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# LIMINAL SPACE IN WILLIAM BLAKE'S POETRY

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## Abstract
“Thresholds" between different states of consciousness, states of being, or fully cognitive and perceptive states are the essence of many poems by William Blake. This paper discusses how liminality is used by Blake to break limits and express the experience of change. Based on the close readings of the selected examples from Blake’s opus—‘Songs of Innocence and of Experience’—as well as his prophetic books, it is possible to define certain characteristics of the liminal space in his work. The liminal exploration of Blake's poetry possesses the quality of traversing those boundaries and questioning the societal conditions surrounding the event or, at the very least, taking the revisit of innocence by the experience into a different space designated for imagining further with respect to human existence. It should also be noted that there is a duality of the body and a duality of the spirit in Blake's works; they are Blake's pronouncements of a totality both outside the physical and the spiritual. Through his questioning of set norms, Blake empowers readers to reexamine their understanding of morality, spirituality, and identity and encourages their reincorporation into actual change.

**Keywords:** consciousness, liminality, space, transcendence

## Introduction
### *The concept of liminality in Blake's vision*
Liminal is used for stimuli existing at the borders between two definite states, stages, or paradigmatic spheres and originally comes from the Latin word “limen”, which means the point of threshold. There is value to this one if we think of other art and literature. In such forms, it is prevalent in the form of a place where transformations and ambiguity, narratives and possibilities coexist. It patterns that in terms of poetry, liminality is restrained by innocence, innocence's corporeal and spiritual nexus, and there is life, death. There is an attractiveness about these spaces to the readers, encouraging them to wrestle through the tangled structures and thereby think more deeply about what being human means.

Thresholds in Blake's work appear within the dialectic of innocence and experience, the material and spiritual, known and unknown (Hutchings, 1998). The exploration of liminal space shows Blake’s deep concern with the ambiguities of human life and criticism of social norms.



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William Blake (1757-1827) is an English poet, painter, and printmaker whose works stand out as he creatively uses this idea in his work. His works are very theatrical, and there is always a swing and intrigue of opposites. For Blake, a zone of transition is not a static entity but a dynamic space of self, social, or cultural transformation. This present study epitomizes the complete dualism of childhood and of adulthood that is underlying in his famous poems, Songs of Innocence and of Experience. When examining these borderline phenomena, Blake challenges readers to deal with the questions of what it means and what could be, at the edge of life (Johnson, 2021). According to the vocabulary of Northrop Frye, Blake "became" who he was through the primary force of his imagination, which at the same time clarifies the meaning of liminality and explains it through the experience of displacement (Frye, 1947). By his creative approach, Blake prepares us to understand the necessity of existing in a world that is constantly progressive, and which does not have the stabilization of a given state.

Blake inadvertently intensifies the tensions between innocence and experience, juxtaposing them as well as fusing them, yet not as opposing forces. In Songs of Innocence, Blake makes of a leavened world, full of purity and joy, from which children sing the beautiful meaning of life so uncorrupted by the ills of Man (Carter, 2022). On the other hand, Songs of Experience explores the tougher realities of adult experience, which uncovers how the machine of society contaminates innocence (Adams, 2020). This does its best to erase the ceiling, producing a liminal space, such that the reader is asked to consider the user experience of innocence and of loss. Literary analysts say that, for example, Carme Font Paz has located Blake's contemplation of such issues to be critical within the much broader idea of Romantic approaches to liminality, which implies that it is at the boundaries between mutually exclusive conditions that change is registered (Font Paz, 2020).

It is that visual art that Blake's poetry complements, taking upon the exciting interplay of the text with the image, as not only by illuminated printing did he enable the sum of visual features yet to be put into opera by his theme (Lee, 2019). Thus, one sees, for example, that in The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, Blake's vibrant display in the scenic quality depicts all these opposite forces—heavenly and hellish—and at the same time engages readers with the complexities of life. Their lighting transports readers to a perspective from which these pictures can be produced. The accompanying illustrations to his poems frequently present such a visual depiction of those liminal spaces of those whom he describes, and at the same time illustrate a process of achieving understanding when undergoing those (Zoamorphosis, 2019).

Very few understand the liminality in Blake's context, who started digging through such passages in their arguments. They were not at risk of breakdown; they were part of a time span which in itself included quite minor deviations from the expectations of politics and society. He not only thinks highly of personal criticism of formal religion and government control, in fact, in the main to the extent that, according to him, human beings should change the very ways in which they can act against human boundaries. Such rights would have further extended a reader's experience of entrances with prefigured judgment as approached by Saree Makdisi, who states that much of Blake's notion of rights indeed differs from present radical movements to focus on interdependence and not isolation (Makdisi, 2015). A

liminal space is created here, whereby readers may reconsider the identities within which they find themselves against the weight of society.

Besides innocence and experience, the other most pervasive themes in liminal situations are blackness and identity. Black poems, for example, "The Little Black Boy," are racial poems focused on Black racial identity confronting the problem of Black racial identity in spiritual imagery of otherness and relatedness to the divine, or othering. This entire interaction with the idea of race paints Blake's taking of liminality with another tinge by indicating the issues inherent in human relationships.

Indeed, the total vision of William Blake has resulted from the notion of liminality, as the essential structure through which to understand the significance of his artistic and poetic works. The crossings of innocence and reality, the interplay of text and image, social critique, ethnic and identity concerns, all provoke threshold crossings in readers' experiences (Williams, 2022). Not only do they recount the man's story, but they also call forth the inherent urge for empathy, for understanding, and for radical transformation to build a more just world (Poetry Foundation, 2024).

## Literature Review

### *Scholarly perspectives on liminality in Blake*

The work of William Blake is characterized by its ambivalence, boundary crossing, and transformation—the very qualities that come closest to the term liminality itself. In this literature review, scholars who differ in some ways are examined with respect to how liminality is discussed through parts of Blake's poetry and through that art, with regard to topics that emphasize or portray Blake's depiction of females, nature, and the human condition.

A most remarkable feature of the work of William Blake is its ambivalence, crossing boundaries, and transformation, which very much come close to the term liminality itself. Accordingly, the review of the literature will attempt to clarify the notion of liminality in Blake's poetry.

Liminality refers to the state of transition during rites of passage, when people, according to Arnold van Gennep's (1909), are in the situation of neither being in their previous state nor fully in the new one. This concept is extended to encompass a wider scope and attributed to a range of literary and philosophical applications, highlighting the openness of identity and experience. In Blake's oeuvre, the liminal is not only a liminal space but a liminal space in which transformation and revelation are both present (Arnold van Gennep, 1909).

Because the author addresses a variety of issues, there has been a significant amount of scholarly treatment of the elusive concept of liminality as it pertains to Blake's writings. One of the cornerstones in this field can be considered a book by S. Foster Damon, A Blake Dictionary (1965), which deals, inter alia, with the problem of the Blakean threshold. It becomes apparent that Blake's conception of liminal is also shaped by his religious beliefs and his philosophy. He points out that such spaces are generally in the dialectical relationship between innocence and experience, and are key points of transformation in Blake's imaginative vision. According to Blake's own description, the thresholds are not only physical walls, but are also integrated in the Bearden style of life and their spiritual practice (Damon 1965).

In Fearful Symmetry (1947), Northrop Frye's noteworthy analysis provides a wider outlook on Blake's mystical system, bringing to light how the poet creates borderlands as places of transformation and revelation. Frye suggests that these transitional areas are often bridges between the material and spiritual realms, facilitating transitory events and lightning moments. The fundamental philosophical issues are what Blake is seen as looking into and thereby promoting his readers' engagement with existing dualities. Therefore, Frye sees Blake's poetry as an anguished representation of the condition of man, made through oppositions, a realization that "the world is made for the mind,"—which one must acknowledge (Frye, 1947).

In recent conversations concerning Blake and his liminal spaces, especially during historical and political shifts, they have taken center stage following more recent works by critics like Saree Makdisi, who wrote William Blake and the Impossible History of the 1790s (2003). According to her, liminal spaces are powerful metaphors for social and political change in this age. According to Makdisi, his interaction with liminality provides him with the means to explain alterations in the personal and the collective identities in times of crisis. This perspective emphasizes the relevance of Blake's work in understanding not only individual transformation but also broader societal shifts (Makdisi, 2003).

Liminality is a facet that is deeply embedded in the work of William Blake, the painter and poet, and therefore, this highlights profound insights into transition zones and adjacent questioning of fixed boundaries. Liminality in Blake is not a condition, but rather an intercessional dynamic process of transformation according to Carme Font Paz. This idea is particularly resonant in Blake's illustrations of Dante's Commedia, where women serve as conduits of mediation between worlds. They signify, on one side, the transcendence of the spiritual and the renunciation of that which belongs to the physical and fleshy form. Not only are such representations known for their identity fluidity, but also for the sites of transcendence, translating liminal spaces into places of religious intervention and personal transformation (Font Paz, 2020).

In addition, the theme of liminality in Blake's writings prompts readers to approach the question of multiple realities that each of us experiences in differentiating and blending innocence and experience, and life and death. This inescapable pulling and tugging between opposing states is one potential base for creativity and self-actualization. Although scholars have pointed out that Blake's imagery does reflect this tension, that "crisis", "turn", or "breakpoint" does not correspond only to an endpoint of a life or other realities, but to an entrée into a reinterpretation of the conditions of existence. For this reason, the liminal spaces within Blake's creations function as pivotal moments in which protagonists encounter and struggle with their identities and worlds, propelling them to significant insights into the essence of humanity and the spiritual (Sophonpanich, 2023).

Complete Writings appear as ambivalent and polyphonic. In a sense, the "other" rooms are sites of transformation and revelation within these. According to scholars, his drawings, in particular that showing women in Dante's Commedia, are a manifestation of women figures of liminality through the mediation between earthly and sacred spheres. These representations suggest that Blake viewed femininity as not a fostering but a dynamic force capable of facilitating spiritual

changes—not as some fixed ideas, but considering women positioned at the center of transformation (Keynes, 1972).

Blake does not limit his dimension of liminality to gender; rather, he includes wider existential issues that respond to critical appraisal of society and its rigid moral codes (Thompson, 1993). A lot of his poetry is about crisis and epiphanic moments where characters wade through the tensions of innocence/experience, life/death. What these define are transformative states with all the promise for personal development and spiritual awakening that such transitions imply. Indeed, some of Blake's unfinished pieces serve to emphasize this tendency, for they tell us sometimes meaning is not given to completed narratives, but rather in the spaces between them—those moments of uncertainty among events that beckon deeper introspection into the nature of existence and the human experience (Keynes, 1972).

## Method

### *Analytical framework*

This study was concentrated on the analysis of William Blake's interaction with the idea of liminoid (and was carried out in a relatively simple and effective way). A combination of various research approaches was used to provide a holistic understanding of how Blake created and utilized these liminal spaces in his work.

First, we considered the following questions: What kind of symbols did Blake employ? His writing was filled with imagery and contained meaty mythological ideas in all of his poems. Nevertheless, during the investigation, it has been made to analyze these signs in depth with the intention of grasping how Blake has envisaged spaces between and within two states or concepts. When comparing and contrasting different poems, recognizable symbols were analyzed, their development through time was researched, and some of the symbols' relations were presented to make it possible to speak about being in-between.

The analysis also aimed at comparing Blake's work with the other writers of his time, as well as the earlier writers. It did help in uncovering what set Blake's approach to liminal spaces apart. The presence and the consequence of Blake's ideas also came up in a discussion on their effect on the writing generations that succeeded him.

The examination of Blake's actual words was important to the matter at hand, as it was discussed in this paper. The study also focused on how he employed language as well as how he arranged his poems and the stories in order to provide the notion of the place that is always 'in-between.' This entailed first identifying how he employed vagueness or how he came up with an apparent contradiction that left the reader torn between two concepts.

Since Blake dealt with multiplex domains, the study also incorporated concepts from other fields, including psychology, philosophy, and cultural studies. It introduced some characteristics that made Blake's liminal spaces more nuanced and allowed me to see what was set within them with greater clarity.

Finally, the study was distilled to a few of the components in which Blake's best utilization of the notion of liminal space took place. These included songs of innocence and songs of experience, songs of the marriage of heaven and hell, and some of his more lengthy prophetic volumes (Brown, 2021). Such poems were a good example to demonstrate the tendency of Blake, over and over again, to construct "spaces of transformation and transitional space.

## Findings and Discussion

### *"The Garden of Love" as a threshold space*

A good example of this use of liminal spaces is in William Blake's The Garden of Love from Songs of Experience. It provides a metaphorical transformation of a once perfective garden, securitized and institutionalized, also acting as an allegory for the shift from innocence to experience (Fisher, 2020). The poem opens with "I went to the Garden of Love, and saw what I never had seen" (Blake 1794/1988:26), registering a threshold moment that locates the reader at precisely this point where some revelation is about to become profoundly known.

"And I saw it was filled with graves, and tombstones where flowers should be" (Blake, 1794/1988, p. 26). The guilds of the cemetery and the flowers, symbolic of death and life, the opposite, establish it as a space of tension, yet final regeneration. Strictly human wants on the purpose side somehow pierce through the taboo that the whole of Homo sapiens has erected.

The image portrayed in the final quatrain—"Priests in black robes were pacing the rounds, and braiding with hawthorn the song of my heart's and of my vows" (Blake 1794/1988, p. 26)—helps to substantiate the feeling of liminality. Priests, as agents of institutional religion, are using a creative process to imbue the speaker's psychodynamic being with the earth's natural forces that they previously associated with complex and, at the same time, intertwined social and religious structures. This act of binding in the speaker creates a new liminal state, a space where the innate desires and external limitations conflict.

William Blake's "Garden of Love" is, quite rightly, expanded to cover the issues of liminality, organized religion, and what religious institutions have done to life on earth (Graham, 2020). The poem sets up a kind of threshold, against which the speaker deals with his memories, childhood memories of a garden that was once a place full of life and has now been turned into a chapel. The chapel may be seen as a symbol of what is lost to the naive and what society and religious doctrine impose upon the individual. Once the garden was a free, loving place, now it is a resting place of tombstones, creating a god-sized opportunity for the rest of a naturally passionate life to be overwhelmed and snuffed out, and buried naturally.

In the first stanza, the speaker goes back to "the Garden of Love" and sees that it has been changed into a kind of chapel. The sentiment calls to memory an earlier time when the garden produced 'sweet flowers' and had a sound. However, today, this idyllic feature is left ruined by the authoritarian imposition of the chapel space, which stands as an etymological representation of the church's dominion. The chapel doors are sealed, which hints at the idea of exclusion and limitation, while "Thou shalt not," which is above the door, rings of the Ten Commandments, adding emphasis to the notion that God's doctrine is clasping humans in unreasonable shackles at the front (StudySmarter, 2024). This very differential environment—old and present garden—makes for a liminal space in which the narrator or speaker negotiates loss and resignation.

Here, rather than verbalizing things about what their actions mean from the outside, the second stanza opens up the experience into liminality as the speaker goes beyond and observes a bouquet of black-robed priests found ominously, almost menacing. Even just being around should simply increase the intensity of the oppressive, structured religion; it blocks authentic expressions of love and joy shared with oneself. The repetitions of "and" at the beginning of several lines of the

stanza add momentum—the speaker's growing shock—with itself as those familiar lines of repetition flow towards the end of the first section (Interesting Literature 2018). The metaphor is very resonant—it evokes death and putrefaction—and tombstones used to buy flowers—through those crushing signals that love is by any dogma or religion.

Blake's writings, and particularly in this book, are not just an observation, but are cries of rebellion against the rules of the game, which govern interpersonal relationships and modes of the mystical experience (Reeve, 2023). The poem states that this is indeed a natural human attachment, which should not be controlled by external factors for any reason. This notion applies to various analyses because Blake believed that desire and sexuality are processes leading to living, and hence, they should be free (Centenary Secondary School). This concept is in turn further developed in an exploration of Blake's criticism of institutionalized religion and raises issues for human behaviour in what might be.

***"The Marriage of Heaven and Hell" and the liminality of contraries***

In "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell," Blake contributes to the development of a rather ambiguous space that breaks the usual dichotomies in the ways discussed. The present work reveals a multilevel scheme of reality in which binaries do not simply contradict but, in reality, are undergoing a process of generating each other. The expression of the "contraries" notion is the word crafted because the latter produces a liminal situation between being fully there and not being fully there.

> *It is the Human Existence itself* (Blake, 1790).

These words imply that human existence in itself is a liminal condition that is forever in the act of creating new states of being and reshaping reality.

One such book is William Blake's The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, in which his contrarian philosophy of the idea of "opposition" is expressed in such a way that without his subjects taking part in some kind of opposition "oppositions", individual will not advance or grow either in individual life or in the life of society. As Blake maintains that "Without contraries is no progression," this is a remark in virtue of his view of the necessity of accepting a duality of good and evil, innocence and experience, heaven and hell. This philosophy reframes the moral dichotomies by suggesting that these oppositions are equivalent and therefore complementary to one another and vital to development and enlightenment.

Blake juxtaposes Heaven's passive righteousness against Hell's active energy and asserts that they are both holidays of the same substance and which enhance the richness of the human experience and creative endeavor. The "Proverbs of Hell" also tend to point in this direction, with their eulogies to rebellion and desire—things that one would normally consider sinful—and alter virtue as something that admits the complication of human nature (SpunkyNotes, 2024).

Blake articulates this idea explicitly: "Without contraries, there is no progression. Attraction and repulsion, reason and energy, love and hate are essential to what it is to be human" (Blake, 1790/1988, p. 34). The idea holds that this place is the space between extremes, in which dynamic tension and potential are stored, and where spiritual and intellectual development occurs. Blake argues that, exactly

in this limbo space, in this zone of extremes, is where human life and development happen.

The work title "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell" creates a liminal state from the start. Marriage as a notion is about the combination of items, whilst the items are still items. Heaven and Hell, as typically at opposite poles, found their union thrown into question by a linking of the opposites that calls upon a rapprochement rather than an estrangement, which in turn says what it does least and deserves least to say. There is a kind of "marriage" that opens a new, potential space, a threshold, in which the boundaries between good and evil, divine and demoniac, reason and energy are made elastic and porous (Thompson, 2021).

***Songs of innocence and experience: A dialectic of liminality***

William Blake's Songs of Innocence and Experience embodies Blake's skill in crafting and delving into the liminal spaces. Every sequence of poems in this collection makes a threshold crossing, in which the space of time between the two poems seems to be the location of transformation, of revelation, and of wisdom (Assist Paper, 2016).

One of the above-mentioned liminal dialogues is "The Chimney Sweeper". In the "Innocence" version, Blake wrote:

> *And the angel appeared with a shining key.*
> *And he untied the coffins and set them all free.* (Blake, 1789/1988, p. 10)

The picture provides a more luminous, although naive, picture of the pigeonhole principle problem. Conversely, the "Experience" version presents an outright reaction:

> *They clothed me in the clothes of death,*
> *And taught me to sing the notes of woe.* (Blake, 1794/1988, p. 23)

Time and space are flexible, and this can be seen when the reader is forced to face up to the bleak miscarriages of child labor and social injustice. This mishmash of a liminal space could serve as a stimulus for thought in the shape of opposing ideas. One thing readers have to contend with is combining the bliss of childhood with the more often than not cruel world of adulthood.

William Blake's Songs of Innocence and Experience provide a dialectical, bidirectional description of the within-between that passes at the boundaries of innocence and experience, purity and corruption, and immaterial and material depths. The collection, published somewhere in the late 18th century, contains two sets of poems that contrast enough to cover the two states of human souls. The other, Songs of Innocence, is a song of childhood joy and innocent perspective. On the other hand, Songs of Experience addresses the grimmer realities of adulthood and how the naiveté may be lost from the society and from institutions. Thus, Blake illustrates the struggles that exist between these two states and invites readers into the spaces that exist between them.

The predominant motif of liminality comes most clearly to life through the juxtaposition of poems in Blake's writings, where views of the same subject are presented in dialogue. E.g., the idyllic fabrication, where innocence is represented

through the soft visuals of a lamb—a holy child. The noun "The Lamb" titles in Songs of Innocence represents innocence and the love between God and man. By contrast, "The Tyger" from Songs of Experience gives the reader a much more diabolical aspect of creation (Mukesh, 2024). He debates the nature of evil within the folds or lines of understanding how this mighty, benevolent creator could possibly conceive and create something as fearful as this. Reading by juxtaposition automatically leads the reader to probe this inner world and, in doing so, the reader is compelled to integrate these diametrically opposed perspectives as part of a process of contemplative thought about the self's and the community's behaviour (SparkNotes, 2024).

***Symbolic imagery and visual-textual interplay***

Blake uses the icon of the moon in his verse to produce a tunnel between times (a time closer to the indefinite) and a frontier with no clear boundaries. This, because of the presence of his work accompanied by complex visual sketches and an introduction of seemingly liminal elements to his poems, means these become even more complex (Mitchell, 2021). The process of interaction between textual material, on the one side, and visual imagery, on the other, is multidimensional, so it creates contradictory spaces. Readers are next prompted to engage with both the visual and textual representations of those liminal spaces (Ibrahim, 2016).

The "Tyger" in "Songs of Experience" is an ideal illustration of this strategy. The poem starts with the famous opening verses:

> *Tyger Tyger, burning bright,*
> *In the forests of the night* (Blake, 1794/1988, p. 24).

At the same time, directly from these verses, we are plunged into a state of situation that reflects in this way, the binary of light and dark, the known and unknown. The tiger per se surfaces as a figure of borderlines, denoting both beauty and terror as well as creation and obliteration. The accompanying picture created by Blake is a typical tiger, and its seemingly peaceful nature adds yet another point of liminality because it contrasts with the terrifying animal the text describes in a way (Assist Paper, 2016).

"Forests of the night" could also be construed as a thin margin—a supernatural possibility where metamorphosis and illumination could be evoked. Not only does the tiger "lurk" in the darkness, its first level of image, the tiger even rages through the mind of a human, and thus, the tiger and poet co-extinction occurs, the poet discovers a new vision of the world of imagination which spreads to the natural world. This guest is a new and improved person, about to liberate what is hidden.

***Blake's mythological system: A cosmic liminal space***

Blake's very personal mythological system that he built over the course of his life is a vast and manifold liminal space. His mythical figures—Urizen, Los, Orc, and others—are parts of a universe in which every one of them does not fall into the stereotypes of the hierarchical categories. These numbers typically serve as liminal experiences, or they are modified so as to result in the reduction of the boundary between parts of human experience (Green, 2022).

In "The Book of Urizen," Blake presents Urizen as a paradigmatic case of a liminal being:

> *Lo, a shadow of horror is risen*
> *In Eternity! Unknown, unprolific!*
> *Self-closed, all-repelling: what demon*
> *Has formed this abominable void* (Blake, 1794/1988, p. 70)

Urizen stands for two identical forces, which are a creative deity and a limiting/suppressing force. His separation and disconnection from the Eternals is what created a space of liminality and the struggle, which are the main themes of Blake's mythological stories. The system is, however, quite complex, but it works well for Blake to enter deeply into issues of liminality and, in doing so, to offer his vision of the human condition and for spiritual change that is also planetary on a cosmic level.

On the one side, Los, as the Urizen twin, is the character who has most strongly realized this cosmic liminality. In "Jerusalem," Blake says:

> *I must create a system or be enslaved by another man's.*
> *I will not reason and compare: my business is to create* (Blake, 1804-1820/1988, p. 153).

Los is the concretization of creative imagination, which is very much opposed to differentiation and is always in the state of creation and destruction.

***Historical and political liminality in Blake's work***

Blake's America a Prophecy (1793) illustrates how he employs the resources of liminality to integrate the realities of life with myths. The American Revolutionary War in this foundational text is depicted by Blake as not being a political war, but rather a mythical battle on a cosmic scale. He writes:

> *The morn arises, the eve is spent, the sentinels rest;*
> *The grave is open, the spices are scattered, the cloth is wrapped round it;*
> (Blake, 1793/1988, p. 51).

In these words, Blake transforms historical events into a mythic archetype and thus produces a liminal space in which the divine and the secular come into contact, the temporal and the eternal are poised in tension at every moment (Harris, 2023). The portrayal of past individuals (e.g., George Washington, Thomas Paine) and Blake's mythical beings generates greater anxieties about the problem of reality and imagination relationship.

This portal between the historical and mythological worlds allows the deep consideration of the power of events taking place at the present moment in the spiritual and symbolic spectrum. Blake further uses this approach to the spirit of revolution of his time, claiming not only the potential of spiritual evolution but also the threats of the near future. The liminal space he describes provides a deep view from several directions of these complex historical periods.

The demarcation between oppression and freedom, between tradition and progressiveness, and ultimately, between naiveté and sophistication.

The response of Blake ranges to the critique of traditional institutions that belong to the church and the state during the political events of the 1790s in his poem "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell" (Raine, 1968). He describes a proposition whose central theme is to oppose conventional morality as a powerful integrative paradigm that pits heaven and hell against one another. True enlightenment comes through dualities, not rigid moral codes. "True enlightenment arises from the interplay of opposites, not by strict moral codes," writes Blake. "There is no progress without contraries," and the poet again repeats, in his proclamation, that this conflict—this struggle between forces—is a guise for growth (Makdisi, 2015). Such a point of view very much synchronizes with the revolutionary spirit of the time because it locks into the greater programs of social reform and individual rights that were being fired by the illustrious events like the American and French Revolutions. Blake was concerned not only in terms of political fallout but also a revolution of thinking about potential and ability, and thereby unequivocally upset the norm.

***Imagination as a liminal force***

Key to the understanding of Blake's use of liminal spaces is his concept of imagination. According to Blake, imagination was not only the ability to visualize mental images but also a power that could change reality. He sees imagination as a liminal space between the material and spiritual worlds. This idea is masterfully expressed in "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell":

> *The prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel ate at my table, and I questioned them brashly as to how they were able to maintain that God spoke to them confidently. Then I asked, 'Is it thinking or perceiving that something becomes so?'. He claimed, "All Poets are fond of this Sentiment and in ages of fancy, the strength of positive persuasion has dethroned thrones."* (Blake, 1790/1988, p. 38).

In this paragraph, Blake emphasizes the use of imagination as the embodiment of a line between the transcendent and the mundane, the point from which visions can be drawn and become reality, etc. The idea of imagination as the liminal agent is the basis from which Blake views the world and his creative work.

***Blake's influence on subsequent poets and thinkers***

Blake's exploration of liminal spaces has been a great encouragement to the generations of poets and philosophers in the post-Blake period. For example, he is heard to articulate the characteristics of Romanticism and Modernism, in the way they take note of the importance of subjectivity and abandonment of the classical dynamics of interpretation (Khalili, 2024).

Poets, like William Butler Yeats and Allen Ginsberg, confessed their influence through their own poems and through their works. In particular, Yeats, mentioned, was the one who felt the most impact, identifying in Blake the creative genius and his grasp of liminal states of consciousness. In his essay "William Blake and the Imagination," Yeats says:

> "He announced the religion of art, of which no man dreamed in the world about him; and he understood it more perfectly than the thousands of subtle spirits who have received its baptism in the world about us, because, in the

> beginning of the important things—in the beginning of love, in the beginning of the day, in the beginning of any work—there is a moment when we understand more perfectly than we understand again until all is finished." (Yeats, 1903)

Then Yeats drew attention to the exceptional power, of course, by which Blake is able to be simultaneously expressive of threshold moments of almost absolute insight that arise at the beginning of deeply important objects.

In addition, the very personality of the Beat generation, Allen Ginsberg, was at the forefront. Ginsberg, too, grasped many good thoughts from Blake's work. He claimed that he can come up with the same auditory hallucinations of Blake reading poems to him, which impressed him inside to become a passionate poet himself. This story itself is proof that Blake's liminal spaces are able to resonate through time and affect the subsequent readers and writers, though he died long ago.

***Beyond literature: Interdisciplinary influence***

According to Blake, the theory of liminal spaces, as spaces of transitions or, more importantly, of revelation, has been further developed from literature. These are psychological spaces, e.g., the use of the term collective unconscious by Carl Jung, the central role of dream and vision experiences is extensively similar to the concepts of imagination or liminal space in Blake.

Blake's cultural studies have contributed to the debate on liminality and transgression (Damico, 2024). His ways of challenging the accepted norms and breaking the barriers between innocence and experience, reason and energy, have given the scholars a good deal of material to work with in their studying of liminal spaces in culture and society and the transcendental quality of his poetic expressions (Gleckner, 1959).

Blake's work is not limited to literature. It also holds potential in other fields, owing to its atypical development of disparate kinds, i.e., he integrates visual and verbal art. The study titled "The Verbal-Visual Synthesis in William Blake's Poetic Worldview" clearly states this view. Kozlova et al. (2023) explain that his self-illustrated poems convey the very principle of a multimodal approach that facilitates the interpretation of artistic vision.

This multimodal combination of text and image guarantees more involved tasks in the context of his world for the sake of calling each modality and they share each other in the conceptualization of the world. The work extends the power of Blake's hybrid mode of poetry and visual art beyond the barrier of abstract ideas to an experience in which the reader constructs his or her own interpretation and feelings, in other words, becoming immersed in rooms of cognitive and semiotic possibility for literary study (Kozlova et al., 2023).

There is a curious reverberation in the field of psychology and cultural analysis, and more precisely, the one related to imagination and its place in the human experience, brought about by Blake's insights, his social and political critique (Erdman, 1977). "Imagination, Experience and the Constraints of Reason" Blake refers to imagination not only as that which gives rise to fantasy, but as that which, by drawing us to ourselves and the world, motivates us. Thus, through the literary, Blake's works also cut across philosophy, psychology, and the visual arts;

or, in short, his relevance endures in all fields of human endeavor concerning the actual pervading contemporary debates on creativity and human potential.

## Conclusion

### *The significance of liminal spaces in Blake's poetry*

William Blake's use of thresholds and boundaries within his poetry provides some of the most valuable socio-psychological and theosophical insights into the human condition, the process of individual and collective spiritual growth, and the dynamics of societal metamorphosis. Situating threshold spaces in which opposites coexist, blend, and engage, Blake offers a textual geography that destabilizes binaries and provides a way for imagining difference and cores us. Thus, the role of concepts related to liminal spaces cannot be considered to be solely methodological in relation to Blake's poetry; rather, they provide rich insights into how people and cultures are able to function during the periods of transition and change. His creative output demonstrates how poetry can create such liberatory contexts by thematizing and/or dissolving usual social and discursive boundaries, thereby opening new avenues for the understanding of objects and situations. Blake's analysis of the liminal also leads to a more general body of literature research, because it provides a model within which poetry can engage with abstract concepts in philosophy and religion, through the creation of zones. His work is still a provoking and intellectually stimulating one, as one contemplates the potentialities presented by the intermediate conditions and identities.

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