

UDC 821.111**"Ear", "auricle", "vortex" as an isomorph shaped models of the world in the works of William Blake****Koksharova Tat'yana Eduardovna**

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Abstract

In the article the image of vortex in the works of William Blake is considered, with the connection with images of whirlwind, whirlpool, ear and abyss. The typology of this model in Blake's poems is extremely various. An ear as one of sense organs interprets reality, subjecting it to distortion. For this reason it conducts to Ulro, the earthly world, instead of to the Eden. Blake shares a lot of such illustrations, interpreting numerous isomorphs of dimensional model that are worth our thorough consideration and examination. The author traces references to the motif of falling, that are of noticeable frequency: the artist depicts the human bodies falling down, which are often entwined by spirals-snakes. The author finds a parallel with Urthona whom Blake connects not only with the ear, but also the unconscious. The author comes to the conclusion that images of the auricle, swirl, maelstrom and vortex in the world of William Blake are linked closely and make isomorphs of the one of the models of the world order created by the visionary Creator. Dimensional models, both in his lyrics and in Blake's paintings, particularly specified by initiation metascene, are the object of further research.

Keywords

Auricle, swirl, maelstrom, vortex, William Blake, visionary, Creator, ear, cavern.

Even from the depths of Hell
 (God's) voice
 I hear within the unfathomed
 caverns of my Ear...
 William Blake "Jerusalem"

Introduction

The first English romantic William Blake (1757 – 1827) possessed the unique vision of the world. The professional engraver, the artist and the poet, the visionary talented with "extreme gift of visual imagination" [Nekrasova, 1975, 90], he projected his images on paper or a canvas, distinctly outlining even abstract concepts, representing them in the form of models. Such "modelling sight" [Tokareva, www] defines a semiotic nature of spatial images in Blake's works. One of the main structures of space in his works is vortex. The English word *vortex* is poly-semantic and can be interpreted as *whirlwind*, *whirlpool*, *vortex stream*, or an *abyss*. The word has its use in figurative, metaphorical sense: *in a vortex of gaiety*, *the vortex of war*, etc. The typology of this model in Blake's poems is extremely various. One of its isomorphisms is the symbolical image of an auricle.

An ear is an important symbol in many cultures, because of its hear-

ing function, it "trembles within the person"["Ukho", www]. Since antiquity the ear was considered as a memory receptacle. Early Christians believed that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit through an ear of the Virgin therefore in images of a scene of the Lady day the pigeon sits on Virgin Mary's shoulder at her ear. Ancient legends claim that some gods and heroes took their birth leaving their mothers' ears. Exceptional number of phraseological units in different languages are connected with this part of a human body. The ear, as well as an eye, perceives information from the outside. Therefore, most of the idioms, correlated to this organ, are used to designate the ability to learn: "someone is hard of hearing"; "to be all ears"; "with half an ear to listen"; "to turn a deaf ear". Ears more often than eyes participate in disclosure of various secrets: "and walls have ears"; "to prick up one's ears"; "he that hath ears to hear, let him hear!". The special arrangement of ears on the head explains expressions with symbolism of something ultimate: "to be over head and ears in love", "to be over head and ears in work", "to redden to ears", "smile from ear to ear". And even the ringing in the ears, which is nowadays very prosaic expression, antique Pythagoreans perceived as a signal of Divine inspiration [Ibid]. And simi-

larity of an auricle to a spiral creates a weight more of associations with an exit to ontologic categories.

Ear, auricle, vortex in Blake's poetry

In William Blake's poems ear is the fourth of five sense organs, beginning from the tongue. Its part of the world is the North, its art is poetry. In his poem, incomplete and extremely difficult for the translation into Russian, *Vala, or The Four Zoas* Urizen is a Zoa, the Beast of the South, the symbol of human reason, the energy limiter, the legislator, the revenging conscience. Luvah is the second Zoa, the Animal of the East symbolizing sensual and emotional in the person.

Tharmas is Zoa too, the Animal of the West symbolizing corporal. Urthona is the fourth Zoa, the Animal of the North, a symbol of human imagination [Smirnov-Sadovskii, www]. Urthona is connected with an ear. And the imagination for Blake was the special category, that human ability which art has to awaken, cultivating new sight, "not pattern perception, organic feeling of the world, and a new system of values" [Blake, 2002, 16]. In Blake's art system God is Jesus, both the Person and Imagination: "The eternal body

of man is the imagination; that is, God himself, divine body, Jesus: we are his members" [Bury, www]. The imagination quite often awakens when the person hears beauty of art through the sounding word. Not incidentally Blake often sang the verses, as songs.

Ear is the channel in Ulro. Ulro represents some suppositive gloomy space depicted in the form of rocks or a labyrinth. And this is also narrated about in *Four Zoas*:

FZ1-3.8; E301| ... Can know in all Eternity

FZ1-3.9; E301| Los was the fourth immortal starry one, & in the Earth

FZ1-3.10; E301| Of a bright Universe Empery attended day & night

FZ1-3.11; E301| Days & nights of revolving joy, Urthona was his name

FZ1-4.1; E301| In Eden; in the Auricular Nerves of Human life

FZ1-4.2; E301| Which is the Earth of Eden...[Blake, 1969, 4 Zoa]

We meet similar interpretation of the ear's image in Blake's prophetic epos *Milton*, created on a basis of *Four Zoas*. At the very beginning of the poem author gives the ontological picture of a chasm and four of five sense organs, including ear. In this scene the auricle very much reminds the whirlpool which is narrowing from top to bottom. Ear is the

materialized channel of falling into Ulro, into the untrue space.

M3.14; E97| Rolling round into two little Orbs & closed in two little Caves

M3.15; E97| The Eyes beheld the Abyss: lest bones of solidness freeze over all

M3.16; E97| And a third Age passed over & a State of dismal woe.

M3.17; E97| From beneath his Orbs of Vision, Two Ears in close volutions

M3.18; E97| Shot spiring out in the deep darkness & petrified as they grew

M3.19; E97| And a fourth Age passed over & a State of dismal woe.

M3.20; E97| Hanging upon the wind, Two Nostrils bent down into the Deep

M3.21; E97| And a fifth Age passed over & a State of dismal woe.

M3.22; E97| In ghastly torment sick, a Tongue of hunger & thirst flamed out

M3.23; E97| And a sixth Age passed over & a State of dismal woe [Blake, 1969, Milton].

According to Blake' interpretation, in the normal state ear is "a whirlpool fierce to draw creations in" (Thel 6:17). Ears can hear the "music of the spheres" (Europa III: 2). They are con-

stantly changing spiral ascensions to the heavens of heavens (Europa 10:13); "A golden ascent winding round to the heavens of heavens" (Four Zoas). "Even from the depths of Hell (God's) voice I hear within the unfathomed caverns of my Ear" [Blake, 1969, Jerusalem 3:7].

But after sensations (feeling) contract in falling, the Ear becomes similar to a labyrinth (Jerusalem 83: 36, 98: 18) – only a small auricle having little swirls, not letting in Sacred melodies and capable to conceive only disharmony (Milton 5:23); a winding which Blake designates as not assuming truth of harmony and comprehending great as very small (Jerusalem 49:36). Whether can such ear filled with vapours from a gaping hole estimate the purest melodies of a harp extracted by the Divine hand? [Damon, 1988, 113]. The Symbol of a labyrinth has a huge number of interpretations. In some religions it is often connected with initiation: enlightenment, return full circle, transition through death to revival, revelation of the spiritual center. In ancient temples labyrinths were quite often used directly for ceremonies of initiation and even for the ritual dances representing interwoven orbits of the Sun and the planets. Later labyrinths on a floor of medieval Catholic churches delivered the idea of "the road to Jerusalem". In art this symbol is usually

associated with variety of life challenges and difficulty of a choice of the correct way. But romantics treated it differently, as a symbol of rational enslavement. William Blake often addressed to this motive in his late prophetic poems, *Jerusalem* and *Milton*.

What means "feelings contract in falling"? In appliance with Blake, contraction, convolution symbolizes refusal of spirituality. Now we should get back to an ear isomorph in Blake's this spatial model – vortex. Here is a quotation from the *Four Zoas*: "the Vortexes began to operate / On all the sons of men & every human soul terrified / At the turning wheels of heaven shrunk away inward withring away". However vortex not only tightens in itself as the funnel, but also "vomits". In this case Blake addresses to ancient mythological plots in which the hero who is absorbed by a huge monster and being in its belly, is extorted by a huge beast and thus is born again. Northrop Frye in *Fearful symmetry* sees Blake's vortex in the form of hourglasses. The individual living in borders of the earthly world of Ulro will aspire to a point of the maximum narrowing. And the spiritual personality, leading life of spirit and imagination, is directed away from this point into infinity. In this image we can see an access to an archetype of

initiation if we consider a crossing point of "hourglasses" as a place of a corridor of initiation. According to Blake the maelstrom, or a whirlwind symbolizes the major transformation – transition from the final material universe into infinite space, in Eternity [Tokareva, www]. It is interesting that in many religious texts the person aspirant godwards, can get on heavens across the narrow bridge, a thin rope or a sword edge. And the more sinful a person is, the thinner and more dangerous this transition is.

Thereby, the ear can also be likened to the revealed model of initiation. After all it has external part (an auricle) which perceives signals from world around, transitional (narrow acoustical pass) and internal in which there is already interpreted Knowledge. And what is heard by one person as a result, the other cannot hear at all the same way, everything depends on a level of development and readiness of consciousness of the person to conceive the truth, to absorb that spiritual grain which goes to the person from God, vertically. Hardly every ear is capable to be the conductor of the Divine. This thought has obviously something in common with an evangelical parable about grains and the weeds. We find similar meanings in lines of other works of William Blake, for example,

in *Marriage of Heaven and Hell*: "If the doors of perception were cleansed, everything would appear as it is – infinite" [Blake, 1982, 366 – 367].

Analyzing an image of an ear as a body of perception, it is quite pertinently to make some reflections upon the ways of knowledge which the poet-philosopher follows. In his early work *There is No Natural Religion* (1788) Blake argues that the person perceives the world through sense organs and thinks and acts according to it. But this perception is undoubtedly limited to certain material objects which he is capable to apprehend. Here Blake gets more deeply: "Man's Perceptions are not bounded by Organs of Perception". The person, seeking answers to questions: how this world is arranged? Who created it? What is the meaning of the human's life? etc., – isn't bounded to just materialistic ideology. His look is directed towards ultraboundary, transcendental, turned into Infinite space and into Eternity. As it is to Blake, individual's independence of bodies of perception consists in poetic or prophetic gift which makes cognition of the world an infinite process: "He who sees the Infinite in all things sees God".

Thus, an ear as one of sense organs interprets reality, subjecting it to distortion. For this reason it conducts to

Ulro, the earthly world, instead of to the Eden. Certainly, we couldn't but ask a question about the way how the symbolical image of an ear is shown in Blake's illustrations. It would seem the artist couldn't ignore an auricle, but this image appears in his paintings and engravings rather implicitly. Only attentive, profound look can notice something resembling an ear in separate illustrations of the artist. One of such pictures is *The Fall of Man*, 1806 (picture 1). The author turns here to the subject of Judgment Day exciting him throughout all his life. In the top part of a watercolor we can see God Father in heavens, He is obviously indignant of Adam and Eve's falling while Christ Redeemer accompanies our repented primogenitors softly and with amnesty from Eden through an assembly of crying Angels to the earthly world. Concentrating, we could notice that the oval in the top part of the picture representing the heavenly sphere, is similar to the auricle developed horizontally, and the braided tree on the right, as though connecting sky and the earth, is much alike the acoustical vortex canal. It can be commented according to the interpretation of an image of the auricle given above. The God's word wasn't heard by Adam and Eve. Given in to a temptation, they distorted the gifted serene and in-

nocent existence, they weren't to accept the True Knowledge from the Creator and now they are doomed to earthly way of being in endless challenges and torments. From now on the Satan is capable to awaken the Sin and Death and together with his ministers is ready to celebrate

the birth of the Evil, War and Suffering. Lower than Adam and Eve's depictions with Christ, as though at an entrance to the Underworld, we see the lion seizing the bull, the tiger and the horse as the victims; more to the left – the vulture and the eagle gnawing a lamb.



Picture 1. *The Fall of Man* (1806)

"Ear", "auricle", "vortex" as an isomorph shaped models of the world...

Blake shares a lot of such illustrations, interpreting numerous isomorphs of dimensional model that are worth our thorough consideration and examination. We can trace his references to the motif of falling, that are of noticeable frequency: the artist depicts the human bodies

falling down, which are often entwined by spirals-snakes. And here we can also find a parallel with Urthona whom Blake connects not only with the ear, but also the unconscious. In poet's imagination the unconscious is associated with the snake in a symbolic way. Let's have a



Picture 2. "As the stars are apart from the earth" (1794)

look at one of the illustrations created by the author to *The Book of Urizen*, one of the small prophetic poems, – "As the stars are apart from the earth", 1794 (picture 2).

We see three human bodies, spirally entwined by snakes, falling headfirst. Falling and contraction we've discussed above. In Blake's interpretation, "contraction", as well as "opacity", symbolizes inner lack of freedom and enslavement of the spirit. But if the biblical interpretation of curling universe is like "The heavens receded like a scroll being rolled up," – that means that God turned away from man, then Blake's clotting heaven mated with the fall of the heavenly bodies, "the stars in the sky fell to earth." Moreover, their fall is accompanied by a proportional change: "The Stars Sun Moon all shrink away" [cf. Tokareva, www].

If we compare this idea with the name of the painting, then the connection is obvious: human bodies symbolize heaven ones. But all of them interpret the processes occurring in the inner world of

a man. Changing the physical parameters can be explained by the transition from one state of consciousness to another. So in vortex the open-circuiting universe of spirit turns into a path inside (within) and out (without), because during the transition to the metaphysical sphere we see the change of space orientiers, and spirit overcomes physical existence, destroying the old forms and freely moving beyond their limits. As a result the very concept of a form becomes just conventional: "Can Wisdom be put in a silver rod? / Or Love in a golden bowl?"

Conclusion

Thus, images of the auricle, swirl, maelstrom and vortex in the world of William Blake are linked closely and make isomorphs of the one of the models of the world order created by the visionary Creator. Dimensional models, both in his lyrics and in Blake's paintings, particularly specified by initiation metascene, are the object of our further research.

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«Ухо», «раковина», «водоворот» как образные изоморфы модели мира в творчестве У. Блейка

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Аннотация

В статье рассматривается образ водоворота в творчестве Уильяма Блейка, взятый во взаимосвязи с образами вихря, воронки, уха и бездны. Типология этой визуальной модели в стихах и живописи Блейка чрезвычайно разнообразна. Ухо как один из органов чувств интерпретирует реальность, одновременно искажая ее. По этой причине слух ведет к Ульро, земному миру, а не в рай. Блейк приводит много подобных примеров, интерпретируя многочисленные изоморфы данной модели. Автор приходит к выводу о том, что образы ушной раковины, водоворота, воронки и вихря в мире Уильяма Блейка тесно взаимосвязаны, являясь формами одной из моделей мироустройства, созданной Творцом-визионером.

Ключевые слова

Ухо, ушная раковина, водоворот, воронка, вихрь, Уильям Блейк, визионер, Творец, пещера.