artifacts of humanity.

In Blakean iconography, she could be Enion, the Emanation of Tharmas, the Zoa of Matter. Enion represents the generative instinct, or lust. In Blake's myth, she and Tharmas are the parents of Los and Enitharmon (thus matter gives birth to time and space). Her gift is sensation, the sensuality that allows form to recognize itself.

In Generation, we see woman at the center of things: controlling, moving, animating the “vegetative” or materialized world. She draws raw energy from the cosmos and seduces the gods in order to create “all things both small and great” with her sensational and irresistible powers. Her brazen fertility suggests the unlimited nature of the generative force that transforms spirit into matter.

This card shows that you have the gift of energy and the urge to create – but you must direct this flow. This is a burst of creativity that rises up spewing and spurting ideas, which may, however, fall barren if you do not grasp and direct its output, like this creatrix who manipulates energy into tangible form. Generation shows you handling and using the cosmic resources available to you.

In the creative process, this is the gift of generation, the basic urge to create. It is when you sense energy rising in you that must be grabbed and directed into a project. You should accept the challenge.

KEYWORDS: GIFT OF GENERATIVE POWER • ORIGINATION OF IDEAS AND PROJECTS • FOCUSING YOUR INNER VISION • MANIFESTING YOUR ENERGY • SENSUALITY • VITALITY • FERTILITY • CREATIVE POWER •

2 of Painting – Balance



This card illustrates a passage from Dante's Divine Comedy, and shows the mythological giant Antaeus helping the poets Virgil and Dante to bridge a chasm. As metaphor, it operates on several levels to illustrate duality and kinesthetic intuition.

Perhaps these are the same angels generated in the Ace, here continuing their journey as manifested spirits. They must make choices, represented by the chasm, and their motive power is physical intuition, represented by the giant. In order to overcome obstacles you need to harness your inner powers; you must stretch yourself, set things in motion, and yet keep a firm grasp on your place. This requires a delicate balance and yet agility based on inner strength.

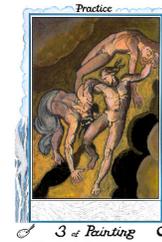
On the other hand, the two poetic figures can represent the imagination, while the giant personifies materialism. The chasm depicts their separation in this rocky world. Yet imagination must come to terms with manifestation to cross the chasm of duality. Physical health, material resources, and economic support are vital to translate imagination into practical form. The giant's arm is intuition reaching across the division that separates art and nature. Above the giant's head, the cloud is split into fire and water, into heat and cold; this is the dualistic nature of materialism that must be breached by the helping hand of intuition.

This card suggests that you can use your bodily intuition, not fearing to hang over the abyss of the unknown, to set your ideas on the path of development. Balance yourself between idea and form, between potential and loss of control, between impulse and action. The energy must now move outward. You need to put your resources to work.

In the creative process, this is the choice at the beginning of a project, the decision to stretch yourself to go on. You must use your present strengths to bridge the gap of possibility, setting new ideas on the path of growth and development.

MEANING: USE OF PRACTICAL WISDOM • PHYSICAL MOBILITY •

CHOOSING BETWEEN PHYSICAL OPTIONS • NEGOTIATION. INTERACTION • CHOICES • CHANGE • DUALITY •



3 of Painting – Practice

Here we see “three falling figures” grappling and tumbling through layers of clouds representing Neoplatonic levels of bodily manifestation. The middle figure is the focus of the composition, and the others are aspects of himself that he learns how to manipulate. One is bearded and clothed, representing sophistication and worldliness, while the other is nude and youthful (perhaps female) – thus part of the practice involves finding the middle way of synthesis and practicality. This card is about working or molding something, and learning about control and finesse. It takes skill and practice to find a way that works. As in movement exercises like ‘contact improvisation’, the real skill comes in the flow of working together with others (or other parts of oneself), integrating each individual's movement so that it becomes a part of the whole. With practice, the descent into form becomes a kind of dance, the discovery of a shape that works. Practice allows you the skill to bring others with you. You must practice to get any process right, and then you can show others how it is done.

In the creative process, this is when you experiment – practicing and learning how to manipulate and work the situation, developing the skills you need, especially in relation to other people.

KEYWORDS: ACHIEVEMENT THROUGH PRACTICE AND WORK • PRACTICALITY •

SYNTHESIS AND GROWTH • MATERIAL WORKS • INTEGRATION • EXERCISE OF SKILLS •

4 of Painting – Means

This collaged image shows the biblical figure of Job, surrounded by his daughters and his prosperity. He is a man of means, relating his life story – symbolized by the visions above him. His daughters, holding symbols of the arts, are his familial and cultural wealth; the sheep at left and right symbolize his material wealth. Although the cloud behind him separates his visions from his earthly state, his hands reach into the ethereal realm and connect him with spiritual energies as well.

This card is about having the means to feel secure in your environment, and the physical resources to manifest your inner vision. You may reach into the spiritual realm for ideas, but you still need the implements, tools, raw materials, time, and space to give those ideas form. Practice, skill, and ability, as developed in the previous card, are only part of the story. This card also shows a sense of contentment. This can sometimes be counterproductive, for we can become lazy or complacent, like the dog in front, or even stagnant. We can also become fearful of loss and therefore compulsive about holding on too tightly to what we have.

In the creative process, this is when you determine the means and resources you need to accomplish your task.

KEYWORDS: FINANCIAL OR MATERIAL SECURITY • INCREASE IN POWER • AMPLIFIED MATERIALS AND CONTROL • CREATING STRUCTURE AND ORDER • PHYSICAL CONSOLIDATION • CONTENTMENT • COMPLACENCY • MISERLINESS • STAGNATION •

**5 of Painting – Hardship**

As in the previous card, this is Job – but now fallen on hard times and accused by his friends, but still accompanied by his wife. Although kneeling in supplication, he is on barren ground, and alienated from the true god (note the Druidic post). All of the hands in this image are expressive: scorn and disgust are seen in those of the accusers, who seem well-dressed, worldly, and prosperous. They may belong to Tharmas (the sensual man), Urizen (the reasoning man), and Luvah (the man of feeling). The hands of Job's wife are self-protective rather than supportive. Although Job's open palms proclaim his honest innocence and his eyes look heavenward for guidance, he is basically alone in his hardship. His partial nudity dramatizes the nakedness of his appeal and the indignity of his suffering. He will endure, however; his beard symbolizes the wisdom and strength that will see him through, and a small symbolic patch of grass at his feet is a harbinger that all is not lost.

In this card, we are shown material reverses, physical illness, or punishment for behavior outside the norm. We are misunderstood or castigated, ejected from the comfort and complacency of the previous card. This card symbolizes a state in which you may feel alienated, attacked, afflicted, or ganged up on – most likely through no fault of your own. There is a sense of suffering for your convictions and beliefs because they thrust you outside what is acceptable in society. Perhaps you are taking an unpopular stand for your beliefs. However, there is a measure of support in your situation, perhaps someone who believes in what you are doing, who is willing to stand beside you. And your inner resolve and faith are still viable though threatened. Your best defense is your own honesty and candor.

In the creative process, this is the realization that the problems you are trying to solve may put you at odds with others who do not recognize your value. This also signifies personal blocks and fears of rejection, inner voices telling you the 'reasons' that something won't work.

KEYWORDS: MATERIAL PROBLEMS. ANXIETY • FINANCIAL (OR SPIRITUAL) LOSS • ILLNESS • SIMPLIFYING DUE TO DIFFICULTY • STRIPPING DOWN TO BASICS • UNCONVENTIONALITY • VOLUNTARY SIMPLICITY • SOCIETY VERSUS THE INDIVIDUAL •

6 of Painting – Assistance

This card depicts an early scene from John Bunyan's spiritual epic, *Pilgrim's Progress*, in which Christian is pulled from the 'Slough of Despond' by a character called Help. Christian has already been abandoned by his initial companion, and he is unable to extricate himself from the slough due to the weight of his sins on his back. Beyond, we see the path leading to enlightenment, symbolized by the sun.

This card is about receiving material benefits from others, without whose assistance we cannot continue on the high road to achievement, health, or happiness. Regardless of sin, Assistance is always welcome. It is the gift of successful relationships, achieved through generosity of spirit and sharing of resources. Note that the nature of the help being offered and/or received is ambiguous due to the positioning of the hands. We assume that the man on the bank is pulling the other out of the water in order to save him, to place him back onto the road that leads into the high ground of the spirit. However, he could also be lowering the other into the water, perhaps a baptism in the waters of life or an immersion for the purpose of healing. The man in the water might also be assisting the one on the bank to join him in the flow, to share the waters of life with him. With this card, you attract or give something of value – whether help, charity, awards, or patronage. You exchange material energy towards a worthwhile goal. The challenge is to give unconditionally, according to your ability, and to receive what is freely given.

In the creative process, this is when you receive support or patronage, either from another or from seeing a new option or path open up. You attract what is needed to keep you going on your project.

KEYWORDS: GIFTS GIVEN/RECEIVED • PRACTICAL HELP. ENERGY EXCHANGES •

PHYSICAL RECIPROCITY, MAGNANIMOUS SHARING • PATRONAGE • EMERGENCE/IMMERSION •

CARE OF THE BODY. HEALING •

**7 of Painting – Patience**

This card is a collage of two images from Blake's *Jerusalem*. In the lower part, Jerusalem, who represents Liberty, sits in a Druidic landscape awaiting (or perhaps summoning) the forces of the four Zoas to emerge from the earth around her, as a new day dawns. In the upper part, a maiden in harness patiently pulls the new moon along a track of clouds into the stars.

This card signifies the need to wait until a current period of uncertainty has passed. The upper figure symbolizes time as a triple-starred female presence, harnessed to eventually bring forth the new and loving energy of the moon. The moon also symbolizes female menstruation, a time of cleansing and purification. Both figures are women, emphasizing that this is a period of creative gestation. In the lower portion, Jerusalem's neck is bent by the weight/wait of time just above her, but her hands signify an attitude of patience and endurance. There is also the sense of opening oneself up to whatever comes. Jerusalem's gestures go beyond mere acceptance, however. Like the figure in harness who is working to change the situation, Jerusalem's hands show that she is an active force; they are like wands releasing the elemental powers in the situation, which will bring new freedom of action following this stage of testing and delay. This is a time during which it is difficult to get things done, but the Zoas, the "four faces of man" are now being liberated, and the dawning of the next stage is evident.

In the creative process, this is the fallow period when you must relax and wait; straining will get you nowhere. Seeds planted will emerge on their own; subconscious visions and day-dreams may bring innovative solutions.

KEYWORDS: AWAITING EMERGENCE • UNCERTAINTY DESPITE MUCH WORK • FEAR OF FAILURE •

APPREHENSION, TESTS AND TRIALS OF MANIFESTATION • DELAYS. SLOW GROWTH •

8 of Painting – Discipline



This is a scene from Dante's Divine Comedy in which the poets Virgil and Dante ascend the mountain of Purgatory. This could be an illustration of Blake's own statement that "temptations are on the right hand & left; behind, the sea of time & space roars & follows swiftly; he who keeps not right onward is lost." The light of the sun is obscured, and there is an air of overall danger. However, Virgil – as the guide and mentor of Dante – is in the lead, and takes the next higher step with both his right hand and right foot; he is the higher wisdom guiding the soul through purgatory – the state of expiation and sacrifice preceding breakthrough.

The process of growth and transformation begun in the previous card is still in motion. In addition to patience, prudence is now indicated. The goal is not yet at hand, and you will need self-discipline and preparation to reach the summit. You can climb slowly but surely toward your goal, making every step count, but it is advisable to learn new skills at the same time that you exercise the old ones. It is useful to define one's values, to learn the terrain. Plan your moves, and be cunning, skillful, and steadfast.

In the creative process, this is when you discipline yourself for the long haul. This suggests a step-by-step implementation of the project that leads ever closer to the goal.

KEYWORDS: PERSEVERANCE IN THE FACE OF DIFFICULTY • PRUDENCE. EDUCATION AND TRAINING • PHYSICAL ASSESSMENT • PRACTICALITY • SELF-IMPROVEMENT • DEFINING ONE'S VALUES •



9 of Painting – Fruition



This is the first state of an etching from Blake's Jerusalem, showing Albion and Vala embracing in sexual intercourse upon a water lily (water lotus), while the phallic caterpillar of natural sex crawls out from beneath their entwined torsos. In the revised final state, the couple merely embrace, without any caterpillar. Symbolically, the original image portrays humankind seduced by nature, and expresses our fascination with bodily pleasure and the material world. Note that the lovers are wrapped in the Blake's "golden net of marriage." In Blake's storyline, Albion subsequently becomes prudish about this and repudiates "every labor of love in all the garden of Eden." Nevertheless, the moment depicted here is one of erotic fruition, although not of completion, and in some measure represents Blake's ideal of sexuality and sensuality.

In the card, collaged with other graphic elements from Jerusalem, we see the drama of this moment of ecstasy: the fish below represent the chain of life feeding on itself, the clouds of pink are sensual rapture, and the nine angelic gyres represent the ennead, the overseeing angels of human development. The water lily floating on the sea of time & space represents fertility, its roots in the mud but its flower a bed of purity and beauty. An alternative interpretation is that these lovers are Tharmas and Enion, the body and its desire, joined in rapture.

This card represents the sensual harvest of the suit, the full flowering of one's creations, the enjoyment of the senses, or being all wrapped up in something. Symbolically its sexuality is a metaphor for material gain, physical well-being, pleasure, satisfaction, and money. These are the rewards of being in harmony with nature and the forces around you. When you act in a definite and practical manner, you ultimately achieve the successes that accrue from this practice.

In the creative process, this is the combining of two disparate things into something new and fruitful, a definition of the creativity. This signifies the proper appreciation and use of what is being created.

KEYWORDS: MATERIAL GAIN • PLEASURE AND LEISURE • PHYSICAL REWARDS GAINED THROUGH EFFORT • PRACTICAL ACTIONS RESULTING IN PHYSICAL SUCCESS • ATTAINMENT • GLOWING HEALTH • MATERIAL SERENITY AND WELL-BEING • COMPLETING THE WORK OF MANIFESTATION • WRAPPED IN SENSUALITY • BEING A FRUITFUL PART OF THE CHAIN OF EXISTENCE •

10 of Painting – Delight

This card represents the culmination of the physical cycle, expressed in the combination of merry humans and the rising spirits of the natural world, together with the harmony of earth and sky, village and country, young and old sporting together. There are a great many things going on this card, with its profusion of symbols, shapes, and colors, but its overall sensation of delight in life and nature is unmistakable. Some augmenting details are worth noting: the angelic trumpeters in the sky are joined by two others at the mid right side, while other angels bear urns and baskets of plenty into the heavens. The Olympian figures are humanized mountains: the goddess cradles a city in her lap and a waterfall under her arm; her mural crown signifies her role as protectress, while the male god has a laurel crown and a road emanates from his armpit.

This card depicts a scene from Milton's *L'Allegro* called "A Sunshine Holiday." Blake said of it:

*In this design is introduced mountains on whose barren breast
the labring clouds do often rest. Mountains, clouds, rivers, trees appear
humanized on the Sunshine Holiday.
The church steeple with its merry bells.
The clouds arise from the bosoms of mountains,
while two angels sound their trumpets in the heavens to announce the Sunshine Holiday.*

Despite their overall prosperity, all these figures are still within the world of Generation, trapped within the flesh. They are the same people who appear in XIII—Transformation. Blake hints at this by placing the butterfly of Psyche, symbolizing the soul, off to the lower right, while just above is a tree spirit with the face of Jesus, looking upon the frolic with an air of sadness. Blake's message is always that salvation lies in the spirit, in the imagination, not the body.

In the creative process, this is when you celebrate, not only your own achievements, but those of others. This is the creation of culture as the conglomerate and cooperative work of many. But you should not overlook spiritual concerns underlying your work.

KEYWORDS: MATERIAL PROSPERITY • GOOD FORTUNE • ESTABLISHED TRADITIONS •
HARMONY AMONG ALL THE ELEMENTS OF THE SITUATION • FINANCIAL OR FAMILY SECURITY •
CULMINATION •

**The Person Cards**

Like the Number Cards, the central images used in the four Person Cards of the Suit of Painting are selected from a variety of Blake's works.

**Angel of Painting
(Air of Water – Mind in Matter)**

Labeled "The Graphic Muse," we see a robed angel-woman who securely sits on a cloud and gazes over her right (spiritual) shoulder as she holds a scroll of inspiration in her right hand. This image is Blake's frontispiece to a book about art. Below it are several tools of the graphic artist: palette, brushes, and engraving tool. The clouds on which the angel rests are metaphorically the material bodies of men, which from a spiritual perspective are but vapors soon to evaporate. Therefore, the visual arts should not dwell on the mortal but on the "the eternal body of man [which] is the IMAGINATION." Works of art should not be imitations of nature, but expressions of the artist's own identity; that is, the forms of inner vision, here symbolized by the muse's upward gaze.

This is the part of yourself that seemingly drifts, dreams, and waits for something to coalesce inside of you. In a creative reverie you find yourself staring out a window, or into a corner of the room, or at your work without seeing anything that is actually there. In the moment before you plunge back to work, the detail or next phase then arises as if from nowhere, flowing directly through your hand into its embodiment. Manifesting depends on integrating vision and technique. Art, like the Suit of Painting, is about manifesting and materializing; it needs appropriate technology as well as vision. The only danger here is being 'up in the clouds', unable or unwilling to bring vision into actuality.

The archangel Raphael, being the guardian of the physical world and specifically concerned with healing, is associated with this card. Raphael ('healing from God') was also the counselor of Adam and Eve in *Paradise Lost* (see VI—Knowledge). Although Raphael is not directly related to the Angel of Painting, both angels can be regarded as divinities that teach and heal.

In the creative process, this may be a soaring insight, the catalysis of an idea, or the impact of a role model. When you admire someone else's vision, and not just the products of it, you are seeing their 'angel'.

KEYWORDS: ARTISTIC VISION • DIVINE IMAGINATION • APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGY •
DOING ONE'S WORK OR PROCESS • GIFTS FROM THE ARCHETYPAL REALM • STABILITY OF VISION •
THE HEALING POWER OF ART •

Child of Painting**(Earth of Water – Spirit in Matter/Mater)**

This card is from an etching for an edition of Hesiod's Theogony, and depicts one of the 'putti' or Cupid-like children riding on a dolphin that accompanies Aphrodite as she is born from the sea's foam. Cupid, Aphrodite's son, represents innocent sexuality. His flowing banners herald the coming of the goddess, and symbolize psychic energy. Dolphin in Greek means 'womb' and represents the fertility of the goddess. In Greek art, dolphins are souls swimming to the next world for rebirth. As one ephemeral world vaporizes a new one is formed, and the soul arises like swimming through matter. The famous image of the "Boy on a Dolphin" is that of the young sun-god Apollo, reborn each morning from the womb of the sea.

Cupid, leaping excitedly on the back of the dolphin, is the part of yourself or another that seeks new sensations, and is gaining strength and balance. Impervious to fear, you take risks as you explore the world around you. You do not ask for anything to have meaning, you want only to flood your senses with material that you will one day mold into new forms. You are learning just how far your body or any material form can take you. This child has thrown itself onto the womb-source or matrix from which things originate or develop, and is riding its generative force.

In the creative process, this is when you plunge into experimentation with form, working the materials (matrix) just to see what will emerge or be disgorged, taking innocent joy in the assault on your senses once that matrix has been breached.

KEYWORDS: BIRTH OF POTENTIAL FORMS, OR NEW PROJECTS •
 JOYFUL RELEASE AND FLOW OF ENERGY • EMERGING SEXUALITY • SEEING EACH DAY AFRESH •
 RIDING THE WAVE OF OPPORTUNITY • DEVELOPING PRACTICAL SKILLS •
 A LITERAL CHILD OR YOUR INNER CHILD, EXPLORING EXPERIENCE •

**Woman of Painting**
(Water of Water – Matter in Matter)

This card is from a watercolor, retouched and collaged, that depicts Athene, the virgin goddess of wisdom, war, and the arts. Garbed in red, she presides over menstruation and blood, and invented all the kinds of work in which women were employed. In the arts, she represents elegance combined with usefulness. In war, she represents intelligence and prudence in lieu of force. Athene's head and crested war helmet are here framed in a cloud (symbolizing body and matter in Blake's scheme), suggesting that her mind is occupied with practical and physical concerns. She awards her sacred olive wreaths to several artists for their industry, competence, and trustworthiness.

This is the part of yourself or another who is secure in their self-worth. You value your talents, enjoy work, and appreciate a job well-done. You express yourself most easily through your endeavors, whether it's a fresh loaf of bread, a newly built house, or a work of art. You look to nature for your inspiration, and to feed you on all levels. You value others' worth based on their actions, not their words. The Woman of Painting is reliable, conscientious, practical and responsible. She is patient and enduring, demonstrating great emotional strength and tenacity. As indicated by the pained expression on the sculpted head, her greatest fear is being disembodied or unattached to something material. She gives form to the intangible, to lock onto the passing phenomena, to immortalize a moment. The close congregation of these persons in an outdoor agora suggests their social skills and cooperative harmony.

In the extreme, you or another can become stubborn, and controlling of others. You may feel the need to amass money and possessions as proof of your worth and security, to hold on too tightly to those who are closest, or to live life through them.

In the creative process, this card shows the act of physically bringing your imaginings into tangible form: you are producing the work. You take pleasure in the slow unfoldment of what others may see as tedious tasks, for to you they are embodied vision

KEYWORDS: COOPERATIVENESS AND SOCIAL SKILLS •
 APPRECIATION OF PRACTICAL ELEGANCE • INDUSTRY AND COMPETENCE • RELIABILITY AND PATIENCE •
 DESERVED REWARDS • CONTROLLING, STUBBORN • NEED FOR POSSESSIONS • TANGIBLE VALUES •
 RITUAL PURIFICATION •

Man of Painting**(Fire of Water – Passion in Matter)***Man of Painting*

This image is a collage that portrays the spiritual art of painting as a combination of illumination and manifestation, respectively symbolized by the light of inspiration streaming around the figure with increasing density as it descends, and by the water of materialism upon which he magically walks. Although he exposes himself to the energy of the elements, he does not get sucked under by them. The image depicts an exalted rainfall of sensory stimulation, producing underlying vortexes of creative energy that are transformed into manifestation by the controlling action of the Man of Painting. His mastery of the suit is shown by the fact that he

holds and uses its graphic symbol of the palette – the only such instance in the entire suit. The word palette comes from a root meaning ‘shovel’, and thus he is able to collect and move the energies that stream about him. His nakedness indicates his sensuality, yet the muscularity of his body and his rigid posture show that he is in complete control.

This is the part of yourself or another that is practical and ingenious, being able to surf upon turbulent physical energies that might disrupt someone less focused. You must touch things to believe in them; you think with and through the five senses. To paint a rainstorm you go out into it, without thought of discomfort, especially if it results in authenticity and verisimilitude. You are a doer, applying everything that you learn, plowing through obstacles. You possess great endurance and self-control, and expect the same in others. Through the body, you touch all that is holy. You see hidden potentials in what others pass over as mundane and uninteresting. You admire the power and wonders of nature, which you recognize as manifestations of spirit.

The Man of Painting is concerned with fulfilling obligations, but may resist new ideas. He can do many things well, and accumulates possessions and wealth. In the extreme, beware of tendencies to rigidify into intolerance, fanaticism, or obstinacy. As a collector, he may view his loved ones as possessions, and believe that everyone and everything has a price. Guard against becoming disgusted with humanity and materialism.

In the creative process, this is when you test and refine a product – seeing if it ‘works’, by submitting it to all kinds of checks for usefulness and integrity.

KEYWORDS: ABILITY TO CONTROL HIGHLY CHARGED SITUATIONS •

COMBINES ILLUMINATION AND MANIFESTATION • HANDLING SENSORY STIMULATION • INGENUITY •

FOCUS ON GETTING THINGS DONE • CONSERVATIVENESS. MANAGERIAL SKILL • STUBBORNESS •

NEED FOR AUTHENTICATION •

**Chapter 5****The Suit of Science**

**THE CHALLENGE OF SELF-UNDERSTANDING
STRIVING TO KNOW SELF & WORLD
THE PATH OF INTELLECT & LEARNING**

What are all the gifts of the spirit but mental gifts.

Characteristics of the Suit

The Creative Process Suit of Science represents the intellectual use of divine imagination, or the failure to use it. It corresponds to the Suit of Swords in conventional Tarot. Its symbol is the compass, which literally means ‘with paces’; that is, to take equal steps in order to measure something. Urizen, the Zoa of Mind, presides over this suit, whose element is Air. Science is associated with knowledge, with the sense of (external) vision, and with intellectual precision such as required in architecture (‘mastery of manual arts’) and engineering (‘art of ingenuity’). The cards in this suit portray situations and states of being that pertain to the mind or its achievements – in short, to anything that is created and has mental form, for “the increase...of a man is from internal improvement or intellectual acquirement.” Pertaining to works of art, Science specifically includes the study and practice of such disciplines as physics (‘science of nature’), astronomy (‘arranging of stars’), astrology (‘speaking to stars’), and philosophy (‘love of learning’). It also includes the many crafts and skills that involves structuring things or thoughts. In general, anything based on reason, logic, and memory is included in this suit. Therefore, technology (‘speaking through the hands’), politics (‘science of cities’), economics (‘household management’), and history (‘knowledge’) are also part of Science, although as “degraded” or fallen forms.

Historians...cannot see either miracle or prodigy; all is to them a dull round of probabilities and possibilities.

Basically, the Suit of Science applies imagination to one’s external vision, and attempts to shape the world of nature. The true scientist-technician-thinker-academic creates forms in the external world using the imagination, whereas the “degraded” scientist applies created forms to suppress imagination – one “who publishes doubt & calls it knowledge; whose science is despair.” In this sense, “Science is the tree of death.”

Imagination is the immortal power of forming images in the mind, and Science is the mortal power of applying those images to gain knowledge and control over oneself and the environment. If the mind is passive and unimaginative, it allows reason to become a tyrant that creates inhumane laws and unholy machines.

*Study sciences till you are blind
Study intellectuals till you are cold
Yet science cannot teach intellect.*

The Suit of Science, like its corresponding Suit of Swords in the traditional Tarot, is the most ‘negative’ of the suits in its deck, unfolding “dark visions of torment.” To Blake, the star-crossed intellect is the contrary of the sunny imagination, and he says that unless the intellect is emotionally joined to the imagination (as in Beulah and Eden), the spectrous intellect inevitably leads to self-cruelty and defeat, as in this suit. Nevertheless, every card in the suit can also be interpreted within the framework of self-understanding and learning, and each points to imagination as the means of elevating Science into the true arts of man. Furthermore, in depicting Urizen as the adversary of imagination, Blake gives a body to error so that it may be recognized and cast out.

Men are admitted into heaven not because they have curbed & governd their passions or have no passions but because they have cultivated their understandings.

The borders of all the suit cards depict stars, which Blake associates with the intellect (speculation upon the universe). The inner edges of the card borders are yellow to symbolize its element of air. The faint design in the Symbol Windows suggests the idea of Structure that underlies this suit. All the cards of this suit are cautionary and instructive, insistently warning of the dangers of self-centered consciousness.



The Number Cards

The ten Number Cards in the Suit of Science are all from The Book of Urizen, giving them both visual and symbolic continuity. The plot of Blake’s book is a parody of the human birth process, a “ninefold darkness” in which Urizen’s body of error is created with Los’s help. It can also be considered a Blakean retelling, in seven ‘ages’, of Genesis in the bible. The story unfolds as a perverse gestation that concludes with Urizen being fettered in his own selfish consciousness – a metaphor for the mind enslaved by reason instead of freed by imagination. Urizen becomes one of the “giants who formed this world into its sensual existence and now seem to live in it in chains.” Although Los appears in this book, he has not yet evolved into his heroic aspect as the prophet of eternity; here he is a false prophet who is controlled by Urizen’s power. A relevant metaphor in the story is the tent called “science,” erected over Los and Enitharmon to limit them – representing Science as an enclosure for time and space.

Ace of Science–Intellect



This card comes from the book’s title page, and depicts the Zoa of Mind as a blind patriarch squatting on an open book, writing with his right hand while etching with his left. From the edges of the open book descend roots indicating that these ideas are from nature, not the imagination. Behind the figure are tombstones representing spiritual death; they are also Mosaic tablets of moral law that limit individual freedoms. Arching over the whole tableau is the forest of error, part of which encloses the mind in a burial chamber. Urizen, the “dark power,” creates the mental world of intellect and consciousness, but lacks creative vision. He writes down natural laws and scientific truths without understanding their implications. Blake stressed that error must be recognized before it can be cast out, and thus Urizen’s situation is instructive. Behind him is an open space of sky, which is the means to imaginative freedom – he has only to turn around and see it. (Compare with XVII–Stars.)

This card is about acquiring and retaining new knowledge. It is pure mental perception that neither sees nor judges, but simply records. Here we accumulate and document information without emotion or judgement. We are poised, balanced in the midst of ideas for their own sake, absorbing and taking them in. It may seem like we are walking blind through a forest of overwhelming possibilities, gathering details without yet knowing how they will fit into the final product. This card can also mean the ability to see both sides of a situation objectively. It indicates a single-focused input with multiple outputs.

In the creative process, this is when you stuff your brain with knowledge. The image depicts the brain itself, the ‘seat’ of intellect, showing both the left and right hemispheres, and its ‘blind’ absorption of data.

KEYWORDS: INTELLECT • BEGINNING OF A NEW IDEA • MENTAL FOCUS AND CLARITY • ACQUISITION OF KNOWLEDGE • OBSESSION WITH ACHIEVEMENT • OBJECTIVITY • WILLPOWER • ABILITY TO DO MULTIPLE THINGS • OPPORTUNITY FOR MENTAL BREAKTHROUGH • INTELLECTUAL WORKAHOLIC • SELF-CENTEREDNESS •

2 of Science–Reflection

This card shows a child standing with his back to a mysterious door that is slightly ajar. Beside him is a dog who growls at the opening. An opening or opportunity awaits, which may be longed for or feared. Both figures seem to be reflecting on their next move. Across the door falls a streak of dark shadow and a burst of golden light. Trepidation and hope are equal possibilities. With which figure do you most identify? What are you doing there and on what are you reflecting? Although the door may be an opportunity for growth and adventure, it could, on the other hand, indicate something to be avoided or guarded against. It intimates unusual or unknown consequences. Although inviting, it might better be left unopened. One of your choices here is not to choose.

Blake called this image “Dog at the wintry door,” and means it as a commentary on the plight of children exploited in factories and as chimney sweeps and beggars. He wants to arouse our sympathies: “Then cherish pity, lest you drive an angel from your door.” He wants us to recognize innocence at the entryway to experience.

The dog and the child suggest two different approaches to a choice or decision: animal instinct versus human logic – with the child having the added meaning of imagination. In effect, both faculties are begging to be chosen; meanwhile, they block the door. They might also represent potential action versus self-reflecting reverie. The card shows a point at which no choice has yet been made, and compromise or arbitration may be required.

In the creative process, this is when you speculate on potentials and possibilities in your imagination. You must choose which method or course to which to commit – divergent versus conventional thinking, perhaps.

KEYWORDS: REFLECTION • MENTAL CHOICES • UNCERTAINTY • TENSION • AN UNEASY PEACE OR DELICATE BALANCE • CAUTION • BEGGING FOR A DECISION • WAITING • PROCRASTINATION • NEED FOR COMPROMISE • ENTRYWAY •

**3 of Science–Jealousy**

This card shows a naked family: a man in chains holds a long hammer, while next to him, with her forehead pressed to his, leans a woman embracing a clinging child. This is Enitharmon and Los (who represent imagination), and their son Orc (who represents revolution). The child, literally “fed with milk of Enitharmon,” is the object of Los’s hatred, symbolized by the “chain of jealousy” that dangles from his breast. Los will eventually chain Orc in vengeance. What should be a loving family takes on insinuations of sexual slavery and heartbreak. This is jealousy as mental imprisonment.

The chain is the dominant symbol. It signifies bondage to sex – note how the male’s erect penis is assimilated into the links of the chain. It is also the “endless chain of sorrows” that links all the generations of humanity in psychosexual torments involving Oedipal conflicts and jealousies. And it is the chain of nature, or what 18th-century writers called the ‘chain of being’, which Blake took to mean the enslavement of the mind and imagination within the biological constrictions of the body. And it represents the reasoning mind’s enslavement of the spiritual impulse – Blake’s “mind-forg’d manacles” that bind language and thought in rules of law and religion. Finally, it represents the chain of time (for Los is also the time-lord) that binds man to mortality, emphasizing again that freedom can only be found in the spiritual life. Los (a smith-god) holds a hammer that he could presumably use to shatter the chain, but jealousy, by its nature, disorders and paralyzes the mind. The setting of the spiritual sun in the background dramatizes their sorrow, but it could also be rising on new opportunity.

Hope appears in the continuing attempts to communicate (foreheads touching) to find some ground of understanding. Current jealousies may be based on old pains that we inappropriately apply to the present situation. Cooperation is implied here, as all parties are in bodily contact. Honesty by baring the soul and following the feeling to its source, each within ourselves, can help release old pains and bring growth.

In the creative process, this is when you feel chained by convention, needs, or requirements. You may become jealous of others who are not as constrained. Seek honest communication and cooperation to avoid frustration and paralysis.

KEYWORDS: JEALOUSY • SEXUAL OBSESSION • HEARTACHE • SORROW • MENTAL PAIN AND CONSTRICTION • LACK OF FREEDOM • MENTAL DISTRACTION OR CONFUSION • FORCED COOPERATION • MENTAL ADJUSTMENT THROUGH THE EXPERIENCE OR SHARING OF PAIN •

4 of Science—Repose

This is Blake's image of Urizen "brooding, shut in the deep" of the sea of time and space – the world of materialism. "In dark secrecy" he hides his fantasies in "surgeing sulphureous fluid." Sulphur signifies vital heat and is associated with reason and the male principle; in other words, he suppresses his burning thoughts. An inscription on the print declares, "I labour upwards into futurity." In his mind, he believes he is going somewhere, but his slack knees and beard show he is drifting and relaxing despite himself. His outstretched arms mimic divinity, but his palms are down-turned – he is a mock god in exile from his element of air, recuperating from the exertion of his endless tyranny of dispassionate logic and reason. 'Repose' literally means to put back, to restore, and in this card the mind puts itself back into its elemental container; immersion in the water of the body prevents sulphurous mental burnout.

This card is about taking time-out from life's daily struggle, and letting yourself be swept along without struggling against the current. Rest from mental activity is required here, perhaps through getting lost in the healing flow of meditation, or a spa, or other mode of relaxation. This is only a temporary retreat – a need to let go of concerns. This kind of mental truce allows ideas to settle and consolidate themselves into a natural harmonization of elements. After such a release from tension and anxiety, you may find that the solution will simply float to the surface.

In the creative process, this is when you let go of previous restrictions, letting bafflement take over. When you relax and let go, taking time off from work, new insights will surface.

KEYWORDS: REPOSE • REST FROM MENTAL ACTIVITY • RECOVERY OF SELF • RETREAT INTO ANOTHER ELEMENT • SELF-ABSORBED SOLITUDE OR SECLUSION • TRUCE • MENTAL CONSOLIDATION • HARMONIZATION OF IDEAS • BROODING THOUGHTS • FORCED WITHDRAWAL • DISCONNECTED SELF-OPINION •

**5 of Science—Division**

Here we see Urizen more enmeshed than ever in his web of reason. "None could break the web...so twisted the cords, & so knotted the meshes, twisted like to the human brain. And all call'd it the net of religion." This net is the false religion of laws and judgement, of logic and Deism that denies divinity (see V-Religion). Blake sees this "dark net of infection" as dividing the cities in the "form of a human heart...bound down to earth by...narrowing perceptions." Thus, Urizen's net, ironically heart-shaped, divides him from others and from his imaginative potential. Only his right shoulder is caught, but his free left arm free wraps the net tighter. This is the essential division within Urizen's nature: his self-constrictive dualism.

This card shows you so divided by your mental conflicts that you become paralyzed or weighed down by inertia. Negative thinking is limiting your possibilities and creating an aura of defeat. Action is inhibited. You are not receptive to help, having become so ensnared in your own reasons that you can see no others.

Hope is seen in the new plant seemingly rising from the head or center of the divided figure, sprouting flowers on both sides. Some plants propagate best by dividing their roots. The figure can emerge from the net by dividing it. When a task becomes too great, a city too large, a plant too overgrown, division is necessary. A group of problems taken together cannot be solved, but dividing them can be a means to success.

In the creative process, this is when you feel weighted down by the enormity of the problem or project. Try to divide it into smaller segments that you can handle or step around.

KEYWORDS: DIVISION • MENTAL FRAGMENTATION • NEGATIVE THINKING • NARROWED PERCEPTIONS • VICTIMIZATION • UNFAIR OR UNDERHANDED TACTICS • LOSS OF FRIENDS OR PURPOSE • DIVIDE AND CONQUER • NEW HOPE FROM OLD RESTRICTIONS •

6 of Science—Passage

Two scenes from the book are collaged into one image. Below, Urizen explores his “dens, mountain, moor, & wilderness, with a globe of fire,” while above, a naked woman pushes back obscuring clouds to reveal the firmament. Urizen blindly strides, left foot forward, on a “fearful journey” through “forsaken mountains,” encountering “cruel enormities” and “dread terrors” writhing in the sky. His globe of imagination is enclosed by his selfishness, and its black flames provide no light. He does not see the lion, who seems ready to offer guidance or even humor (which Urizen lacks although Blake does not). The lion is our ignored instincts, and life’s exotic surprises. The unseen lion and the blackened globe represent lost opportunities, much like the classic tourist who carries the wrong luggage, overlooks the natives, and misses all the fun. Nevertheless, this traveler pushes forward with a sense of purpose, feeling his way as he goes.

The woman is Enitharmon, the imagination at work, who tries to shed light on the struggling Urizen. The stars she reveals are the Pleiades and the belt of Orion, the former representing wisdom and the latter, the foolish hunter. In her left hand she grasps the moon and in her right the sun, so that she is herself the passage or mediator between the contraries of female and male, the unconscious and conscious modes. Her negative aspect is in her alternative role as pity, which “divides the soul.”

With this card, passage is possible to new lands, to a higher level of consciousness, or to a place of objectivity where you can gain perspective or get an overview. Once set in motion, keep the ball rolling. Take advantage of the resources and opportunities offered. You do not journey alone; let imagination be your guide.

In the creative process, this shows where opportunities may be overlooked by blindly pushing forward without pausing for reassessment. Stay open to making adjustments based on new circumstances encountered in the process. Get an overview of your progress.

KEYWORDS: PASSAGE, TRAVEL • RITE OF PASSAGE • JOURNEY OF CONSCIOUSNESS • MENTAL OVERVIEW OR PERSPECTIVE • HELP FROM HIGHER UP • MOVEMENT AWAY FROM DIFFICULTIES TO RESTORE HARMONY • MEDIATION BETWEEN CONTRARY STATES • OPPORTUNITIES OVERLOOKED • DEPRESSION OR DANGER •

*7 of Science—Lamentation*

Here we see Urizen energetically moving away from us with his hands raised beside his head. He could be wailing in sorrow, fleeing from a situation he ‘can’t handle’, or straining against something, especially the globe of fire from the preceding card. In the story, Urizen “sickend to see...that no flesh or spirit could keep his iron laws.” The realization of this failure becomes a lament of “weeping & pain & woe.” So, leading with his unspiritual foot, he flees in self-protective sorrow, and attempts to push the globe of light (his imagination/soul), trying to ‘get away with something’. In doing so, he blocks the spiritual light. His energetically flowing robe is the complex emotional residue of his actions, which are “stretch’d from the sorrows of Urizen’s soul.” Positively, this card can be interpreted as someone using sorrow to reshape his thoughts or plans, to extract energy and strength from his turbulent mind, or just resisting the oppressing pressure.

This card is about the pain of not trusting the imagination. You may feel like your task is impossible. You want to put your head into the fire and scream with pain. You may ‘push your weight around’, or if direct action seems futile, try to ‘get away with something’. Such tactics are self-betraying and lamentable. Just as the body strengthens from pushing against something, so does the mind. The 7 cards are tests, and this is a test of the mind. Let your lamentation be a springboard for self-renewal. Use your wits to develop a new strategy. Gather ideas and materials. Resist the negative pressures. Look directly at what you have to work with and mold it as best you can.

In the creative process, this is when you are stuck or ‘pushing it’. You wait at the wall or boundary. Be compassionate with yourself and others involved; take infinite pains to find a way around the problem or to develop a new strategy.

KEYWORDS: LAMENTATION • MENTAL TESTS • DISAPPOINTMENT • DEFEATIST THOUGHTS • RUNNING AWAY FROM PROBLEMS • UNSTABLE EFFORT • MANIPULATION OF IDEAS • MANIPULATION OF SITUATIONS • GATHERING IDEAS AND MATERIALS • SHAPING AND PREPARING • RESISTING PRESSURE •

8 of Science–Restriction

Urizen, still weeping, has ceased resisting and is now bound in irons. He has reached a “state of dismal woe,” manacled by his own abstract ratiocinations. His closed eyes signify that he exists in spiritual darkness. Desiring to enforce “one command, ...one weight, one measure, ...one God, one law,” he has become “in chains of the mind locked up.” Limbs contracted to his torso, he is an aged fetus, his wisdom imprisoned within his own dogmatism. This is an image of the “eternal mind” trapped in the mortal flesh, making us focus on the needs of the body instead of the spirit.

Blake’s inscription to this image, “Frozen doors to mock the world” suggests that Urizen is a metaphor for a living book of knowledge that is rendered useless, its wisdom locked between frozen covers. Even so, the intellectual light and creative fire of the “eternal mind” still emanate from the figure’s head.

Distrusting your own power, you may have willingly accepted obstacles and interference to avoid the potential consequences of your actions. Or perhaps you are restricted by circumstances for the purpose of concentrating on spiritual matters. The closed eyes indicate a focus upon an inner reality. Eventually the energy of applied imagination can break the bonds of materialism, as shown by the exploding matter in the background. Use your ingenuity and intuition rather than brute force to liberate yourself.

In the creative process, this is where you transcend feeling trapped by impossible limits. Necessity forces improvisation; structure ignites spontaneity; limits yield intensity. The more constraint, the greater the spiritual freedom.

KEYWORDS: RESTRICTION • MENTAL BLOCKS OR OBSTACLES • SELF-IMPOSED BLINDNESS • CONSTRUCTIVE ATTITUDES • LIMITED BY DOGMATIC IDEAS • SUPPRESSED ENERGY OR CREATIVITY • FEELINGS OF HELPLESSNESS • LATENT IMAGINATIVE POWER • MENTAL FREEDOM DESPITE PHYSICAL RESTRICTION •

**9 of Science–Despair**

The skeletal Urizen hunches in the fetal position, while collaged above a woman extends her hand to a hovering infant. Blake’s describes the skeleton as being “in a horrible, dreamful slumber...a vast spine with’d in torment upon the winds...like a bending cavern; and bones of solidness froze over all his nerves of joy.” Consciousness is in dread sleep within the bodily cave that confines us, trying to avoid the pain of mortality that kills the joy of life. Nightmares of the intellect shrivel us into a ball of self-inflicted despair. This is the soul in the power of the Spectre: “the Almighty has made me his contrary...knowing and seeing life, yet living not.”

Protecting its head, the figure shrinks from expected blows. These are projections of one’s own fears arising from the perfectionism that rationalism expects. Guilt and depression can cause us to hide from innocent joy, or to withdraw from the weight of the world’s sorrows. This card depicts the mind tormented by its own demons – grief from past failures, or the soul’s suffering when personal wrongs or society’s problems seem uncorrectable. Despairing over what went wrong, we may take the blame upon our own heads.

The woman and child in the plane above are symbols of acceptance and hope. The woman, her hair bound as a matron, depicts the inner maturity and emotional stability that can penetrate the black cloud of despair, as she does with her right or spiritual hand. She is the earthy green spirit of love and forgiveness. The child she welcomes is the skeleton’s pure soul, who looks compassionately at its alter ego. The possibility of regeneration comes when we forgive not only ourselves but those who have hurt us. The self-folded skeleton positively represents integrity of structure and intrinsic wholeness. Pain is necessary but temporary. Grief and despair can take us back to the essence or “bare bones” of who we are, stripping us of everything that is incidental. We can reclaim our innocence; we can rebirth ourselves.

In the creative process, this is where criticism and inner grief overwhelms you. Judgements block creativity and produce rigidity and doubt. Go within yourself and think back to where you began; forgive your mistakes and recapture the initial innocence.

KEYWORDS: DESPAIR • MENTAL ANGUISH • SELF-PITY • DEPRESSION • WRACKED WITH GUILT • FEAR OF PUNISHMENT • SENSE OF ISOLATION • INSOMNIA AND NIGHTMARES • PUTTING YOURSELF DOWN • STRIPPING TO BASICS • SOUL-RETRIEVAL • SELF-FORGIVENESS • INTENSE CONTEMPLATIVE WITHDRAWAL •

10 of Science – Defeat

This card shows three figures encircled by serpents of death, falling head-first into a pit of fire. Two faces peer out from the flames, while eagles circle overhead. In Blake's plot, Urizen, furious with the other Eternals for opposing him, consigns them in his mind to "unquenchable burnings." In this view, the divine qualities in man are defeated by the forces of tyranny, and are painfully lost in the infernal abyss of materialism. Likewise, you may find yourself entangled in the slander or machinations of others, and headed for a fall. This could arise from being 'too smart for your own good', or from unavoidable situations reflecting your worst fears.

If defeat is inevitable, you can still surrender with grace, your thoughts imaginatively circling above. The two faces peering from the flames are the perennially contending spirits of life who ritually defeat each other: the one on the left, old and wizened, represents repression and loss; the other is young and leonine, representing energy and life.

This image also illustrates Blake's statement that "the modern church crucifies Christ with the head downwards" – meaning that Christ today would be considered a rebel angel or a devil, condemned by secular society for his sacred imagination. Perhaps you are being crucified for unpopular or rebellious actions. Your choice is epitomized in the three figures: Two cringe in fear, while the central figure calmly accepts his fate. He exultantly prefigures transformation and resurrection – the attitude of life-in-death that is the touchstone of spiritual consciousness. Material defeat and death to Blake mean spiritual victory and eternal life. This requires the voluntary sacrifice of the scientific reasoning mind. Those who despair at this will perish, for we must die to material consciousness in order to serve the imagination. The birds in the card are the ennobled phoenixes that rise from the ashes of sacrifice.

In the creative process, this is when difficulties consume you, and your work goes down in flames. Defeat is a form of intellectual bondage, and must be transcended. Physical or materialistic suffering is the quickest path to spiritual breakthrough.

KEYWORDS: INTELLECTUAL DEFEAT • SPIRITUAL VICTORY • DESCENT INTO PERSONAL HELL • HUNG-UP OVER MATERIALISTIC FEARS • WRAPPED IN VICES • ACCEPTANCE AND RESIGNATION • SACRIFICE AND SURRENDER • DEFEAT OF THE REASONING SELF • MISFORTUNE • RUIN • ADDICTION •

**The Person Cards**

The central images used in the four Person Cards of the Suit of Science are selected from a variety of Blake's works.

**Angel of Science
(Air of Air – Mind of Mind)**

Ironically, this image is from the title page of a scientific textbook advocating the rational materialism that Blake despised. Therefore, this is Blake's satiric comment on the scientific and intellectual idealism that separates us from our prophetic imagination, or soul. The card depicts a radiant temple in the sky, a veritable 'brass tower' of the mind whose foundations are hidden behind a bank of ephemeral clouds. The angel is apparent only as a circle of white light illuminating a geometry of Ionic precision and philosophical starkness. The breeze-blown banner asks Who would demonstrate the foundation of such a structure? This is a lofty Deistic vision, a literally classical projection of overglorified intellectuality. The Angel of Science is so abstracted that it has no human features. It is an abstract angel of air supported by a vaporous structure of mind. The muse of intellect offers you pure, objective mind coupled with clear, unemotional and unbiased thinking.

This is the part of yourself or another that believes in answer and explanation for everything, or a law by which things can be understood: absolute justice, universal principles. It is wanting to 'know' for knowledge's sake. You crave mental stimulation. This is like a bright idea, a light bulb in your head. It taps the invisible power inherent in maps, diagrams, equations, measurements, relational databases and spreadsheets, so as to mediate between us and the physical world, and spirit as truth. This muse can take the form of an environment, atmosphere, or attitude conducive to mental focus.

The archangel Gabriel can be associated with the Suit of Science, for it acts as the chief messenger of God. Gabriel ('God my strength') is the angel of truth and celestial revelation. Gabriel appeared to Mary to tell her to name her son Jesus. Although Gabriel is not related to the Angel of Science, both angels can bring fresh perspectives, or stimulate enlightening ideas.

In the creative process, this is the pure inspiration that can come in a flash of transparent thought, and you are likely to know how to apply it to your work.

KEYWORDS: RATIONAL MATERIALISM • FOCUSED INVOLVEMENT WITH ABSTRACT ISSUES • ISSUES OF CLARITY VERSUS ILLUSION • SCIENTIFIC AND INTELLECTUAL IDEALISM • UNEMOTIONAL AND UNBIASED THINKING • MENTAL STIMULATION • A BRIGHT IDEA • WORKING WITH MAPS OF UNDERSTANDING • INTELLECTUAL SELF-ABSORPTION •

*Child of Science**Earth of Air – Spirit of Mind**Child of Science*

This card from an engraving for the title page of a 1782 children's textbook of science and measurement. A child points to a sketch of the Pythagorean theorem, also drawn on the adjacent stone wall. Mathematics is shown to be the 'ground of existence'. Pythagoras was a 6th century B.C. Greek mathematician and philosopher who taught that numbers form the underlying basis of reality, an idea that began the ultimately successful effort of Science to separate spirit from matter. (Blake responds that "God is not a mathematic diagram.") This scientific child, and his alter ego, are grounded in ratiocination and materialism and thus lack spirit and imagination (only their left feet touch the ground). On the other hand, the child represents the spirit of learning; he nakedly seeks truth and openly communicates what he discovers.

Of the two aspects of the child, one is dark, partially cloaked and its face obscured, with long hair, and staff grounded in the earth. The other child is light, open, with bound hair, and baton as teaching tool. The twin-aspected Child of Science, one dark and wild, the other light and groomed, are the airy twins of Gemini being schooled in the pagan and natural sciences. The outdoor environment, with its various representations of nature, indicates that the phenomenal world is the subject of their speculations.

This is the part of yourself or another that likes to figure things out; that plans, measures, divides, and describes. Or you could be considering some campaign or strategy, acting as the brains behind the pack. We see symbols of classical knowledge and wisdom: the pyramid, Pythagorean geometry, and stones of permanence. This child looks for permanent truths and underlying infallible laws to explain or direct action. He wants to know the layout and the ground plan before moving in. Innocence questions everything, and its mental agility and quick-wittedness can clear up any mess. Communication, negotiation, and diplomacy can be your tools. This is a serious child, ready to defend his position. Taken to an extreme or threatened, he can become critical, cynical, quarrelsome, spiteful, and scheming.

In the creative process, this is when you first put pencil to paper to come up with an outline or a plan, or you talk it through with a friend. This can be the initial stages of organization and research to find out if something is actually feasible.

KEYWORDS: DEVELOPING MENTAL POWERS • LOVE OF LEARNING • RATIONAL VIEW OF NATURE • CONSCIOUS AND SUBCONSCIOUS COMMUNICATION • SEEKING TRUTH • PRECIOUSNESS • INTELLECTUAL DUALISM • MENTAL QUICKNESS •

*Woman of Science**Woman of Science*
(Water of Air – Matter of Mind)

This card is a collage of two designs from Edward Young's *Night Thoughts*, illustrating the line, "Ye searching, ye Newtonian, angels! tell, where, your great Master's orb? His planets, where?" Here the triple feminine is involved in Newtonian (that is, scientific) pursuits, bathing in the glow of illumination from above. The "bold comet" in the window symbolizes the love of knowledge and the cosmic energy that characterizes the Woman of Science. Seven-pointed, the comet can be interpreted as Sophia, the goddess of wisdom, and her seven planetary spirits, the seven pillars of her temple, and the seven legendary priestesses who founded the oracle-shrines of the ancient world. The telescope indicates an ability to see at a distance, a form of intellectual scrying.

This is the part of yourself or another who researches and studies things with care, who has exalted values and ideas, who looks to the future, turning her back on what has not worked in the past. The Woman of Science integrates what is possible (looks to the big picture or overview), with care for details (laying the groundwork). She freely offer her ideas and knowledge to others. An excellent teacher, counselor, and business executive, she is highly disciplined, and pays attention to detail. Communication and truth are central to her relationships. Seeing easily through subterfuge, she judges with a critical mind and sharp tongue. Emotionally detached, she is determined to maintain her perspective. Visionary but opinionated, her intellectual curiosity is a blessing and a fault. In the the extreme, she can be rigid and unyielding, looking to the principle rather than the particular, and have an answer to everything.

In the creative process, this is when you gather information to fit into a plan or design, and then look at suitable strategies for progressing further.

KEYWORDS: MULTIPLE APPROACHES OR ALTERNATIVES TO LEARNING • INNER INVESTIGATION • LOVE OF RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE • SCRYING OR "SEEING FROM A DISTANCE." • PROFESSIONALISM • AN INTEREST IN ASTROLOGY • SHARP AND CRITICAL • OPINIONATED OR UNYIELDING VIEWS •

Man of Science
(*Fire of Air – Passion of Mind*)



Chapter 6

The Suit of Music

THE CELEBRATION OF LIFE FORCE
FEELING WITH HEART & SOUL
THE PATH OF LOVE & BEAUTY

I love the jocund dance, The softly-breathing song.

Characteristics of the Suit

The Creative Process Suit of Music represents the emotional uses of divine imagination. It corresponds to the Suit of Cups in conventional Tarot. Its symbol is the lyre, an ancient stringed instrument whose name means 'to laud in song'. The earliest lyres were made by stringing animal horns, and its seven strings were the basis of today's musical scale. The lyre was sacred to Orpheus, Greek god of music, and was honored in the stars as the constellation Lyra. Luvah, the Zoa of Emotions, presides over this suit, whose element is Fire. Music is associated with passion, the sense of smell, and abstract precision such as in musical theory and mathematics. The cards in this suit portray situations and states of being that pertain to human feelings, especially love, as related to the power of imagination. When pertaining to works of art, Music specifically includes the study and practice of such disciplines as music ('art of the muses'), dance ('to move or stretch'), and weaving ('the art of webbing'). It also includes activities related to fire, such as chemistry ('pouring and melting'), alchemy ('mixing of fiery fluids'), perfumery ('through the smoke' [incense]), and cooking – the latter two being related to both fire and smell. Anything related to emotional causes is part of this suit, because the highest power of music is its ability to kindle the emotions. In addition, because of the mathematical and harmonic structure underlying music, the suit also applies to law and mathematics, although these are "degraded" or fallen forms because they seek to bypass spiritual vision. In general, Blake associated music with the idea of transcendence, and therefore uses musical symbols throughout his art to represent spiritual and imaginative states.

Basically, the Suit of Music is about one's spiritual vibration or energy, and its expression through the use of imagination. Music relates to the world through the heart and emotions. The true musician-dancer-weaver-chemist inspires love and creates emotional beauty in the external world by using the imagination, whereas the "degraded" musician rationalizes or regiments feelings to suppress the imagination, as in the following description of Urizen:

*He formed also harsh instruments of sound
To grate the soul into destruction or to inflame with fury
The spirits of life to pervert all the faculties of sense.*

The borders of all the suit cards depict flames and smoke symbolizing the heat and passion of the emotions, and its element of fire. (Swedenborg defined love as spiritual fire.) The inner edges of the card borders are red to symbolize the suit element. Each card has a Symbol Window

This is from Blake's famous painting, Newton, which depicts the arch-scientist Isaac Newton on the floor of the ocean of illusory materialism, seated on a stone, bending forward to make measurements with a compass. Newton, who died 30 years before Blake was born, is considered one of the greatest scientists of all times; he discovered gravitation, developed optics, and invented calculus. Although Blake respected his genius, he saw Newton as embodying all the Urizenic principles of scientific rationality that denied the imagination and spiritual reality. Dangling over his left shoulder is his rational cloak woven on "the loom of Locke." On the rock beneath Newton's thigh is a squid, "polypus of death...that vegetates beneath the deep," symbolizing the evils of human society, whose tentacles reach into every man's life, bringing doubt and despair. In Blake's view, Newton and his sciences serve a useful purpose by giving visible form to error, making it vulnerable to eradication. Although surrounded by intellectual darkness, Newton himself in his naked beauty, and his work, are brilliantly illuminated by an inner light.

This is the part of yourself or another who thinks, discriminates, and measures everything critically, with high ideals. As a perfectionist, you can get stuck in ideation, and may have difficulty putting things into practice. You worry over any ambiguity or unclear consequences. The Man of Science is a loner, characterized by personal detachment and self-possession. He knows something about everything, and is fascinated by new topics. Full of ideas, he thinks they can solve the world's problems, but may become cynical. An explorer and pioneer of the mind, he plots maps for the rest of us to follow. He can be a researcher, analyst, strategist or theorist. He names and classifies, defines principles. He teaches, preaches, and judges. Taken to extreme, this part of you can be ruthless or vengeful, rarely listening to others and seeing mistakes as someone else's fault. Beware of falling into obsessive intellectuality, know-it-all snobism, or calculated cruelty.

In the creative process, this is when you refine and hone your work by submitting it to critical analysis, careful measurements, and quality control.

KEYWORDS: GENIUS AT WORK • IMMERSION IN MENTAL WORK • FOCUSED CONCENTRATION • EXCESSIVE RATIONALITY • OBLIVIOUS TO SURROUNDINGS • PLOTS AND PLANS • NEARNESS OF MENTAL DEPRESSION •



at the bottom whose faint design of wavy lines suggests the vibrations of energy (and music) that characterize this suit. Each card also contains a thematic quote from Blake that extends its meaning and emulates lyrics to music. They are like Blake's "sounds of spiritual music and its accompanying expressions of articulate speech."

The Number Cards

The ten Number Cards in the Suit of Music are all from Blake's watercolor designs to Poems by Mr. Gray, giving them both visual and symbolic continuity. Blake's book of designs illustrated 12 poems by Thomas Gray, a poet whose work Blake admired. A single copy was commissioned by a patron as a gift for his wife; thereafter the existence of these designs was unknown to the public for over 100 years.

Ace of Music – Passion



This card shows a naked youth astride a giant swan ascending in full flight. In one hand he holds an upraised lyre and in the other a pair of reins. The opening illustration to Gray's book, it represents Genius being carried by Inspiration. In Blake's symbology, upward flight signifies energy – the life force associated with man's desires. The swan embodies purity, grace, and fertility, in union with the youth's naked innocence. In Greek mythology, the swan is the mount of Apollo, the god of music whose instrument was a lyre, and who Blake related to the divine imagination. The lyre is the instrument of Luvah, the Zoa of Music.

Its shape symbolizes sexual energy, for the sounds rising from between its horns are said to have initiated the birth of the universe. Traditionally, the lyre has either seven strings (representing the planets) or twelve strings (representing the astrological signs), and thus unites the forces of the cosmos. The reins in his right hand show that you, as Apollo/Luvah, can control and direct these creative energies.

The quotation in the window declares man's passion for life, which must be matched by an infinite capacity to live life. Thus the card shows your unlimited ability to 'ascend to heaven', to open yourself to dreams and especially to your own feelings – to soar on wings of inspiration to the heights of your loftiest desires, and to lovingly perceive the unlimited nature of life.

This card is about giving yourself completely over to the feelings of the moment. 'To desire' means 'to long for the stars' and now, on the wings of your imagination, you can get there. You seek elegance and majesty beyond the influence of finite things. This is the realization that you are an unlimited being. We all have a genius and passion for something higher. When this card appears, look for a sign of where your passion lies.

In the creative process, this is when you desire to possess or achieve something with passionate intensity. Let your genius soar upon your inspiration, and go for it.

KEYWORDS: PASSION FOR LIFE • UPLIFTING EMOTIONS • FEELINGS OF ONENESS •
OPENING TO FEELINGS • CREATIVE BREAKTHROUGH •
RECEPTIVITY TO PSYCHIC, SPIRITUAL, OR UNCONSCIOUS CHANNELS •
AWARENESS OF YOUR INFINITE POTENTIAL •



2 of Music – Contraries

This card shows Reason looking down from the clouds of matter, hearkening to the gentle vibrations of Imagination's song – as the scientist Isaac Newton listens to John Milton sing – illustrating Gray's lines from his "Ode to Music":

*Milton struck the deep-ton'd shell
And, as the choral warblings round him fell,
Meek Newton's self bends from his state sublime,
And nods his hoary head, and listens to the rhyme.*

Milton is poetic inspiration, Newton is rational inspiration; their essences are quite different yet augment each other. Blake believed that consciousness can be posited in terms of "contrary states" of existence, which are unique and necessary to each other. In this instance, Newton represents reason or science, while Milton represents the contrary state of energy or imagination. Contraries are not opposites (which negate each other) but are interactive components of a whole, much like the oriental concept of yin and yang. The opposite or negation of imagination is vegetated dullness. Mercy and justice are contraries, while the negation of mercy is cruelty. Other major Blakean contraries are: heaven & hell, joy & woe, innocence & experience, liberty & society, convention & revolt, ecstasy & despair, and time & space. Putting these terms together we discover such poetic and mystical paradoxes as: conventional revolt, revolting conventionality, the ecstasy of despair, crying for joy, a liberal society, innocent experience, heaven in hell, and rational images.

In the card, Milton sits right foot forward, his right hand plucking the strings of a seashell lyre; he represents the spiritual sentiments, and his long hair signifies freedom of expression. The moon-white lily and golden sunflower beside him nod in concordance with the music, further affirming the idea of contraries. Amidst the stars of intellect, Newton's cropped curly hair suggests tidy self-control. In sum, Blake endorses the art of feeling, and the art of thinking. The presence of contraries intensifies any experience.

This card also depicts archetypal male and female symbols: the starry sky-father in the clouds communing with the floral and lyrical earth-mother below. Their partnership creates the essential unity of life. They represent all contraries within ourselves that need to recognize and respect each other. Instead of having to make a choice as in the other suits, here there is a healing of differences.

In the creative process, this is when the tension of contrary forces propels you into the imaginal realm to find solutions or new possibilities. Contraries need the presence of each other to elicit the fullest expression of both.

KEYWORDS: INTERPLAY OF CONTRARIES • ALLOWING FOR PARADOX •
RESPECT AND COMPASSION FOR THE OTHER • OPPOSITES ATTRACT •
EMOTIONAL FREEDOM AND PSYCHIC WISDOM • EMOTIONAL ISSUES OR CHOICES •
PARTNERSHIP OR FRIENDSHIP • BALANCING THE MALE AND FEMALE • AFFINITY DESPITE DIFFERENCES •

3 of Music – Exuberance



This card is a collage of two illustrations for Gray's poem, "Ode for Music." It depicts an ascending seraph with many-plumed wings, trumpeting a great musical riff upwards into the heavens. Represents the vitality and joy of life, its upward movement suggests growth, especially of spiritual awareness. The seraph ('radiant, burning one') is the highest order of angel, one who sounds the music of the spheres (the rotating planets). Its celestial passion is evident in the color of its wings, complemented by the flames in the border. On its tunic we see dancing figures of energy like those in the 10 of Music. Below, two small birds on looping tendrils join

in the song. Nature cooperates with spirit, forming an exuberant chorus. Angel, birds, and horn all symbolize transcendent communication. The two birds independently signify fellowship and friendship.

The word 'exuberance' itself means an abundance or overflowing (from 'udder', hence 'to be fertile', to gush with nourishment), and is akin to 'enthusiasm' ('filled with god'). In Blake's eyes, exuberance is beautiful because it is filled with spiritual nourishment. The emotion of exuberance is infectious because it has the ability to 'feed' others.

This card shows you blowing your own horn, and singing with joy. Everyone around you shares in the good feelings. You announce good news, and broadcast your enthusiasm for something. You are lifted by happiness, calling attention to the beauty or special qualities of something or someone. When this card turns up, there is often something special or wonderful that you don't want to miss. It may simply be your wake-up call to appreciate who and what's around you, and communicate how you feel.

In the creative process, this is when you get so excited about something that you can't hold your feelings back. This is a 'Eureka' experience that makes you blow your horn and sing your song. This is a time to 'pour it on'.

KEYWORDS: EXPANSIVENESS • CELEBRATION • ENTHUSIASM • LIVELINESS • SPIRITUAL GROWTH • MUTUAL FELLOWSHIP • SPIRITED COMMUNICATION • SHARING OF IDEALS • COMPROMISE • HEALING • GIVING THANKS •



4 of Music – Musing

This card is a collage of two watercolors, and depicts an ancient bard playing his harp at a ceremony, while in the background a boy in a tree leans to hand down a nest to a girl below. The bard, a favorite figure of both Blake and Gray, represents the mythic poet-musician-prophet who speaks the truth (soothsayers) about past and present, and can divine the future as well. (See Man of Music.) The scene in this card is similar to that illustrating Blake's poem from Songs of Innocence, "The Voice of the Ancient Bard," which shows a bard surrounded by young people as he sings: "Youth of delight come hither, and see the...image of truth new born."

With powers indicated by his starry robe, the bard is an intermediary between the worlds of matter and imagination. His eyes are closed as he looks within and muses upon what he sees with his spiritual sight. In general, the bard signifies the passion of wisdom. As the window quotation states, this is Blake himself, conveying his musings in words and song to audiences old and young.

The background children are innocently involved in their own musings as well, with the young birds representing 'lines of communication' between them (the birds are called "captive linnets" – a species whose name derives from 'lines'.) There is a sense of relaxation and play, and shared feelings in this card, for the bard entertains his peers while the children. This can represent reflective nostalgia, or 'remembrance of things past' – a rich source for creative art.

In the creative process, this is when you relax into playfulness, whimsically experiment with improvisation, or reminiscence about past experiences. Such meditations alleviate stress and refresh the imagination. Make space for the gifts of spirit to move through you.

KEYWORDS: CONTEMPLATION OF HEART AND SOUL • IMAGINATION AT PLAY • PLEASURE COMBINED WITH PURPOSE • PASSIVE RECEPTIVITY • PLAYFUL OR FANCIFUL COMMUNICATION • RELAXING PURSUITS •

5 of Music – Melancholy



This card depicts the “unlettered Muse” of Gray’s most famous poem, “Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard,” standing amidst several tombstones. Her finger traces the letters of the words, DUST THOU ART, beneath which the inscription says, HERE LIETH WM BLAKE. As a spirit figure, the muse touching the gravestone signifies the possession of psychic powers. The tombstones generically symbolize the death of love, emotional loss, broken vows, or plans overturned. They can also signify one’s own buried emotions. Gray’s poem is a melancholy speculation on mortality and immortality; Blake’s name upon the tomb is his own ironic gesture of empathy.

Melancholy (‘black bile’) is a deep and bitter emotional sadness, often produced by the contemplation or experience of death or extreme loss. In Blake’s time, melancholy was widely believed to be the wellspring of inspiration, providing both the topic and motivation for much art. Although Blake himself at times went woefully “walking along the darken’d valley, with silent melancholy, he believed it to be “a disease which God keep you from & all good men.” Sorrow or grief may result in creativity, but happiness and joy are preferable, by far. Ultimately, this card declares the necessity of transcending sadness: the muse’s lyre itself connotes energy and life; and she leads with her right or spiritual foot.

In the quotation window, Blake tells us that the grave is the ultimate way to spiritual freedom. His last line, “Then what have I to do with thee?” echoes Jesus speaking to his mother at the marriage in Cana. This haunting question may be a repudiation of friendship, family, and the ties to life – a statement of existential melancholy; or it can be interpreted as a statement of spiritual necessity: no one can pursue the spiritual path without first forsaking the ties of the material world – which may include emotional ties, even this vegetable life itself.

This card is about being in low spirits, perhaps from a disappointment or loss. At worst it portrays an apathy or glumness that can be deadly to your creativity. The point is not to make it habitual, or better, to break free from it. Use these times to get in touch with your deepest feelings, to trace them to their source. By following your feelings into your depths, you may be able to free yourself from old pains and sorrows.

In the creative process, this is when you convert the pain of disappointment or loss into artistic expression. Or it may mean letting go of something old or dead, and moving on to something new and alive. Or the let-down or dissociation that follows intense effort.

KEYWORDS: SORROWS AND REGRETS • AWARENESS OF MORTALITY • SENSITIVITY TO PSYCHIC INFLUENCES • DISAPPOINTMENT IN LOVE • DEEP EMOTIONAL CONFLICT • REPRESSED (BURIED) EMOTIONS • SPIRITUAL MATURITY • NEED TO TRANSCEND AND MOVE ON •



6 of Music – Pleasure



This card is a collage of two watercolors, a circle of dancers around a central figure. With six as the number of reciprocity and sharing, and Music as the suit of love and emotions, this card is immediately understandable in its simplicity and gracefulness. The card quotation confirms the social nature of human pleasure. In fact, the word ‘pleasure’ itself comes from a word root meaning ‘mutual understanding’, which clearly leads to mutual enjoyment. The central figure can also be seen as a leader receiving the support and backing of his followers. Or the performance artist responding to the enthusiasm of an audience. Or the individual who would be at a loss without his friends and family. In this sense, the card represents any network or support group that functions to assist and encourage the individual. All of these are examples of emotional sharing that bring deep satisfaction.

In a more general sense, this card also represents the larger community of society that brings us life’s most pleasant experiences: our family and friends, neighbors and co-workers, our community, and by extension the entire community of mankind that makes it possible for us to function and enjoy life. This is the global dance of community.

When you get this card you are moving effortlessly with the natural flow of energies. Harmony is restored after the difficulties of 5 of Music. You freely give and receive. You may find yourself the center of attention or the fulcrum of a wheel that moves about you. Or you may be joining with others in such a way that your united energies can focus through one individual or cause. Like songs and games that feature call-and-response, a dynamic synthesis generates more movement and energy than just one factor alone. This card is also about the constellating of sympathetic or related characteristics.

In the creative process, this is when a variety of people or ingredients are brought together to produce a positive or elegant outcome, sometimes quite spontaneously. This happens when collective energies unite in exciting ways.

KEYWORDS: PLEASURABLE EXCHANGE • FILIAL AND FRIENDLY SUPPORT NETWORKS • GIVING AND RECEIVING GIFTS • HAPPY MEMORIES FROM THE PAST • BEING THE CENTER OF ATTENTION • RECEIVING SUPPORT • POSITIVE CONNECTIONS • SURROUNDED BY GOOD FEELINGS • HARMONIZATION OF ELEMENTS •

7 of Music – Fancies

This shows a poet-musician playing his lyre while, riding a rainbow above him, his muse pours forth a cornucopia of gift-bearing sprites so as to inflame his creative passions. This illustrates the lines in Gray's poem, "The Progress of Poesy":

*Hark, his hands the lyre explore!
Bright-eyed Fancy, hov'ring o'er,
Scatters from her pictur'd urn
Thoughts that breathe, and words that burn.*



As the "fancies" fly before him, the poet-musician records them in music and poetry. The technical term for this is synesthesia: the ability to experience one sense through another. Once considered a form of madness, it can be seen as a special talent for perceiving directly the spirit world that lies beyond the physical senses. Pamela Colman Smith, artist of the Rider-Waite Tarot deck, who had the ability to see music, explained that her drawings were "thoughts loosened and set free by the spell of sound." She credited the "subconscious energy [that] lives in them all." Debussy described her drawings of his music as "dreams made visible."

The fancies demonstrate a variety of things that can inspire us: one releases a bird of hope, another holds out a locust of problems, a third offers snakes of wisdom in both hands (one emerging from an egg), while a fourth holds the laurel sprig of victory. The rainbow that bears "bright-eyed Fancy" represents the mystical bridge between the worlds of matter and imagination; it is the artist's causeway.

For Blake, the world of fancy is reality, of which the so-called 'real' world of nature is but a reflection. The making of images in the mind, or "spiritual existences," is the process of imagination itself.

*All forms are perfect in the poet's mind, but these are not abstracted nor compounded
from nature but are from imagination.*

In the card, the fire spilling from the urn inflames your creativity, and the urn, decorated with laurels, signifies the prophetic and victorious nature of your work, or your mind. Fancy and all her little fancies are female, the anima or subconscious nature of the imagination. On the negative side, this card can represent delusions, self-deceptions, and inner confusion. Determine which fancies hold enough meaning and power to sustain your work, and make their expression your goal.

In the creative process, this is when you allow fantasy free reign. Your senses may cross-fertilize (hearing colors, for instance). As in daydreams, visions take form and then dissipate, permitting you to rehearse future actions or try out seemingly impossible ideas.

KEYWORDS: IMAGINATIVE POSSIBILITIES • INSPIRATIONAL FANTASIES • INNER VISION • ALTERED STATES • SYNESTHESIA • DREAMS AND DAYDREAMS • EMOTIONAL DELUSIONS • EXPLOSIVE EXPRESSION OF FEELINGS • MENTAL CONFUSION • CHOICES OR INDECISION •

8 of Music – Discontent

This watercolor is from Gray's poem, "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College," illustrating the lines:

*Alas, regardless of their doom,
The little victims play!
...Yet see, how all around them wait
The ministers of human fate...
The vultures of the mind*



These mental spectres are identified: at the left, with the snake of materialism wrapped around his arm, is jealousy. At his feet is gluttony as a rooting hog. Next at right is devilish avarice, clutching a running boy. Beneath is leonine pride or anger. At the extreme right, sobbing despair grasps a maiden with a doll. Above her ball-throwing companion is the serpent of flattery. Crowning all are the vultures of the mind, including one who reaches down to menace the boy with the cricket stick. These spectres are products of one's own discontent, and they prey upon the frivolous mind. They are transparent because to Blake they are created by ego and therefore unreal – quite different from the visions created by imagination, which are more real than anything in nature.

Blake believes such mental monsters are "the reasoning Spectre [that] stands between the vegetative man & his immortal imagination." They can and must be conquered:

*Each man is in his Spectre's power
Untill the arrival of that hour,
When his Humanity awake
And cast his Spectre into the lake.*

In the flames of the brightening sky, birds and eagles soar as emblems of hope and creative possibilities. As always in Blake, imagination is the key to personal freedom.

This is like being haunted by irrational fears, feelings of inadequacy, and low self-esteem. You are psychologically spooked or plagued by negativity. You may think that no one likes your work, or that there are hideous flaws in it. You may be trying to avoid an ugly scene, or cover up apprehensions or anger with a happy face. You need to re-evaluate your friendships.

In the creative process, this is when invisible demons of discontent make their presence felt, instigating psychodrama and clouding your judgement. On the other hand, the imagination rampant can produce 'monsters from the id.' Creativity is kin to lunacy, and sometimes you will be visited by bizarre ideas in your search for expression.

KEYWORDS: EMOTIONAL DISAPPOINTMENT OR DISSATISFACTION • ENERGY DRAIN • LOSS OF INNOCENCE • SELF-PITY • PLAGUED BY EMOTIONAL TORMENTS • EMOTIONAL OVERINDULGENCE • EMOTIONAL BREAKDOWN • SENSE OF THINGS OUT OF CONTROL •

9 of Music – Happiness

This is from an illustration to Gray's poem, "Ode on the Spring." Blake described it: "the purple year awaking from the roots of nature & the hours suckling their flowery infants." The waking 'year' is young man. Naked, he pushes himself up from the roots of nature, rising into Gray's "Cool Zephyrs" – who he sees as two bare-breasted women – "whisp'ring pleasure as they fly." His head is between us and the rising sun so that it forms a natural halo, signaling his spiritual grace. Around him the "rosy-bosom'd hours...disclose the long-expected flowers" (Gray's lines) as fairies extract babies from amidst the blossoms and then, nursing them, float heavenward. Two other fairies carry food and musical instruments. The man's ability to see such things of the spirit shows his heightened psychic perception. A cuckoo balances on a tendril above the Star of Venus, both symbols of springtime sexuality – of which the young man is quite aware. All in all, the aroused 'year' has every reason to be happy.

The window quotation is strongly related to the concept of time, like the illustration itself (which depicts the year and the hours), making the connection between time and happiness. The "winged life" of the hours is like "joy as it flies" – beautiful yet ephemeral. Nevertheless, happiness – like the flowers – is ever-renewing and always at hand. As Blake said, "Those who want happiness must stoop to find it; it is a flower that grows in every vale."

The sap is rising. You are blessed, and feeling your power. Today you are complete and whole, healthy in mind and spirit. You have done everything that needs doing. This is the card of direct, spontaneous love and happiness. You accept whatever Spirit and Nature has to bring you: today is a good day to die, or to live. In excess, you can become egotistical, gluttonous, and self-serving, with expectations that only you can provide happiness to those around you.

In the creative process, this is when you are at your creative best – fully present in the eternal moment, showered by gifts of spirit, improvising as you go, taking what comes without demanding more.

KEYWORDS: EMOTIONAL SATISFACTION & WELL-BEING • SENSUAL PLEASURES • UNCONDITIONAL LOVE • VISUALIZING WHAT YOU WANT • GOOD HEALTH • PSYCHIC POWERS • SENSUAL EXCESS • COMPLACENCY • SELF-INDULGENCE • SATIETY •

**10 of Music – Sublimity**

This card is from a design to Gray's poem, "The Progress of Poesy," and illustrates the lines:

*O'er Idalia's velvet-green
The rosy-crowned loves are seen
On Cytherea's day
With antic Sports, and blue ey'd Pleasures
Frisking light in frolic measures:
Now pursuing, now retreating,
...To brisk notes in cadence beating*

Decoding this passage and its illustration reveals a focus upon love and sexuality as the basis of the sublime. 'Idalia' was an ancient city on Cyprus famous for its temple of Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love and beauty, called Venus by the Romans. Born from the waves near the small island of Cythera (her name means 'descendant of the foam'), she is sometimes called 'Cytherea'. Her 'day' is Friday, reserved for sexual fertility and marriage. Other signs of Aphrodite are the Star of Venus, and the figure of lusty Cupid-Eros, who was Aphrodite's son. The timbrels (hand-drums) being held aloft by the "loves" who are "in cadence beating" could also be the famed mirrors of Venus, which were made of copper – itself named after Aphrodite's isle of Cyprus. Aphrodite, a water goddess, was united to fire by marrying Hephaestus (Vulcan), the god of the forge. The male/female symbolism of the phallic flutes and round drums, is repeated in Cupid's bow and violin, which also symbolizes magical powers and earthly perfection. This portrayal of sublimity ("elevated state") is literalized by the fact that everyone is dancing on air.

The window quotation extends the meaning of this card by identifying it as the foundation of creativity. Emotional and sexual satisfaction are the wellsprings of perfection in art, according to Blake. The music and dance of the maidens is the product of joy, not melancholy, focusing on the divine energies of sex and love.

You may have a talent for bringing people together. In this card we see collaboration, a group choreography, individuals in step, or sharing a vision. Through eros (love), we come to a state of vibrational resonance. You may be involved in something of high spiritual, moral, or intellectual worth. Your noblest characteristics are coming out. Everything is working well together. This shows moments of shared exultation.

In the creative process, this is harmonic convergence – the synchronization of rhythmic systems into a single divine note. The combined instruments and energies of the project and its components oscillate into resonance, building one upon another into sublime spiritual eros.

KEYWORDS: THE DANCE OF LOVE AND LIFE • PERFECT EMOTIONAL SATISFACTION • COMPLETE GOOD FORTUNE • "AT HOME" WITH SELF AND OTHERS • DOMESTIC AND ARTISTIC BLISS • COLLABORATION AND TEAMWORK • DIVINE CHOREOGRAPHY • SOCIAL HARMONY • SEXUAL AND SPIRITUAL WHOLENESS • PSYCHIC MASTERY •

The Person Cards

The central images used in the four Person Cards of the Suit of Music, like the ten Number Cards, are all from the Blake's watercolor designs to Poems by Mr. Gray. In each Person Card of the suit, as in each Number Card, the window contains a thematic quotation from Blake that emulates lyrics to music.

Angel of Music

(Air of Fire – Mind of Passion)



Angel of Music

This image is from the title page of Gray's poem, "Ode for Music." As in 3 of Music, this angel is a seraph ('radiant one'), called "Fame." But here the seraph holds two trumpets, not one (because fame, according to Milton, has two mouths) – and descends instead of rises. Trumpets were anciently used to herald the new and full moons, associating this angel with the moon and the emotions. Trailing flames of compassion, the angel touches down into the world using the right or spiritual foot. Crowned by a single star of intellectual inspiration, its spiritual vision is directed upward to heaven.

The domes and pyramids of London, which Blake associates with the Suit of Music, symbolize the city's materialism and commerce, while the spires and steeples represent its religion and arts. To men of all pursuits, the Angel of Music announces (for 'fame' means 'to speak') divine forgiveness for the evils of society, and brings the blessing of aesthetic sensibility. At its right, a star shoots upwards, signaling a crack in the firmament through which the angelic energies appear; it is also a sign of psychic abilities associated with this card.

In the window quotation, Blake tells of a sweetheart, who, "when she speaks, the voice of heaven I hear." Thus the "music of an angel's tongue" is the soft lullaby of love that creates "times of innocence and joy" despite the complexities and evils of civic life. The angel brings a cleansing freshness of possibility.

This card is the part of yourself or another that channels love for spiritual growth and awareness. Optimistic and open-hearted, you are able to overlook foibles and faults that others cannot, and you are blessed with friends and admirers. You are a voice of moderation and compassion, unafraid to announce your feelings or to step into the fray to defend others who are needy or disadvantaged. You bring a clear insight into confused or mixed situations, and may be psychically gifted. On the negative side, you are opportunistic and may resort to duplicity, speaking from both sides of your mouth. You are hot-tempered and sometimes act too quickly, lacking adequate grounding in the situation at hand.

The archangel Uriel can be associated with the Suit of Music, reputedly being the bringer of both alchemy and qabalah to mankind. Uriel ('fire from God') is the angel of salvation, and the fiery guardian of Eden's gates. Although Uriel is unrelated to the Angel of Music, they can both be regarded as emissaries of transformative energies.

In the creative process, this is when you feel an inrush of passionate excitement about what you are doing, when your heart sings with a vision of the imaginative possibilities that are appearing or coming down to you.

KEYWORDS: EMOTIONAL BREAKTHROUGH • COMPASSION • APPROACH OF SPIRITUAL GRACE • INCREASE OF AESTHETIC AWARENESS • LUNAR INSIGHTS. FORGIVING OF PERSONAL AND SOCIAL FAULTS • PSYCHIC POWERS • QUICK TO DISPLAY EMOTIONS • OPPORTUNISM. DUPLICITY •



Child of Music

Child of Music

(Earth of Fire – Spirit of Passion)

This card is from a design to Gray's poem, "The Progress of Poesy," illustrating the lines:

*Where shaggy forms o'er ice-built mountains roam,
The Muse has broke the twilight gloom...
She deigns to hear the savage youth...
Th' unconquerable mind, and Freedom's holy flame.*

The piping boy in leggings and wolf skins represents the primal feelings, outwardly wild and fierce, but inwardly innocent, tamed by love's lyrical power. The starkness of the 'ice-built mountains' and the primitiveness of the animal skin's 'shaggy form' emphasize the preciousness of the boy's humanity and the sweetness of his private tune – he is a 'sheep in wolf's clothing'. Obviously oblivious to his surroundings, he communes deeply with an inner muse. No matter how barren his environment, or how crude and unkempt his raiment, his songs are intuitive expressions of his feelings, and personal communications from his dreams and subconscious mind. Although he is emotionally independent and has a thick skin, he is inwardly vulnerable and moody. His willingness to take risks for love is part of his inherent valor. He strides forward confidently with his right or loving foot, and even the menacing persona on his back proceeds with its right paw first; thus the fearsome child is on the path of goodness. The emphasis on nature symbols in this card shows its relation to elemental earth as the source of primal feelings.

This is the part of yourself or another that plays on the most primitive of feelings. You are an empath proceeding alone into the psychic realm or into dreams. Emotionally vulnerable, you may be singing the blues, and turn away from human companionship. This can be your inner child whose trust has been betrayed, and retreats into insecurity or reclusiveness. You play-act with animal magnetism to see who will respond to your wild tune. This individual may become wrapped in fantasies and illusions of reality.

In the creative process, this when you explore the possibilities of improvisation, led by heart and soul. You fall in love with your own imagination.

KEYWORDS: SELF-COMMUNICATION • BEING TOUCH WITH ONE'S OWN FEELINGS • SHARING OF VISIONS AND DREAMS VIA CREATIVE EXPRESSION • DISGUISED EMOTIONAL VULNERABILITY • WILLINGNESS TO TAKE EMOTIONAL RISKS •

Woman of Music**(Water of Fire – Matter of Passion)**

This card is from a design to Gray's poem, "The Progress of Poesy," illustrating the lines:

*Awake, Æolian lyre, awake,
And give to rapture all thy trembling strings.
From Helicon's harmonious springs
A thousand rills their mazy progress take:
The laughing flowers, that round them blow,
Drink life and fragrance as they flow.*

Mt. Helicon's anciently famous springs of Aganippe and Hippocrene

(hippo=horse + krene=spring, because unearthed by the winged horse Pegasus), are the home of the Greek muses and thus the birthplace of music and poetry. Their wands inspired whoever drank them, and the fragrant flowers surrounding them were reputed to deprive snakes of their venom. Helicon was named after the goddess Helice, a virgin form of Hecate (see II-Mystery) whose name means 'willow' in Greek, for willows were planted by streams and their wands used for divination. This Grecian muse is Helice, and like her namesake willow, she merges with the stream – right foot forward to indicate her spiritual qualities. The 'trembling strings' of her lyre (from Æolus, the wind-god) are the song of the wind in her branches. The humanized flowers along the rills of the stream all drink and toast the inspirational waters, a metaphor for Gray's "rich stream of music."

The muse or Woman of Music is here associated with fire (in the border), air (the Æolian wind), water (the springs), and with earth (the living flowers). She is the Enchantress who channels and integrates energy, thoughts, feelings, and spirit. Her "living music" is "loud" and clear. Compare this card image with the Queen of Cups in the traditional Tarot.

This is the part of yourself or another who listens to the inner chords for life's ecstatic moments. You seek pleasure and tranquility, are naturally graceful and gentle, and enjoy all the senses. This person excels at 'diffuse consciousness' – an instinct for taking everything in without focusing on anything in particular. She may be very psychic, and easily reflects other people's feelings and projections. In the face of harsh realities, she may escape into solitude, addictions, or anodynes. Loving life, she is likely to vigorously laugh with joy, or unashamedly wail with sorrow.

In the creative process, this is when you vibrate in tune with everything around you, sensitively aware of life energy in all its forms, from which you create something new through the filter of your own consciousness.

KEYWORDS: EMOTIONAL DEPTH • FLOWING PSYCHIC SKILLS • SOURCE OF INSPIRATION TO OTHERS • ENCHANTING PERSONAL MANNER • MULTIPLE AFFINITIES AND TALENTS •

**Man of Music****(Fire of Fire – Passion of Feelings)**

This card is from the title design to Gray's poem, "The Bard," but could illustrate Blake's own lines from his Songs of Experience:

*Hear the voice of the bard!
Who present, past, & future sees
Whose ears have heard,
The holy word,
That walk'd among the ancient trees.*

Bards were Celtic minstrels who acted as heralds, and sang heroic odes at celebrations and festivals. The Man of Music is such a bard, a wise counselor and gifted visionary. His hoary beard and advanced age signify his emotional control and vast experience. A good term for him is wizard ('wise one'), a member of the magical establishment. He stands next to the sea of time & space (the material world) and beneath the branches of the "ancient trees" where walked the "holy word" – hence, he mediates between the worlds of matter and spirit; he is a shaman (medium) who sings the sagas of the soul. His mystical authority is asserted by his starry magician's robe, and, crowning his golden harp, by an angelic muse, which itself holds another, miniature harp. The bard's imagination roams freely between the mundane and the sacred, between fantasy and reality, between the past and the future.

Blake's window quotation states that imagination is ageless – artists and poets of old created perfect works, as will those of the future. Bardic inspiration is not supplanted by our own; nor will our realized visions be devalued by those of artists yet to come.

This is the part of yourself or another who is a spokesperson for the soul, interpreting the pregnant sounds and deep currents of life. You show maturity of emotion with a real concern for others. You are wonderfully imaginative but need an audience to appreciate you. This individual is old-fashioned, and devoted to tradition. In the extreme, he may be an idealist out of touch with reality, or live in a fantasy world of self-delusion. His sensitivity may lead to drowning his feelings in addiction or neurosis.

In the creative process, this is when you offer yourself as a servant of the life force, dedicating yourself to what you love, to helping others, or creating something beautiful.

KEYWORDS: EMOTIONAL CONTROL AND SELF-DISCIPLINE • MEDIUMSHIP • SHAMANISM • WIZARDRY • WISE COUNSEL • SOULFUL EXPRESSION • CREATIVE MASTERY • LIVING IN FANTASY • SELF-DELUSION •



Chapter 7

The Suit of Poetry

THE EXPRESSION OF ETERNAL TRUTH
TO SPEAK FROM PROPHETIC INSPIRATION
THE PATH OF INDIVIDUALITY & REVELATION

One power alone makes a poet – Imagination the divine vision.

Characteristics of the Suit

The Creative Process Suit of Poetry represents the intuitive, poetic, and prophetic uses of divine imagination. It corresponds to the Suit of Wands in the traditional Tarot. Its symbol is the scroll, a roll of truth – from its medieval meaning of ‘a piece cut off and used as a record’. Urthona, the Zoa of Imagination, presides over this suit, whose element is Earth. Poetry is associated with commitment and truth, the sense of hearing, and verbal precision such as in writing and religion. The cards in this suit portray characteristics and qualities relating to imagination and eternal truth, which is prophecy.

When pertaining to works of art, Poetry specifically includes the study and practice of such disciplines as literature, oratory, theater arts, and so forth. It also includes psychology (‘study of the soul’) and mythology (‘study of spoken fables’), and activities related to its element, such as agriculture (‘devoutly working the fields’). Anything related to spiritual causes is part of this suit. Religion, ritual (including magic), and war (‘confusion’) are part of Poetry, although as “degraded” or fallen forms.

Basically, the Suit of Poetry applies imagination to one’s spiritual vision, and attempts to reveal man’s inner nature. The true poet-writer-prophet-spiritual warrior creates forms in the external world using the imagination, whereas the “degraded” poet uses created forms to suppress imagination. In this sense, “poetry fetter’d, fetters the human race!” and “he who will not defend truth, may be compell’d to defend a lie.”

Poetry attempts to communicate what cannot be fully known – the essence of the soul. But visions of the soul seen through the imagination can be individually expressed, and thus poets become prophets – spiritual seers whose views of eternity provide the truths we need to know. For those in whom the spirit is active and alive, poetry releases individuality and energy – which is to say that poetry is also rebellious and spirited.

the grandest poetry is immoral...the poet is independent & wicked...

The borders of all the suit cards depict grapevines symbolizing the vitality of the imagination – which like its element, is eternal and ever fruitful. The inner edges of the card borders are green to symbolize the living earth. Each card has a symbol window at the bottom whose faint design of biblical words suggests the faith in imagination that characterizes this suit. Each card also contains a thematic quote from Blake that extends its meaning.



The Number Cards

For visual and symbolic continuity, the ten Number Cards in the Suit of Poetry are all from Blake’s watercolor designs to *Night Thoughts* by Edward Young. This long narrative poem, popular in Blake’s time, is now forgotten except for Blake’s illustrations. Young described his poem as “Truths, which, at Church, you might have heard in prose.” Affectedly speculating on mortality, it admonishes man to live morally and rationally – a theme that Blake often rectified in his illustrations.

Ace of Poetry – Inspiration

We see a six-winged cherub descending to touch the poet’s lips as he writes upon a scroll draped over his right leg. A manifestation of spiritual power, the cherub represents the divine inspiration as a sexual metaphor. Blake says:

In Beulah the female lets down her beautiful tabernacle, which the male enters magnificent between her cherubim, and becomes one with her.

The “beautiful tabernacle” refers to female genitalia, the “cherubim” are the labia, while Beulah is the realm of creativity and sexuality. This card thus symbolizes the reception of Inspiration as spiritual cunnilingus,

or communicating with the sacred. In Young’s poem, this image illustrates a line alluding to the poetic nature of the Bible, which is also appropriate because Blake’s inspiration often came from it – “The whole Bible is filld with imagination & vision from end to end & not with moral virtues.”

Blake’s lines in the window declare the universal poet’s mission, which is to create Poetry by letting spirit in (inspiration), renouncing the “rotten rags” of rules and rationality, and sacrificing one’s ego (self-annihilation). “Faith in the Saviour” does not mean religious belief in God; it means belief in your divine self, in your own imagination as your savior. Compare this image with the Angel of Poetry.

This card is about receiving an inner, intimate message of truth – which is the definition of imagination. Prophecy describes what is eternally true, and it too is imagination. In this card, Blake links sexuality, sacredness, and imagination in the same action.

In the creative process, this is when you are first seduced by your muse, whose kiss of spirit makes you let go of everything that you thought you knew, in service to the immediacy of divine revelation.

KEYWORDS: THE KISS OF INSPIRATION • INTIMATE CONTACT WITH HIGHER CONSCIOUSNESS • BURST OF INTUITION • SENSE OF INNER GUIDANCE • DESIRE FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH • SEXUALITY AS A METAPHOR FOR IMAGINATION •



2 of Poetry – Individuality



This image illustrates Young's lines comparing the "mortal man" (shown holding a hand-mirror and writing on his lap) with the "man immortal" (the angel at his right foot) and the "world's dark shades" (the group of spirits below his knees). The ethereal blue mountain establishes that spiritual aspiration is the background of this card. The seated man sees his material self in Blake's "vegetable glass of nature," and presumably writes what he sees. But the man's face is vapid, and he wears classical garments that symbolize secular, materialistic consciousness. He embodies Young's point that men can only "make their comment" on "what they find at home" – their pallid earth-bound vision. The huddled "dark shades" represent the self-enclosed society that urges people to stay focused on their egos.

To see and express one's deeper individuality requires looking beyond the temporal self into the eternal self. If the man in this card puts aside his ego-mirror he will see his immortal self reflected in the square mirror at his feet, as well as a reflection of the infinite sky overhead. His true individuality is his divine reflection, the angelic self. The angel bows not to the mirror but to the divine spirit it reflects. Blake asserts that "general forms have their vitality in particulars: & every particular is a man; a divine member of the divine Jesus." Thus, each man's individuality or identity is his divine portion, and his path to knowledge, because "all knowledge is particular."

"Every man's wisdom" (from the window quote) defines his individuality, and empowers his imagination to express itself uniquely. In his quote, Blake's own "individuality" is wryly shown by his misspelling the word.

This card is about avoiding worldly confusion and not being influenced by selfish concerns. You need to discern into which mirror you look – the vegetable glass of earthly issues, or the mirror of imagination that reflects the eternal truth. This card suggests that every issue makes a surface impression behind which lies an eternal reality. True individuality comes from seeing both one's outer and inner personalities, discerning the difference and then acting accordingly.

In the creative process, this is when you look into yourself to see the underlying content and meaning of your project. This is the choice of whether to express your ego-self or your true self, which is a particularized expression of immortal truth. The more you are your (true) self, the more universal your message.

KEYWORDS: VIEWING THINGS IN YOUR OWN WAY • AWARENESS OF INTUITION AND ORACLES • HOLISTIC COMPREHENSION • BEING MINDFUL OF YOUR TALENTS • ENLIGHTENED SELF-EXPRESSION • ABILITY TO CHOOSE BETWEEN ALTERNATIVES •



3 of Poetry – Creativity

We see the poet kneeling in front of an open book, his arms forward in a gesture of both worshipping and welcoming. Three angels with overlapping, outstretched arms stand in the background, celebrating and blessing the occasion. In Young's words, they represent "an imprimatur from above"; that is, a divine permission to proceed. The man is clothed in a simple blue smock, suggesting an unsophisticated or spiritual motive. Except for a few words heading the page, his book is blank – it represents unlimited creative potential, awaiting the words or system of thought to be inscribed on its pages. Being a book rather than a single sheet or scroll suggests a synthesis of many pages, hence of many related ideas and concepts. The book could also represent a completed system, plan, or 'bible' being offered to you for guidance. The triple angels are spiritual messengers and poetic muses; they are also reminiscent of the "triple female tabernacle" mentioned in II–Nature and the Ace of Poetry, suggesting again that creating forms is a reproductive function, connected to the generative forces of life and sexuality.

Blake's window quotation, although stated in the first person, refers to the nature of creativity, which defines the self in the idiom of a highly personalized view of life. It is the inventive outcome of the peculiar individuality of each person, as noted in the previous card.

This card also suggests that you have a strong impulse is to communicate your vision in a traditional way. You have a great deal to say, and you approach your work with deep respect and innate dignity. However, the scope of your vision and the extent of your ambition requires that you plan carefully and proceed with due concern for details. You need to sit down with your work and humbly commune with it to learn the best way to proceed.

In the creative process, this is when you receive the divine fiat to 'make your mark', according to your own vision. You have 'carte blanche' to create your own myth, to determine what is written in the book of life. But be prudent in laying out and planning your project.

KEYWORDS: CREATIVE BLESSINGS AND SUCCESS • CREATIVE OVERVIEW OR PLAN • IMAGINATIVE POETIC VISION • UNLIMITED CREATIVE OPPORTUNITY • SYNTHESIS OF IDEAS • REVELATION OF TRUTH • SPIRITUAL IDEALISM OR UNDERSTANDING •

4 of Poetry – Harmony



We see a woman and a bearded old man communing by a river populated with swans and flamingos. In Young's text, the river is "pleasure's sacred stream," which "fosters ev'ry growth of happy life" and brings "refreshment, life, health, reason, joy." It symbolizes the river of life in its rich flow – at which male and female, innocence and experience, beauty and wisdom stand side by side in harmony. The two figures, garbed in simple and unpretentious robes, raise their heads to gaze into a glow from above. This heavenly spotlight indicates they are eternal forms whose heightened awareness enables them to spiritually merge with their environment. They also represent Adam and Eve, returned to the garden in their old age after restoring their own inner harmony.

Their arms and hands are upraised in gestures of gratitude and worship, and the branches of a tree of life hover over their heads. Their long flowing hair suggests that theirs is the felicitous marriage of freedom and knowledge. They stand upon the spiritual bank of the river, with nature represented as the opposite bank, whose flamingos of paradise play by the stream. The surrounding willows (see Woman of Music) are associated with the goddess, and her creativity and intuition. The two swans on the near bank confirm that all the creative energies, both natural and spiritual, are in harmony.

This is a traditional card of marriage, of celebration and thanksgiving for life. It may signify a time of holiday (holy day) during which to ritualize or formally recognize the joy and bounty granted to you. There is a sense of completion at this time, a recognition of things being right, of common effort and shared appreciation, of good energy flowing towards a worthy cause.

In the creative process, this is when you unite elements of concordant feeling by interweaving their strands, forming a new 'one-hearted' or eternal form. All the elements are meshing together, and the work flows easily; now you give thanks.

KEYWORDS: REWARDS OF LIFE • SATISFACTION IN EVERYDAY LIFE • THANKSGIVING AFTER LABOR • COMING TOGETHER IN PROSPERITY • PERFECTED WORK • TRANQUILITY • CEREMONY AND CELEBRATION • CREATIVE CONSOLIDATION •



5 of Poetry – Strife



This card depicts the falling angel Lucifer and his "portentous shade," an elephantine creature, in the stormy skies of some "foreign, un-terrestrial sphere" (Young's lines). In Blake's myth, Lucifer ('light-bearer') is the first step away from spirituality; his flaw is pride. Lucifer is a fallen aspect of God within man, which whom we must do spiritual battle. Normally elephants symbolize positive qualities such as intelligence, chastity, and longevity; and in the medieval bestiaries they are emblematic of Christ. However, Blake's creature parodies an elephant to represent a perversion of its qualities, just as Lucifer is a parody of God. Both figures are falling head downward, which in Blake's visual vocabulary signifies spiritual fall. Lucifer's outstretched arms caricature resurrection, especially since he bears weapons in both arms. The figures could be locked in battle among themselves, but more likely they are comrades-in-arms. They represent the spiritual adversaries that man must battle within himself – selfishness and perverseness. The lightning flashes next to Lucifer's body are a visual pun on the meaning of his name, but the illumination they brings are the light of truth. Its celestial fire reveals Lucifer and his bestial alter ego to be aspects of Satan.

In the context of the window quote, the figures represent our own fallen divinity. Man and God are the same; both are divine, both can fall. We must struggle with our inner demons, for that is the "spirit of life." Just as Lucifer fell because of material pride in his own spiritual glory, so can we. Spiritual materialism, or false righteousness, is particularly dangerous for otherwise spiritually oriented people who think their awareness makes them better than others.

This card is about being in conflict with different parts of yourself, possibly creating violent stress or lightning insights, or both. It can mean falling into arguments, being caught in a thicket of ideas, or being surrounded by dark clouds of confusion. It is a wake-up call to seek the light and find the truth of the matter. But you're in for a tumble; and may get scraped.

In the creative process, this is when things are falling apart and looking quite dark. You need to assert your spiritual rights! Prepare to do battle in order to illuminate the truth. Prepare to 'beat down' the opposition using divine ideas, and perhaps inspired parody.

KEYWORDS: FOCUS ON SELF-IMPROVEMENT • TESTING IDEAS THROUGH CONFLICT OR DISAGREEMENT • HEATED EXCHANGE OR TROUBLED RELATIONSHIP • COMPETITION OR LITIGATION • POWER STRUGGLES • CONFRONTING OBSTACLES • QUESTIONING AUTHORITY •

6 of Poetry – Cooperation



This card depicts an angel offering a book to a naked man vaulting upward through flames. This card represents divine inspiration being handed down by the poetic muse as an act of cooperation with man. His impulsive leap symbolizes the psychic energy and desire needed to propel us upon the flames of creativity into the spirit's realm. (Blake said "Jesus...acted from impulse, not from rules.") The scene metaphorically describes a psychological process, for the man must first believe in the angel (and leap towards it) before the angel can give him its book of inspired knowledge. Without recognition from man, and without man's desire and energy, the divine muse is unable to communicate its message.

This card specifically expresses what archetypal psychologist James Hillman calls personifying, which means giving names and passions to insensate things, making them into psychic presences with real power. Only this way can you perceive their specific qualities, and yield to them the respect they require. The Tarot itself is a classic example of personifying as a psychological tool for societal and self-understanding. Personifying requires imagination and stimulates personal creativity because it makes gods, demons, and the soul not merely poetic allusions but real 'beings' that cooperate with and serve mankind. Blake consistently personified his psychological states, such as the Zoas and myriad other "presences" who were completely real to him, and he established relationships among them all. This ability to cooperate with his personifications is the foundation of his artistic power.

This card exemplifies the psychological interaction between the mind and its personifications. When you recognize the 'eternal attributes' as divine persons, you rise up to meet them, and then the gods can give you their gifts of wisdom and inspiration, via mutual recognition and cooperation. The book in this card could also represent the answer to a question, permission to do something, a gift of any kind, success in court or real estate, and so forth. The act of conscious soaring could also represent actual journeys or imaginative flights near at hand.

This card is about the true artist's ability to mythologize his work, and to open communication with all the gods that inherently inhabit any creative work. Unfortunately, we live in a society that has few gods (although many devils). However, your individual genius enables you to rectify this situation by creating a personal pantheon of personifications. Doing this can open the floodgates of creativity because your gods will cooperate by telling you whatever you need to know.

In the creative process, this is when you cooperate with your 'genius' by having a 'dialogue' with your conceptual material. Your work, too, is a living god, and you must give this god its due by communicating with it. In return, your god can give you its divine 'inside' information.

KEYWORDS: A GIFT FROM ABOVE • SUCCESS THROUGH COOPERATION • ADVANCEMENT TOWARD A GOAL • TEAMWORK BETWEEN MIND AND SPIRIT • CREATIVE JOURNEYS • NEW SENSE OF PURPOSE •



7 of Poetry – Boldness

We see two of Young's personifications confronting each other: "Can Joy...talk with threat'ning Death, and not turn pale?" Young, in his poem, thinks not – but Blake's painting clearly disagrees. The figure of Joy, depicted as a statuesque young woman in flowing robes, has the blush of life on her cheeks and her expression is notably calm as she looks Death in the eye without flinching. Boldly, she strides toward him with her right or spiritual foot, and her right hand upon her heart emphasizes her sincerity. Joy is the fearless spirit of life. The figure of Death, by contrast, is angry at her boldness, and towers over her menacingly. His left foot is forward, his right hand points backward, and he threatens her with his arrow of destruction (at upper right). Even knowing that you cannot win, with boldness you can still tell the truth.

This card portrays the need for tenacity and courage against opposition, even when overpowered. In particular, Blake felt that creative artists should boldly raise their voices to resist societal error. In his notebook, Blake wrote a "Public Address" in which he said:

The wretched state of the arts...demands a firm & determinate conduct on the part of artists to resist the contemptible counter arts established by...politicians...

In this situation, you find the willingness to stand up to opposition without backing down. The vine of life, of which you partake, fills you with eternity's strength. Although Death will be the eventual victor, the life-impulse and the boldness of art that you represent and create will never die or be vanquished. This card urges you to face your fears and live heroically.

In the creative process, this is when you find courage in the face of adversity. You can do your duty to life – countering fears and mortality itself – by doing what you love, upholding truth, and encouraging others in the same bold path.

KEYWORDS: COURAGE AGAINST THE ODDS • TAKING A STAND • ENERGETIC CONSTRUCTIVENESS • STUBBORNNESS OF BELIEF • DEFENDING YOURSELF • NEEDING TO TEST YOUR METTLE • SPEAKING YOUR MIND • TELLING THE TRUTH • ACTING WITH INTEGRITY •

8 of Poetry – Swiftiness

This card illustrates Young's rococo lines:

Boundless creation! what art thou?

...If, on tow'ring wing,

I send [my thought] through the boundless vault of stars;

...tho' rich, what dross their gold to thee...

Rephrased: Philosophical reflection swiftly finds that nothing outshines imagination. This card deals with Blake's ideas about time. His window quotation suggests that we benefit from life's briefness because it makes us cherish life the more. He said "eternity is in love with the productions of time," meaning that life's human and artistic achievements have eternal value. Time for Blake is not an linear progression of measured moments; such a scientific view of time forges a chain of temporal slavery. Viewed with imagination, time becomes protean and indefinite; it can be lengthened and shortened, altogether stopped, and contains eternity in every moment.

Swiftiness is a metaphor for the ever-renewing prophetic power of imagination, and its subjective and numinous nature. The figure in the card can be interpreted as Los, the lord of time who is in love with space. He is shown 'embracing' his beloved, using his wide-spread scroll of poetry to gather the energy of eternity's wide firmament. "Incessant the falling mind labour'd, organizing itself: ...with ease searching the dire vacuity." The imaginative mind swiftly wings its way through the universe, forging personal meaning out of the void and then strives to communicate its acquired truths.

This card is about also about energy and freedom, and about falling in love: with another person, with your work, with yourself, with life. Marcel Proust defined love as "Space and time measured by the heart." Your mind races with ideas, and with time as a constraint, your energy bursts through space.

In the creative process, this is when you get so carried away by your work that time ceases to exist. You spontaneously become one with eternity; for true creation happens in a moment, and all that is false happens over time.

KEYWORDS: MUCH ENERGY SUDDENLY AVAILABLE FOR USE • ACTIVITIES AND ENERGIES SPEEDING UP • EXPERIENCING TIME-WARPS AND TIMELY COINCIDENCES • INFATUATION AND FALLING IN LOVE • FAST THINKING AND COMMUNICATION • BURST OF CREATIVE ENERGY • FINDING A NEW SENSE OF VALUES •

**9 of Poetry – Powers**

The 9 of Poetry depicts Jesus as the "great vine," flanked by an embracing couple, a mother with two children, and various surrounding angels. This visually renders Jesus's biblical words: "I am the vine, ye are the branches...without me ye can do nothing." Blake too calls Jesus "the true vine of eternity, the human imagination," and uses his image many times in Night Thoughts, stressing the role of imagination to diminish Young's emphasis on reasoning.

The branches of Jesus's vine are human beings, whose fruitfulness stems from both passion (the embracing couple) and compassion (the mother with children). The hovering angels are powers that surround the imagination; especially words and symbols, which, like angels, have invisible sway over us. Other qualities symbolized by this image are: moral strength, good health, spiritual energy, and creative communication.

The window quotation carries the meaning of Powers even further. It expresses the inspiring truth that human beings are indeed capable of dealing with our human situations, and even of facing and spiritually overcoming death itself. This inherent human capacity is the divine mercy. Jesus expresses this by stretching out his hands in blessing, his down-turned palms conferring the divine powers upon the human figures beneath him.

This card is about completion through strength. You receive divine support that blesses your efforts, and this is a time to seek closure or consummation in your work and relationships. Although 'God is on your side', be careful not to assume beforehand that all your grapes are harvested. Coordinate your forces, and gather your fruit with loving care.

In the creative process, this is when you surrender to imagination, and let its transformative power work through you. Your work becomes your life, and your life the work – a living god, whole and fertile. You are now poised to complete the work at hand.

KEYWORDS: POWERS OF IMAGINATION • POWERS OF LOVE • POWERS OF COMMUNICATION • SPIRITUAL STRENGTH • HEALTH, ABUNDANCE, AND FRUITFULNESS • STAUNCHNESS OF BELIEF • STRENGTH OF PURPOSE • COMPLETION AT HAND • BE CAUTIOUS AGAINST OVERCONFIDENCE •

10 of Poetry – Prophecy

This image illustrates Young's lines:

Orb above orb ascending without End!

Circle in circle, without end, inclos'd

...At once it quite ingulphs all human thought;

'Tis comprehension's absolute defeat.

Likened to Ezekiel's prophetic biblical vision (see X–Whirlwind), these heavenly eye-studded gyres signify not just God's glory but everything that is beyond man's understanding. In response, man can only kneel and humbly acknowledge the divine workings of the universe. The angels stand behind two gyres forming the sign of infinity, and represent the four Zoas; in viewing them we see ourselves as a portion of the divine plan. Note that the nearest orb has parallel arcs that pass through the body of the kneeling worshipper. The orb with eyes signifies that man is part of the divine plan, even though he fails to comprehend his inclusion in the circuit of higher consciousness. The black orb without eyes means he is still impaled on Blake's "circle of destiny," the materialist round of cause and effect. Which orb he chooses is determined by his prophetic vision.

This card is a vision of spiritual possibility, foreseeing a time when mankind rises to its full spiritual stature. In the meanwhile, everyman's task and the poet's responsibility is that of Prophecy, which means to speak the eternal truths – past, present, and future. This means 'telling it like it is' – not from the fallen and illusory perspectives of history, science, medicine, or religion, but according to the only eternal realities, which are those of imagination and the soul.

In the window quotation, Blake prophesies that spiritual awareness will make the materialist desert of man's mind into an eternal garden of delights. Although he speaks of "futuraity," in Blake's cosmology there is only the eternal now. The future is now, and this card depicts spiritual awareness in this present moment. There is an element of humility or penance in this card. Spiritual awareness and prophetic statements can be easily misunderstood, not only by the people around you, but by yourself as well. The true nature of things is ultimately incomprehensible, so humility and awe serve better than egoistic pretenses to knowledge and understanding. Speak the truth as you see it, but always remember that your truth can never be the only or complete truth.

In the creative process, this reminds us to worship and humbly commune with the divine powers of the universe, in order to actively participate in the prophecy, which is the awakened consciousness of the greater organism we call Gaia.

KEYWORDS: AWARENESS OF SPIRITUAL REALITY • HUMILITY IN THE FACE OF INFINITY • SPEAKING THE TRUTH AS YOU SEE IT • CHANNELING • BOWING TO THE WILL OF THE • ACCEPTANCE OF YOUR LOT •



10 of Poetry



The Person Cards

All the central images used in the four Person Cards of the Suit of Poetry are selected from Milton a Poem, an autobiographical prophecy that was 'dictated' to Blake by the spirit of John Milton. It was written to correct what Blake saw as Milton's errors in elevating reason and confusing God with Satan. The book seeks to cleanse man's perception so that "every thing would appear to man as it is: infinite." It opens with Mose's biblical quote, "Would to God that all the Lord's people were Prophets," and describes how both Milton and Blake overcome their selfhood and are assimilated into Los, the spirit of prophecy.

Angel of Poetry

(Air of Earth – Mind of Spirit)

This depicts William Blake himself, as the embodiment of everyman, spiritually merging with Los, the imaginative Zoa and mythic angel of poetry – framed within the blaze of the spiritual sun behind them. Both are naked in their fusion.

And Los behind me stood, a terrible flaming sun,

...I turned round in terror; and behold!

...trembling I stood...but he kissed me and wish'd me health,

And I became one man with him arising in my strength.

...Los had entered my soul...I arose in fury and strength.



Angel of Poetry

Here the artist-poet merges with his own all-powerful genius, suffusing everything with the light of overwhelming inspiration. This could illustrate Blake's line that "God becomes as we are that we may be as he is." Like an angel, Los has descended to earth to be with man, and his up-raised arms signify that he honors and accepts him. The rounded earth below suggests that this is the planet earth; Blake is humanity. When the muse and the poet join in mutual attraction and love, the result is an explosive inrush of truth and imagination. In this card, we realize that everything is one thing, which is the divine insight. This card is about mutual emancipation of prophetic expression: man needs God to see; God needs man to speak. It is the prophetic union.

The archangel Michael is concerned with spirit and reconciliation, and can be associated with the Suit of Poetry. Michael ('like unto God') is the Prince of Light, the angelic warrior who does spiritual battle with Satan. Although Michael is not related to the Angel of Poetry, both angels can be conflated as divine emissaries and warriors of the spirit.

This card represents the part of you or another that has the power to come through in the clinch, to hunker down and forge a major breakthrough when things seem desperate. You have the ability to rise up in the face of adversity, receiving energy from a spiritual force. You are assertive but modest, and trust in your imagination to stand by you through thick and thin. With the courage of your convictions, you tell the truth as you see it, no matter what the odds or the cost. Negatively, this could represent inadequate reliance on yourself, counting on outside intervention instead of helping yourself.

In the creative process, this is when everything comes together in a blinding rush of imaginative insight and energy. Your work can be a godly expression of staggering truth and prophecy.

KEYWORDS: RADIATION OF CREATIVE ENERGY • REALIZATION OF DIVINITY • MESSAGES FROM SPIRIT • BURST OF IMAGINATION • BURNING OF INNER FIRES • UNION OF CONTRARIES • SEXUAL RELEASE •

*Child of Poetry**(Earth of Earth – Spirit of Spirit)*

This card appropriately depicts Blake himself, indicated by the word WILLIAM. Beside him is a falling star, which in the poem represents Milton's intellectual energy inspiring Blake, and entering his left (intellectual) foot. Blake's bodily attitude, leaning backward with his arms outstretched and palms upturned, signifies total acceptance of the divine will, including possible self-sacrifice. The carved stone steps at left show the potential for spiritual ascent through one's own handiwork. The figure's nakedness symbolizes his innocence and beauty as he receives the divine spirit. Although the sky is obscured by black clouds overhead, his faith enables him to attract the star that blasts through the negative obstructions.

In general terms, this card shows that receptive innocence can 'catch a falling star', an inspiration that ignites passion and stimulates genius. By contrast, maturity and experience tend to clothe themselves in dogma that wards off divine energies. The card quotation refers to people with blocked vision. Blake teaches that 'seeing' is an attitude rather than an action; it means that we must put aside our 'clothing' of selfhood, and let the realm of imagination enter us without precondition – if necessary, even ridiculously, as through our feet. The Child of Poetry is willing to take major risks.

This is the part of yourself or another that is restless, with strong feelings and quick impulses. You find the new and the strange fascinating, and learn through experience and by taking risks. You will bend over backwards or go to any length to see the light. You are hot-tempered but also down-to-earth and forthright. This individual may have problems with intemperate expression or exaggerated posturing.

In the creative process, this is the beginning of inspiration, when you are first fired up by a staggering idea that may free you from the blindness of previous conventions or paradigms.

KEYWORDS: RECEPTIVITY TO IDEAS • FAITH IN DIVINE INSPIRATION • INFUX OF CREATIVE ENERGY • IMAGINATIVE BREAKTHROUGH •

*Woman of Poetry*
(Water of Earth – Matter of Spirit)

This image contains the final illustration and words to Milton a Poem. The nude woman depicted is Ololon, the Emanation of Milton, a character who represents the multiple-faceted female and specifically the incarnation of the female imagination that resides in the unconscious mind. Her name may be a word-play on 'all alone', with implications of being both unique and seldom recognized. Beside her are two humanized plants, the grain and grape of the "harvest & vintage" of the card quotation. The harvest figures are deliberately ambiguous, and can be interpreted as man and wife, as brothers, as children; whomever, they gaze on the female force and are made fruitful. They are her projections, her offspring, her worshippers, her protectors, and more.

The female is shown in the act of freeing herself; her outstretched hands and upturned palms not only signify divinity but also seem to separate or rend a veil in which she was previously cloaked. Simultaneously, her feet are separating and emerging from the tree-trunk of vegetable existence; she is ready "to go forth... [to the] nations" with passion and intensity. Her hair is wildly free, streaming in all directions, and her gaze is directed upwards. It is as if she channels divine energy from above, through her hands and arms, and then distributes it to her armless acolytes who depend on her for their inspiration and energy. Unlike the Queen in traditional Tarot, who is chastely covered from head to toe, the Woman of Poetry, as so often in Blake, is a figure of radiant sexuality, and we note that her naked flesh raises bumps and prickles on her horny companions.

This is the part of yourself or another that speaks up without reservation, revealing who you really are. This figure is an individualist, generous and open-hearted, who inspires others with her vision and energies. She focuses on potentials and possibilities. When making decisions she opts for self-growth. She can be dramatic and assertive, but also impulsive and unpredictable. She needs to be the center of attention, and may disregard the feelings of others. Projects begun in a rush may falter for lack of patience with tedious details.

In the creative process, this is when you take on problems as creative challenges, refusing to be bound by circumstances or other people's rules. You trust your intuitions and embrace opportunity.

KEYWORDS: FEMININE INTUITION • SUBCONSCIOUS IMAGINATION • LIBERATION FROM CREATIVE RESTRAINTS • CHANNELING OF PROPHETIC TRUTH • FLOWERING OR HARVESTING OF DIVINE ENERGIES • EXPRESSION OF SEXUALITY •

Man of Poetry
(*Fire of Earth – Passion of Spirit*)



This card depicts Blake's spiritual mentor and poetic hero John Milton. Amid the flames and swirling smoke of mortal and material confusion and error, he is the prototypical poet-artist heroically facing intellectual darkness, right foot forward in spiritual quest. With his raised right hand, Milton breaks his own name into pieces – a blow against selfhood. In addition, Blake, who loved puns, suggests Milton's hand is the instrument of a 'thousand' (mil) 'tones' (ton) of poetry and prophecy. With his hair flowing free, his gazes penetrates into invisible realms of inner truth. The separation of his fingers (on both hands) is a chirological gesture signifying triumph. Unlike the King in traditional Tarot, who is garbed in robes, cape, and crown, the Man of Poetry is naked to signify that he has shed all garments and pretenses. He is clothed with imagination.

The card quotation, paraphrased from Paradise Lost, effectively states the prophetic mission of all poets – to promulgate divine understanding. The elemental fire (around the poet) combined with elemental earth (in the border) symbolize the passionate imagination that characterizes this card. Negatively, his heroic pose can become mere posturing if he becomes dogmatic and inflexible.

This card represents the part of you or another who is outspoken and clear-sighted. Inspirational to others, you are a fluent communicator and natural leader who makes decisions based on intuition. You need to be center-stage, and expect others to heed your revelations and warnings. The Man of Poetry clears away darkness so that others may see, and bring hidden issues to light.

In the creative process, this shows those moments of inspiration when you suddenly realize where your project is going, or get the 'big picture' unseen by others.

KEYWORDS: PROPHECIC ASSERTION • ACTIVE IMAGINATION AT WORK • MASTERY OF EXPRESSION • TRUTH CONSCIOUSNESS • NAKED CREATIVE FORCE • FOCUSED SPIRITUAL VISION • ATTITUDE OF HEROISM •



Chapter 8

Reading The Cards

*Man has a visible and invisible workshop.
The visible one is his body, the invisible one his imagination.*
– Paracelsus

No outside reading or study is necessary to use this deck. The beginning user does not even need to read the interpretations provided. You can immediately begin to use this deck simply by relating directly and personally to the images. However, by reading the card descriptions in Chapters 3 through 7, and referring to the charts in Chapter 2 – you will greatly increase the range of ideas and responses available to you.

Additional study of Blake and Tarot is encouraged, and for this purpose a few resource books are recommended in the Appendix.

Although this chapter deals with how to interpret the cards, we must try to avoid converting symbols into rigid meanings, or images into tight-fitting allegories. Such actions limit the imagination. Instead, we want to 'see into' symbols as metaphors, personal fantasies, and jumping-off points for myth-making, for taking imaginative leaps that do not define meaning but instead allow symbols to connect with our lives and dreams in ways that are imaginative and open-ended.

PRINCIPLES OF DIVINATION

You can interpret the cards by using the imaginative principles of the suits themselves. To do this, follow the same keywords that are thematic to the suits:

1. Painting = Form: Physically inspect the cards: their suits, numbers, figures;
2. Science = Structure: Intellectually analyze the symbols and meanings;
3. Music = Vibration: Emotionally empathize with the querent and the cards;
4. Poetry = Prophecy: Imaginatively intuit the truth revealed in the cards;
5. Triumphs = Soul: Divine the spiritual purpose that the reading serves.

The following paragraphs briefly expand on the above principles:

1. **Inspection.** Carefully note all the 'facts' presented by the cards in a reading: its suit, number, characters, symbols, colors, and so forth. Note the details; many are subliminal or seemingly trivial.

Tarot author Mary K. Greer calls this the "literal dimension" of meaning, emphasizing factual statements of what is contained or happening in the pictures on the cards.

2. **Analysis.** Systematically analyze all the 'facts' and their interactions. Knowing the keywords for the symbols is helpful as a place to start. Don't memorize; instead, learn their principles and seek to understand their contextual significance. Symbols have stories and are themselves the elements of storytelling. By learning their own stories, you can weave them into new stories that embody the truth of the situation at hand.

Greer calls this the “allegorical dimension” of meaning, using the symbols as allegory instead of facts. Think about symbols as having a range of interpretive responses, rather than ‘meanings’. The idea is to weigh the possibilities of the allegory as grist for your own imaginative mill.

3. **Empathy.** Let yourself respond emotionally to the cards and the reading situation. Cards that evoke strong feelings in you or the querent may be particularly relevant. Remember that, for the querent, the reading is likely to be predominantly an emotional experience. However, avoid making value judgments about what the querent is feeling.

Greer calls this the “moral dimension” of meaning, because it evokes subjective responses based on personal beliefs. The feelings surrounding the cards often point to the appropriate interpretation, assuming they are allowed to be felt and expressed.

4. **Intuition.** Give your imagination free rein to play with the particulars of the reading and then integrate them into a prophecy that speaks psychological truth. The querent will usually affirm your interpretation, but sometimes not – either from lack of feedback or because the interpretation seems wrong or inapplicable. In this case, ask the querent to express her own intuitions about the reading. There will be a mutual sense of revelation when the appropriate interpretation is found. The ‘true’ interpretation involves combining and sequencing of details (the narrative) within a meaningful context (the plot).

5. **Spirit.** Lastly, look for the highest potential or spiritual moral of the prophecy revealed in the cards. Any outcome should always be placed in a context of higher consciousness: what is the soul saying through these cards?

Greer calls this the “spiritual dimension,” of meaning, which always has the capacity to be uplifting. What can be learned from the cards and the experiences they represent? How can this be put to beneficial use? Every card has the potential to convey a spiritual insight of immediate value.

USING THE SUIT KEY-PHRASES

A supplemental 80th card in the deck provides key-phrases for each of the suits, as does the Frontispiece to this book. These key-phrases are useful starting points for reading the cards. By noting the name and number of any card, and then relating it to the key-phrases, some correlation to the situation at hand may become evident.

At the conclusion of a reading, the cards selected can be arranged according to suit. A predominance of cards in any suit suggests that the keywords of that suit are particularly significant in the reading. Note any suits that are missing: their qualities are either lacking from the situation or point to a resource that is operating well and does not need consideration – you must decide which.



INTERPRETING THE NUMBER CARDS

Cards bearing the same numbers are numerologically related even though they appear in different suits. This information that can be helpful when interpreting them.

The Relationships of the Number Cards

	Painting	Science	Music	Poetry	Triumphs
1's - Beginnings	<i>Sensation</i>	<i>Intellect</i>	<i>Passion</i>	<i>Inspiration</i>	<i>Magic</i>
2's - Choices	<i>Balance</i>	<i>Reflection</i>	<i>Contraries</i>	<i>Individuality</i>	<i>Mystery</i>
3's - Growth	<i>Practice</i>	<i>Jealousy</i>	<i>Exuberance</i>	<i>Creativity</i>	<i>Nature</i>
4's - Consolidation	<i>Means</i>	<i>Repose</i>	<i>Musing</i>	<i>Harmony</i>	<i>Reason</i>
5's - Upset	<i>Hardship</i>	<i>Division</i>	<i>Melancholy</i>	<i>Strife</i>	<i>Religion</i>
6's - Reciprocity	<i>Assistance</i>	<i>Passage</i>	<i>Pleasure</i>	<i>Boldness</i>	<i>Knowledge</i>
7's - Tests of:	<i>Patience</i>	<i>Lamentation</i>	<i>Fancies</i>	<i>Cooperation</i>	<i>Experience</i>
8's - Assertion	<i>Discipline</i>	<i>Restriction</i>	<i>Discontent</i>	<i>Swiftness</i>	<i>Assessment</i>
9's - Attainment	<i>Fruition</i>	<i>Despair</i>	<i>Happiness</i>	<i>Powers</i>	<i>Imagination</i>
10's - Culmination	<i>Delight</i>	<i>Defeat</i>	<i>Sublimity</i>	<i>Prophecy</i>	<i>Whirlwind</i>

Aces

Aces are seeds or roots that we must nurture, or gifts and opportunities that we must grasp if they are to develop. The number 1 is the number of creation and the source of all numbers; it signifies the male attributes that assert or initiate things. In the four suits they represent the four creative essences: Generation (body), Intellect (mind), Passion (feelings), and Inspiration (spirit).

OTHER KEYWORDS FOR THE ACES'S ARE: CONCENTRATION, WILL, CREATIVITY,

ORIGINALITY, INDEPENDENCE.

NEGATIVE: INABILITY TO GRASP OPPORTUNITY.

Two's

The number 2 is the number of duality and signifies the female attributes. The 2's deal with making choices, and with nurturing, change, and intuition. In the four suits they represent four types of choice-making: Balance (choosing both), Reflection (not choosing), Contraries (interacting with both), and Individuality (choosing one).

OTHER KEYWORDS FOR THE 2'S ARE: RECEPTIVITY, SENSITIVITY, ADAPTABILITY, PEACEFULNESS.

NEGATIVE: UNBALANCED, INABILITY TO CHANGE.

Three's

The number 3 is the number of growth and synthesis. The 3's combine the impetus of 1 with the receptivity of 2 to produce beauty and fruitfulness. In the four suits they represent four aspects of growth: Practice (refines growth), Jealousy (inhibits growth), Exuberance (celebrates growth), and Creativity (embodies growth).

OTHER KEYWORDS FOR THE 3'S ARE: OPTIMISM, KINDNESS, HEDONISM, EXTROVERSION, ARTISTIC TALENT, FECUNDITY, LOVINGNESS.

NEGATIVE: ARROGANCE, TRIVIALITY, FRIVOLOUSNESS, SELF-INDULGENCE.

Four's

The number 4 is the number of consolidation, of stabilizing and actualizing. The 4's mark initial success and establish boundaries. In the four suits they represent four ways of consolidating:

Means (through materialism), Repose (through rest), Musing (through play), and Harmony (through rapport).

OTHER KEYWORDS FOR THE 4'S ARE: DEPENDABILITY, DIGNITY, DISCIPLINE, PRACTICALITY, CONSERVATIVENESS, ENDURANCE.

NEGATIVE: REPRESSION, LIMITATION, DISCONTENT, SELFHOOD, STAGNATION.



Five's

The number 5 is the number of upset or conflict, a reaction against the 4's. The 5's cause change through loss, strife, and purgation. In the four suits they represent four ways of upsetting stability and stagnation: Hardship (through difficulty), Division (through alienation), Melancholy (through sadness), and Strife (through conflict).

OTHER KEYWORDS FOR THE 5'S ARE: TEACHING, LEARNING, PROBLEM-SOLVING, COMBATIVENESS, VERSATILITY, RESOURCEFULNESS.

NEGATIVE: DOGMA, ANGER, DEPRESSION, DISRUPTION, IRRESPONSIBILITY.

Six's

The number 6 is the number of sharing and reciprocity. The 6's are concerned with the right use of energy and the benefits of reconciliation. In the four suits they represent four ways of relating and experiencing: Assistance (by helping), Passage (by communing), Pleasure (by enjoyment), and Cooperation (by sharing).

OTHER KEYWORDS FOR THE 6'S ARE: PROTECTIVENESS, UNSELFISHNESS, HEALING, SYMMETRY, SERVICE, RESPONSIBILITY, DISCRIMINATION.

NEGATIVE: VANITY, CONDESCENSION, STUBBORNNESS.

Seven's

The number 7 is the number of initiation and instability. The 7's are tests of what you have learned. In the four suits they represent four ways of overcoming obstacles: Patience (waiting them out), Lamentation (pushing them away), Fancies (seeing them as opportunities), and Boldness (facing them directly).

OTHER KEYWORDS FOR THE 7'S ARE: POISE, STOICISM, RESEARCH, INTROSPECTION, FAITH, MOVEMENT, VICTORY.

NEGATIVE: DELUSION, DECEIT, MANIPULATION, AVOIDANCE.

Eight's

The number 8 is the number of reevaluation and assertive expansion. The 8's deal with balancing of power and making decisions. In the four suits they represent four ways of asserting power: Discipline (power over oneself), Restriction (limitation of power), Discontent (negative assertion), and Swiftiness (positive assertion).

OTHER KEYWORDS FOR THE 8'S ARE: LEADERSHIP, AUTHORITY, THOROUGHNESS, VISION, ACTION.

NEGATIVE: FRUSTRATION, JEALOUSY, INDECISION, FEAR.

Nine's

The number 9 is the number of attainment and completion. The 9's are plateaus achieved through effort. In the four suits they represent four types of attainment: Fruition (sensual or material success), Despair (mental failure), Happiness (emotional success), and Powers (spiritual success).

OTHER KEYWORDS FOR THE 9'S ARE: UNDERSTANDING, COMPASSION, GENIUS, HUMANITARIANISM, PURIFICATION, SOLITUDE.

NEGATIVE: ISOLATION, DENIAL, REJECTION.

Ten's

The number 10 is the number of culmination and transcendence. The 10's represent the essences of their ruling elements and are overviews of their suits. In the four suits they represent four types of culmination: Delight (material culmination), Defeat (negative mental culmination), Sublimity (emotional culmination), and Prophecy (spiritual culmination).

OTHER KEYWORDS FOR THE 10'S ARE: END OF CYCLE, RESULT OF ATTAINMENT, KARMA.

NEGATIVE: OVERFLOW, FATALISM, CORRUPTION.

INTERPRETING THE PERSON CARDS

The Person Cards are called the Court Cards in conventional Tarot. The word 'person' literally means a face mask used by actors, from personare, to sound through (per, through, and sonare, to sound). Hence, a person is a character or a role as well as a body and a personality. The Person Cards in the Blake Deck, in each of the four suits, are: Angel (sacred person or mask), Child (face of innocence), Woman (feminine role), and Man (masculine role). They roughly correspond to the Knight, Page, Queen, and King cards, respectively, in the conventional Tarot. One vital difference is that the Blakean frame of reference concerns imagination and the arts as divine pursuits, not regal pretensions or materialistic strivings. Blake's persons are artists and heroes, not egotistic monsters. Like the Number Cards, the Person Cards reflect the characteristics of their suits; however, the former depict human situations while the latter portray the personalities involved in them. Viewed internally, the Person Cards are levels of self-mastery and models of success within their suits. Viewed personally, they represent aspects of yourself in the situation, and sometimes other people around you.

Meanings of the Person Cards

	Painting	Science	Music	Poetry	Element
Messenger Angel Muse	Active Vision. Manifesting	Absorbed Messenger. Abstraction	Descent of Spirit. Love	Merging with Imagination. Epiphany	Air
Innocent Child Novice	Innocent Sexuality. Nascence	Developing Powers. Learning	Primal Feelings. Communion	Spiritual Acceptance. Inspiration	Earth
Receptive Woman Inner Mastery	Sensory Awareness. Practicality	Inner Investigation. Versatility	Flowing Emotions. Psychism	Channelling of Spirit. Liberation	Water
Assertive Man Outer Mastery	Sensual Control. Intensity	Outer Investigation. Immersion	Emotional Control. Shamanism	Assertion of Spirit. Prophecy	Fire

Angel Cards

The Angel cards are divine muses representing imagination in its various forms. Blake invokes the angelic muses himself:

*Come into my hand By your mild power; descending down the nerves of my right arm
From out the portals of my brain, where by your ministry
The eternal great Humanity divine planted his paradise.*

The word ‘angel’ means ‘divine messenger, bringer of good news’ (from Greek). In this deck, the Angel cards are celestial and spiritual emissaries whose powers flow from eternity. They know the secrets of the suits, and can call, inspire, or awaken us to the special abilities of each suit, and set the atmosphere in which we perform creative work. They also represent Swedenborg’s “divine influxes” – sacred feelings such as love and beauty, idealism and transcendence. The Angel represents the initiatory or generative energy of a situation or project. Each angel is a servant of the gods, a talismanic presence that reminds man of the fundamental ideas (as expressed in the Triumphs cards). Although often depicted as female, angels (and archangels) are androgynous. The Angel cards can be considered to correspond to Knight cards in the conventional Tarot, but their differences make this correspondence quite limited when interpreting the cards. Their similarity is that both Angel and Knight cards signify energy and purpose. The Angel cards are associated with the element Air, which is their medium.



Child Cards

The Child cards are innocent and instinctive beings of light. Although novices, they are powerful in their directness and simplicity. Playful and enthusiastic, they represent our ability to see freshly, and are wellsprings of imagination. They represent growth and learning, openness and curiosity. They discover, explore, and develop the powers of each suit. They challenge us to take risks. “Jesus supposes every thing to be evident to the child...” The Child cards roughly correspond to the Page cards in the traditional Tarot, but with greatly extended powers of artistic imagination, and lacking the ‘messenger’ aspect of the Page cards. The Child cards are associated with the element Earth, ever growing and renewing.

Woman Cards

The Woman cards are endowed with skills and wisdom. Working from the heart, they are the spiritual power within, and represent the sacredness of imagination. They receive and use the creative powers of each suit, and are fertile and productive (“the female is a golden loom”). They are sensitive, receptive, self-aware, introspective, and people-oriented. Their talents are personal and interpersonal. They look for inner meaning. “But what may woman be, to have power over man from cradle to... grave?” The Woman cards roughly correspond to the Queen cards in the traditional Tarot, but with greatly extended powers of creativity and spirituality. The Woman cards are associated with the element Water because they are fluid, shape-shifting, and primal.

Man cards

The Man cards are focused and goal-oriented. Working from the mind, they represent rational power, artistic mastery, and control over the powers of the suits. They define and assert, and demand recognition for their expertise. Seeking action and wanting to transform things (“the male is a furnace of beryl”), they can also be inflexible and intolerant of others. They are self-defining and self-oriented. The Man cards roughly correspond to the King cards in the traditional Tarot, but with greatly extended powers of creativity and spirituality. The Man cards are associated with the element Fire because they are forceful, passionate, and dangerous.

MAKING CORRESPONDENCES TO OTHER DECKS (USING THE SUIT GLYPHS)

New users of the Blake Deck may already be familiar with another deck, especially the Waite-Smith deck or one of its many variants. For this reason, the Blake Deck incorporates an easy method of determining the equivalent cards. This is done via the suit glyphs, which are designed to cor-

respond with those of the Waite-Smith Deck in particular, but will correspond with most other decks as well. Each suit card in the Blake Deck contains two glyphs that symbolize its suit – the first is a literal picture of the suit symbol (at the lower left corner of each card), while the second is a shorthand version of the same (at the lower right corner of each card).

The shorthand version is intended to be used in handwriting or text to represent the suit; for example:

- means the Ace of Painting,  Palette = Painting  = Pentacles 
- means the 8 of Science,  Compass = Science  = Swords 
- means the Angel of Music,  Lyre = Music  = Cups 
- means the Child of Poetry,  Scroll = Poetry  = Wands 

However, the handwritten glyph has another very important purpose: it indicates the corresponding Waite-Smith suit via the graphical similarity of their glyphs.

For example, the glyph for the Suit of Painting deliberately resembles the suit glyph of Pentacles in the Waite iconography: both are roughly circular. The other suit glyphs are likewise correlated by their similar shapes. All cards in the two decks with similarly shaped glyphs are equivalent. For example, the 7 of Painting is equivalent in meaning to the 7 of Pentacles in the Waite-Smith Deck. The card meanings correlate in all cases, taking into account the differing frames of reference between these two decks. The only variation is in the Person Cards, where the correlations are: Angel ≈ Knight and Child ≈ Page.

All owners of another deck – especially the Waite-Smith deck – are strongly urged to compare every card in their deck with every card in the Blake Deck by placing the corresponding cards side by side.

This exercise will greatly accelerate the process of understanding the cards, and should prove highly entertaining as well!

The Symbol Windows

Each of the 56 cards in the Creative Process or “working” suits (Painting, Science, Music, and Poetry) contains a Symbol Window – a space on the card in which you may mark or paste your own personal symbols. In this manner, users of the William Blake Tarot can imaginatively incorporate their own symbolic data into the Blakean and Tarot data. A fine-point wax pencil or stylus is recommended so that your symbols can be changed as needed by simply wiping them off. Or after experimenting, you may want to make some symbols or sets of symbols a permanent part of your deck – a personalization that makes the deck uniquely yours.

Alternatively, you can glue or adhere printed matter or images to the Symbol Windows by using paste or tape. Stamps, rubber stamps, and stickers are other possibilities. To fit the maximum of information into the Symbol Window spaces, use your computer to generate the desired symbolic information, and then with your computer printer, print the data to exactly fit the spaces, which are 3/8” high x 2-1/2” wide (10 mm x 64 mm).

Many different symbol systems can be employed to answer different questions, or to satisfy different needs. Several different symbol systems can be used on the cards at the same time, or combined in any way. Some kinds of symbolic information you might add to your cards are:

- Words – of any kind: Phrases, Notes, Slogans, Reminders, Signatures.
- Numbers – of all kinds: Weights and measures, Monetary symbols, Mathematics.



- Alphabets – Hebrew, Greek, Egyptian hieroglyphs, Mayan glyphs, Braille dots.
- Names – of Persons, Animals, Flowers, Places, Objects, Gods & Goddesses, etc.
- Titles – of Books, Songs, Films, Brand-names, Corporations, Clubs, etc.
- Symbols – Alchemical, Geometrical, Architectural, Scientific, etc.
- Divination – Runes, I Ching hexagrams, Astrological and other systems.
- Designs – Talismans, Monograms, Seals, Crests, Brands, Signs, Flags.
- Correspondences – Colors, Gemstones, Essential Oils, Musical notes and notations.
- Time notations – Hours of the day, Months, Years, Dates.
- Terms used in – Organizations, Professions, Occupations, Industries, Crafts, Arts.
- Location terms – Compass points, Directions, Degrees of circle, Latitude/longitude.
- Keywords for – Ideas in progress, Questions being asked, Alternatives being pondered.
- Predictive data – Lottery numbers, Stock-market listings, Sports betting, Horse-racing, etc.
- Personalizing the cards – Coloring, Drawings, Designs, Cut-outs, Doodles.

Here are some ways the Symbol Windows can be used, with appropriate spreads:

- Add personal meanings to one or more cards.
- Add personal reminders of related issues.
- Get answers to questions by using specific words or symbols keyed to the questions.
- Choose from numerous alternatives by specifying them in detail on the cards.
- Get ideas and suggestions for artistic processes and crafts projects.
- Use a secondary set of symbols for extending your interpretation. Add other divination symbols to your deck. Add gems, plants, animals, constellations, colors...
 - Play with math, chemical, statistical equations. (Let the cards be quantities and unknowns; invent various spreads to use as operations.)
 - Determine lottery numbers, names of race horses, and other gambling information.
 - Select among possible travel destinations, things to do, people to see...
 - Choose times and dates, latitudes and longitudes, degrees of circle...
 - Create a Braille deck for a blind friend by adding dots (in the windows of the Suits cards and in the bottom spaces of the Triumphs).
 - Creative play: Generate poems or haikus by writing words on the cards. (For example, if each card contains a noun, infinitive, adjective, etc.; then spread positions can be parts of speech.) Compose a tune using musical notation. See if the cards can speak to spirit a la Ouija.
 - Decoration: Beautify or personalize your deck with designs, colors, clippings...

Effective use the Symbol Windows will greatly depend on the data you put into your deck and the spreads you choose to work with that data. The Symbol Windows are meant to entice you into using your own imagination and see what happens. Some books that might help with ideas are listed in the Appendix.

For readers who make use of the Symbol Windows, I recommend doing lots of experimentation with this feature to determine their utility (how to use them) and their dynamics (what are they for). If you want to give Symbol Windows a whack, three primary issues are involved:

1. You need to assign which symbols go with which cards.

First choose which cards seem the best vehicles for your particular symbolic additions, based on their primary meanings and present symbology. You could add your symbol sets randomly,

but for most purposes it makes sense that the added symbols should be meaningfully applied. In other words, each of the cards already has a constellation of meanings attached to it, so the goal of adding more symbols is to extend the range and specificity of the existing meanings, not to introduce new and unrelated ones. Next, in doing this:

2. You need to find or invent ways to match the symbols to the windows.

There are 56 windows altogether, a number that is unlikely to match the number of symbols in your set(s). So the next issue is how to assign your symbols to the windows, and whether or not to use all the cards in a particular reading. If your symbol-set is shorter or longer than the number of cards with windows, obviously some accommodation is necessary. Here are the possibilities:

- Mark Some, Use All: You can mark some of the cards, but still do readings with the entire deck. In this case, the added symbols will be meaningful only when marked cards are dealt. Even though your symbol-set is smaller than the card-set, it will still add a deeper dimension to any reading in which the marked cards are dealt.
- Mark Some, Use Only Those: You can mark some of the cards, then select out only those cards for the reading(s). In this case, your reading(s) will consist only of subsets of cards that you marked. This enables you to do shorter or very specific readings in which the cards represent defined choices, decisions, or answers. You may also designate several different subsets of cards, each marked with different symbol-sets, and then use whichever subset most applies to the reading situation.
- Mark All: You can mark all the cards, with one or more symbol systems, and then either use all of them or only some of them, as outlined in the two preceding paragraphs.

3. Finally, you need to discover which spreads make the best use of your added symbols.

If your readings involve all the cards, whether or not all are marked, the spreads you ordinarily use should work fine without change. The marked cards will simply extend the meanings within the existing structure of the spreads. However, if you use only some of the cards in a reading; that is, only subsets consisting of marked cards, then you may have to invent new spreads to accommodate the smaller number of cards available to be dealt. This might be as simple as drawing a single card. However, using several cards in a spread will yield more information and more depth of interpretation.

Finally, the use of the Symbol Windows is entirely optional. The Blake Deck is functionally complete without them, and no one should feel under any obligation to use them. However, they represent a potential that can be creatively explored at any time, especially when you wish to receive very specific and highly personal information from the cards.

I would like to hear about the ways you find to use the Symbol Windows. My address is listed in the Appendix. Please let me know about your own experiments and experiences with them, which I will report in the TAROT Newsletter.

Chapter 9

Spreads

That greatest of all blessings: a strong imagination, a clear idea, and a determinate vision of things in his own mind.



The Blake Deck can be used with any Tarot spread. This chapter briefly describes two simple but useful spreads, and then introduces three new spreads based on Blakean ideas. In these spreads, the deck should be shuffled by the person(s) receiving the reading.

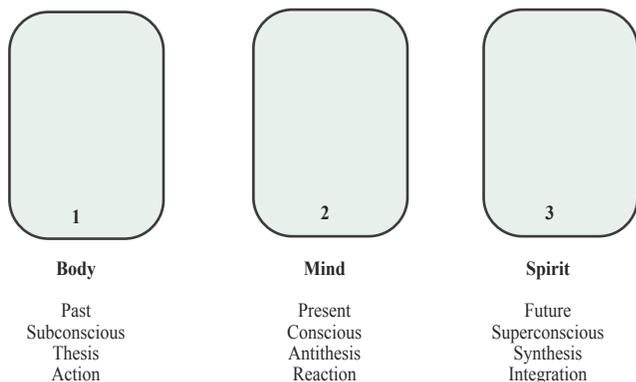
THE ONE-CARD SPREAD

Drawing a single card is the simplest of spreads, yet is highly useful for focusing, meditation, and learning. Drawing a daily card, for example, provides a meditative or symbolic theme to which thoughts and events of the day can be related. It is also an excellent way to systematically go through the deck and become familiar with its symbology. Depending on your intention, you can either begin with the first card and methodically proceed to the last, or the cards may be shuffled and one card drawn at random each day. If practicable, write your thoughts and observations in a personal Tarot journal.

THE THREE-CARD SPREAD

Drawing three cards is another elementary but powerful spread, particularly because its three positions can be flexibly interpreted in quite different ways. This spread, and many other traditional spreads, are described in detail in *Tarot for Your Self*, by Mary K. Greer – see Appendix. The meanings of the three positions can be interpreted as follows, depending on your question or intention:

The Three-Card Spread



This spread, and many other traditional spreads, are described in detail in *Tarot for Your Self* by Mary K. Greer (see Appendix).

BLAKEAN SPREADS

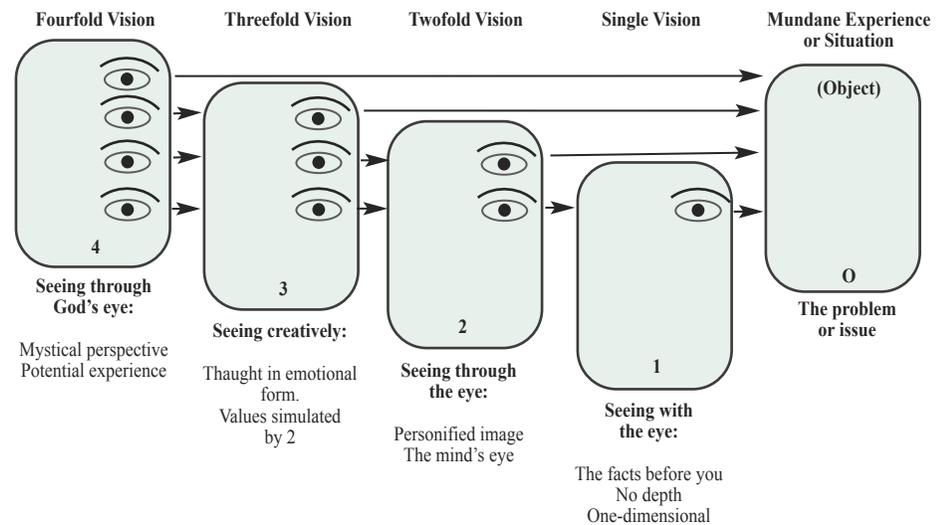
This section presents two Tarot spreads that are specifically based on Blakean ideas: the Fourfold Vision Spread, and the Creative Process Spread.

THE FOURFOLD VISION SPREAD

Blake’s concept of “fourfold vision” was poetically expressed by him as follows:

*Now I a fourfold vision see
And a fourfold vision is given to me.
'Tis fourfold in my supreme delight
And threefold in soft Beulah's night;
And twofold always. May God us keep
From single vision and Newton's sleep.*

The Fourfold Vision Spread



Blake postulated that vision was of several kinds, depending on the spirituality of the ‘eye’ doing the looking. Chart 9-2 presents Blake’s concept of vision as a layout of cards. The Fourfold Vision Spread is a general-purpose layout that can give you a deeper view of just about anything; it’s like turning a spotlight on something that you want illuminated.

Position O (Object). The first card at the right, labeled O (for the Object being viewed), can be anything at all: an idea, a thing, a relationship, yourself. Card O may be selected face-up, if desired, by looking through the deck and choosing a card that outwardly symbolizes what you want to ‘view’ in this reading. Alternatively, you may choose this card at random from a fanned deck, in which case Card O should be interpreted as an inner definition of the object. Place it face up at the right.



Position 1. Now choose a card at random from the fanned deck, and place it face up, as shown. Card 1 represents single vision, which is the mechanical act of seeing things in a factual way. It presents a one-dimensional view of the object. It tells you how you see the object of the reading at its basic or material level, or what Blake calls “seeing with the eye” as a mechanical instrument. He gives the example of walking down a country lane beneath “a mild sun,” which his outward or single vision tells him is indeed the physical sun that mounts over the trees and fields.

Position 2. Now choose Card 2 as before, placing it face up in the position shown, to the left and slightly above the previous card. Card 2 represents twofold vision, which sees the object from a humanized perspective – or what Blake calls “seeing through the eye” – as through a window onto the higher faculties. In Blake’s example of the sun:

*Then Los appeared in all his power
In the sun he appeared descending before
My face in fierce flames in my double sight
’Twas outward a sun: inward Los in his might.*

Note that twofold vision sees the object personified; that is, with human characteristics. At the same time, it sees the object through single vision too.

Position 3. Choose and place Card 3 as shown, just left and slightly above the previous card. This represents threefold vision, in which emotional values are creatively stimulated by the personified vision of Card 2. Threefold vision is associated with Blake’s realm of Beulah, with its subconscious and dreamy forces that inspire lunar sight and sometimes lunacy. Blake goes on:

*Los flamed in my path & the sun was hot
With the bows of my mind & the arrows of thought
My bowstring fierce with ardour breathes
My arrows glow in their golden sheaves.*

The vision of Card 3 sees the object with an even higher level of creativity that fuses emotion with thought. In Blake’s case, he now views the sun/Los with the emotion of fierce ardor.

Position 4. Now choose Card 4 in the same manner as the others, and place it in the final position of the spread, again left and slightly above the previous card. Card 4 represents fourfold vision, which is the culminating spiritual perspective of the object and of the reading. The vision of Card 4 sees the object as a mystical psychospiritual event, while still viewing it with the other types of vision operative in Cards 3, 2, and 1. Card 4 goes beyond the previous physical, mental, and emotional viewpoints into a transcendent overview that is “fourfold in my supreme delight.” Card 4 can also be interpreted to represent some previously unseen potential of the object, which may actualize into experience if these levels of vision can be maintained.

Sample Reading

The following is a brief description of an actual reading using the Fourfold Vision Spread. The object in question (Card O) was my relationship with my ex-wife, Mary, a topic suggested by her following an argument between us. Rather than deliberately select a significator for Card O, she chose it at random from the fanned deck. The card drawn was 6 of Science–Passage, which

easily identifies her feeling of alienation, and quite well described our relationship at the moment. I was working on writing this book – plodding along with my globe of imagination – oblivious to Mary, who is far above me pushing at clouds of anger and confinement. Between us, chain lightning flashes; our relationship is in passage.

The next card drawn by Mary, representing single vision of the facts as we see them, was the Child of Poetry. Literally interpreted, this card says that our relationship is the child of our creativity. Viewed simplistically, it is an idealistic expression (child) of truth (Poetry). This is borne out by our collaborative works together, which present a one-dimensional view of our collaboration as purely artistic. That is, we are learning together to teach ourselves and others to see.

The next card drawn, Card 2, a personifying of the previous card, was the Man of Painting. Our inner vision here shows that the view of our relationship in Card 1 is confirmed even upon a deeper look. This is an image depicting mastery (man) of material form (Painting), which is how we see ourselves. Our relationship produces creative works in an atmosphere of light. We create in beauty but we must deal with turbulent matters, here representing roiled emotions as well as material difficulties.

The next card drawn, Card 3, represents our creative vision of ourselves. The card drawn was I–Magic, a nice segue to the previous card. One viewpoint has Mary channeling celestial energies while I (as Jupiter/Urizen) mediate and ground her energies; another viewpoint has me praying for guidance while Mary (as Urizen/Jupiter) hurls thunderbolts in anger. Evidence of creative energy abounds in this card, and the message is that we can basically handle it, although it is a constant struggle and balancing act as well.

The final card drawn by Mary, Card 4, represents mystical or godly vision. The card was 3 of Poetry–Creativity. The kneeling figure at the book of prophecy is either or both of us together, blessed by the muses as we create our system of Tarot and collaborative works. This was a nice ending that helped us bury the hatchet.

THE CREATIVE PROCESS SPREAD

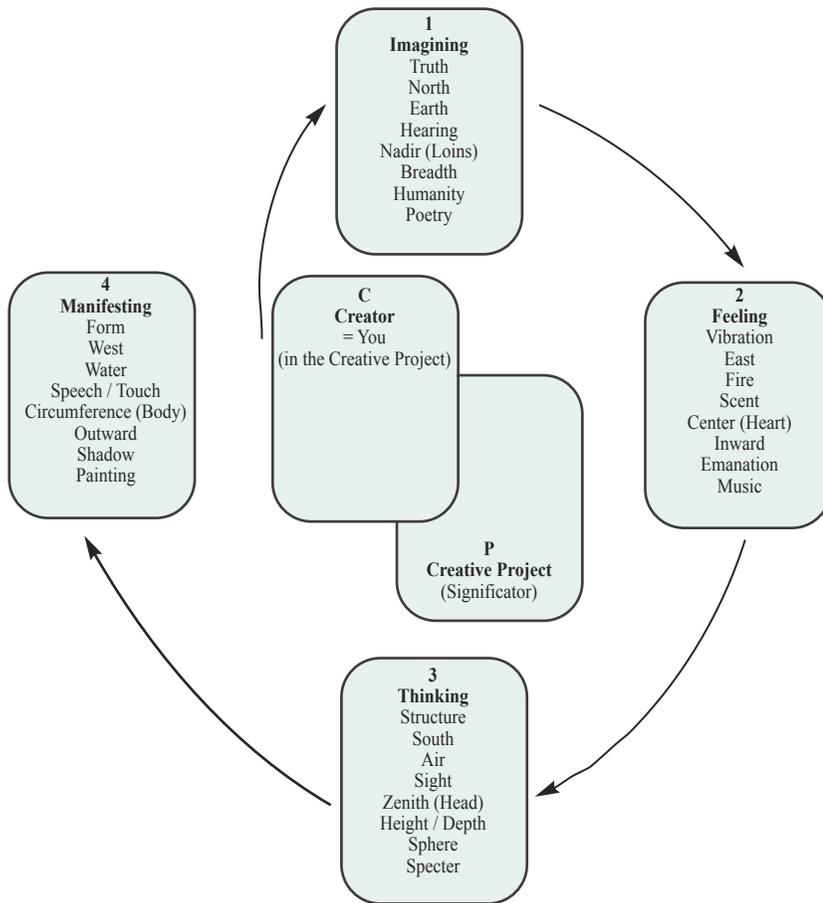
This is based on Blake’s idea of the four parts of man, which correspond to the four parts of any creative process: imagining, feeling, thinking, and manifesting. It is like taking a snapshot of a project or idea that you are working on, giving you a picture of the inner dynamics of your (see chart, next page).

The spread begins with a significator card (P) chosen or drawn to represent the Project. The next card (C) drawn represents you as the Creator of the project, and is placed over the first card, face up. Then four more cards are drawn in sequence to represent four aspects of the process from ideation to manifestation. In Chart 9-3, each of the cards are depicted with their symbolic Window Keywords (from Chart 2-2). These keywords are used in defining the meanings of the cards:

Position P (Project). This is the first card laid down. Select it by looking through the deck, or at random from the fanned deck. Place it face up at the center. This represents the project as a point of origin from which the process will spiral out. Interpret this card as the essence of what the reading is about.

Position C (Creator). Choose at random from the fanned deck, and place it face up, overlapping the first card. This represents the Creator of the project, who may be yourself or another person or entity. This card is the spiritual impetus or force behind the project. The first two cards are a snapshot of the creative synthesis.

The Creative Process Spread



Position 1 (Imagining). Choose at random from the fanned deck, and place it, face up, above the first two cards (north), which represents the imagination. This card tells you something about the ideation of the project – it springs from the loins, so to speak; and represents the spiritual truth overseeing the project. The process of imagining the project – that is, making an idea or ‘image’ of it – requires listening to the Creator and thereby defining the breadth or scope of the project as well. (The curved line connecting Cards C and 1 indicates the listening process.) Associated with Humanity, the highest aspect or valuation of the project, Card 1 is the prophetic statement of the work.

Position 2 (Feeling). Choose this card in the same way, and place it face up, to the left of the center cards (east), which represents the emotions. This card tells you about the feelings stimulated by or surrounding the ideation of the project. Associated with the Emanation, this is the feminine or subconscious aspect of the process. Being associated with the sense of smell, imagine this card receiving the earthy scent of the idea from Card 1, then bringing it to the center. Here, from the heart, it generates a “vibration” – indicative of the feeling-tone and the levels of energy involved. As the pulse of the project, Card 2 is the musical or energetic statement of the work.



Position 3 (Thinking). Choose this card as before, and place it face up, below the center cards (south), representing thought and structure. This card is about problem-solving, and what you need to know in this process. Being associated with the sense of sight, imagine this card seeing the fiery energy of Card 2, then bringing it into the mind. Here it looks intently at this energy (that is, what it represents) from top to bottom, and thinks about how it relates to the structure as a whole. Associated with the Spectre, or masculine aspect, this card suggests the linear dimensions of the project: its height and depth. Card 3 is the structural statement of the work, blowing as an intellectual wind.

Position 4 (Manifesting). Choose this final card as before, then place it face up, to the right of the center cards (west), which represents the manifesting of the project, and its culmination. This card tells you how to actually do the work, and/or the form it will take when completed. It is the outward or natural effect of the inward or spiritual cause that initially motivated it in Card 1. Being associated with the senses of speech and touch, this position touches the airy structure of the previous card and gives it voice to make it palpable. Associated with the Shadow, this card may also indicate something unreal in the outcome, a projection of desire rather than an expression of the spiritual motive. Card 4 tells you about the final result of the creative process, or the form it will take; it is the “portrait” of the work, and speaks its message.

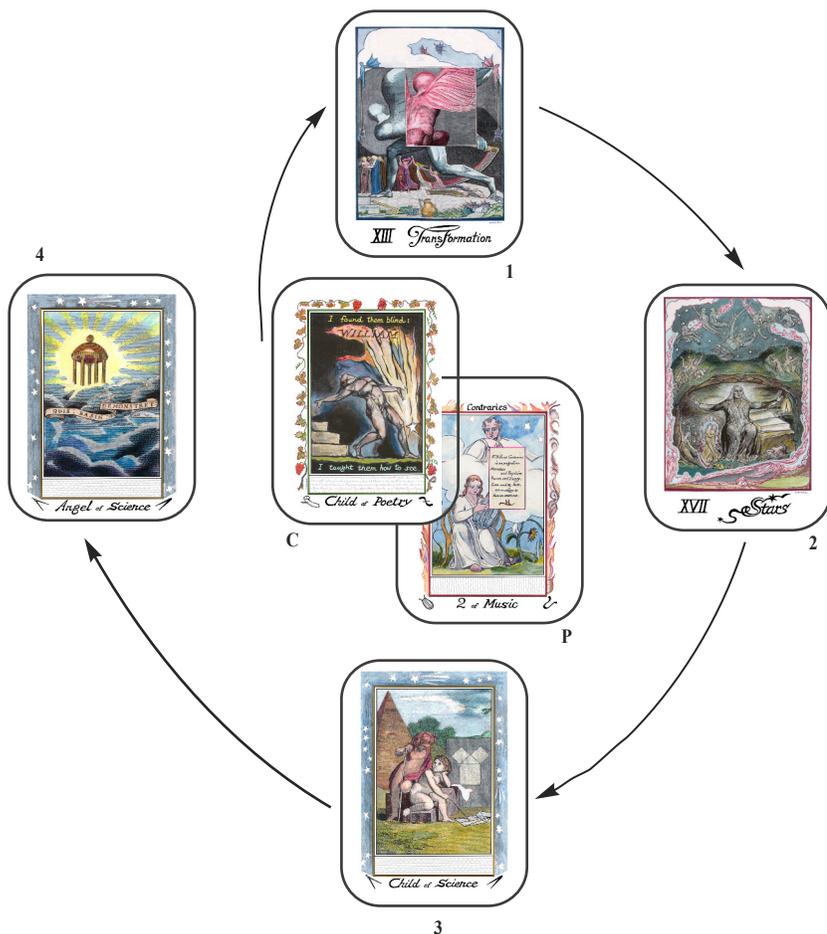
Note that the cards in the spread, while taking the appearance of a four-square diamond, develop that shape as a spiral evolution from the original card, with each card passing-on the energy of the previous card, communicating with it and then transforming it into another dimension of the process. At the same time, the creator at the center (Card C) is equally in touch with every stage of the process.

Sample Reading

The following is a brief description of an actual reading using the Creative Process Spread. The creative project in question was a film script written by Rick, an actor friend of mine who lives in Hollywood; the reading was done in the Los Angeles Farmers Market over morning coffee immediately preceding his meeting with the prospective financial backers of the film.

Rick chose the Child of Poetry as the significator (Card P) of the reading, in part because the character on the card reminded him of the main character in his film script, as well as himself in the effort of trying to sell his script. The child persona goes along with Rick’s novice status as a movie mogul, if he sold the script. The Creator (Card C), turned up as 2 of Painting–Contraries. When this card appeared, the true import of the project was expressed by Rick’s wife, Char, who was also present at the reading. The real issue was whether this project, especially if successful, would act as a divisive influence on their marriage – which was a happy one because Rick’s part-time acting jobs had heretofore allowed him to spend a lot of time with his family. This card graphically expressed their dilemma: Rick in the clouds of his mental vision of film success looks down on Char, happily grounded at home singing songs of marital bliss.

Card 1 (imagination) was then drawn as XIII–Transformation. Rick’s imaginal truth is represented here. He sees this project cutting away his old career: and looks to the red angel, the new life force raising it wings. This also shows Rick’s commitment to changing things; he is clearly ready to switch his career horses.



Finally, there is the underlying psychological foundation of the reading as expressed in the Contraries card, which is the Shadow aspect of this final card – the influence of this project on Rick's marriage. Cards 1 and 2 show Rick's obvious commitment to becoming a successful, but Cards C and 2 show that he is also aware of the needs of his marriage, while Card 3 shows the way he gains support and understanding from his wife, and they have a joint plan. In this overall context, Card 4 looks unambiguously good. The bright temple of marriage and family is his muse (angel) and the home of his creative intellect (Science). It surmounts all clouds.

THE REUNIFICATION SPREAD

Part A: The Divided Man

The first four positions represent the divided parts, and are laid out in the usual cruciform arrangement that depicts the fallen man.

Note that the head is down (Spectre=south) and the loins are at the top (Humanity=north).

Position 1 (Specter). Select this first card in the spread from the fanned deck and place it face up. Card 1 describes or relates to the Spectre, which is the male portion and the reasoning power in man. Divided from and craving its feminine portion (the Emanation), its tendency is to be brutish and selfish. The Spectre needs to change or sacrifice something to promote reunification. Card 1 tells you something about your own Spectre and/or how to change, balance, join, or cast it out.

Position 2 (Emanation). Select this card from the fanned deck and place it face up, above and to the right of Card 1, as shown in Chart 12-6. Card 2 describes or relates to the Emanation, which is the female portion and represents spiritual perception. When separated from the Spectre, its tendency is towards pride and willfulness, wishing to dominate the male through sexual manipulation. The Emanation also needs to change or sacrifice something to promote reunification. Card 2 tells you something about your own Emanation and/or what can be done to mitigate or eliminate its negative influence, and promote reunification with the Spectre.

Position 3 (Shadow). Select this card in a similar manner, and place it face up, above and to the left of Card 1, as shown. Card 3 describes or relates to the Shadow, the material portion or physical body (which is ultimately a delusion of the senses, and also the repository of suppressed desires. When the body is alienated from its animating forces (the Spectre and Emanation), it becomes passive and deenergized, subject to cruelty and delusions. To promote reunification, the Shadow needs somehow to recognize its state. Card 3 tells you something about how to recharge the body and regain awareness of its spiritual basis, of which its physical basis is only the shadow or reflection. Cards 2 and 3, shown opposite in the spread, are in fact contraries of each other, because the Emanation represents spiritual awareness while the Shadow represents materialistic awareness.

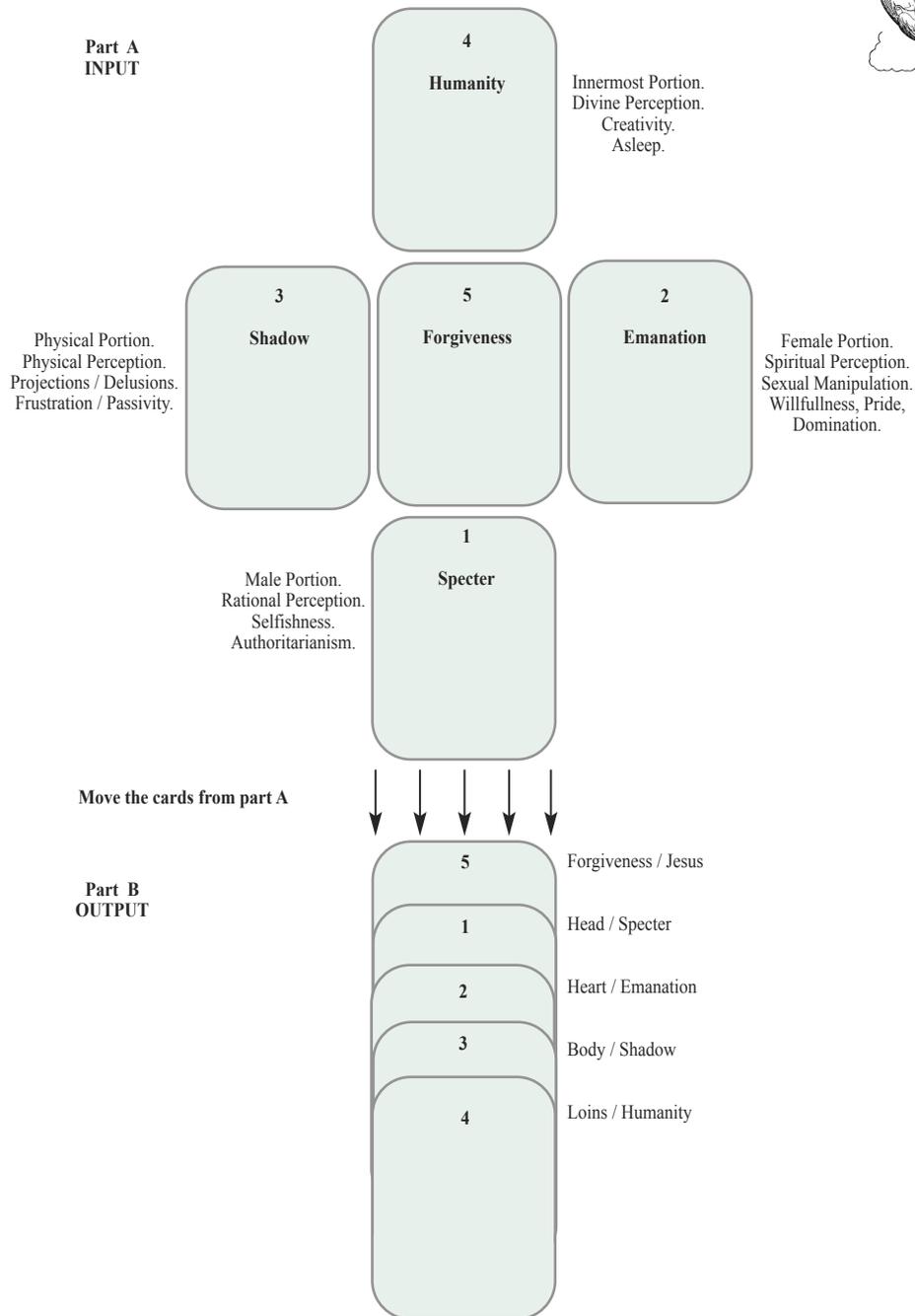
Position 4 (Humanity). Select this card in the same manner as the others, and place it face up, above the other cards as the fourth corner of the diamond shape. Card 4 describes or relates to Humanity, which is the innermost portion of man. Humanity is Blake's term for Fourfold man's divine

Card 2 (heart of the matter) was XVII – Stars. Rick has the scent of stardom in his nostrils, and his eyes are looking up and away from the mundane, just as in Card C. In this case, he is lovingly aware of the marital and familial energies at his feet, but his eyes (and his heart) are clearly on stardom.

Card 3 (thought and structure) was Child of Science. Here we see Rick, both as the innocent and the Spectre, drawing his plans in the sand, explaining them to Char – who is figuratively behind him; that is, supporting his goal but also hanging back. Note that the action takes place next to the dominating pyramid of materialism.

Card 4 (manifestation), the final or culminating card, was Angel of Science, which is interesting but ambiguous: First, it literally suggests the meeting with the backers, the financial 'angels'. The temple is radiant, which is favorable. However, there are also dark clouds in view. In this position of the material outcome of the project, this could represent a dream afloat in the sky, and we must question the foundation of this matter. Maybe this project is pure abstraction.

The Reunification Spread



spirit, which is wrapped in deadly sleep when his other portions are separated from each other. Card 4 tells you something about your own Humanity and/or suggests what can be done to awaken this faculty within yourself. Cards 1 and 4, shown opposite in the spread, are in fact contraries of each other because the Humanity represents imagination while the Spectre represents reasoning.

Position 5 (Forgiveness). Select this card in the same manner as the others, and place it face up, in the center of the other cards. Card 5 tells something about what's going on in the entire reading, possibly a summary or overall depiction, or tells what needs to be forgiven, or suggests how forgiveness might take place. Forgiveness is another name for Blake's Jesus, the Divine Humanity, which is the one quality that can mediate among the divided parts and bridge their contraries. This is literally shown by its position at the heart of the spread, connecting all the cards simultaneously.

Part B: The Unified Man

Now the cards drawn in Part A are picked up and rearranged into a single vertical line of overlapping cards, with Card 5 placed first, at the top, and then Cards 1, 2, 3, and 4 in order so that Card 4 is at the bottom, in full view. See Chart 12-6. This lineup of cards represents the unified man, who is now upright.

Position 5. As the highest position, the card placed here represents the superconscious aspect of the figure. Because Blake's Jesus is not only Forgiveness but Imagination, this card is appropriately placed above the others. It serves as the instigator of creativity, which begins as a divine idea that descends to man.

Positions 1 through 4. Card 1, which was the divided Spectre, is now the head of the unified man. Card 2, which was the divided Emanation, is now the heart. Card 3, which was the divided Shadow, is now the body (frame). Card 4, which was the sleeping Humanity, is now awake and transformed into the loins (genitals) of creativity. The overlapping of the cards indicates their organic unity, and therefore these four cards as drawn should be interpreted as a unity, in addition to their separate interpretations. Card 4, the last or lowest card, also represents the outcome or focus of the creative energy that is released by this spread, and for this reason it is fully visible. In this light, Card 4 tells you something about the nature or expression of the creative energy embodied in this process of reunifying the psyche.

Sample Reading

The following is a brief description of an actual reading using the Reunification Spread. The creative issue was the writing of this book, at a time when I felt scattered and unsure about how to proceed.

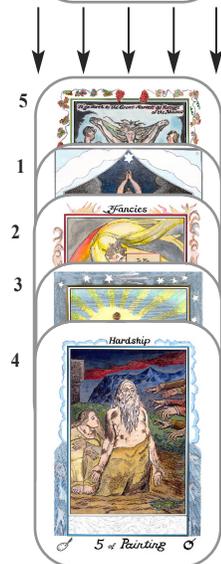
In position 1, the divided Spectre, I drew the triumph I Magic. My Spectre in this creative situation could be an over-rational approach to the writing (in response to dealing with the intricacies of Blake), so this card suggests a more magical perspective. The card shows a spectrous Urizenic figure trying to control the things below him (the intellect), while the magus literally stands up to him, instead calling on mystical energies from above. He also represents Los, the time-lord, which suggests that to meet my book deadline I need to control time, magically if necessary.

In position 2, the divided Emanation, I drew the 7 of Music. The Emanation here could be a tendency to dominate the process instead of letting it flow, so this card suggests lightening up

The Reunification Spread

Part A
INPUT

Move the cards from part A

Part B
OUTPUT

(the rainbow) and becoming more fanciful and playful. The Emanation is associated with the suit of Music (see Chart 6-1) so this card (of Music) is exalted in this position, stressing the need for more heart.

In position 3, the divided Shadow, I drew the Angel of Science. The Shadow here could be telling me that my perception of the book as a physical thing is a frustrating delusion. The card reminds me that my muse (angel) in writing the book is an inspired mental process, not a matter of filling pages. This card is often ironic, and here it says mental light may dispel the shadow. Both this card and the previous card are about lightness, but they have contrary aspects as the former is about emotional light while this one is about mental clarity.

In position 4, the divided Humanity, I drew the 5 of Painting (Hardship). My sleeping Humanity here could refer to various physical problems that are blocking my creativity and my ability to work, things that I view as hardships (such as many competing demands on my time, an illness, an injury, endless distractions, and so forth). In this sense, the card is a depiction of my situation, with the pointing figures representing the things figuratively keeping me on my knees. In another sense, the card depicts my need to see that these things are necessary to awaken my Humanity or inspired portion. These distractions, pressures, and pains are catalytic forces that can summon a higher level of creativity and productivity, without which this may not get done, or may not get done right. The figure of the woman also suggests that my wife is supportive, and can help me in various material and physical ways. Both this card and Card 1 are about the need to stand up to restrictive forces, but they have contrary aspects: this card is about resisting physical limitation while Card 1 is about resisting rational limitation.

In position 5, Forgiveness, I drew the Woman of Poetry, which represents mastery of inner truth. The woman in the card stands between the contraries to harmonize them, and suggests that seeing the truth about the nature of the divided portions is the way to reconcile them.

In part B of the spread, Card 5 is laid down first, and signifies that inner truth is the halo of imagination around the head of my now unified vision of working on the book. Card 1 shows magic at work in the mind, Card 2 shows fancy at work in the heart, Card 3 shows the body filled with light, and Card 4 shows the reproductive organs (creativity) disciplined by outside forces. All the cards together as a unity suggest a transforming process that takes diffuse ethereal energy in at the top (the input) and converts it into refined matter at the bottom (the output). Card 4 viewed by itself as the focus of the creative unification shows the necessity to overcome the physical hardships involved. The card itself suggest various visual clues for doing this: facing the difficulties forthrightly and without subterfuge, getting stripped down for creative production, and getting help that is near at hand.

Inventing Your Own Spreads

Far more than most decks, the Tarot of the Creative Imagination emphasizes personal invention in its use. One of the keys to getting the most out of this deck is to invent your own Tarot spreads as the need arises. In her book *Tarot for Your Self*, author Mary K. Greer provides a chapter called *Design and Creativity with the Tarot* that includes a section about designing your own spreads, which I highly recommend.

Basically, the act of designing a spread is an exercise in creative problem-solving, which can be broken down into several steps.

1. Find and define the problem, question, or situation. What is it about money, love, career, or what? Who is it about self, family, friends, or who? Where and when is it taking place? Why and how is it meaningful?

For example, suppose you want the cards to suggest whether you should give up on a present project (job, relationship) that's stumping you, or start fresh on a new one. Here's one way to come up with a spread: Let one card position be your present situation; let a second card position be the new situation.

2. Define the issues, parameters, categories of the question. How does this involve the senses, the mind, the emotions, or the spirit (the four Zoas)? Are we dealing with colors or shapes, with structure and magnitude, with feelings or music, with morals or principles? What are the important elements and needs?

In the example, you decide you want to gain more information. In particular, you want more information about the reasons to hold on or to let go. How can you do this with the cards?

3. Generate possible ideas for spreads. What systems of thought can be applied here metaphysical, psychological, economic, or what? What existing spreads can be used or adapted to this situation? If you are using the Symbol Windows, what kind of symbol sets can be used to describe or deal with the issues involved?

In the example, beneath card 1 of the old situation, let another card position signify a reason to stay with your present situation and to keep working at it. And beneath that, let another position signify a reason to quit your situation. Then, beneath card 2 of your new situation, let another card position signify what you hope to gain from it. And beneath that, another card position to signify what you might lose in the new situation.

4. Select the best idea(s) and try them out. Lay out the trial spread. Do one or more readings, and then evaluate. Did you understand the reading? Does the outcome help you to answer the question or solve the problem? What refinements can be made to improve the process?

In the example, you should now try to do a reading with your six-card spread. After trying it out, you might find that the question is answered simply by going through the spread. If not, work along these same ideas until your spread works for you.



Appendixes

1

Recommended Reference Books

Here is a short list of recommended reference books. All are available in inexpensive paperback editions (except *), and are in print or at least readily available. There are many other fine titles worth reading, which you will discover once you open the doors to these areas. In particular, there are dozens of excellent critical studies of Blake, but most are out of print, difficult to find, and /or expensive. Used bookstores are often the best source of these titles.

TAROT:

Tarot for Your Self: A Workbook for Personal Transformation, by Mary K. Greer. Newcastle, 1984. Arguably the best instruction book available on Tarot, formatted as a self-teaching manual.

Tarot Constellations: Patterns of Personal Destiny, by Mary K. Greer. Newcastle, 1987. Deals with the numerology of Tarot, plus a treatise on the Person Cards.

Tarot Mirrors: Reflections of Personal Meaning, by Mary K. Greer. Newcastle, 1988. Deeper reflections on Tarot as mirroring the soul.

The Tarot: History, Mystery, and Lore, by Cynthia Giles. Simon & Schuster, 1994. A critical interpretation of the history and philosophy of Tarot.

Tool And Rites Of Transformation (T.A.R.O.T.) Newsletter: Ed Buryn, Editor, PO Box 720, Nevada City, CA 95959. (The above listed books are available by mail-order here.)

BLAKE:

A Blake Dictionary: The Ideas and Symbols of William Blake, by S. Foster Damon. University Press of New England, 1988. If you were limited to one book about Blake, this is probably the most useful although not the most readable.

Fearful Symmetry: A Study of William Blake, by Northrup Frye. Princeton University Press, 1947. The rousing interpretive standard by which all Blake criticism is measured.

Golgonooza, City of Imagination: Last Studies in William Blake, by Kathleen Raine. Lindisfarne Press, 1991. Illuminating essays that cover a wide range of Blake's ideas.

William Blake's Theory of Art, by Morris Eaves. Princeton University Press, 1982. Insightful and inspiring treatment of Blake as an artist.

*The Princeton University Press series of William Blake's Illuminated Books:

Jerusalem (1991)

Songs of Innocence and Experience (1993)

Milton, A Poem (1994)

The Early Illuminated Books (1994)

The Lambeth Prophecies (1994)

Although unavailable in paperback and somewhat expensive, this beautifully produced series is the best way to put Blake's art in your personal library.



CREATIVITY:

Design Yourself! by Kurt Hanks, Larry Belliston, Dave Edwards. Wm Kaufmann, 1978. A "how-to" guidebook about finding ideas, solving problems, and using drawing as a tool for creativity and thinking. Profusely illustrated.

Free Play: Improvisation in Life and Art by Stephen Nachmanovitch. Tarcher, 1990. Highly readable and inspiring study of the wellsprings of creativity, including many Blakean references and illustrations.

Symbols, Signs, and Signets by Ernst Lehner. Dover, 1950: A pictorial catalog of various types of symbols, which may give you some ideas for the Symbol Windows.

A Whack on the Side of the Head: How You Can Be More Creative, by Roger von Oech. Warner, 1990. A light-hearted and profound book about jump-starting your imagination for any reason whatsoever.

Re-Visioning Psychology, by James Hillman. Harper, 1992. A fascinating study that looks into the reality of the human soul and how it functions. This is a book of highly practical metaphysics.

Judge then of thy own self; thy eternal lineaments explore.

What is eternal & what changeable & what annihilable?

The imagination is not a state: it is the human existence itself.



2

How the Deck was Created

All the cards in the William Blake Tarot are original works consisting of lettered and painted collages of photocopies of reproductions of William Blake's art. Five years in process, the deck is a home-made graphic invention built from parts created two centuries ago.

The original works are approximately twice the dimension of the printed cards, painted with combination of watercolors, acrylics and art pencils. The colors of the individual cards are based upon and accurately represent Blake's own renditions of his works. However, approximately a fifth of the cards use previously uncolored works and in these cases my coloring seeks to emulate Blake's.

Users of the deck who would like more specific information about all the cards should look at my booklet entitled *Artwork Notes for the Blake Tarot*, provided here as Appendix 4. This identifies all the works and quotations used, and provides exact details of their modification.



3

Old Symbols for the New Age

by Ed Buryn

A paper presented at the First International Tarot Conference in Melbourne Australia, July 12, 1997

The idea of a New Age is, of course, not new. Many periods long gone were contemporaneously defined as such. Today's oncoming New Age, however, is more promising than most. It's not just the onset of the millennium, for many critical indicators signal that our New Age is really unprecedented, warranted by everything from the end of the Mayan calendar and Harmonic Convergence to the prediction of revolutionary breakthroughs like nanotechnology, biogenetic technology, hydrogen fuel cells, quantum computing, and real-time translators.

For a more mundane example, how about just plain old data overload? With the exponential growth of information of every sort, as propelled by business, government, media, publishing, computers, and the internet, for the first time we will soon be deluged with more data than we can possibly process. When we reach this point, societally or personally, with too much to think about, we face a real danger of becoming anesthetized, paralyzed, or psychotic – especially because so much of the ever burgeoning data is also wildly contradictory.

However, as we near the limits of our rational abilities this may well stimulate a major awakening of our inner or intuitive abilities. In both the near and distant future we are likely to explore and greatly expand our imaginative minds and spiritual perceptions, which have enormous untapped power to reshape our personal and global realities. Albert Einstein said that “No problem can be solved from the same consciousness that created it.” Obviously we need to develop magical consciousness to deal with the realization that scientific progress and material prosperity by themselves are not enough. We must become aware of other dimensions of life if we are to survive, let alone prosper. Buckminster Fuller said that “the more we master the physical universe the more prepared we are to transform to higher consciousness.” Now is apparently the time. Those of us living in this amazing historical niche at the end of the 20th century, in what is being called a period of “extreme novelty,” are about to experience the most profound New Age so far – the third millennium, the third wave, the third degree, the third rail, the Third Man, the three-ring circus, the three-star show, where we may well meet the three Fates, the three Graces, and The Trinity itself.

I agree with Terrence McKenna who said that “the future of communication is the future of the evolution of the human soul.” In what promises to be a new psychic frontier working more intensively with symbols and dreams, these explorations in communication are unlikely to be mastered by teams of scientists and engineers equipped with colossal computers, or by corporations and governments unleashing unlimited funds. Many future breakthroughs will be advanced and experienced by unique independent persons possessing only an open mind and the courage to evolve. Individual consciousness will be the key to making “an evolutionary transition to a higher level of culture,” which I think will be about the recovery of Soul.

From this point of view, it seems destined that Tarot, a multi-faceted metaphysical wisdom system that develops both intuition and imagination, will become ever more prominent. Inevitably, the future will emphasize the increased use and understanding of its archetypal and subliminal symbology as a powerful adjunct to the old establishmentarian approaches to reality-comprehension. Already, the so-called “new physics” suggests the possibility that such things as psychic

powers may have an underlying physical basis, the understanding of which may profoundly change our view of the universe and ourselves.

In turning to the symbols and archetypes of the Tarot, we go back to old symbols from the Medieval and Renaissance periods onto which were grafted Romantic and Victorian interpretations. Many symbols have lost their original meanings or are less clear than they once were. For example, we note that most decks today employ symbols with outdated referents such as the court-card figures (kings and queens, et cetera), suit-glyphs such as swords and pentacles, and points of view based on ideas of secrecy and occultist methodologies. Because the new millennium will call everyone to seek new levels of intuitive and imaginative insight, it may well be time to revise our Tarot symbology and reconstruct some of our underlying assumptions about the tools of Tarot that will be used in our brave new world.

One of the reasons I designed the William Blake Tarot of the Creative Imagination was to introduce a new yet classically proven symbology based on universal truths that are eminently suitable for psychological and spiritual awareness. William Blake's art and ideas represent a tested vision of life that is eternal and yet fresh. Especially today, with our neo-Romantic renewal of interest in artistic, emotional, visionary, and transcendental views of reality, Blake's works blaze forth with extraordinary depth and ability to inspire. After all, Tarot cards are just colored pieces of paper; what makes them "work" is what Blake called "the Divine Arts of Imagination," which he also called "the Eternal Body of Man" that "manifests in his Works of Art."

The earliest Tarot cards, which date from the mid-15th century, were apparently used primarily for gaming. It was not until 1781, when Blake was 24 years old, that the Frenchman Antoine Court de Gebelin asserted that the cards were receptacles of the ancient Egyptian mysteries. This started what is sometimes called the 1st Tarot Revolution, because it turned Tarot from what had been a parlor game towards becoming, first, a divination fad, then a magical method, and finally a metaphysical system. Blake was apparently unaware of this occult revolution, which took place at the same time as the American Revolution, the French Revolution, and the Industrial Revolution). His uninvolved in Tarot can be deduced from the fact that most of Blake's influences are traceable in his works, in references to books he was reading, and people that he met.

His Tarot ignorance is hardly surprising, for Tarot was unknown in England at the time, and there was no tradition, as in Italy, of the game of Tarocchi being played. Moreover, England and France were at war and there was little exchange of ideas. For another thing, the new magical view of Tarot was in its infancy, with scarcely any audience outside France. The few books written about Tarot were unavailable and untranslated until the late 19th century. The prevailing intellectual climate of the time supported a belief in a rational god and a clockwork universe, as propounded by Newton, Bacon, Locke, and other thinkers of the Age of Reason, and so there was little interest or room for the concepts of Tarot. Finally, England had long forbidden the importation of all foreign playing cards to protect the home printing industry. There were no Tarot decks produced in Great Britain, nor could any be imported. In fact, the Rider-Waite deck, the first Tarot in English, was not published until 1910.

Nevertheless, Blake mystically required a deep and comprehensive view of life, and thus began to develop his own spiritual system in accordance with his famous dictum: "I must create a system or be enslav'd by another man's." In effect, Blake deliberately set out to invent his own version of Tarot, or rather, what Tarot was eventually to become: a profound metaphysical tool for personal and spiritual development. In his many works of poetry and painting, Blake gradually



defined a complex personal mythology in which godlike characters he called Zoas symbolize the divine aspects of the human psyche or soul. In the William Blake Tarot these archetypal figures and their mythic roles are depicted in what I call the Tarot Triumphs, which exactly correspond to the traditional Major Arcana, although many are renamed to reflect Blake's view of the Tarot concepts. As far as the workings of the psychical forces, especially in their forms of art activity, Blake defined these as being fourfold; and therefore in the William Blake Tarot these functions are represented in what I call the four Creative Process Suits, which exactly correspond to the traditional Minor Arcana.

By renaming the so-called Tarot Major and Minor Arcana as Triumphs and Creative Processes, I have intentionally discarded the idea of Tarot "secrets," for this is a reflection of a century-old, Victorian mind set opposed to the ideas of openness and spiritual equality. In fact, the term "arcana" (or secrets) was not applied to the Tarot until the mid-19th century (by the occultist author Paul Christian), and as another example, the traditional suit of Denier or Coins was not pictured as Pentacles (or "talisman") until even later. Focusing on nomenclature may seem trivial, but, in fact, reflects a serious view that the tools of soul transformation and the deepest powers of mind should not be reserved to an elite group of magicians for ritualistic purposes.

Only an open, overt, accessible, cooperative model of thinking and acting can induce the mass of people to strive to integrate themselves into an expanded, millennial view of the world. Openness to change and exposure to new ideas and new kinds of functioning leads to innovation and progress, to growing tolerance and appreciation of diversity and expansion of personal power. The opposite view, with its ideas of mystery and privilege, is closed and more likely to inspire fear and rigidity. The way we name and use our symbols is of great importance.

In the Blake Tarot, the four Creative Process Suits are named after Blake's four "arts in Eternity" – Painting instead of Pentacles, Science instead of Swords, Music instead of Cups, and Poetry instead of Wands. These evocative and action-oriented suit-names stimulate awareness of our godlike powers of creativity and healing through art. The prevailing suit names are less appropriate for open-ended interpretation. Pentacles represent talismans of protection around material concerns, whereas Painting focuses on the artistic depiction of the world and its people; Swords tend to suggest conflict and pain whereas Science suggests mental exploration and the search for understanding; Cups are enclosures or containers for our emotions whereas Music suggests the open expression of our passions; Wands are power objects whereas Poetry expresses eternal truths. In like manner, the Tarot Triumphs, which have historic overtones of the triumphal parades of the Italian Renaissance, suggest the magnificent stages of life through which our souls must pass, and the ways we can personally triumph in our lives. Personally, I find this more appealing and more pertinent than the clandestine mumbo-jumbo suggested by names that mean the Big and Little Secrets!

Another innovation unique to the Blake Tarot is the inclusion of an additional (or 79th) card with the dual numeration of 00 (double-naught) and ∞ (infinity-sign or lemniscate). Based on Blake's central idea of Eternity as the soul's true home, it represents a point of departure and return, a goal and a reminder of our spiritual reality and destiny. In one sense, all the other cards in the Tarot pack can be derived from, and grounded in, this new card.

Next, and equally important, is Blake's assignment of the elements to the four arts, which became my four suits. These are vital keys to understanding Blake's spiritual view of life, and for using Tarot as a spiritual system. Blake's use of the elemental correspondences is extremely

precise and intentional. Although seemingly idiosyncratic, his use of the elements is, in fact, based on a definite spiritual understanding of how the universe works.

- Elemental Water is associated by Blake with the world of Matter because material things are mostly made of water or depend on it; for example, both the human body and planetary body are approximate 71% water. Water is the first element mentioned in the Bible. Blake asserts that matter (and everyday reality) is an illusion of the senses; although seemingly solid and permanent, our bodies and all material things are as fluid and protean in nature as water, when viewed from an eternal perspective. Painting is designated the art (and suit) of depicting the ordinary and practical matters of humanity. Blake specifically symbolizes the human body by clouds because although seemingly of substance, it only too soon evaporates and disappears when viewed from Eternity. Clouds and running water are used as symbols of elemental Water in the borders of the cards of the suit of Painting, which correspond to Pentacles.

- Elemental Air is associated with Mind, the intellect that, although insubstantial, is yet capable of roaming the entire universe; therefore Science is designated the art (and suit) for understanding how reason and logic seek to define and control our reality. Stars are used as symbols of universal Air in the borders of the cards of the suit of Science, which correspond to Swords.

- Elemental Fire is associated with Emotion, which to Blake is an overwhelming force neither material nor mental but one that sings to our souls; therefore Music is designated the art (and suit) for expressing how it feels to be human in all its joy and terror. In the Blake deck, emotion is described more as fiery passion than traditional watery sentiment. Flames and smoke symbolize elemental Fire in the borders of the cards of the suit of Music, which corresponds to Cups.

- Elemental Earth is seen as eternally everlasting and therefore associated with Imagination or Spirit, the prophetic voice of humanity that magically and everlastingly renews itself; therefore Poetry is designated the art (and suit) for speaking the beautiful and permanent truths that Imagination creates. Poetry thus represents the true ground of reality, which is spiritual in nature. The long-lived, ever-fruiting, and potentially intoxicating grapevine is used to symbolize magical Earth in the borders of the cards of the suit of Poetry, which corresponds to Wands.

The entire key to Blake's system, and part of its revolutionary appeal, is that elemental Earth unequivocally represents Imagination and Spirit, thus asserting the firm and solid belief that these are the only permanent forces in the universe, literally the ground of reality. The illusion of Matter becomes symbolized by Water, as mentioned before, and the emotions or passions become Fire.

One way of thinking about the assignments of the elements is that the Rider-Waite-Smith pack describes our everyday reality and its elements work well at that level, while the Blake deck looks beyond the physical plane to higher reality of spiritual substance. By the way, the Blake deck uses equivalency glyphs so that the standard elements can still be used as appropriate. In this standard scheme, as we know, Earth is associated with Matter or Pentacles, Water with Cups, and Fire with Wands. The association of Fire with Wands, in particular, can be thought of as representing our intense, fiery expansiveness and yearning for Spirit. When we shift our point of view to Blake's mystical vision, the way we see the elements is transformed by deeper insight. In particular, our yearning for Spirit, which was Fiery, now transforms mystically into Earth, representing the fruition of our yearning in the ground of reality, where only Imagination rules eternally.

There are many other new features incorporated in the William Blake Tarot of the Creative Imagination in the same spirit of combining the old and new, but I leave these to its users to discover and employ for themselves.



We can now reasonably say that after two centuries of intensive study and development by many artists and metaphysicians, Tarot is finally beginning to be recognized as a Western wisdom system comparable to those in the Oriental and Eastern traditions. Many of us here, for example, would agree that Tarot, after an extremely checkered and peripatetic history, has finally reached a high degree of practical perfection and clarity through myriad versions and changes. In fact, Tarot experienced periods of charlatanism, fortune telling, and fakery; it has a long and associated with Gypsies and the Devil. At the same time it has also enjoyed consorting with hippies, occultists, and magicians. And now it is being increasingly used as an intentional tool of higher consciousness, used by psychologists and analysts, by spiritual counselors and human-potential readers, and most importantly, by large numbers of ordinary people sincerely wanting to deepen and improve their lives.

Interestingly, William Blake's works were widely considered to be madness, mysticism, mystery, and mediocrity, not only in his own time but long afterwards. It was not until the late 19th century that the poet William Butler Yeats began the process of deciphering Blake's texts and restoring them to public view. Of course, this is the same Yeats who was a member of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, from whence came the Rider-Waite-Smith deck and hence modern Tarot. Now, in the 20th century, after being explored intellectually by countless scholars and mystically by many artists and poets, Blake has exploded into our modern consciousness as a master spokesman of the soul's journey.

And so we see that Tarot and William Blake have been on separate but parallel paths since they both appeared at the same time. Now, in the William Blake Tarot, for the first time these two perfected systems are joined and deepened by each other's insights and formative structures. I designed this deck as a blessed marriage between two compassionate and imaginative spiritual entities, one being the genius of Tarot and the other being the genius of Blake.

What is especially pertinent about Blake for Tarot is his stature as a master symbolist. He created more than 2000 paintings and graphics, and wrote more words than Shakespeare. Throughout the 58 years his working life from the age of 12 in 1769 to his death at the age of 69 in 1827 he was consistently focused on developing and refining his own symbolic universe. As a result, his symbols and words are never haphazardly used nor isolated from an intentionally meaningful context. Speaking of his own paintings he said, "I intreat . . . that the Spectator will attend to the Hands & Feet, to the Lineaments of the Countenances; they are all descriptive of Character, & not a line is drawn without intention, & . . . not a Grain of Sand or a Blade of Grass insignificant."

It is this quality of deeply meaningful and consistent use of symbols that makes Blake potentially the greatest Tarot artist of all time. Although the Tarot through the ages right up to the present day has attracted the skills of countless fine artists, and even some renowned artists such as Salvador Dali, none approach the stature of William Blake. Even though I have adapted and collaged Blake's designs to suit Tarot, they form an uncanny and near perfect fit because they are all from his own parallel, harmonious, and contemporaneous system of thought. Blake was not just a great artist and poet but also a profound spiritual thinker and psychological mythologist. What we therefore have in Blake is the compleat painter, scientist, musician, poet, philosopher, and mystic – he represents the perfection of all the Tarot suits combined. He not only gives us mythic characters in a spiritual and psychological context, he illustrates them and makes them speak. The facial expressions of his figures, the exact placement of their hands and feet, for ex-

ample, whether the left foot is forward or the right hand upraised, together with every gesture and sign, the clothing or lack of it, the physical interactions with each other, everything about the figures and their surroundings is always symbolic and charged with invisible yet highly accessible meaning. Only Blake has this supreme degree of intentionality that invests and informs every aspect of his images and his thought. And therefore I have renewed the old symbols of William Blake for our modern age, and I believe that he may speak even more clearly to the future in its great New Age: “Children of the future Age, Reading this indignant page; Know that in a former time, Love! sweet Love! was thought a crime.”



In our growing materialistic quandary, Blake is a beacon of Imagination, showing us how to transform our personal realities. Blake was perhaps the first person to foresee and warn us about the dilemmas that would arise for a future world that dedicated itself to technological and political goals instead of pursuing artistic and spiritual vision. He tried to warn us that by embracing Industry we would sacrifice Soul. Blake believed that exercising the Imagination is the invoking of God, and there is no other god than the human Imagination. In this sense, he was a pagan, and for him the Ten Commandments symbolized spiritual tyranny. (He said, “He has observ’d the Golden Rule, Til he’s become the Golden Fool.”) Yet Blake loved the Bible because it was filled with Imagination, and he made Jesus one of his symbols of Imagination. Blake envisioned the human body and psyche as a metaphor for the universe, ruled by eternal powers he called Zoas, who in humanity symbolize the parts of the body and psyche. As above, so below. Blake asserted the values of mercy and forgiveness of sin, against those of obedience, judgement, and punishment. Blake believed that Energy or life force is holy, and by extension, that sex is sacred and beautiful.

Blake urged and pleaded with us to discover and use our Divine Imaginations, to awaken the latent powers of godlike creativity within ourselves, by throwing off our “mind-forg’d manacles.” He knew his mission perfectly well: “I rest not from my great task! To open the eternal worlds, to open the immortal eyes Of man inwards into the worlds of thought.” That is, to locate and expose the visionary promise in others and in himself. Blake teaches us to see the world symbolically so that we can discern the truth behind the seeming reality, which is this: we can reclaim our souls by recognizing that our bodies and senses are only material extensions of our vital spiritual essence. He maintained that by practicing the principles of the arts in our daily lives, we can heal and unite our divided psycho logical selves and thus break through into a vision of the exalted higher reality that he called Eternity. By way of example, despite his perennial poverty and lack of recognition, Blake was cited by his contemporaries as the happiest of men, who on his deathbed worked on his paintings, singing songs of praise and gratitude.

Here is an example of how the Blake Tarot works: I asked the cards what this audience needed to know about them, and randomly selected one card to suggest an answer. The card I drew was the Triumph Reason (which ‘happens’ to be the theme card illustrated on the cover of the book and the merchandising box). Numbered IV, this card depicts Urizen, Blake’s mythic figure who symbolizes the reasoning Mind and corresponds to the Emperor in the traditional Tarot. Urizen kneels in his airy realm of sky, blocking the light of the Imaginative sun behind him, and reaches down out of dark clouds to assert his worldly control by wielding the calipers of his trademark compass. What does this card mean? First of all, its name literally pertains to giving us the “reason” behind the deck, which is to help us mentally understand ourselves and our world. Secondly, the card emphasizes one of Blake’s primary messages, warning us that Rationality is the enemy of Imagination. Urizen’s technology (which symbolizes our own fascination with technological

cleverness) is powerful but devoid of spirit and heart. Blake asserted that revealing Error was the first step in casting it out; thus this card tells us that the Blake Tarot (of which this particular card is the lead or trademark image) can be a means for freeing our imaginations, in part by identifying what inhibits and threatens our imaginations: namely, the calculating, logical, scientific lord of the laboratory. Finally, I also interpret this card to mean that for Tarot to be accepted in the broader context of everyday life by millions of people, they will first need to understand in a “reasonable” way what Tarot really is, and why it works, and what it can do for us. Because we have been indoctrinated by Rationality, we require a rational reason to believe in Tarot even as a counter-rational force.

Particularly in the last few decades, Tarot has grown explosively even in the face of skepticism and widespread belief that it was only a fad, or really a fraud, or actually an outright fiend. But more and more new decks keep appearing every year, and sales keep going up despite its own publishers’ disbelief. Year after year, people keep saying that the Tarot boom is about to bust, that the market is oversaturated, and yet Tarot keeps expanding in delightfully unpredictable and outrageous fashion. As a result, many of us believe that Tarot has at long last arrived. However, I don’t agree. What I believe is that Tarot is only now about to arrive; that what has happened so far, amazing as it is, is just the beginning. Tarot for the 21st Century will be a mass phenomenon and a household word as a new age embraces its old symbols.

As for William Blake, the acclaimed but shadowy genius who “discover’d the infinite in every thing,” a new dawning continues. His 200-year-old wisdom has been retooled for the 21st Century, and I’m letting him have the last word:

*Re-engrav’d Time after Time
Ever in their youthful prime,
My design unchang’d remains.*
— William Blake
(1757–1827)

4

Artwork Notes

This booklet provides enthusiasts of artist/poet William Blake (1757-1827) with specific information about the creation of the William Blake Tarot as published by HarperSF and Aquarian (London) in November 1995. Herein are listed all the original works used, details of how they were combined, and descriptions of modifications made in the process.

For each card in the William Blake Tarot, the original work(s) are identified under the Image or Central Image heading; the figures in the images are noted under the Figure(s) heading; and the changes and coloring are described under the Commentary heading. In addition, for those cards containing quotes from Blake, the Quotation heading identifies their sources.

When referring to the coloring of a card, the word “derivative” means that I colored its collaged version to emulate Blake’s own coloring of the work(s) cited. However, my coloring tends to be somewhat more vivid to accommodate the subsequent reduction and reproduction of the images in the deck. Nevertheless, these derivative colorings are reasonably accurate renderings of the originals, and can serve as valid representations of Blake’s graphic works to observers encountering them for the first time.

“Original” coloring means that I employed my own coloring schemes whenever the Blake originals were uncolored, fulfilling the publisher’s requirement that all the cards in the deck be fully colored. In these cases, my coloring schemes are attempts to harmonize with Blake’s general coloring schemes.

I wish to make perfectly clear that I have deliberately retouched and/or modified ALL of Blake’s works used in this deck. This was required for a number of reasons: to accommodate the images to the space allotted, to make them symbolically suitable as Tarot images, to improve their reproducibility, and, finally to avoid any complications of copyright. Even so, I have meticulously sought to maintain the integrity and intention of Blake’s work at every step. In the final result, I believe that the William Blake Tarot accurately reflects the unique “look” and sense of spiritual purpose that characterizes William Blake’s work.

Book Illustrations

The nine black & white line illustrations reproduced in the William Blake Tarot book that accompanies the deck are slightly retouched versions taken from *For the Sexes: The Gates of Paradise* (line engravings, circa 1818), a set that is a reworking of Blake’s earlier set called *For the Children: The Gates of Paradise* (1793). The illustrations used in the William Blake Tarot book are as follows:

Frontispiece Plate:	“What is Man!” “The Suns Light when he unfolds it Depends on the Organ that beholds it.”	
Page 7	Plate 6:	“At length for hatching ripe he breaks the shell”
Page 50	Plate 14:	“The Traveller hasteth in the Evening”
Page 68	Plate 2:	“Water” “Thou Waterest him with Tears”
Page 88	Plate 4:	“Air” “On Cloudy Doubts & Reasoning Cares”
Page 110	Plate 5:	“Fire” “That end in endless Strife”
Page 131	Plate 3:	“Earth” “He struggles into Life”
Page 158	Plate 1:	“I found him beneath a Tree”
Page 162	Plate 13:	“Fear & Hope are – Vision”

Calligraphy

All the card titles, quotations, and other words used in the deck were hand-lettered, based on the various calligraphy styles used by Blake in his original works.

The suit glyphs (♂, ♀, ♃, ♄) are also based on Blakean emblems.

Back Design (Verso of each card)

Image: Title Page of the Illustrations of the Book of Job. (Line engraving, circa 1825.)

Figures: Seven angels representing the Eyes of God (see published book).

Commentary: The border and the words on the original page were deleted. The cloud is slightly resized in relation to the angels. The entire image is the negative of the original (i.e., white on a blue background instead of black on a white background).

The Blake Triumphs (Major Arcana)

Borders of the Triumphs

Images: From Illustrations of the Book of Job. (Line engravings, circa 1825.)

Commentary: The image-filled borders of the Triumphs are the borders from the 22 plates in the Illustrations of



the Book of Job, but with all the words deleted. The central images framed by the borders are deleted, and replaced by others selected for their Tarot significance. The original order of the borders is indicated by a small number at the top right of each Triumph card. The rectangular outline of each border has been thickened.

The 22 border images were previously uncolored; their coloring is original to these cards. In the deck, the border of Card 0 is printed in black, the borders of the next seven cards (I through VII) are printed in gray, the borders of the middle seven cards (VIII through XIV) are printed in red, and the borders of the final seven cards (XV through XXI) are printed in blue. The coloring of the images within the borders is original to these cards.

The new Triumph card 00/∞ – Eternity has no border, to signify its unlimited nature.

Central Images of the Triumphs

The central images (those framed by the borders) in the Triumph cards replace the original central engravings in the plates of Illustrations of the Book of Job. The new central images were selected for use in the Blake Deck from a variety of Blake’s works, as follows:

00/∞ – Eternity

Central Image: Jacob’s Dream. (Pen and watercolor, circa 1805.)

Figure: The Biblical patriarch Jacob. The image illustrates Genesis 28:12: “And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.” In Blakean terms, in this card, this represents Albion (Humanity) asleep on the Rock of Eternity.

Commentary: The coloring is derivative.

0 – Innocence

Central Image: Frontispiece to “The Dog” from Ballads by William Hayley (Line engraving, 1805).

Figure: Naked Innocence. In the card, he represents the fallen Tharmas descended into the world of Matter.

Commentary: The original image is slightly cropped to extend into the border at the top and bottom. The coloring is original to this card.

I – Magic

Central Image: The Fertilization of Egypt from The Botanic Garden by Erasmus Darwin (Line engraving, 1791).

Figure: The Egyptian God Anubis, who in this card also represents the fallen Los in his roles as Lord of Time and Conductor of Souls.

Commentary: The original image was cropped at the corners, and slightly widened to fit the border. A fourth rattle was added to the sistrum at the lower left to accord with traditional sistrums symbolizing the four elements. In the border, a dot-screen background was added to the flames on the altar. The coloring is original to this card.

II – Mystery

Central Image: Hecate (Color print finished in pen and watercolor, circa 1795).

Figure: The Triple Moon Goddess, Hecate. In the card, she also represents Enitharmon (the Emanation of fallen Los) in her roles as Pity and Ruler of Space.

Commentary: A donkey and owl in the left portion of the original image are cropped out, and the remainder of the image cropped to fit the border. The bat-winged figure is repositioned slightly to the left. A watery foreground is added. In the border, the two upper angels are repositioned, and some small details deleted. The coloring is derivative, except the background is considerably lightened so that the winged figures can be readily seen, and skin tone of the front figure is darkened.

III – Nature

Central Image: Bathsheba at the Bath (Tempera on canvas, circa 1800).

Figure: The Biblical queen Bathsheba with her first two sons. In the card, she also represents Vala (the Emanation of Luvah) in her role as Nature. (In Blake’s detailed mythological lineages, the historical Bathsheba is listed as one of Vala’s many daughters.)

Commentary: The left and right portions of the original image are cropped, deleting various pillars, the figure of a female servant at the left, and King David at the upper right. Roses at the right edge of the image are relocated to the left of the figures, replacing the servant’s extended hand. A third lily is added at right in place of a five-lobed flower. The coloring is derivative.

IV – Reason

Central Image: The Ancient of Days (Watercolor, pen, and gold paint, 1794).

Figure: Urizen. In the card, he represents the fallen Urizen.

Commentary: The original image is cropped to fit the border, except that the compass points extend into the border at the bottom. In the border, illuminations on the angel are cropped out, and illuminations below the cloud are moved to the top of the cloud. The coloring is derivative.

V – Religion

Central Image: Plate 10 of Europe, a Prophecy (Color print finished in watercolor, 1794).

Figure: King George III of England, attended by angels.

Commentary: The words in the original plate are deleted. The border is from the third state of Plate 16 of Illustrations of the Book of Job, a variation that affects the top border. The coloring is derivative.

VI – Knowledge

Central Image: Raphael Warns Adam and Eve (Pen and watercolor, 1808).

Figures: Adam and Eve with archangel Raphael in the garden of Eden.

Commentary: The coloring is derivative.

VII – Experience

Central Image: Plate 46 of Jerusalem (Line engraving finished in pen, watercolor, and gold paint, circa 1820).

Figures: In the card, a resigned couple represents Experience-weary Humanity.

Commentary: The coloring is derivative, based on Copy E.

VIII – Assessment

Central Image: This card is a collage using portions of two works:

(1) The Resurrection of the Dead; Alternative Design for the Title Page to The Grave by Robert Blair (Pen and watercolor, 1806).

(2) A View of St. Edmund's Chapel from The Life of Cowper by William Hayley (Line engraving, 1803).

Figure: Probably the archangel Michael. In the card, he represents the regenerated Luvah.

Commentary: The card image is a collage consisting of one angelic figure from (1), together with the Gothic arch from (2). The figure is a small portion of the original work in (1), and the coloring is derivative. The background behind the arch in the original work (2) is cropped out, and the coloring of the arch is original to this card.

IX – Imagination

Central Image: Frontispiece to Jerusalem (Line engraving finished in pen, watercolor, and gold paint, circa 1820).

Figure: Los entering the Door of Death. In this card, he represents the regenerated Los.

Commentary: The border of the original image is deleted. The top corners of the image are cropped as curves. The coloring is derivative, based on Copy E.

X – Whirlwind

Central Image: Ezekiel's Wheels (Chalk, pen, and watercolor over pencil, circa 1803).

Figures: The Biblical prophet Ezekiel and his vision of God with its "likenesses of four living creatures" in the whirlwind, with "rings full of eyes round about them four."

Commentary: The original image is slightly cropped at the corners to fit the border, and slightly extended at left and right to complete the curves of the Wheels. The figure of Ezekiel at the bottom is relocated into the fallen trees of the border. The coloring is derivative.

XI – Energy

Central Image: Adam naming the beasts, Frontispiece to A series of Ballads by William Hayley (Line engraving, 1802).

Figure: Adam naming the beasts. In this card, he represents the regenerated Tharmas.

Commentary: The words and brick-like border in the original are deleted. The upper corners are cropped, and the bottom extended, to fit the border. The coloring is original to this card.

XII – Reversal

Central Image: Plate 8 of The Book of Urizen (Relief etching finished in watercolor, circa 1820).

Figure: Urizen inverted. In the card, he represents the regenerated Urizen.

Commentary: The original image is slightly cropped at the edges to fit the shape of the border; Urizen's left foot extends into the border at top left. Several small details in the border are cropped out to accommodate the central image. The coloring is derivative, based on Copy G.

XIII – Transformation

Central Image: This card is a collage using portions of two works:

(1) Plate 26 of Blake's engraved illustrations to Night Thoughts by Edward Young (Line engraving, 1797).

(2) Plate 25 of same.

Figures: Time, as Death, whose enormous scythe "Strikes empires from the root," works on the same figures depicted in the 10 of Painting card. The blue figure of Time looks back, while the red figure of Time looks forward. It is the same figure, acting out the concept of Transformation.

Commentary: The card image is a collage consisting of most of the image in (1), omitting the words in the Quotation Window, together with a segment of the right side of the image in (2), collaged into the former text box or "Poetry Window." In the border, the spiders now depend from shorter and thicker strands. The bottom is extended. The coloring is original to this card.

XIV – Forgiveness

Central Image: Christ Ministered to by Angels, from Blake's illustrations to Paradise Regained by John Milton (Pen and watercolor over pencil, circa 1816-20).



Figure: Jesus, with attending angels.

Commentary: The original image was slightly cropped at the corners, and slightly extended at the top and sides, to fit the border. The tips of the wings of the upper angels were extended to complete the image. A cloud-line in the upper part of the border was deleted to accommodate the central image. The coloring is derivative.

XV – Error

Central Image: Satan in Council, from Blake's illustrations to Paradise Regained by John Milton (Pen and watercolor over pencil, circa 1816-20).

Figure: Satan, with his acolytes.

Commentary: The original image was slightly cropped at the lower corners, and extended at the top, to fit the border. The coloring is derivative.

XVI – Lightning

Central Image: Plate 3 of Illustrations of The Book of Job (Line engraving, circa 1825).

Figure: Satan the Accuser, lording over the dying members of Job's family.

Commentary: Both the central image and the border are from the same work, the only such instance in the deck.

The original plate is unchanged except that the central image is slightly enlarged to fit the entire window allotted for it. The coloring is original to this card.

XVII – Stars

Central Image: Milton in his Old Age from Blake's illustrations to L'Allegro and Il Penseroso by John Milton (Pen and watercolor, circa 1816-20).

Figures: John Milton "in his Mossy Cell Contemplating the Constellations," with Job asleep in the lower border.

Commentary: The original image is slightly cropped at the upper corners and lower right corner, and slightly extended at the lower left corner, to fit the border. In the border, some stars in the upper part are deleted to accommodate the central image. The upper angels in the border are interleaved with the figures of the constellations, creating small deletions in each. The coloring is derivative.

XVIII – Moon

Central Image: Malevolence (Pen and watercolor, 1799).

Figures: A Family watched by two murderous Fiends. In the deck, this represents the dark watery beauty and sexuality of the realm of Beulah, and the subconscious dangers of the traditional Moon card.

Commentary: The coloring is derivative.

XIX – Sun

Central Image: The River of Life (Pen and watercolor, circa 1805).

Figure: Jesus swimming with two children in the stream of Time, together with Atropos and St. John.

Commentary: In the original image, two large figures of sacred musicians at the left and right are cropped out. The sky at the top is extended to fit and interleave with the border. The river at the bottom is also interleaved with the flames in the border. A portion of the flames in the border is deleted to accommodate the central image. The coloring is derivative.

XX – Liberty

Central Image: This card is a collage using portions of two works:

(1) Frontispiece to Leonora by G.A. Birger (Line engraving, designed by Blake and engraved by Perry, 1796).

(2) Title Page of Jerusalem (Line engraving finished in pen, watercolor, and gold paint, circa 1820).

Figures: The butterfly form of Jerusalem (Albion's Emanation, called Liberty) is propelled across the night sky amidst forms of death, in response to the trumpet call of Judgement.

Commentary: The horse and two riders in the original of (1) are deleted, and Jerusalem from the bottom part of (2) is inserted instead. The words in the original of (1) are deleted. The upper corners are cropped, and the top slightly extended, to fit the border. In the border, the steps and platform at the bottom are deleted, along with sheaves of wheat at left and right. The lower cloud edges are deleted, along with slight illuminations on the upper clouds. The angels at left are moved to the right, and the angels at right are moved to the left. The coloring of Jerusalem is derivative; the coloring of the remainder of the image is original to this card.

XXI – Union

Central Image: Albion Rose; also called The Dance of Albion, and/or Glad Day (Color-printed line engraving finished in pen and watercolor, circa 1794).

Figure: Albion/Blake. In the card, he represents the regenerated Albion.

Commentary: The original image is slightly cropped on all sides evenly. The coloring is derivative.

The Creative Process Suits (Minor Arcana)**Symbol Windows of All Suits**

Each card in all the Creative Process Suits contains a “Symbol Window” in which the user may write or paste personal symbols, if desired. Although neither suggested by nor modeled after them, the Symbol Windows are nearly identical to the graphical title blocks that Blake used beneath his six illustrations to *The Triumphs of Temper* by William Hayley (Line engravings, 1803).

Suit of Painting**Borders of the Suit of Painting**

Image: The border motif of all the cards in the Suit of Painting are themselves collages derived from two sources: (1) Clouds: From the border of the Title Page of *Jerusalem* (Line engraving finished in watercolor, circa 1820 [Copy E]).

(2) Waters: From a portion of Page 54 of Blake’s engravings in *Night Thoughts* by Edward Young (Line engraving, 1797).

Commentary: The border of each card in this suit differs considerably due to differing selections and arrangements of the portion from (2). The coloring of the Clouds is derivative, based on Copy E, and the coloring of the Waters is original to these cards.

Symbol Windows of the Suit of Painting

The faint (screened) image in the Symbol Window of each card in the Suit of Painting is a small detail from *The Last Judgment* (Drawing, pen and wash over pencil, circa 1809).

In the deck, this design represents Form.

Number Cards of the Suit of Painting

The central images (framed by the borders) in the ten Number Cards of the Suit of Painting are selected from a variety of Blake’s works, as follows:

Ace of Painting – Generation

Central Image: *The Descent of the Angels to One of the Daughters of Men* from Blake’s illustrations to the *Book of Enoch* (Pencil drawing, circa 1824-27).

Figures: Two “Watchers of Heaven” and a “Daughter of Men.”

Commentary: The card image is extended at the top and bottom to fit the border. The coloring is original to this card.

2 of Painting – Balance

Central Image: *Antaeus Setting Down Dante and Virgil in the Last Circle of Hell* (Plate 66) from Blake’s illustrations to the *Divine Comedy* by Dante (Pen and watercolor, circa 1826).

Figures: The Greek giant Antaeus transports Dante and Virgil across the chasm.

Commentary: The coloring is derivative.

3 of Painting – Practice

Central Image: *Three Falling Figures* (Pen and watercolor, circa 1793).

Figures: Unidentified.

Commentary: The upper left and lower right corners of the original image are cropped out, and the upper right and lower left corners extended, enabling the image to be converted from horizontal to vertical format to fit the border.

In the card image, clouds are added at the upper left and lower right as part of this reorientation. The coloring is derivative.

4 of Painting – Means

Central Image: *Job and his Daughters* from the “Butts Set” of Blake’s illustrations to the *Book of Job* (Pen, chalk, and watercolor, circa 1821-27).

Figures: Job and his daughters, with dog and sheep flocks.

Commentary: The original image has been converted from horizontal to vertical format by moving the flocks of sheep from alongside the figures to the foreground in front of them. The dog was relocated from the lower left corner to lower center, and a lamb on the right was deleted. The original image is also slightly cropped at the top, and slightly extended at the bottom, to fit the border. The coloring is derivative.

5 of Painting – Hardship

Central Image: *Job rebuked by his Friends* (Plate 10, first state, prior to inclusion of border) from *Illustrations of the Book of Job* (Line engraving, circa 1825).

Figures: Job, his wife, and three accusing friends.



Commentary: The torsos, feet, and faces of the three friends in the original image are cropped out at the right, and the image is also slightly cropped at the left. The top and bottom of the image are slightly extended to fit the border. The coloring is original to this card.

6 of Painting – Assistance

Central Image: *Christian Drawn out of the Slough by Help* from Blake’s illustrations to *The Pilgrim’s Progress* by John Bunyan (Pencil, pen, and watercolor, circa 1824-27).

Figure: Christian being assisted by Help.

Commentary: The coloring is derivative.

7 of Painting – Patience

Central Image: This card is a collage using portions of two images:

(1) (Top) Plate 8 of *Jerusalem* (Line engraving finished in pen and watercolor, circa 1820)

(2) (Bottom) Plate 92 of same.

Figures:

(1) A daughter of *Jerusalem* pulls the new moon.

(2) *Jerusalem* (Liberty) patiently awaits the emergence of the Four Zoas.

Commentary: The original words on both plates are deleted (except “*Jerusalem*”) and the two images joined. The coloring is derivative, based on Copy E.

8 of Painting – Discipline

Central Image: *Dante and Virgil Ascending the Mountain of Purgatory* (Plate 76) from Blake’s illustrations to the *Divine Comedy* by Dante (Pen and watercolor, circa 1826).

Figures: Virgil and Dante.

Commentary: The coloring is derivative.

9 of Painting – Fruition

Central Image: This image is a collage using portions of four plates (top to bottom) from *Jerusalem*:

(1) Plate 75 of *Jerusalem* (Line engraving finished in pen and watercolor, circa 1820).

(2) Plate 83 of same.

(3) Plate 28 of same (first state, circa 1804-20).

(4) Plate 45 of same.

Figures: Perhaps Albion and Vala, copulating on a water lily/lotus flower. In the card, they represent universal lovers. Commentary: The card image is a collage consisting of the following graphic elements combined from top to bottom: the nine angels from Plate 75, the marginal clouds from Plate 83 (made horizontal), the embracing couple from Plate 28, and the fish from Plate 45. The coloring is derivative, based on Copy E.

10 of Painting – Delight

Central Image: *A Sunshine Holiday* from Blake’s illustrations to *L’Allegro and Il Penseroso* by John Milton (Pen and watercolor, circa 1816-20).

Figures: Jupiter and Juno, angels and townspeople in a vision of life-enjoyment.

Commentary: The original image is slightly extended at the bottom to fit the border. The coloring is derivative.

Person Cards of the Suit of Painting

The central images used in the four Person Cards of the Suit of Painting are selected from a variety of Blake’s works, as follows.

Angel of Painting

Central Image: The card image is a collage using portions of two works:

(1) *The Graphic Muse, Frontispiece to An Inquiry into the Requisite Cultivation and Present State of the Arts of Design in England* by Prince Hoare (Line engraving designed by Joshua Reynolds and engraved by Blake, 1806).

(2) Plate 18 of *Illustrations of the Book of Job* (Line engraving, circa 1825).

Figure: The Muse or “Theory” of Painting, according to Sir Reynolds.

Commentary: The card image combines the graphic-arts tools (palette, brushes, and engraving tool) from the lower border of (2), deleting the words at the bottom of the page, with the entire image from (1), except for deleting the word THEORY in the scroll held by the muse. The coloring is original to this card.

Child of Painting

Central Image: *Venus* (Design 25) from *Compositions from the Works Days and Theogony of Hesiod* by John Flaxman (Line engraving, 1816).

Figures: A child on a dolphin.

Commentary: About two-thirds of the original work is cropped out at the left. The lower left banner held by the child is an element added from another portion of the work, replacing the back of Venus, who reclines on the dolphin’s head in the original work. A few more waves are added, from other portions of the work, at the bottom, to extend the image to the border. The coloring is original to this card.

Woman of Painting

Central Image: The Awards of Athene (Pen and watercolor, circa 1780-5). The original work is a horizontal lunette-shaped pen and ink drawing with a gray wash on the figures and cerulean blue wash in the background. Figures: Athene offering wreathes to emblematic women representing the arts of Painting and Sculpture. Commentary: The card image is a rearrangement of the constituents of the original work, and also adds some new elements. The two women in the foreground were originally further left and right, and two additional figures in the original work are cropped out at the left and right. The cloud in the background and the cloud being painted on the easel are not in the original work. The ovoid shape of the original work is suggested by the curvature of the arch at the top. The coloring is original to this card.

Man of Painting

Central Image: This image is a collage using portions of two works:
 (1) Enoch (Lithograph, circa 1807. Blake's sole lithograph.)
 (2) Baffled Devils Fighting from Blake's illustrations to the Divine Comedy by Dante. (Line engraving, 1827).
 Figure: An emblematic man who represents the art of Painting.
 Commentary: The card image is a collage consisting of one figure from work (1), whose surrounding rays are formed by collecting the rays from other portions of the same work; collaged together with the "waves" from (2). The figure from (1) is a small portion of the original work; similarly, the waves from (2) are a small portion of the original work. The coloring is original to this card.

Suit of Science**Borders of the Suit of Science**

Image: The border motif used in the Suit of Science is a collage based on details of various plates from Jerusalem (Line engravings, circa 1825).
 Commentary: The border motif of all the cards in the Suit of Science is based on depictions of stars in various plates of Jerusalem. The border of each card in this suit differs slightly due to individual variation in coloring and details. The coloring is derivative, based on Copy E.

Symbol Windows of the Suit of Science

The faint (screened) image in the Symbol Window of each card of the Suit of Science is collaged from portions of the border of the Frontispiece to A series of Ballads by William Hayley (Line engraving, 1802). In the deck, this brick-like design represents Structure.

Number Cards of the Suit of Science

All the central images used in the ten Number Cards of the Suit of Science are selected from The Book of Urizen, and their coloring is based on copy G (Color-printed relief etchings, circa 1815).

Ace of Science – Intellect

Central Image: Title Page (Plate 1) of The Book of Urizen.
 Figure: Urizen writing a book with his right hand and illustrating another with his left hand.
 Commentary: The words on the original plate are deleted. The coloring is derivative.

2 of Science – Reflection

Central Image: Plate 26 of The Book of Urizen.
 Figures: A begging/praying boy and his dog at a doorway.
 Commentary: The coloring is derivative.

3 of Science – Jealousy

Central Image: Plate 21 of The Book of Urizen.
 Figures: Enitharmon and Los with their son Orc.
 Commentary: The coloring is derivative.

4 of Science – Repose

Central Image: Plate 12 of The Book of Urizen.
 Figure: Urizen drifting "upward into futurity."
 Commentary: The coloring is derivative.

5 of Science – Division

Central Image: Plate 28 of The Book of Urizen.
 Figure: Urizen snared in the Net of Religion.
 Commentary: The original words in the plate are deleted. Two small clouds above and to the right of Urizen's head are relocated to the left. The flower growing from Urizen's head has an added blossom on the right side of its stalk. The coloring is derivative.

*6 of Science – Passage*

Central Image: The card image is a collage using portions of two works:
 (1) Plate 13 of The Book of Urizen.
 (2) Plate 23 of same.
 Figures: Above, Enitharmon (as Pity) "divides the soul"; below, Urizen carries a Globe of Fire.
 Commentary: The card image is a collage consisting of the central image from (1), together with the main image from (2). The original words are deleted from both plates. The coloring is derivative.

7 of Science – Lamentation

Central Image: Plate 27 of The Book of Urizen.
 Figure: An emblematic figure strikes an ambiguous pose.
 Commentary: The coloring is derivative.

8 of Science – Restriction

Central Image: Plate 22 of The Book of Urizen.
 Figure: Urizen, manacled and seated.
 Commentary: The coloring is derivative.

9 of Science – Despair

Central Image: The card image is a collage using portions of two works:
 (1) Plate 2 of The Book of Urizen.
 (2) Plate 8 of same.
 Figures: Mother and infant above, the fetal skeleton of Urizen below. In the deck, this represents Hope hovering above Despair.
 Commentary: The card image is a collage consisting of the main image from (1), together with the main image from (2). The original words are deleted from both plates. The circle of light enclosing the lower figure is extended to touch the right hand of the matron in the upper part of the image. The coloring is derivative.

10 of Science – Defeat

Central Image: The card image is a collage using portions of three works:
 (1) Plate 6 of The Book of Urizen.
 (2) Plate 10 of same.
 (3) Plate 5 of same.
 Figures: Three upside-down, serpent-girdled figures flank two spirit-heads in the flames.
 Commentary: The card image is a collage consisting of the main image from work (1), together with four small birds from work (2) and one larger bird from work (3), placed above the lower figures. The birds are small details from their respective plates. The coloring is derivative.

Person Cards of the Suit of Science

The central images used in the four Person Cards of the Suit of Science are selected from a variety of Blake's works, as follows.

Angel of Science

Central Image: Vignette on the Title Page of An Introduction to Natural Philosophy by William Nicholson (Line engraving, 1787).
 Quotation: Quis: Basin: Demonstret: translated: "Who would demonstrate the foundation?"
 Figure: None, suggesting that the angel of Science is sequestered in an "ivory tower."
 Commentary: The original image is slightly cropped at the left and right; the cropped portions were reproduced and added beneath to extend the clouds to the border, also converting the image from horizontal to vertical format. The coloring is original to this card.

Child of Science

Central Image: Vignette on the Title Page of An Introduction to Mensuration by John Bonnycastle (Line engraving, 1782).
 Figures: Two boys study a diagram illustrating the Pythagorean Theorem.
 Commentary: The right half of the original image is cropped out, along with slight cropping at left; the bottom is slightly extended to fit the border. The suggestion of a bush has been added at the right, replacing the elbow of a cropped-out figure. The coloring is original to this card.

Woman of Science

Central Image: The card image is a combination of portions of two works:
 (1) Plate NT509 from Blake's watercolor designs to Night Thoughts by Edward Young (Pen and watercolor over pencil, 1795-7).
 (2) Plate NT504 from same.
 Figures: Three "Newtonian Angels" with compass and telescope.

Commentary: Plate (1) is slightly cropped at the left and top, and Young's text is deleted from the Poetry Window – which is instead filled with only the shooting-star portion of Plate (2). The coloring is derivative.

Man of Science

Central Image: Newton (Color print finished in watercolor, 1795).

Figure: Isaac Newton measuring Ratios on the ocean bottom (as far from God as possible).

Commentary: The original work is cropped at the left, right, and top to fit the border. The polypus has been moved slightly closer to Newton's left foot to be inside the frame. The coloring is derivative.



Suit of Music

Borders of the Suit of Music

Image: The border motif of each card in the Suit of Music (except the Angel of Music) is a collage derived from two works:

(1) Flames: From a portion of Plate 20 of Jerusalem (Line engraving finished in watercolor, circa 1820).

(2) Smoke: From a portion of Plate 6 of same.

Commentary: The Flames and Smoke in the plates have been reoriented from horizontal to vertical format. The border of each card in this suit differs slightly due to individual coloring variations. The coloring is derivative, based on Copy E. The border of the Angel of Music card consists only of (1) above.

Symbol Windows of the Suit of Music

The faint (screened) image in the Symbol Window of each card in the Suit of Music is a small detail from the border of A View of St. Edmund's Chapel from The Life of Cowper by William Hayley (Line engraving, 1803). In the deck, this wavelike design represents Vibration.

Number Cards of the Suit of Music

All the central images used in the ten Number Cards of the Suit of Music are selected from Blake's watercolor illustrations to Poems by Mr. Gray (Pen and watercolor over pencil, 1797-8). Each of the original illustrations featured a text box or "Poetry Window" that featured lines of Thomas Gray's poetry. In each card of the Suit of Music, Gray's lines in the poetry window are replaced by thematic quotations from Blake, emulating lyrics to Music.

Ace of Music – Passion

Central Image: General Title Page of Poems by Mr. Gray.

Quotation: "The desire of Man being Infinite | the possession is Infinite & him-self Infinite." – from There is No Natural Religion.

Figure: Genius rides a swan in flight.

Commentary: The original design is slightly cropped at the left to fit the border. The coloring is derivative.

2 of Music – Contraries

Central Image: Design 4 of Ode for Music from Poems by Mr. Gray.

Quotation: "Without Contraries is no progression. | Attraction and Repulsion, | Reason and Energy, | Love and Hate, | are necessary to Human Existence." – from The Marriage of Heaven and Hell (3).

Figures: John Milton, arch-poet, and Isaac Newton, arch-materialist.

Commentary: The original design is slightly cropped at the left and right to fit the border. The coloring is derivative.

3 of Music – Exuberance

Central Image: The card image is a combination of two works:

(1) Design 10 of Ode for Music from Poems by Mr. Gray.

(2) Design 2 of Ode for Music, above.

(3) Same as (2) but its mirror image.

Quotation: "Exuberance is Beauty" – from The Marriage of Heaven and Hell (10).

Figures:

(1) A winged seraph named Fame.

(2) A bird singing (at right.)

(3) A bird singing (at left).

Commentary: The original image of (1) is slightly cropped at the left and right to fit the border. The coloring is derivative. The tendrils in images (2) and (3) are slightly trimmed, and made to join from a common stalk. The coloring of (2) and (3) is original.

4 of Music – Musing

Central Image: The card image is a combination of two works:

(1) Design 3 of The Triumphs of Owen from Poems by Mr. Gray.

(2) Design 5 of Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College from Poems by Mr. Gray.

Quotation: "And I wrote my happy songs | Every child may joy to hear." – from "Introduction," Songs of Innocence.

Figures:

(1) The Bard with eyes closed, musing upon a melody on his harp.

(2) A boy in a tree hands down a nest of young birds to a girl, both musing on Nature.

Commentary: The original image of (1) is slightly cropped at the left, with the tree trunk and grass of (2) collaged into the image at the right. Two other boys (and background trees) are deleted from (2) to accommodate the image of (1). The coloring of the portion from (1) is derivative; the coloring of the portion from (2) is original.

5 of Music – Melancholy

Central Image: Design 8 of Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard from Poems by Mr. Gray.

Quotation: "Whate'er is Born of Mortal Birth | Must be consumed with the Earth | To rise from Generation free; | Then what have I to do with thee?" – from "To Tirzah," Songs of Experience.

Figure: Thomas Gray's "unletter'd Muse" tracing words on the gravestone.

Commentary: The original design is cropped at the left, right, and top to fit the border. The coloring is derivative.

6 of Music – Pleasure

Central Image: The card image is a combination of two works:

(1) Design 1 of A Long Story from Poems by Mr. Gray.

(2) Design 2 of Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College from Poems by Mr. Gray.

Quotation: "...we cannot experience pleasure but by means of others." – from Annotations to Lavatar's Aphorisms on Man.

Figures: A nude youth and four damsel dance round a running boy.

Commentary: The original design (1) is slightly cropped at the right to fit the border; while only the boy, reduced in size, from design (2) is placed in the circle of (1). The coloring is derivative in both images.

7 of Music – Fancies

Central Image: Design 10 of The Progress of Poesy from Poems by Mr. Gray.

Quotation: "To Me This World is all one continued Vision of Fancy or Imagination." – from Letter to Reverend Dr. Trusler, 1799.

Figures: The poet Dryden receives gifts from "Bright Eyd Fancy."

Commentary: The original design is slightly cropped at the right to fit the border. The coloring is derivative.

8 of Music – Discontent

Central Image: Design 6 to Ode On a Distant Prospect of Eton College from Poems by Mr. Gray.

Quotation: "Clouded with discontent & brooding in their minds terrible things" – from Milton a Poem (20).

Figures: Creatures representing Misfortune lurk next to unsuspecting children at play.

Commentary: The Poetry Window in the original design is slightly widened (the young girl's airborne ball is slightly moved to the right). The bottom is slightly extended to fit the border. The coloring is derivative.

9 of Music – Happiness

Central Image: Design 3 of Ode on the Spring from Poems by Mr. Gray.

Quotation: "He who binds to himself a joy | Does the winged life destroy | But he who kisses the joy as it flies | Lives in eternity's sun rise." – from Several Questions Answered.

Figures: The personification of "the Purple Year" awaking to Zephyrs and "Hours suckling their Flowery Infants."

Commentary: The original design is slightly extended at the top and bottom to fit the border. The coloring is derivative.

10 of Music – Sublimity

Central Image: Design 5 of The Progress of Poesy from Poems by Mr. Gray.

Quotation: "Peace & Plenty & Domestic Happiness is the Source of Sublime Art." – from Letter to George Cumberland, 1795.

Figures: A winged boy and dancing maidens with "many-twinkling feet."

Commentary: The original design is slightly cropped at the right, and slightly extended at the bottom, to fit the border. The coloring is derivative.

Person Cards of the Suit of Music

The central images used in the four Person Cards of the Suit of Music, just as in the Number Cards, are all from the Blake's watercolor designs to Poems by Mr. Gray (Pen and watercolor over pencil, 1797-8). Each of the original illustrations featured a Poetry Window that quoted lines of Thomas Gray's poetry. In each Person Card of the Suit of Music, as in each Number Card, Gray's lines in the Poetry Window are replaced by thematic quotations from Blake, emulating lyrics to Music.

Angel of Music

Central Image: Design 1 of Ode for Music from Poems by Mr. Gray.

Quotation: "Like as an angel glitt'ring in the sky, | In times of innocence and holy joy; | The joyful shepherd stops his grateful song, | To hear the music of an angel's tongue." – from Song ("Fresh from the dewy hill...").

Figure: A winged seraph personifying Music.

Commentary: The original design is slightly cropped at the left and right to fit the border. The coloring is derivative.

Child of Music

Central Image: Design 7 of The Progress of Poesy from Poems by Mr. Gray.

Quotation: "Piping down the valleys wild | Piping songs of pleasant glee." – from "Introduction," Songs of Innocence.

Figure: A piping youth clad in a wolf's skin.

Commentary: The original design is slightly cropped at the left to fit the border. The coloring is derivative.

Woman of Music

Central Image: Design 3 of The Progress of Poesy from Poems by Mr. Gray.

Quotation: "Loud & more loud the living music floats upon the air." – from The Four Zoas (5).

Figures: A Grecian maiden by Helicon's inspirational spring, amidst "The Laughing flowers."

Commentary: The original design is slightly cropped at the right to fit the border. The coloring is derivative.

Man of Music

Central Image: Design 1 of The Bard, A Pindaric Ode from Poems by Mr. Gray.

Quotation: "Music as it exists in old tunes or melodies... is Inspiration, and cannot be surpassed; it is perfect and eternal." – from A Descriptive Catalog of Pictures (5).

Figure: The Ancient Bard, "Who Present, Past, & Future sees."

Commentary: The original design is slightly cropped at the right, and slightly extended at the bottom, to fit the border. The coloring is derivative.

Suit of Poetry**Borders of the Suit of Poetry**

Image: The border motif of all the cards in the Suit of Poetry is based on the grapevine border from Enoch (Lithograph, circa 1806. Blake's only lithograph).

Commentary: The original grapevine was modified to fit the shape of the cards. The border of each card in this suit differs slightly due to individual coloring variations. The coloring is original to each card.

Symbol Windows of the Suit of Poetry

The faint (screened) image in the Symbol Window of each card in the Suit of Poetry is a small retouched detail of the calligraphy in Cain Fleeing from the Body of Abel in the Illustrated Manuscript Copy of Genesis (Pencil drawing, circa 1826-7).

In the deck, this calligraphic design represents Prophecy.

Number Cards of the Suit of Poetry

All the central images used in the ten Number Cards of the Suit of Poetry are selected from Blake's watercolor designs to Night Thoughts by Edward Young (Pen and watercolor over pencil, 1795-7). Each of the original designs featured a text box or "Poetry Window" that featured lines of Young's poetry. In each Number Card of the Suit of Poetry, Young's lines in the Poetry Window are replaced by quotations from Blake, representing the theme of Poetry.

Ace of Poetry – Inspiration

Central Image: Plate NT344 of Blake's watercolor designs to Night Thoughts by Edward Young.

Quotation: "I come in Self-annihilation & the grandeur of Inspiration | To cast off Rational Demonstration by Faith in the Saviour | To cast off the rotten rags of Memory by Inspiration | To cast aside from Poetry all that is not Inspiration" – from Milton a Poem (43).

Figures: A six-winged cherub inspires the kneeling Poet.

Commentary: The original design is slightly cropped at the left to fit the border. The coloring is derivative.

2 of Poetry – Individuality

Central Image: Plate NT399 of Blake's watercolor designs to Night Thoughts by Edward Young.

Quotation: "Every Mans Wisdom is peculiar to his own Individuality." – from Milton a Poem (4).

Figures: The Poet looks in the mirror and writes; his Muse prays to another mirror.

Commentary: The original design is slightly cropped at the left and right to fit the border. The coloring is derivative.

*3 of Poetry – Creativity*

Central Image: Plate NT341 of Blake's watercolor designs to Night Thoughts by Edward Young.

Quotation: "I must create a System, or be enslav'd by another Mans | I will not Reason & Compare: | my business is to Create." – from Jerusalem (10).

Figures: The Poet receives inspiration from three angels.

Commentary: The original design is slightly extended at the top and bottom to fit the border. The coloring is derivative.

4 of Poetry – Harmony

Central Image: Plate NT379 of Blake's watercolor designs to Night Thoughts by Edward Young.

Quotation: "Love and harmony combine | And around our souls entwine | While thy branches mix with mine | And our roots together join." – from Song ("Love and harmony combine...").

Figures: The elderly Adam and Eve stand by "Pleasure's sacred Stream."

Commentary: The original design is slightly extended at the top and bottom to fit the border. More leaves are added on the branch at upper right. The coloring is derivative.

5 of Poetry – Strife

Central Image: Plate NT508 of Blake's watercolor designs to Night Thoughts by Edward Young.

Quotation: "Thou art a Man | God is no more | Thy own humanity | learn to adore | For that is my Spirit of Life | Awake arise to Spiritual Strife." – from The Everlasting Gospel.

Figures: Lucifer in combat with an elephant-like creature.

Commentary: The original design is slightly cropped at the left and right to fit the border. The coloring is derivative.

6 of Poetry – Cooperation

Central Image: Plate NT217 of Blake's watercolor designs to Night Thoughts by Edward Young.

Quotation: "...Gods are visions of the eternal attributes, or divine names. | They ought to be the servants, and not the masters of man..." – from A Descriptive Catalog of Pictures (3); plus

"Cooperating in the bliss of Man obeying his Will | Servants to the infinite & Eternal of the Human Form." – from The Four Zoas (126).

Figures: An angel hands a book to an upward leaping man.

Commentary: The original design is slightly cropped at the right to fit the border. The coloring is derivative.

7 of Poetry – Boldness

Central Image: Plate NT386 of Blake's watercolor designs to Night Thoughts by Edward Young.

Quotation: "The times require that every one should speak out boldly; | ...every man should do his duty, in Arts, as well as in Arms, or in the Senate." – from A Descriptive Catalog of Pictures (14).

Figures: The Poet literally faces up to "threat'ning Death."

Commentary: The original design is slightly cropped at the left and right to fit the border. The coloring is derivative.

8 of Poetry – Swiftiness

Central Image: Plate NT134 of Blake's watercolor designs to Night Thoughts by Edward Young.

Quotation: "Time is the mercy of Eternity: | without Time's swiftiness | Which is the swiftest of all things: | all were eternal torment." – from Milton a Poem (24).

Figure: The Poetic spirit speeds through "Boundless Creation."

Commentary: The original design is slightly extended at the top and bottom to fit the border. The coloring is derivative.

9 of Poetry – Powers

Central Image: Plate NT512 of Blake's watercolor designs to Night Thoughts by Edward Young.

Quotation: "We were plac'd here by the Universal Brotherhood & Mercy | With powers fitted to circumscribe this dark Satanic death." – from Milton a Poem (22).

Figures: Jesus ("the true vine" – John 15:1), with loving human souls.

Commentary: The original design is slightly extended at the top and bottom to fit the border. The coloring is derivative.

10 of Poetry – Prophecy

Central Image: Plate NT474 of Blake's watercolor designs to Night Thoughts by Edward Young.

Quotation: "In futurity I prophetic see, | That the earth from sleep | (Grave the sentence deep) | Shall rise and seek | For her maker meek: | And the desert wild | Become a garden mild." – from Little Girl Lost, Songs of Innocence.

Figure: Ezekiel's vision of "Circle in Circle, without End, inclos'd!"

Commentary: The original design is slightly extended at the top and bottom to fit the border. The coloring is derivative.

Person Cards of the Suit of Poetry

All the central images used in the four Person Cards of the Suit of Poetry are selected from Milton a Poem (Relief etchings and white-line engravings finished in watercolor and gray wash., printed circa 1808-9). The coloring of the cards is derivative, based on Copy B.

Angel of Poetry

Central Image: Plate 21 of Milton a Poem.

Quotation: "Angels stand round my Spirit" – from Letter to John Flaxman, 1800.

Figure: Los as Angel and Blake as Poet in the act of uniting into One Being.

Commentary: The quotation is inserted at the top of the original image. The coloring is derivative of Copy B, but the figure is unclothed as in Copy A.

Child of Poetry

Central Image: Plate 29 of Milton a Poem.

Quotation: "I found them blind: I taught them how to see." – from On F & S.

Figure: William Blake in a moment of poetic epiphany.

Commentary: The quotation is inserted at the top and bottom of the original image. The coloring is derivative.

Woman of Poetry

Central Image: Plate 45. of Milton a Poem.

Quotation: "To go forth to the Great Harvest & Vintage of the Nations" – from Milton a Poem (45).

Figures: The Human Form Divine flanked by harvest figures representing Bread and Wine.

Commentary: The word "Finis" on the original plate is deleted. The coloring is derivative.

Man of Poetry

Central Image: Title Page of Milton a Poem.

Quotation: "To justify the ways of God to Man." – from Milton a Poem (Title Page). This is Blake's paraphrase from John Milton's Paradise Lost (1:26).

Figure: John Milton as the naked Poetic Hero stepping into Self-Annihilation.

Commentary: The words on the original plate are deleted, except the quotation and the word "Milton." The coloring is derivative.

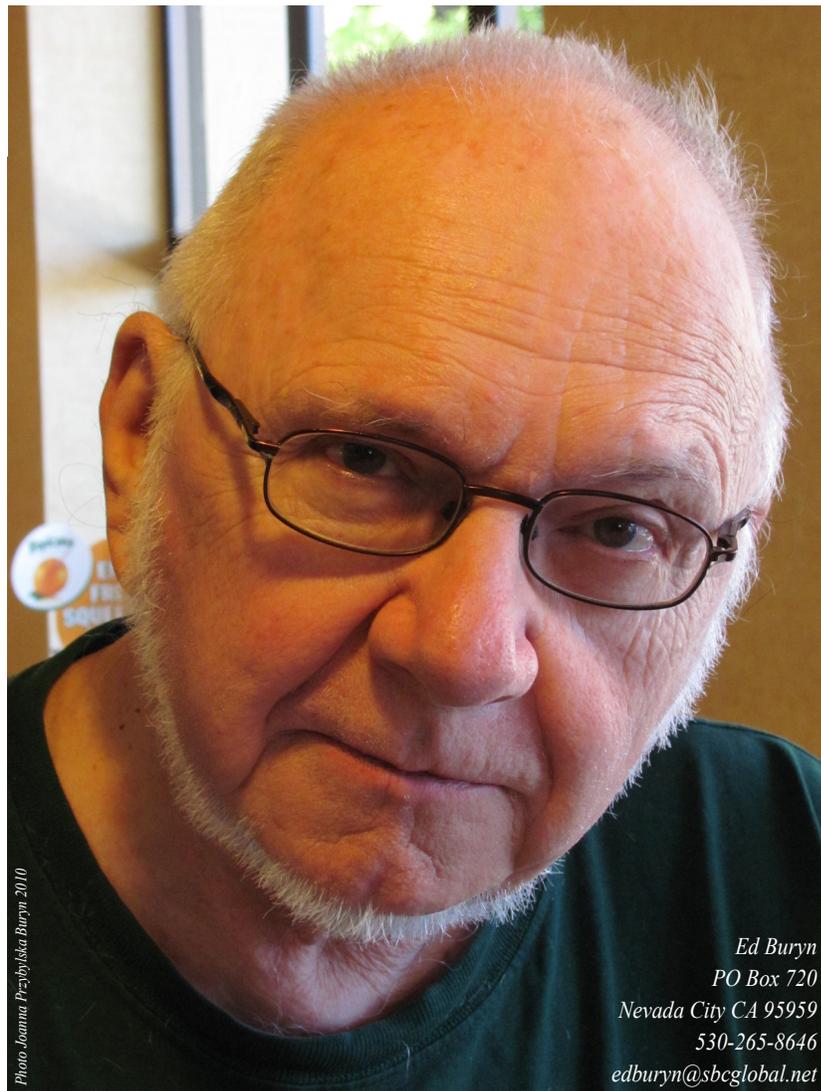


Photo Joanna Przybylska Buryn 2010

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Ed Buryn

... is a retired author, professional photographer, publisher, and editor. Currently he is an online bookseller and performing poet. Besides creating the *William Blake Tarot of the Creative Imagination* (HarperCollins, SF, 1995, revised edition by Tools and Rites of Transformation, 2010) and *The William Blake Tarot Triumphs* (TAROT, Nevada City CA, 1991), he also wrote *Vagabonding in America* (Random House, NY, 1973), *Vagabonding in the U.S.A.* (And/Or Press, Berkeley, 1976), *Vagabonding in Europe & No. Africa* (Random House, NY, 1971), and *Hitch-Hiking in Europe* (Hannah Publ, SF, 1969). During a 30-year career in free-lance photojournalism, he also published two photography books, *Two Births* (Random House, NY, 1972); and *Mission Creek San Francisco* (Mission Creek Conservancy, SF, 1985). He is listed in *American Photographers* (Facts on File, NY, 1989), *Who's Who in Photography* (Five Corners, 1991), and *Contemporary Authors*, Volumes 85-88. He is a two-time prize-winner in the Nikon International Photo Contest (1977, 1985). Ed Buryn is married and has lived in Nevada City California for the past 22 years.