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TIME AND THE QUEST FOR KNOWLEDGE

IN THE POETRY OF WILLIAM BLAKE:

A DISCUSSION OF TIRIEL, THE BOOK OF URIZEN,

THE SONG OF LOS AND THE FOUR ZOAS

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SUMMARY

The physical appearances and specific behaviour of the characters in Tiriel, even the subtly ironical choice of names, suggest Blake's persistent opposition to the prevalent materialist-determinist philosophy of his day and to any form of dogmatism. This opposition accounts for the imaginative assimilation of originally unrelated literary material within a new symbolic context. Human misery does not originate from innate limitations or from a primordial fall from Divine Grace. It is caused by the immanent phenomenon of legalism in thought, ethics and aesthetics. Physical, intellectual and emotional oppression, deformation and corruption begin in childhood and are primarily perpetrated and perpetuated by repressive methods of education. Har and Tiriel are self-centred promulgators and, together with the other members of their family, warped products of Natural Law and Natural Religion. Tiriel's quest demonstrates that an increase in empirical knowledge is not necessarily accompanied by spiritual progress, nor does it improve the human condition. The complex vagueness of aspects of the poem contributes toward a more definite shaping of Blake's thought and symbolism in his later 'prophecies.'

Portions of The Book of Urizen may be read as satire directed against the philosophic premises of seventeenth and eighteenth-century rationalism in general, and of Locke's theory of knowledge, in particular. Theme, structure and symbolism of the poem reflect this opposition and implicitly affirm Blake's own idealist metaphysics of reality. Abstracted from Eternity, Urizen's monolithic world has no extrinsic cause. It is a projection of his limited self-awareness. However, his solipsism fails to resolve the persistent contradiction between ideality and reality, thought and thing, subject and object. Los imposes temporal order and physical form on Urizen's disorganised thoughts. The limited anthropomorphic universe, produced by this intervention, is a prison for mind and body, thought and desire. Henceforth, sensation and reflection determine the will to act. Man has rendered himself dependent on the fictitious 'substance' of matter, and on an equally mysterious remote deity. Both are only known by their 'accidents.' Natural science and Natural Religion are their respective rationalised forms of worship. Both the pursuits of knowledge and of happiness require the suspension of desire.

In The Song of Los Blake adopts a supra-historical perspective. Representative personages from biblical history, the history of religions generally, philosophy and science are associated by their common failure to

sustain their visionary powers. Blake incorporates into his poetic typology of decline, structural elements derived from biblical, classical and modern conceptions of history, without adopting their respective philosophical backgrounds. The notion of scientific progress and the advance of civilisation, concurrent with linear historical process, are dismissed. The achievements of empirical science, organised religion and autocratic government--synonymous with intellectual and physical oppression--kindle Orc's "thought creating fires." Despite its apocalyptic connotations, his violent outburst is of a highly ambivalent nature.

The Four Zoas adumbrates the spiritual history of mankind. The poem is also a complex epic phenomenology of the human mind. Eden is an aspect of ideal reality where natural and human organisms are identified, and where life is sustained by loving self-sacrifice. After the Man's Fall elemental uproar reflects the mind's regression to the level of a perturbed oceanic consciousness which can no longer integrate the dissociated phenomena of the generative world into a living human form, thriving on love and understanding. Nature is transformed into a self-engendering monster. The human mind is englobed by the illusion of reality conceived as external and material, and by a fatalistic view of temporal process.

Nevertheless, both misconceptions impose a degree of stability and order on the anarchic forces released by the cosmic catastrophe.

Man's Fall is due to the dissociation of reason and affection. "Mental forms" are externalised and idolised. Eventually, under Urizen's control, imaginative energy is forced into rigid geometric form and regular motion. The beautiful illusion of the pseudo-Platonic "Mundane Shell" reflects the essential structure of Urizen's intelligence. However, it does not provide a lasting solution to the human dilemma after the Fall. After the collapse of his creation, Urizen explores his alien environment by empirical means. He is a prisoner of his own restricted conception of reality.

Unexpectedly, in Night VII(a), the Spectre of Urthona and Los are transformed into labourers of the Apocalypse. Regeneration starts with the annihilation of 'self.' Aware of his responsibilities, Los builds Golgonooza, the city of art. Emulating Christ's self-sacrifice, visionary activity is a form of self-denial. Time becomes a function of imaginative creativity. The imaginative world created by Los incorporates visionary time and space. Natural existence is realised as being endowed with regenerative qualities. Los no longer rejects Orc but sublimates his energies. Orc's destructive powers become an integral aspect of the Last Judgment.

Throughout Night VIII the providential and redemptive character of mortal life is stressed. Plunging into "the river of space" is a baptismal, if painful, experience. Although guided by Divine Providence, individual man has to work for his own salvation. In Night IX prophetic and apocalyptic views are fused as Los acts in a temporal context when tearing down the material, social and metaphysical barriers to vision erected by Urizen. The symbolism of Revelation is employed to adumbrate the artist's ultimate task in history. History is not beyond human control. Submission to the "Divine Vision" is an active ethical achievement capable of generating a powerful social dynamic, rather than tentatively removing it. Tyranny is overthrown because once the visionary poet has revealed its deceptions, mankind follows his example and removes it physically. This optimistic vision of the Last Judgment is an affirmation of the poet's absolute faith in the power of inspired vision to regenerate and humanise all aspects of life in this world.

INTRODUCTION

Blake's opposition to rationalism, materialism and positivistic historiography is well-documented. This study is not primarily concerned with the unearthing of philosophical 'sources' or with placing Blake's thought within the context of the history of ideas. Although this discussion proceeds from the hypothesis that the poems selected are critical of specific schools of philosophical thought, my approach will not be strictly deductive. Tiriel and The Book of Urizen, and parts of The Song of Los and The Four Zoas will be discussed in some detail. Emphasis will be placed on analysing the manner in which Blake's critique of specific epistemological, ethical and aesthetic concepts and of notions concerning the function of time and the nature of change are integrated into themes, symbolism, narrative structure and even the language of his poetry. Inevitably other equally important aspects will have to be neglected or completely disregarded. The delicate question of aesthetic quality will be studiously avoided.

The selection of the four poems is not arbitrary. They share a common theme: as a result of the Fall all aspects of life appear to be governed by dualistic

principles. Driven by his desire to control his own destiny and that of others, fallen man spends his life searching for knowledge of his environment and, ultimately, of himself. The complex vagueness of aspects of Tiriël contributes to a more definite shaping of Blake's thought and symbolism in his later 'prophecies.' The Book of Urizen is a mature expression of Blake's convictions concerning the nature and causes of the fallen human condition. Its central theme is integrated within the considerably wider scope of The Four Zoas. The same applies to The Song of Los. Attention will be drawn to other poems dealing with the same or similar problems. Milton and Jerusalem will be mentioned mainly by way of cross-reference, rarely for the sake of clarification of obscure points.

TIRIEL

The illuminated poem Tiriel poses numerous problems, textual and otherwise, which can only be solved tentatively.¹ The poem was never engraved or printed by Blake, and there is only one copy of the unfinished manuscript extant. This manuscript consists of eight leaves comprising fifteen pages of text.² Of the twelve drawings described in some detail by Rossetti, four have not been traced since the 1863 sale at Christie's.³ The complicated relationship between text and drawings will concern us only marginally.⁴ We are not concerned with the question of whether Blake ever intended to publish the poem, and if so, why he never did.⁵ Also the problem of dating Tiriel is of minor importance. Both external and internal evidence support the assumption, generally held by scholars, that the poem was written about 1789, probably during the period separating the etching of the Songs of Innocence and of the Songs of Experience.⁶ Tiriel deals with aspects of innocence and experience, with the transition from one state to the other, and with the causes and effects of this transition especially with regard to man's conception of himself and of reality. In the context of Blake's poetic canon, it may be considered as an early dramatisation of the perennial theme

of man's confrontation with a strange and hostile environment. Man, who attempts to come to terms with himself and with his social and natural environment, is pictorially and poetically depicted by Blake as a wanderer in search of knowledge of the external world and, unwittingly, of himself. The poem is an expression of the poet's own arduous search for truth, and one of the means leading to its gradual recognition.

The narrative of Tiriel is in many places obscure and difficult to interpret. Nevertheless, a number of themes relevant to our chosen topic are touched upon. They will be taken up again and further developed in the later 'prophecies.' Kathleen Raine insists that this "phantasmagoria on the theme of the death of an aged king and tyrant-father may be--indeed, must be--read at several levels."⁷ At one extreme, Ellis and Yeats read the poem as "a treatise on Old Age written in the form of a myth, with the purpose of showing the decline of life as it appears in the mirror of symbolic poetry, and of using senility in its turn, as itself a symbol."⁸ Erdman, on the other hand, reads Tiriel as an historical allegory. He suggests that "the pattern of Tiriel's 'madness and deep dismay' parallels that of King George's and his agony anticipates that of Albion's Prince."⁹ Erdman correlates the loss of the American colonies during the reign of George III and the King's later madness with Tiriel's claim "I am Tiriel King of

the west" (8:4) after he has been driven out of his kingdom.¹⁰ Up to a point the poem supports both interpretations. Kathleen Raine significantly modifies Erdman's conclusions by pointing out that "Blake's use of myth gives history a spiritual context, relates it to the human soul and the daimonic powers . . . that move mankind to action."¹¹ There are also numerous parallels with literary 'sources,' as for instance with Oedipus Tyrannus, Oedipus at Colonus, and King Lear, as well as echoes of Swedenborg, Cornelius Agrippa, and Jacob Bryant.¹² Bentley finds "the most tantalizing analogue with Tiriel . . . in the story of Joseph in Genesis."¹³ No single critical approach or method of interpretation can cover the whole range of potential meaning. For our purpose an inductive approach, though selective in the choice of aspects considered, is the most appropriate one. Additional pieces of information will be drawn from sources other than the text of the poem, if they strengthen or clarify our argument.

Tiriel's name may provide a first clue to his character and identity.¹⁴ According to Damon, the names of Tiriel and that of his brother Zazel are "taken from the tables in Cornelius Agrippa's Occult Philosophy . . . Here Tiriel is called the Intelligence of Mercury."¹⁵ Obviously, in Blake's poem, Tiriel resembles Agrippa's "unfortunate 'Mercury,'" personifying, up to a point,

"the principle of a blind materialism,"¹⁶ or "the mental error or belief in matter."¹⁷ These latter identifications by Raine and by Ellis and Yeats, respectively, are too narrow to do complete justice to the poetic character Tiriel. Nevertheless, they point in the right direction.

John Beer, too, gives a valuable lead, particularly applicable to this passage, when he suggests that "the ultimate key to the poem lies . . . in its many references to paradise and the serpent."¹⁸ On close examination the references contained in the poem's final passage go a long way toward revealing aspects of Blake's interpretation of Genesis at the time of the writing of Tiriel.¹⁹ They also anticipate, and contribute to a better understanding of, his convictions concerning this subject, which he elaborated in his 'prophetic' books.

Both the materialistic-rational aspect, suggested by Tiriel's name, and the moral aspect, conveyed by the biblical references, are brought together in Tiriel's final speech. His own comprehensive, if uncharacteristic, account of the formative influences on human life from infancy to death, which he directs at the aged Har, the "weak mistaken father of a lawless race," provides the most obvious and explicit clue to Tiriel's character and to the apparently esoteric meaning of the encounters depicted in the poem.²⁰ This account is dramatically,

though not psychologically, consistent with Tiriel's character as portrayed throughout the poem; and it is indispensable to the reader's appreciation of the poem as a coherent symbolic entity, as it reveals the psychological and philosophical issues involved in the complex poetic configurations. Once the reader has become aware of the specific nature of the educational, philosophical and moral doctrines which are being explicitly rejected, and of those which are being implicitly advocated, he has found an important clue to some of the obscurities of the poem, especially to the principle of association underlying Blake's apparent eclecticism.

Why is one law given to the lion & the patient Ox
And why men bound beneath the heavens in a reptile
form
A worm of sixty winters creeping on the dusky ground
The child springs from the womb. the father ready
stands to form
The infant head while the mother idle plays with
her dog on her couch
The young bosom is cold for lack of mothers
nourishment & milk
Is cut off from the weeping mouth with difficulty
& pain
The little lids are lifted & the little nostrils
opend
The father forms a whip to rouze the sluggish senses
to act
And scourges off all youthful fancies from the
new-born man
Then walks the weak infant in sorrow compeld to
number footsteps
Upon the sand. &c
And when the drone has reachd his crawling length
Black berries appear that poison all around him.
Such was Tiriel
Compeld to pray repugnant & to humble the immortal
spirit

Till I am subtil as a serpent in a paradise
Consuming all both flowers & fruits insects
& warbling birds
And now my paradise is falln & a drear sandy plain
Returns my thirsty hissings in a curse on thee O Har
Mistaken father of a lawless race my voice is past
He ceast outstretchd at Har & Hevas feet in awful
death (8:9-29).

Of the two questions in lines 9-11 the first, ostensibly enquiring into the causes of legal monism, may be elucidated, without danger of distortion, by a line which originally followed and which was deleted by Blake: "Dost thou not see that men cannot be formed all alike?"²¹ The imposition and functioning of a universally valid law presupposes an equally universal uniformity of human aspirations. This presupposition is declared false in the deleted line and, implicitly in line 7.²² Line 7 and the deleted line also anticipate and clarify the implicit connection of line 9 with the rest of Tiriell's speech.

Lines 10-11 play on the introductory formula of traditional theodicy. But no attempt is made to "justify the ways of God to men."²³ Instead, dismay about the human condition and its causes is expressed in the form of a complex question which touches upon several vital issues. For instance: Why does man have to live "beneath" the heavens and not in them? Why are his physical appearance, his mentality, and mode of motion those of a

"worm" and not of the "human form divine?"²⁴ Why is his life span of limited temporal duration? Who imposes the limitations upon mankind?

Any reader familiar with biblical tradition will feel inclined to vaguely associate Tiriel's questions with man's Fall in Eden, as related in Genesis and Paradise Lost. Seduced by the serpent, Adam and Eve transgressed the Creator's command and were duly punished for their disobedience. They were expelled from the Garden of Eden into the dreary world of the reader's own familiar existential limitations. Genesis and Paradise Lost place this mythical event at the beginning of human history proper.

In his uncharacteristic speech, reverberant with Blake's own "voice of honest indignation,"²⁵ Tiriel does not blame man's mortal condition and "reptile form" on a specific and unique event which occurred in the remote past. Such a unique and, at the same time, universal 'lapse' would provide man with a convenient excuse for his very personal and definite shortcomings. Blake, speaking through Tiriel in these lines, shows no inclination of becoming yet another apologist in the traditional Christian sense, neither on behalf of God nor of man; and he refuses to regard man's fallen condition, his notion of being "wrapped in mortality,"²⁶ which is as much a physical as a mental state, as a

restriction of human potential beyond man's responsibility. Instead, he gives, in concrete terms, an account of an educational process which is at once timeless and yet specifically representative of the principles governing the acquisition of a certain kind of knowledge and furthering the advancement of learning, as advocated by such 'enlightened' philosophers as Bacon, Locke and Hume.

Tiriel's representative 'father' is the incarnation of the father-figures in Songs of Experience, and the type of Dickens' Gradgrind.²⁷ The child's upbringing is one protracted process of repressive conditioning. First, the child is isolated from motherly love and care which play such an important part in the Songs of Innocence. The father's symbolic forming of the "infant head" is vividly presented in terms which suggest that the child is trained to rely exclusively on his sense organs for his "finite organical perceptions" of the only reality there is for them to perceive under the direction of the father: the external material world.²⁸ At the same time, the father "scourges off" the more immediate mental reality of "youthful fancies from the new-born man." In other words the child is reduced to the level of 'natural' man, as described by Blake in There is No Natural Religion (a), "a natural organ subject to Sense" who "cannot naturally Percieve. but through his natural bodily organs." Nor does he have any "notions of moral

fitness but from Education" (E1). Tiriel thus implicitly, yet unambiguously, denounces two basic tenets of Lockean philosophy of which There is No Natural Religion (a and b) and All Religions are One are epigrammatic refutations. Book I of Locke's An Essay Concerning Human Understanding sets out to prove that neither 'principles,' practical or speculative, nor 'ideas' are innate; that the 'ideas' of God, of Divine, Moral, and Natural Law, of reward and punishment are acquired by education and retained by memory. 'Ideas' originate in sensation and reflection.²⁹

Our observation, employed either about external sensible objects, or about the internal operations of our minds perceived and reflected on by ourselves, is that which supplies our understandings with all the materials of thinking. These two are the fountains of knowledge, from whence all ideas we have, or can naturally have, do spring. (II,1,2)

Had he accepted the rationalist premise that all our knowledge is derived from experience, Blake would have had to agree with Locke's conclusion: 'naturally' there are no innate 'ideas.' However, Blake's radical anti-rationalism throughout his career as an artist, led him to quarrel with that very premise which renders "Mind & Imagination" dependent on "Mortal & Perishing Nature."³⁰ In the early tractates, There is No Natural Religion and All Religions are One, his position is systematically and effectively outlined. In There is No Natural Religion (b) for instance, he states categorically that

Mans perceptions are not bounded by organs of perception. he percieves more than sense (tho' ever so acute) can discover. (E2)

Blake, speaking through Tiriel in his final speech, infers that man is not born a 'natural' man. Innate 'ideas' do exist because "perception is not the first operation of all our intellectual faculties," as Locke believes, nor is it, by Tiriel's own implicit admission, "the inlet of all knowledge in our minds."³¹ Only the suppression of "youthful fancies" produced by extra-sensual perception can lead to exclusively 'natural' experience. According to the deistic view, religious faith, Blake's 'Natural Religion,' is founded on such 'natural' experience and not on innate 'ideas' or on revelation. Any notion of "moral fitness," therefore, has to be instilled into the child's mind by education.

Prevented from indulging in unproductive play, and with its child-like self suppressed, the child's view of life changes from innocent enjoyment to painful experience until the whole environment assumes the character of hidden hostility and poisonous deceit. The "Black berries . . . that poison all around him" suggest the poisonous yet tempting properties of the deadly nightshade and recall the fatal fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the Garden of Eden. At last, "the weak infant" walks "in sorrow

compelled to number footsteps / Upon the sand." It has learned to live by imposed rules, its scope being hopelessly limited by regulations, prohibitions, and fear. The mechanical procedure of numbering "footsteps / Upon the sand" ingeniously suggests in one complex image a fatal combination of eighteenth-century rationalism with orthodox interpretations of Old Testament mythology and conformity with moral dogma. The dust the cursed biblical serpent is compelled to eat when crawling on its belly is correlated with the traditional desert of this world of material appearances in which Adamic man wanders, physically and mentally, during his life's journey. This condition is summarised in There is No Natural Religion (a):

VI The desires & perceptions of man untaught by any thing but organs of sense, must be limited to objects of sense. (E1)

Though accumulating experience all the time, he fails to gain the kind of knowledge that would enable him to transform the desert back into a garden. It is, therefore, only a question of time until man literally returns to the dust he was originally made of.³²

Having given this general and seemingly objective account of the process of human conditioning, Tiriel reveals its relevance to his own upbringing. He thereby provides an essential link in what may be termed the poem's internal structure or "chronology of motivation,"³³

as distinct from its narrative chronology or external structure. Tiriél's statement, "Such was Tiriél," indicates that during his life he has been in both positions, that of the child and of the father. As an infant he was "Compelld to pray repugnant & to humble the immortal spirit,"³⁴ the one element in his human nature which elevated him beyond the merely material and reasonable, his link with the Divine, the supernatural and non-temporal. Having learned to suppress his imaginative notions he does not become an ordinary hypocrite but "subtil as a serpent in a paradise / Consuming all both flowers & fruits insects & warbling birds."

In Genesis, the subtlety of the serpent is directly connected with temptation: "Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree in the garden?"³⁵ Yet, Tiriél's twofold use of the indefinite pronoun removes the denotative quality from the comparison. Although the familiar associative complex connected with serpent, paradise, the specific event of man's temptation and fall in an ahistoric past is retained, it is also being invested with new connotations. While seemingly relating to a general pattern of behaviour, these connotations are particularised by the immediate poetic

context, when Tiriel gives his account a sharp turn toward his present personal dilemma: "And now my paradise is falln." The personal and impersonal, the general and the specific are thereby fused. If the reader may have felt inclined to sympathise with Tiriel so far, he has to realise now that by doing so he sympathises with both the dissembling serpent and with his unfortunate victims.

Tiriel's correlation with a serpent recalls Satan's metamorphosis as described in Paradise Lost. Yet, there is an important difference. In spite of his changes of external appearance, Milton's Satan does not and cannot alter his essential identity which is constantly revealed by his evil actions and sufferings;³⁶ and in adopting the shape of the serpent he merely finds the adequate physical equivalent of his essential spiritual corruption. Tiriel, one gathers, is not corrupt from birth. His corruption takes place in the course, and as a result, of the educational process already described. His physical decay, his old age and blindness reflect the progressive degradation of the faculty which once produced "youthful fancies." Implicitly he acknowledges this symbolic correlation between outward appearance and spiritual depravity when attributing to himself the guile of the serpent, the creature traditionally

identified with the negation of absolute divine authority, who is held responsible for the acquisition of the fatal knowledge of good and evil by man.

Even before its fall, Tiriel's paradise was not the mythic garden of innocent joy as described in Paradise Lost. The possessive pronoun indicates that Tiriel's paradise was an exclusive and private affair, and that it had little in common with popular mnemonic fictions or nostalgic pastoralism. In a sense it was a parody of the Lord's Garden of Eden. Entering this very special 'paradise' entails the loss of innocence for Tiriel's victims. His "Consuming all both flowers & fruits insects & warbling birds" signifies the destruction of anything that might operate as a stimulant for "youthful fancies," or that might serve to satisfy any desires, mental or physical, beyond his control. As the stress is placed on the phenomenal and thus cognitive rather than the moral aspects of perception, the reduction of material appearances of natural objects to rationally conceived categories may be inferred. By forcing them into the narrow limitations of his rational categories, Tiriel deprives them of their tangible qualities by which they stimulate the senses to discover "the infinite in every thing" and the human mind to creative activity.³⁷

In his private garden, his kingdom "in the west," Tiriél was able to satisfy his selfish, uninspired and repressive desires. There he was the lord and maker, the father of children whom he exploited and oppressed, whose "immortal spirit" he attempted to stifle from birth--until they rebelled. Their rebellion, which will be discussed later, indicates that Tiriél's sons have perceptions and desires which are not limited by their organic perceptions, and the reflections based on these, after all.

Tiriél unites in his personality the characteristics of a creator and a spoiler. His own once energetic powers and "youthful fancies" have degenerated into a 'fatherly' attitude. He asserts himself by imposing specific man-made codes of behaviour on his creatures. The poetic character of Tiriél is not the portrayal of a fully developed complex human being. He may be described as the somewhat abstracted presentation, in anthropomorphic terms, of the "symptom of the decline of individual and social life within the great culture."³⁸ On a similarly symbolic level of interpretation Tiriél may well represent "the ancient religion of Law empowered by the Curse now rapidly aging towards death," as Damon believes; "a system of thought concerning material things, that once brought some amount of liberty to mankind, but

now is outworn."³⁹ More specifically, Tiriel's outward appearance is the key to his mental constitution. Late in his life Blake once described in a letter to George Cumberland, his own condition:

I have been very near the Gates of Death & have returned very weak & an Old Man feeble & tottering, but not in Spirit & Life, not in The Real Man The Imagination which Liveth for Ever. In that I am⁴⁰ stronger & stronger as this Foolish Body decays.

With regard to Tiriel, no such differentiation is made between the outward appearance which is subject to decay, and the spiritual constitution. Indeed, as has already been pointed out, Tiriel's physical decay symbolises his spiritual corruption. The passage of time has a disintegrating influence on both body and mind. Bearing this fact in mind, much of the poem becomes meaningful, particularly if the very first episode and Tiriel's second confrontation with his sons are considered together.

Examination of the images employed to depict different localities and Tiriel's relationships with other personages will promote an understanding of the principle of association governing the poem's symbolic texture. It will also clarify the nature and the cause of Tiriel's failure. In her brief discussion of the form of Tiriel, Kathleen Raine points out its resemblance with

Swedenborg's "memorable relations" of happenings seen in the spiritual worlds. In those worlds each mental state creates its appropriate surroundings; and a change of state changes these surroundings. This insubstantial and shifting texture of images which correspond to their symbolic content is precisely what we have in dreams. The landscape of Tiriel is dreamlike: the forests and deserts over which he passes, the animals, personages, and events which he encounters, are all appropriate to his mental state, by correspondence.⁴¹

Furthermore, one may safely assume that the various changes in Tiriel's fortune, expressed in vivid material terms, are complementary symbolic expressions of the complex mental state personified by Tiriel. Insight into his character and an adequate understanding of what he stands for can only be obtained through careful analysis of the numerous references and connotations, apparent and concealed, provided by the four introductory lines and the poetic context as a whole.

The first few lines of the poem take the reader 'in medias res.'

And Aged Tiriel. stood before the Gates of his
beautiful palace
With Myratana. once the Queen of all the western
plains
But now his eyes were darkend. & his wife fading
in death
They stood before their once delightful palace.
(1:1-4)

The changes wrought by the passage of time are depicted in these lines in terms suggesting changes in Tiriel's

physical appearance, in his powers of visual perception, and in his status.⁴² He even has lost all pleasure in his palace, the still beautiful material symbol of his former regal power, which he and his dying wife no longer inhabit.

Bentley argues convincingly that "it may not be fanciful to see a deliberate contrast between the description of the palace as 'beautiful' and as 'once delightful.'" However, Bentley's subsequent explanation-- "for as he corrupted himself Tiriel may have altered his palace from one of eternal delight to one of cold beauty"-- is too perfunctory to do justice to the complexities of the text.⁴³ Neither the text nor any of the drawings indicate that the external appearance of Tiriel's palace has been altered. It may, therefore, be presumed to be the same beautiful edifice he erected in the prime of his power. The first drawing shows heavy unornamented columns which may represent the entrance to a temple-like building in classical style.⁴⁴ The impression of regular mathematic proportion is enhanced by the Egyptian pyramid in the background. The text does indicate, however, that Tiriel and his dying wife Myratana have ceased to derive any pleasure from the view of "their once delightful palace" which they no longer inhabit. One may conclude that although no objective material alteration in the appearance of the palace has taken place, Tiriel's

subjective appreciation of his former domicile has changed. This, together with his loss of sight and the death of his wife, indicates some deeply rooted defect or failure on Tiriel's part.

Tiriel anticipates a central theme of The Four Zoas in dramatising the devastating effects a mother's absence has on the father and the child. Tiriel denounces his "accursed sons" (1:7) as "Serpents not sons. wreathing around the bones of Tiriel / . . . worms of death feasting upon their aged parents flesh" (1:21-22). From his point of view they have drained their mother of "milk" and "mothers tears & cares" (1:26). When she dies she leaves behind a husband with "eyes blind as the orbless skull among the stones" (1:27). Myratana was "once the Queen of all the western plains." Geographical and inherent historical symbolism, this time associated with the dying queen, provide the story not simply with temporal and spatial dimensions, but with a degree of topicality within those dimensions. Yet, the poem is neither a straight "commentary on current political events," nor does it allegorise them. It is, however, "an attempt to relate those events to a wider pattern,"⁴⁵ thus giving "history a spiritual context."⁴⁶

Within rather narrow limits, the "western plains" may be an allusion to the American colonies. From Tiriel's

point of view they are a lost possession. Myratana was the "Soul," "Spirit" and "fire," the delight and "inspiration" pervading his rule and inseparably linked with his power.⁴⁷ For Myratana, exile from those "western plains" means gradual death. For Tiriél's sons it means liberation from physical, intellectual and moral oppression. Their rebellion is a hopeful sign indicating that their desires, their faculties of perception, and will to act were not totally conditioned by Tiriél's repressive education.⁴⁸ Obviously, Tiriél believes that by turning away from him, his children have rendered vain all his previous educational efforts and other achievements. To him they are serpents that have intruded on his private paradise, destroying what was dearest to him. Tiriél's voluntary exile indicates the failure of his physical and intellectual powers. In keeping with the poem's symbolism, his age, his blindness, and his wife's death are concrete symptoms of his loss of vision. His obsessive hatred of his sons is another.

On one level of meaning, Myratana may represent the pleasure Tiriél derived from his constructive activities which produced his 'offspring.' However, if Tiriél's final speech, previously discussed, is anything to go by, his children never enjoyed much of their mother's nourishment. On another level of meaning, she may, therefore, represent the inventive cunning displayed by Tiriél in

the course of his sons' upbringing. He accuses them of ingratitude and curses them, claiming that their rebellion against his tyranny was worse than his own against Har long ago, and not merely a repetition.⁴⁹ Despite his own rebellious past, he fails to understand that the notion or concept of a 'paradise' implies the presence of the serpent, the subversive force directed against any form of dogma and its promulgator. If one chooses to read the story as satire on Genesis and Paradise Lost, Tiriel is a 'creator' who refuses to be pacified and who abandons his creation, not vice versa. Read as political allegory, Tiriel, the old king, was dethroned by his children and his oldest son, Heuxos, became the new king.⁵⁰ Another possible complementary reading is hinted at by Damon and followed up by Bentley. Damon suggests that "Sons, to Blake, always represent accomplishments,"⁵¹ and in Tiriel "sons represent the arts and sciences."⁵² This identification is especially supported by the first drawing.⁵³ One of the young men facing Tiriel and Myratana is adorned with bay leaves which, according to Bentley, "could indicate either a poet or a conqueror, but in the context poet seems far more likely."⁵⁴ In contrast with the cold, abstract lines of Tiriel's palace, as depicted in the drawings, their "houses" (1:37) have "lofty towers" (5:14). According to Rossetti's description (1863) of the untraced ninth drawing, they are also adorned with "some richly-

sculptured columns."⁵⁵ The different architectural styles of Tiriel's palace and of his sons' houses surely correspond with the contrasting mentalities of their respective inhabitants. The same inference may be drawn from their contrasting appearances in the drawings. Furthermore, the sons' generous offer of hospitality to their dethroned father contrasts favourably with his own "cruelty" (1:35), self-righteousness, and hypocrisy. Thus, from an ethical and an aesthetic point of view, the sons' way of life may signify an advance over Tiriel's. Indeed, from the different architectural styles associated with Tiriel and his sons, may possibly be inferred Blake's preference, even at this point in his artistic career, for a style he was later to describe as "Gothic" which "is Living Form."⁵⁶ In contrast, "Grecian is Mathematic Form," and the style appropriate for expressing Tiriel's mentality. However, as the sequence of events will eventually show, any supposed advance or even superiority on the sons' part over Tiriel is of a highly tentative and precarious nature. There certainly is no indication of necessary linear progress or evolution of the human mind and of the perfectibility of achievement in successive generations manifesting itself in politics, philosophy, architecture, and the arts in general. Nevertheless, the possibility of, or potential for, development, irrespective of education, is implied. Another conjecture appears equally likely. Apart from

the obvious contrast of two cultures and their respective merits as manifest in their artistic expressions, the confrontation between Tiriel and his sons involves the problems of the origin and originality of art, of its historicity and value. Already in All Religions are One (about 1788) Blake insists that "all sects of Philosophy are from the Poetic Genius adapted to the weakness of every individual," and that "The Religions of all Nations are derived from each Nation's different reception of the Poetic Genius" (E2). Art has essentially the same universal, metaphysical and ahistorical 'origin,' as Blake was later to stress in A Descriptive Catalogue (1809):

Poetry as it exists now on earth, in the various remains of ancient authors, Music as it exists in old tunes or melodies, Painting and Sculpture as it exists in the remains of Antiquity and in the works of more modern genius, is Inspiration, and cannot be surpassed; it is perfect and eternal. . . . the finest specimens of Ancient Sculpture and Painting, and Architecture, Gothic, Grecian, Hindoo and Egyptian, are the extent of the human mind. . . . To suppose that Art can go beyond the finest specimens of Art that are now in the world, is not knowing what Art is; it is being blind to the gifts of the spirit. (E535)

The latter is also true if, on the strength of some intangible authority, individuals, nations or cultures claim philosophical, religious, artistic or, most commonly, political predominance to the detriment of others. This applies to Tiriel who is literally blind to the gifts of

the spirit--his own and that of others. Both Tiriel's "once delightful palace" and the ornamented "houses" of his sons are "specimens of Art" and thus material manifestations of the human mind, no more, no less. However, pressed into the service of some ideology, art becomes corrupted. In this sense, too, Tiriel's palace is not the same as it was.

As Tiriel cannot accept his own limitations, he refuses to acknowledge the justification of a promising new culture and, indeed, to be integrated into it. Its acceptance would be a necessary step toward recapturing an imaginative capacity he has lost. Instead, he chooses "to wander like a Son of Zazel in the rocks" (1:38) of barren materialism, rationalism, and introverted self-contemplation, thus suffering the effects of the curse of the victims he previously enslaved and condemned to such aimless wandering. As he fails to comprehend the inevitability of his sons' rebellion, he vainly opposes what is no more than a 'natural' repetition of events. He denies his sons the right to develop their faculties independent of his personal conception of right and wrong, and of an autonomous existence free from the compulsions of his rules. Blind to the needs of others and failing to understand his own dilemma, Tiriel is filled with destructive wrath. This state of mind is appropriately expressed by the traditional image of wandering.

and what they represent--wiped off the face of the earth and from memory altogether, demonstrates that he does not grant them a past existence at all. Indeed, by denying to his children their own past, not to mention a present or future, Tiriel tries to bereave them of what he believes to be their entire existence.

There is more to human life than physical existence, and more to human achievement than its material manifestations, artistic and otherwise. Although Tiriel eventually succeeds in corrupting his children's minds and in destroying their bodies, he does not command the power to undo what has already occurred. There is no denying that his children once possessed the spirit of independence. Tiriel fails to disrupt the inescapable cycle of rebellion against established rules (Har's laws), the subsequent establishing of a modified dominion (Tiriel's realm in the West), and its degeneration and end through a new rebellion (Tiriel's sons). Prompted by the realisation that his educational efforts have failed and that desires unlimited by organic perception and reflection do exist, Tiriel's violent effort of destruction, aimed at his children, represents a futile negation of individual human aspirations and of time as the vehicle of change. Ironically, he thereby merely affirms time not only as the form of becoming, being, and flux, but also of perishing, and therefore as the

sum of past, present, and future events. By killing his sons, Tiriel attempts to unmake what he himself created. In this he partially succeeds. But he cannot restore his former happiness. He ultimately fails, because he merely perpetuates the cyclic pattern of rise and fall, of growth and decay, equally applicable to natural and human history, and to the aspirations of the individual human being.

After Myratana's death, Tiriel unwittingly admits his own spiritual limitations by proclaiming that "all the time of grace is past" (6:11). "Grace" to him is the vengeful toleration of activities which he is, for a while, incapable of preventing, probably because of his lack of comprehension of his sons' motivations and because of his temporary inability to control their powers of perception. His curse does not appear to have affected his children immediately. For five years he and his wife "dwelt . . . in the desolate rock," waiting "all that time . . . for the fire to fall from heaven / Or for the torrents of the sea to overwhelm" them all (6:8-10). Only on his second, involuntary, return to his old palace the forces of nature, "Thunder & fire & pestilence" (5:13), overwhelm his offspring. Apparently, time is required to render his curse effective. During their period of "grace" Tiriel's children must

have undergone changes which now render them susceptible to the effects of Tiriel's curse. In other words, they may have become somewhat like Tiriel themselves.⁵⁷

Hence, the delay in Tiriel's curse becoming effective is not necessarily due to a lack of ruthless power on Tiriel's part, but possibly to the cunning restraint exercised by Myratana. All they had to do was wait until their sons' initially unimpaired imaginative powers, their powers of resistance against Tiriel's inflexible standards--affecting matters rational, ethical, and aesthetic--gradually weakened in the course of time. On Tiriel's second return to his palace, these powers of resistance have disappeared.⁵⁸ One may even conjecture that not in spite of their submission, but because of it, Tiriel's victims are destroyed. They are literally overwhelmed by destructive natural forces, associated with Tiriel's power:

all the sons & daughters of Tiriel
Chaind in thick darkness utterd cries of mourning
all the night
And in the morning Lo an hundred men in ghastly
death
The four daughters stretchd on the marble
pavement silent all
falln by the pestilence the rest moped round in
guilty fears
And all the children in their beds were cut off
in one night
Thirty of Tiriels sons remaind. to wither in the
palace
Desolate. Loathed. Dumb Astonishd waiting for
black death (5:27-34).

The moral, psychological and epistemological implications of this passage are unmistakable. The pestilence inflicted on Tiriél's children adversely affects their consciousness of personal integrity and autonomy, their conceptions of reality and their powers of perception. They lose sight of the light of inspiration, their innate potential exalting them beyond their egotistic and rational selves in the same way as their father did before. In the words of Damon, they suffer "the Death from Eternity into Time; the Fall; the closing of the senses from perception of the Infinite; and the consequent degeneration of all men's acts."⁵⁹ If Tiriél's sons are to be regarded as his accomplishments, it is only by their survival that Tiriél may gain an afterlife in a temporal, material, and metaphysical sense. By destroying the majority of his sons and daughters, he deprives himself of the merit of having contributed to a better future. All that is left bearing witness to his efforts are the superstitious "rest" who "moped round in guilty fears."⁶⁰ Having lost all faith in themselves, Tiriél's thirty remaining sons are obsessed with past imaginary sins and the fear of punishment to come. Significantly, they "wither" in Tiriél's palace where an irrational consciousness of guilt dominates their present, rendering them unfit for a future distinguished by spiritual progress.⁶¹

Tiriel's confrontation with his sons may be considered to be carrying strong psychological as well as epistemological implications. Their rebellion subtly reveals what Hirsch, following Coleridge's lead in Biographia Literaria, calls "the central contradiction in the Lockean-deistic position;"⁶² and Tiriel's reaction candidly discloses what Blake believed to be the insidious aims of this position. Locke's claim that "in our 'ideas' as well of 'spirits' as of other things, we are restrained to those we receive from sensation and reflection"⁶³ is considered erroneous by Blake (and later by Coleridge) since

None could have other than natural or organic thoughts if he had none but organic perceptions
(There is No Natural Religion, E1).

Under this premise, progression from sense data and reflection on these (including observation of the operations of the mind) to the 'moral sense' and the 'idea' of God is a logical impossibility. Nor is there, under the same premise, any scope for the notion of 'inspiration' and its displacement into works of art. Yet, initially, the attitude and achievement of Tiriel's sons are inconsistent with their education which should have turned them into materialists and deists right from the beginning. Their rejection of Tiriel's doctrines leaves the old tyrant with the alternative either to renounce his teachings or to

assert himself and thereby disclose his true motivation. Tiriel does the latter. Tiriel's behaviour throughout the poem renders it virtually certain that he consciously instilled in his own children the "notion of moral fitness" for no higher reasons than those of personal and political expediency. The same utilitarian motivation may be presumed to underlie his conceptions of art and culture.

The only 'quality' left to Tiriel's credit is his old age. Generally, in Blake's symbolism, old age as such deserves no merit nor is it to be venerated. In 'Tiriel' and other poems it is not even a temporal specification free of value. On the contrary, it bears the negative connotation of an existence insulated from creative vigour. Tiriel has only acquired 'experience' which in itself is no merit either. He leaves this considerable experience an unrealised potential in the imaginatively constructive sense. This failure is summed up by Fisher who comments that Tiriel "has made the mistake of hoarding that wealth which is the experience of life with the memory of experience."⁶⁴ Only the transformation or displacement of experience in the course of time into imaginative achievement deserves positive acknowledgement and acclaim.

Tiriel's blindness may be approached on similar lines to his old age. After having cursed his sons for the first time, though without any visible effect, Tiriel

darkling oer the mountains sought his pathless way

He wanderd day & night to him both day & night
were dark
The sun he felt but the bright moon was now a
useless globe
Oer mountains & thro vales of woe. the blind &
aged man
Wanderd (1:51-2:4).

Tiriel's narrow-minded, irrational jealousy and his physical decay, both representative of his decrepit spiritual state, leave him with nowhere to go, literally and figuratively speaking. Seeking "his pathless way" indicates that there may be paths which Tiriel, in his very real blindness, cannot find. Progress in such a fortuitous quest is necessarily slow; and there is no certainty whether, apart from death, there is any destination for Tiriel to reach at all. Yet, feeling the warmth radiated by the sun, Tiriel must be bitterly aware that there is still life being generated from which he is excluded because of his blindness. The richness of life remains invisible to him in more than one sense.⁶⁵

The possible literary source of Tiriel's name provided the first clue to his character and thus to the

symbolic meaning of his actions in the poem. The limitations of Tiriel's scope and the nature of these limitations have been adumbrated in epistemological, ethical and aesthetic terms. The same procedure may be applied with regard to several other members of his family whom Tiriel encounters at the different stages of his quest. Tiriel, Ijim, and Zazel are 'sons' of Har in as far as they are the immediate descendants of Har's impaired reception of the "Poetic Genius" and its degeneration into Law. As 'brothers' they represent three basic types of spiritual corruption resulting from a "humbling" or "handling" of the "immortal spirit," as described by Tiriel in his final speech. While helping to interpret Tiriel's blindness, their reactions to his disability are conducive toward assessing their own characters and clarify the symbolism associating them with their apparent blood-relation.

When blindly groping "his lonely way" (4:1) from the vales of Har, Tiriel encounters his mighty brother Ijim who lives in the woods. Furiously Ijim addresses Tiriel:

Who art thou Eyeless wretch that thus obstructst
the lions path
Ijim shall rend thy feeble joints thou tempter
of dark Ijim
Thou hast the form of Tiriel but I know thee well
enough
Stand from my path foul fiend is this the last of
thy deceits
To be a hypocrite & stand in the shape of a blind
beggar (4:5-9).

Ijim cannot believe that this "dark fiend . . . in the form of helpless age & eyeless policy" (4:16-17) is Tiriel, because to Ijim "Tiriel is a king." (4:37) When Ijim threatens to use him "like a slave" (4:24) and tells him to hold his "glib & eloquent tongue" (4:36), Tiriel makes no attempt to resist "for Ijims words were as the voice of Fate" (4:26). Against his will Tiriel is carried by his 'brother' back to his palace in the West, to be confronted with the 'real' Tiriel and be revealed as an impostor. Ijim is, rightly, convinced that he has caught his elusive tormentor, "the hypocrite that sometimes roars a dreadful lion," or who assumes the shapes of a tiger or of threatening natural forces like a river or lightning.

Then he would creep like a bright serpent till
 around my neck
While I was Sleeping he would twine I squeeze
 his poisonous soul
Then like a toad or like a newt. would whisper
 in my ears
Or like a rock stood in my way. or like a
 poisonous shrub
At last I caught him in the form of Tiriel blind
 & old
And so Ill keep him (4:56-61).

Finally, however, after having carried Tiriel back to his palace, a disgusted Ijim realises that he has been duped all along. The tempting impostor was the king after all; and the king himself was the 'hypocrite.' Gloomily, Ijim

returns to his "secret forests & all night wanderd in desolate ways" (4:79). There are a number of literary parallels which may further our understanding of the actions and configurations in Tiriel. At the same time it must be stressed that they are not indispensable, as Kathleen Raine believes.⁶⁶ Commenting on Tiriel "trying to domineer over others and establish a reign of terror founded on moral virtue . . . [resulting in] self-absorption, symbolized by blindness," Northrop Frye points out that "the use of the name 'Ijim' . . . indicates a Swedenborgian source for the theme."⁶⁷ According to Frye "Swedenborg means, as Blake read him, that deserts and serpents and vultures are the part of nature's character that corresponds to the part of man's character represented by Tiriel."⁶⁸ This conclusion is somewhat confusing since the symbolic meanings which Swedenborg derived from Isaiah are correlative with Ijim's name, not with Tiriel's. Ijim is tormented by animated delusive projections originating in his own mind. He proceeds to identify these phantoms not with Tiriel the king, but with the "hypocrite" who, as Ijim believes, has adopted "the form of Tiriel blind & old" just as another guise.

Kathleen Raine contributes toward a clarification of this problem by drawing attention to a relevant passage in Agrippa's Three Books of Occult Philosophy, "in which

is described the fate of the evil soul, wandering in hell . . . [where it] . . . becomes the prey of its own hallucinations."⁶⁹ Raine summarises: "Such disincarnate souls may impress their fantasies upon the consciousness of the living, in the form of apparitions."⁷⁰ Agrippa's list of apparitions closely resembles the series of oppressive Protean metamorphoses of which Ijim accuses the "hypocrite" Tiriel.⁷¹

One of the most notable disguises attributed to Tiriel--"Then like a toad or like a newt. would whisper in my ears"--is not mentioned by Agrippa. It is reminiscent of one of Satan's disguises in Paradise Lost. During his effort of tempting his sleeping victim, Satan is discovered

Squat like a toad, close at the ear of Eve;
Assaying by his devilish art to reach
The organs of her fancy, and with them forge
Illusions as he list, phantasms and dreams
(Book IV, 800-803).

One remembers that in his successful attempt at seduction in Paradise Lost Satan assumes the appearance of the biblical seducer, the serpent. Tiriel, in his final self-revealing speech explains that he, too, became "subtil as a serpent in a paradise," though only as a result of being "compell'd to humble the immortal spirit." The disguises of the toad and the serpent in particular,

and Tiriel's final self-description carry identical connotations with regard to Tiriel's character as a satanic tempter and spoiler.⁷²

Concerning Tiriel's state of mind and his relationship with Ijim, a number of differing and, as it turns out, complementary explanations have been offered. Raine draws additional information from yet another passage in Swedenborg, "describing 'the hell which contained the emperors of emperors and kings of kings,' which explains more precisely why Ijim is called Tiriel's 'brother,' who can yet in turn tyrannize over him." On the strength of this evidence Raine identifies Tiriel as "a figure of political tyranny" and Ijim as "his 'brother,' ecclesiastical tyranny, who has power even over a king."⁷³

Gleckner approaches the problem of Ijim's identity from yet another direction. In his annotations to Lavater's Aphorisms on Man, Blake is at pains to distinguish 'superstition' from 'hypocrisy' (E587). Gleckner proposes that the meeting of the 'brothers' Tiriel and Ijim is designed "to dramatize this idea and thus to scrutinize more closely the essentials of experience."⁷⁴ Both Raine's and Gleckner's lines of reasoning were implicitly anticipated by Damon to whom Ijim "represents the common people's religion . . . always wrestling with a devil who is not there, for he imagines that there are supernatural forces

in natural forces; in a word, he is an animist."⁷⁵
And elsewhere: "Ijim is a religion of fear, thinking that all the terrible natural forces are God, or rather his brother Tiriel, who is the religion he mistakes for God."⁷⁶ Whether one chooses to identify Tiriel and Ijim with modes of behaviour such as 'hypocrisy' and 'superstition' or with their respective institutionalised forms of political and religious tyrannies, they represent different forms "of the dominion of Self."⁷⁷ Tiriel imposes his will on others and causes them to suffer physical and mental pains. Ijim, on the other hand, is the honest man who possesses sufficient powers of imagination to conceive of natural phenomena as animate and to invest them with demonic powers. The apparitions which torment him are no more than his own repressed desires which he has been taught to fear, probably both by his father, Har, and by Tiriel the king. Tiriel certainly has been taking advantage of Ijim's naivety. An exclusive concern with their private spiritual conflicts renders both Tiriel and Ijim insensitive to matters beyond their narrow spheres of self-interest. Their senses, for instance, become unreceptive to natural beauty. They both wander "Blind to the pleasures of the sight & deaf to warbling birds" (4:28).

Eventually, when they reach Tiriel's palace, Ijim finds out that the elusive and apparently supernatural

tormentor whom he has caught "in the form of Tiriel" is Tiriel, the once powerful king, himself. He is forced to realise that deceit and hypocrisy are aspects of Tiriel's character and the essential means by which his power was maintained. Only now, after Tiriel has lost his position as a king and, apparently, much of his power--though none of his cruelty--can Ijim achieve the shocking identification of demonic tormentor and calculating worldly ruler, and trace its origins back to "Tiriels house [which] is as false (as) Matha. & as dark as vacant Orcus" (4:75-76).⁷⁸ This realisation might be considered a hopeful sign if it resulted in Ijim achieving a higher level of consciousness. This is not so. Ijim fails to free himself from superstitious fear. His moral outrage at the evil ways of the world and its corrupt and cruel rulers--including Tiriel's sons--does not drive him to positive imaginative and truly enlightening action. Instead he retires into "The secret forests" (4:79) of irrational error, vainly fleeing from the threatening projections of his own unrecognised, and therefore misdirected, powers of imagination. As long as Ijim continues animating the world with his own obsessions, he will be haunted on his nocturnal wanderings "in desolate ways" (4:79). This is, in Gleckner's words, an "ironic parallel to Tiriel's situation . . . Tiriel, worldly wise but without divine wisdom, experiences the downfall of his god, self, and must wander in an eternal but vain search for lost authority."⁷⁹

Tiriel's second 'brother,' Zazel, was "compelled to humble the immortal spirit" to the point of its extinction. Zazel accuses Tiriel of having chained him and of having enslaved his sons (7:9/1:40). Tiriel caused them to wander in the rocks, and Tiriel's sons continue where their father left off by calling "a son of Zazel. to dig their mother a grave" (1:34). "Old Zazel" and his sons live in caves (7:3); and they show their hatred of Tiriel by throwing at him "dirt & stones" (7:5).

Damon traced the name 'Zazel to Agrippa, and Raine, following up this lead, quotes the relevant passage in Three Books of Occult Philosophy:

the flesh being forsaken, & the body being defunct of life, is called a dead Carcass; Which as say the divines of the Hebrews, is left to the power of the demon Zazel, of whom it is said in the Scripture, 'Thou shalt eat dust all thy daies;' and elsewhere, 'The dust of the earth is his bread.' Now man was created of the dust of the earth, whence also that Demon is called the lord of flesh, and blood.

Zazel's fate is thus implicitly identified with that of the serpent cursed by the Lord and with Adam's fate in Genesis.⁸¹ Although not indispensable, knowledge of the literary background of the name 'Zazel' helps to clarify the somewhat obscure function of this character in Tiriel. In the poem, Tiriel is accused of having played the part of the tyrant demiurge who reduces his victims to an

earth-bound existence. Henceforth they physically and philosophically subsist on the lowest forms of organic life and on inorganic matter, and are unable to transcend their material perceptions. This is an extraordinary inversion of orthodox interpretations of the story of the Fall as related in Genesis, because, in the person of Zazel, the notorious serpent and Adam are identified and rendered victims of the 'creator' who is his 'brother' and deceitful tempter. Tiriél's own surviving sons have suffered a similar fate. They have become fearful Adamic victims groping on the ground as a result of Tiriél's curse which may be associated with the Lord's curse levelled at the serpent and his punishment of Adam in Genesis.⁸²

The poem thus once again fuses satire directed against orthodox interpretations of Genesis with a critique of mindless, ineffective materialism. Tiriél is the blind and cruel promulgator of both moral dogma and empiricism. Both maladies have the same withering effects on the human spirit. Ironically, Tiriél himself suffers the same apparently inescapable fate as his victims, whose spiritual corruption merely anticipates and reflects his own physical and spiritual decay as revealed in the course of his wanderings toward death. Zazel scorns his 'brother,' vividly describing the fate awaiting the blind "tyrant prince" (7:4).

Hela, however, denounces her cruel father in revealing terms as a hypocritical "destroyer," "consumer" and "avenger" (6:23).

O Leagued with evil spirits thou accursed man of
sin
True I was born thy slave who askd thee to save
me from death--
Twas for thy self thou cruel man because thou
wantest eyes (6:13-15).

Tiriel requires her to guide him safely across "the desert of all those cruel ones" (6:16), ignoring that it was his own cruelty which killed his children and turned his former kingdom into a desert. He insidiously asserts that "his youngest daughter / Laughs at affection glories in rebellion. scoffs at Love" (6:17-18) which she probably never received. Calling her a "serpent youngest venomous reptile of the flesh of Tiriel" (6:32) and "child of the curse" (6:34), he curses her:

Let snakes rise from thy bedded locks & laugh
among thy curls
He ceast her dark hair upright stood while snakes
infolded round
Her madding brows. Her shrieks appalld the soul of
Tiriel (6:43-45).

Based on the knowledge of Blake's later works, especially The Four Zoas, Damon describes Tiriel's realm in the West as "primarily sensuous" and he identifies it with the body. Damon and other commentators speculate that

Tiriel's five daughters represent the five senses which Blake, in The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, correlates with the body:⁸³

Man has no Body distinct from his Soul for that calld Body is a portion of Soul discernd by the five Senses, the chief inlets of Soul in this age (E34).

Hela, being the fifth daughter, is presumed by Damon to represent the sense of touch which "also signifies Sex to Blake."⁸⁴ Expanding this argument, Frye claims that "all imaginative activity based on the senses disappears except automatic sexual reproduction."⁸⁵ Without having to commit oneself to such a very specific identification founded on conjecture, it may be more generally stated that Hela objects to the constraints Tiriel imposes on her, be they of a physical or a moral nature, or both.⁸⁶ In reply to her defiance, Tiriel levels his curse against her, the one 'faculty' that warrants the continuity of his life, thus transforming her into an agent of death as reflected by her Medusa-like appearance.⁸⁷

As Tiriel has already lost the capacity for immediate perception and sympathetic communication, he relies on Hela to replace his eyes, or powers of "Vision." She mediates between the self-closed, introspective tyrant father and what to him has become a threatening external world inhabited by hostile sons and brothers. There is

no reason to assume that her guidance, with its overtly perceptual character, is bad in itself. Although this changes with Tiriel's curse, she might have helped bridge the psychological, perceptual and moral gulfs separating the energetic assertive 'self' from his environment. However, the mediator herself, the unwilling agent of perception, has been changed into a lethal, terrifying, Medusa-like figure, upon whom the act of perception is forced. As a result, it reflects the corruption of the subject of perception and it leads to the perversion of the object perceived. Despite the overt association of Hela's physical aspect with her mythological prototype Medusa, her appearance together with Tiriel has no 'petrifying' effect on Zazel and his sons, since they have already been reduced to the lowest level of material existence. Gradually, Tiriel's self-consciousness intensifies. He appears to repent having disfigured Hela, if only because he is beginning to fear the consequences for himself. The encounter with Zazel is a case in point.

These events anticipate in dramatised form some of the "Errors" as outlined in conceptual form in The Marriage of Heaven and Hell. For instance

1. That Man has two real existing principles
Viz: a Body & a Soul.
2. That Energy, calld Evil, is alone from the
Body, & that Reason, calld Good, is alone from
the Soul. (E34)

From Tiriel's point of view, the energies mobilised by his rebellious children are evil. Isolated cunning "Reason," represented by Tiriel, is good. In such a psychological approach to the ethics implicit in the poem, the destruction and submission of Tiriel's sons and daughters represents the early adumbration of a recurrent theme in Blake's poetry.

After his first confrontation with his sons on the occasion of Myratana's death, as related at the very beginning of the poem, Tiriel

the blind & aged man
Wanderd till he that leadeth all. led him to the
vales of Har

And Har & Heva like two children sat beneath the
Oak
Mnetha now aged waited on them. & brought them
food & clothing
But they were as the shadow of Har. & as the
years forgotten
Playing with flowers. & running after birds they
spent the day
And in the night like infants slept delighted
with infant dreams (2:3-9).

The names of Har and Heva, the contrast between their age, their physical appearances and their mentalities, their place of residence and their activities, as well as their association with their aged guardian Mnetha and their relationship with Tiriel, help reveal the identities of "The aged father and mother" as they are called in a deleted line.⁸⁸ These features also contribute to a

deeper appreciation of Tiriel's origins, of his present condition, of the significance of his quest and of the possibilities latent in his apparently providential encounter with Har, Heva, and Mnetha.

'Heva' is a conflation of the Latin Eva and Hebrew Havvah.⁸⁹ Har's name means mountain in Hebrew; thus, living in the "vales of Har" carries ironic connotations.⁹⁰ These strengthen the impression that Har and Heva, who "were as the shadow of Har," are parodies of Adam and Eve "degenerated from former wisdom and strength."⁹¹ Their "pleasant gardens" (2:10) are an artificial paradise where "singing birds" (3:20) are being deprived of their freedom and kept in "the cage of Har" (3:12).⁹² The implicit correspondence of a caged bird and a child imprisoned in school is elaborated in 'The School Boy' in Songs of Experience. Significantly, Har himself sings "in the great cage" (3:21) which proves that he still conforms to the laws which Tiriel denounces in his final speech. Har and Heva do not have a genuine conception of the pleasant and carefree, yet vulnerable state of childhood innocence celebrated in the Songs of Innocence. Apparently their own consciousness has not matured in correspondence with the external passage of time and, although they must have been experienced once, they have now regressed to a level of self-awareness which makes them act "like two children." The old couple

have grown senile without ever having acquired the self-knowledge of mature adults; nor have they retained the carefree innocence of real children who have not yet learned to control their "youthful fancies" and to "humble the immortal spirit." It is fitting that the second drawing, though not illustrating any particular passage in the text, should depict Har and Heva sitting naked in what Bentley describes as "a shallow stream," with Mnetha resting on the bank in the background.⁹³ Raine explains that "what is illustrated . . . is nothing so naturalistic as a bath, but the nature of Har and Heva: they are immersed in the waters of 'hyle'--matter--for their philosophy is unspiritual."⁹⁴ This conjecture is implicitly supported by Tiriel's analysis of the effects the imposition of Har's Laws has on the mind of a child, and by the fact that in the characters of Tiriel, Ijim, and Zazel, these Laws have produced different types of 'natural' man haunted by various kinds of dualism. Essick observes that Har and Heva "seem hypnotized as they press their foreheads together and stare into the 'watery glass' of each other's eyes. This odd configuration, and the retention of a close face-to-face posture even in sleep (drawing No. 11), suggest a limited perspective, shrunken to total self-involvement or lulled into sleep."⁹⁵ This portrayal specifically anticipates the shrinking of their sense organs and by this token, of their powers of perception, as described in The Song of Los. It also adumbrates the pervasive Blakean motifs of self-projection

Har and Heva's frightened reactions become more meaningful if one chooses to consider them as degenerate forms of Adam and Eve. Their biblical prototypes transgressed the Creator's command or code of behaviour, which limited their scope of knowledge. Their Fall occurred as a consequence of acquiring the fatal knowledge of good and evil. If Tiriel's final speech can be relied on, Har and Heva, of their own accord, did just the opposite. They effectively prevented their offspring from acquiring any kind of knowledge transcending the principles of duality--moral, epistemological, metaphysical--on which their 'paradise' subsists. Har and Heva never attempted to rid themselves of their 'reasonable' conformism and convert their latent powers of vision into positive action. Approached from a psychological rather than a moral point of view, Tiriel represents energy and desire. He therefore had to leave their constrictive garden of 'blissful' spiritual apathy and try to find fulfilment elsewhere.⁹⁶ It is not surprising that with Tiriel's sudden reappearance old fears, associated with the unpleasant memories of this disastrous event, come alive. However, once Heva's fears have been allayed, she

came & took old Tiriel in her mothers arms

Bless thy poor eyes old man. & bless the old father
of Tiriel
Thou art my Tiriels old father. I know thee thro
thy wrinkles (2:36-38).

Because of her retarded condition she can conceive of Tiriel only as the young man she used to know. Although the text suggests that she is older than Tiriel, her knowledge of life has not increased in the course of time. The second drawing ironically illustrates this apparent contradiction. Heva's youthful appearance and the benign expression on Har's unmarked features, as depicted for instance in the second and the eleventh drawings, might suggest their living in a state of youthful innocence. This first impression is corrected in the second drawing: both Har and Heva are immersed in water (symbolising matter or perhaps even the world of time and space); Mnetha is present in the background; and Har's flowing white beard suggests old age. Thus, Heva's youthful appearance ironically corresponds with her condition of spiritual immaturity.⁹⁷ With her, the pleasant aspects of the past have remained an unchanging present. She is, therefore, able to recognise familiar features in Tiriel's face ("thou art so like Tiriel" 3:22). But she is incapable of consciously identifying this blind old man with the young Tiriel she remembers. The best she can do is to fit him within her own categories of comprehension which agree with her timeless world of make-believe: "Then let thy name be Tiriel & never leave us more" (3:14). She can neither associate the change in Tiriel's physical appearance with the passage of time, nor can she perceive the corresponding implications concerning his state of

mind. The only 'logical' conclusion of which she is capable leads her to the assumption that somehow this old man must be the father of young Tiriel.

Mnetha is the indispensable guardian of the "vales of Har." Her name recalls both Mnemosyne and Athena, the ancient embodiments of memory and wisdom.⁹⁸ At Tiriel's arrival, Har and Heva run "weeping like frightened infants for refuge in Mnethas arms" (2:11). A statement by Blake in A Vision of the Last Judgment, though written two decades after Tiriel, may shed some light on Mnetha's character and function in the poem.

. . . when they Assert that Jupiter usurped the Throne of his Father Saturn & brought on an Iron Age & Begat on Mnemosyne or Memory The Greek Muses which are not Inspiration as the Bible is. Reality was Forgot & the Vanities of Time & Space only Rememberd & calld Reality Such is the Mighty difference between Allegoric Fable & Spiritual Mystery (E545).

Apart from Tiriel's final speech, there is no indication throughout the poem that any of the protagonists have any notion of a "Reality" beyond "the vanities of Time & Space." Mnetha is the aged mediator of the supposedly lasting values and recorded 'facts'--Blake's "vanities of Time & Space"--pertaining to the past and affecting the present. Her "wisdom founded on memory" has come a long way and pertains entirely to the past.⁹⁹ This accounts for her failure to immediately recognise Tiriel who is no

longer "king of all the west" (2:17), nor does he live there "in joy" (2:19) any more. Ijim failed to identify his tormentor with Tiriel, the deposed king, because he was deluded. Mnetha fails to recognise the true identity of the blind wanderer because she is not up to date with the present situation, nor does she comprehend the deep significance of the changes that have taken place outside the "vales of Har." She is the agent of forgetfulness of not merely the spiritual "Reality" transcending the supposed reality of immanent time and space, but especially of their effects on man and nature: change and mutability. Terrified, Har and Heva run to her "for refuge" when confronted with Tiriel, the representative of a perishing world, whose decrepit physical condition they instinctively associate with the evanescence of natural life, with decay, corruption and with death.¹⁰⁰ These are the aspects of life they fear and which, with Mnetha's aid, they have shut out of their artificial 'paradise.' But they cannot be erased from their consciousness. Har is concerned about losing her 'protection' should Tiriel decide to "smite his mother Mnetha" (2:25).

According to Essick, the leaf and tendrill patterns on Mnetha's dress and on the counterpane covering the playing Har and Heva (Drawing No. 4 and No. 11, respectively), emblemise Mnetha's 'natural' powers, and suggest the concept of the mind being limited to nature and its

imitation. "Mnetha's nature-mother-enchanted portrait in the designs shows her to be, like Tiriel himself, a creature of limited and limiting vision."¹⁰¹ Her 'protection' vouches that delights and fears are drained of any spiritual significance and interpreted in accordance with the unchanging standards and values of the past. Under her auspices, no creative but only restricted and imitative activity takes place, as Har's singing "in the great cage" proves. Such activities have little in common with what Blake in A Vision of the Last Judgment came to describe as "Vision or Imagination [which] is a Representation of what Eternally Exists. Really & Unchangeably." Har and Heva are sustained by the "food & clothing" with which Mnetha provides them. On one level of interpretation this may be read as a denunciation of traditional, possibly classical, influences on art, especially on poetry, rather than as a direct attack on Greek and Roman "Fable or Allegory . . . Formd by the daughters of Memory."¹⁰² The "food & clothing" handed down by the ancient poets was considered by Blake to be outworn, second-hand material and form, lacking the immediacy and freshness of original inspiration.

Devoid of "Vision or Imagination" and far from being natural and artistic correlatives or "a Representation of what Eternally Exists," the activities of Har and Heva correspond with the nature of their artificial paradise.

"Reality," the entelechy of a totally humanised universe, Aristotle's active principle or condition in which a potentiality has become a reality, thereby fulfilling its existence, has become degraded to an existence in which the flux of time is reduced to repetitive automatism terminating in death.¹⁰³ Sensual enjoyment is without spontaneity, and natural beauty is deprived of any transcendent significance. Correspondingly, devoid of inspiration aesthetic form becomes an empty shell. The limited use Har makes of the natural beauty of his "vales" and the constrictions he imposes on his "singing birds" as well as on his own pleasures may indeed represent, as Damon believes, "the bondage of poetic laws" imposed by the kind of "didactic poetry" which was especially rife during the eighteenth century.¹⁰⁴ Thus, Mnetha's 'protection' is tantamount to a retarding function which artificially helps to preserve Har and Heva's ambiguous state and protects them from having to face up to the futility of their existence.

When Tiriel, the old blind wanderer, for the first time in the poem, arrives in the "vales of Har," he is weary and hungry. Yet, he is no prodigal son ruefully returning to his father's home. Apparently Tiriel is aware that these "vales" can be no permanent abode for him. The delusive state of unchanging, unreflecting and complacent infantilism maintained under the pretence

of timelessness, does not agree with the sorrowful and compelling restlessness which forces him to wander in search of some obscure goal. Tiriel's blindness signifies his ignorance of the meaning and purpose of life transcending self-interest. He never learnt to take a critical view of himself and of the motives underlying his thoughts and actions. Although he himself once rebelled against Har's Laws, he nevertheless activated their repressive potential by enforcing them on his own children. From his point of view, other human beings exist solely in relation to him, never to themselves as autonomous individuals with desires of their own. Tiriel's blindness also renders apparent that he is thrown back upon himself in perceptual and spiritual isolation from his natural surroundings and from human company. Cut off from former glory, his blind journey back to his place of origin is not an attempted permanent escape from painful experience into the realm of soothing anamnesia or of nostalgic childhood memories. Rather it is the visual expression of an attempt to find in memory, the sustenance for his continuing quest. This is the reason why he demands

O Mnetha. if thou hast any food
Give it me. for I cannot stay my journey is far from
hence (2:20-21).

Returning to the "vales of Har" signifies a return to his origins in a geographical (East), temporal, genealogical

as well as in a psychological and cognitive sense. It would appear, however, that Tiriel does not comprehend the possibilities offered by his brief sojourn in these "vales," the realisation of which would bring his quest to a satisfactory end. After all, he does not choose to enter the "vales of Har" of his own accord, but "he who leadeth all. led him."¹⁰⁵ This apparent allusion to the merciful Christian God suggests that Tiriel, in spite of, and because of, his blindness, is being given the chance of self-recognition by being confronted with the condition of spiritual deprivation which caused him to rebel against Har in the first place. The poem makes the point that Divine guidance is at work regardless of whether man is aware of it or not.¹⁰⁶ Man perverts truly Divine love and joy by forcing his fellow men into the straight jacket of moral laws and other codes of conformity. The same is true if he, like Tiriel, rejects such oppression and then proceeds to take the law into his own hands, instead of realising that the "God of love" and his "Heavens of joy" do exist, that they are ever present, and that joy and love must not be enforced.

Tiriel finally frowns at Mnetha when she asks him to stay, offering herself, together with Har and Heva, as substitutes for his lost sight:

But dwell with us & let us be to thee instead of
eyes
And I will bring thee food old man. till death
shall call thee hence (3:28-29).

Mnetha's degenerated wisdom and Har and Heva's 'natural' paradise of intellectual stagnation are no lasting substitutes for Tiriel's lost dreams. They are merely temporary remedies for the immediate painful experience of his unfulfilled desires. At this stage of his quest he does not understand that the past is not only a convenient resting place for the frustrated and exhausted mind, and memories the food to sustain it, but that the promise of a better future and the key to a new and far superior paradise are to be found in the errors of the past, and that it is for this reason that he is being led back to his place of origin. There he might learn--as indeed he does on his second visit--that in some respect he has suffered the same fate as Har, and for similar reasons.¹⁰⁷ Despite his renewed confrontation with Har, Tiriel fails to recognise the correspondence between himself and Har. His journey, associated with most intense painful experiences, has not yet led Tiriel to correct his mistaken conception of the nature of reality inherited from his ancestor. He does, however, realise that Har and Heva's pretence to paradisaal harmony is founded on the deliberate suppression of desire and of the consciousness of experience and change. Rather than turning his back on them for a

second time, Tiriel ought to try and achieve a higher form of innocence purified by experience, not an escape from it. Such an achievement would constitute genuine imaginative progress, and not the repetition of old mistakes.

Having failed to bind their offspring by means of their respective codes of behaviour, both Har and Tiriel feel betrayed. Har was deserted by his sons--presumably Tiriel, Ijim and Zazel--and so, in a sense, was Tiriel. While Har complains that his cruel sons left him (3:16), Tiriel insists: "my sons were not like thine / But worse" (3:18-19), probably because they did not literally desert him, but committed an act of 'high treason' by attempting to change his empire from the inside as it were. Although Har did not actively persecute his sons, they were in different ways permanently conditioned by his Laws. Hela mistakenly describes Har and Heva as

holy. & forgiving filld with loving mercy
Forgetting the offences of their most rebellious
children
Or else thou wouldest not have livd to curse thy
helpless children (6:26-28).

These alleged virtues may be defined more accurately as repressive tolerance, to use a topical term. It is based on a perverted conception of Christian ethics. As a young man Tiriel escaped only to build an empire founded on his

own violent and vengeful brand of worldly deceit without metaphysical pretensions. Stressing the "Madness & deep dismay [which]" posses(s) the heart of the blind man / The wanderer who seeks the woods" (3:31-32), Tiriel departs for a second time from Har's "vales" where the totality of potential human experience is reduced to shadows of "Reality" and truth. Continuing to wander in the mental hell of his own making, Tiriel is in fact running away from himself.

Probably an original harmony between Har, Heva and their sons existed a long time before the poem's action sets in. In that original harmony all these figures possibly formed a unity consisting of distinct human beings complementary in their individualities. The fallacious tenet that all men are to be treated alike ("One Law for the Lion & Ox"), commonly held by Har and Tiriel, results in the attempted reduction of mankind to uniformity; and the fragmentation of original universality manifests itself in limited self-projection. Primordial harmony is destroyed because of the individual's perpetual separation from the community, and by the attempt to subordinate the community to one law. It is not the rebellious spirit which destroys true harmony but the selfish conformist who perverts it to uniformity. Their self-centred thinking and hierarchic aspirations keep Har and Tiriel ignorant of the value of creative individuality. Har believes that he is preserving the harmonic paradisaal condition by suppressing

desire. Tiriel escaped from it to create his own private paradise which, ironically, is founded on the same repressive principle. Both Har's "vales" and Tiriel's kingdom in the West are thus paradigms of truncated universality, perversions of the eternal qualities of spiritual youth, resulting in stagnation or even spiritual regression.

Both Har and Tiriel consider any critical reaction against their self-righteous attitudes toward nature and their fellow men an offence. Correspondingly their misconceptions of the world and the nature of reality are founded on the negative principle of exclusion which may take the forms of materialism, empiricism or moral dualism. In dramatising Tiriel's quest, the poem examines the spiritual causes and effects of his impaired vision of reality. It thereby makes a contribution toward arresting the process of further spiritual degeneration. It also implicitly suggests a vision of "Reality" where all human thoughts, acts and experiences are deemed necessary in making up a completely humanised world transcending all manner of dualism.

Only when "the terrible pair" (7:24), Tiriel and Hela, have "entered on the mountains of Har" (7:19) does Tiriel, in a final burst of critical insight, take a recapitulating and analytical look into the past, at the nature of

repression and at the origins of rebellion. His speech of denunciation, discussed earlier in this chapter, unjustly places all blame on Har. Two vital points are made: 'natural' man and 'natural' religion are both products of repressive education. This insight has a lethal effect on Tiriel (and possibly on Har) because it reveals and thereby negates the basic Lockean principles on which the respective 'paradises' of Har and Tiriel were founded.

When Tiriel left Har for the first time, he acted in accordance with a persistent Blakean maxim, succinctly expressed in All Religions are One: "As the true method of knowledge is experiment the true faculty of knowing must be the faculty which experiences." (E2) Possibly, Tiriel knew then that this faculty can only transcend "the confined nature of bodily sensation" if invested with "the Poetic or Prophetic character."¹⁰⁸ But once Tiriel had established and consolidated his rule over the West, the notion of "experiment" became alien to him, and his character changed into that of a self-assertive tyrannical father. Although he initially failed to suppress the energetic impulses of his children, their eventual defeat indicates that their activities were no longer invested with the "Poetic or Prophetic" spirit. For a short period, Tiriel's lust for revenge was satisfied and he felt free to return to Har and Heva, in a geographical and spiritual sense, and peacefully settle down in their "vales" to

contemplate his past achievements. His conflict with Hela and his encounter with Zazel, however, force upon him the realisation that his entire life has been a tragic failure. The energetic principle, personified by Tiriel, has unprofitably spent its potentially constructive force and expires. Tiriel dies experienced yet unrepentant and unconsoled.

In There is No Natural Religion (b), Blake asserts:

VI If any could desire what he is incapable of possessing, despair must be his eternal lot.

VII The desire of Man being Infinite the possession is Infinite & himself Infinite

Application. He who sees the Infinite in all things sees God. He who sees the Ratio only sees himself only.

Therefore God becomes as we are, that we may be as he is (E2).

These lines succinctly express the message at the core of Tiriel. All his life Tiriel has striven to dominate others, even to the point of their destruction. Yet, ironically, instead of joy, "Madness & deep dismay posses(s) the heart of the blind man / The wanderer who seeks the woods" (3:31-32). Thus, Tiriel's ultimate failure is not brought about by his opponents' power. It originates in his own unsubdued 'ego' which, in Blakean language of a later period, would be described by the more complex term 'selfhood.' Ironically, Tiriel's ultimate desires have to remain unful-

filled because he has always seen himself at the centre. His personal interests and selfish aspirations are his absolute standard. They are not recognised for what they really are: the "Ratio" in Blake's use of the term, the relative value of one's 'self' as compared with others and their aspirations. In the attempt to realise his ambitions Tiriél has imposed his will on others without considering their wishes. He has imposed on them his notions of right and wrong, of what is real and what is not, thus projecting, in a manner of speaking, his inflated 'self' as the 'ultima ratio' on reality, and he has reduced reality to his own point of view. As a result, Blake's concluding maxim of There is No Natural Religion (b) is perverted. Tiriél has created his private image of a 'father' and king, an idol with no existence of its own, a delusive reflection of Tiriél's monstrosity. Tiriél is his own God.¹⁰⁹ His imposition is that of the political and ecclesiastic tyrant. His error is the common failure of the moralist and the rationalist.

The end of Tiriél's reign signifies just another failure of human endeavour in a world conceived as fallen. Once the beauties of the natural world have been reduced to the lowest level of amorphous matter, symbolised by "a drear sandy plain," and communication has been replaced by mutual distrust, cursing and the hissing of human 'serpents,' there is nothing left for Tiriél worth living

for. The very appearance of the desert of this world reflects the existential misery of its inhabitants and their outlook on life. Yet, Tiriel, unlike Adam and Eve, and Job, does not accept this vital change of fortune with humility. Eventually, he turns against Har who, in spite of their differences, is his spiritual ancestor. His denunciation is inherently ironic since Tiriel himself fails to draw the consequences from his insight into the causes of error and fails to blame himself as well. He shows no signs of remorse for having cursed and thus effectively destroyed his own rebellious children.¹¹⁰ Indeed, his reproachful address to Har appears to indicate Tiriel's unrepentant preference for a law-abiding race of slaves. With Tiriel cursing the "weak mistaken father of a lawless race" the story comes full circle. It has covered, by way of symbolic illustration, the fate of intellectual conformism and the rise and fall of human ambition.

There is no indication in this poem of an epiphany of true innocence or of lasting spiritual 'progress.' As the two major protagonists have no notion of such a possibility, they cannot be expected to successfully perform the necessary rites of cleansing their senses and their minds through experience by activating their powers of imagination during their time-bound sojourn. With Har it is pretended ignorance, with Tiriel acute awareness of the effects of

time, which constitute the ever-present features of their characters and which condition their thinking and actions.

Tiriel succumbs to the inescapable truth that all his actions are affected by the passage of time. Possibly he also understands that any prolonged residence in the "vales of Har" merely leads to natural regeneration, thereby implying the danger of a repetition of Tiriel's previous life-cycle, cyclic motion being the pattern to which all merely energetic, self-centred activity in time and space must adhere. 'Progress' along the lines pre-determined by sense perception (the basic form of empiricism) and codes of behaviour (Natural Law and Natural Religion) corresponds with the cyclic pattern inherent in all forms of 'natural' life, as Blake in There is No Natural Religion and in All Religions are One forcefully asserts. Empirical modes of perception and rules governing behaviour are imposed by the father on the child, by the older generation on the younger. An interruption of this pattern cannot be expected from Tiriel's surviving sons who "wither in the palace."

Tiriel's downfall does not entail liberation from the stifling effects of all manner of 'natural' conditioning--be it cognitive, legal or religious. The specific conception of reality associated with a 'natural' and deistic world

picture apparently survives despite the death of its most volatile and ambitious exponent. If one chooses to adopt Tiriel's biased point of view, the events of the poem suggest that, despite the steady flux of time, adherence to a 'natural' conception of reality predetermines man's understanding of himself in relation to others to develop--or stagnate--in a circular course. Tiriel, in his final speech, infers that had he received a different kind of education, had he been allowed to indulge in "youthful fancies," his conception of himself and of his environment, his attitude and his actions would have been different. Yet, after he had left Har and Heva, there were no external obstacles to limit his scope for constructive action. After all, his sons managed to go beyond Tiriel's conception of art and government, despite Tiriel's probably oppressive education. Even when his sons rebelled and Tiriel had become blind and utterly dejected about his wife's death, there was still the Divine hand to guide him. Tragically, Tiriel proved unable to grasp the opportunities of rising through painful personal experience to a higher level of spiritual awareness of his own needs and those of others.

In Tiriel there is no other 'cause' of personal or impersonal nature, beyond the immediate power and influence of the leading characters, which might be responsible for their 'fall.' Har and Tiriel personify different modes of

behaviour based on the same 'weltanschauung.' Adherence to it constitutes their individual 'fall.' This 'lapse' is not endowed with the weight of a mythical event. It is ironically revealed in the poem as being self-inflicted and forced on others by means of education. Fallen man is a 'natural' man, the man subscribing to Natural Philosophy and Deism. He is a product of repressive education of the mind and the body, and his notion of "moral fitness" is one of its corollaries. The fallen state of mankind does not manifest itself in an individual's immorality, as synonymous with mortality, but in the mistaken belief that an unchanging moral code exists, obedience to which will allegedly be rewarded with immortality in some distant future.

Blake's persistent opposition to the prevalent materialist-determinist philosophy of his day and to any form of dogmatism, not only influenced his subtly ironical selection of names in Tiriel, it also accounts for the imaginative association and assimilation of originally unrelated literary material within a new symbolic context. Here, all human misery is demonstrated as originating in the manifestly immanent historical phenomenon of legalism in thought, ethics and aesthetics. By Tiriel's own admission, physical, intellectual and emotional oppression, deformation and corruption begin in childhood, and are primarily perpetrated and perpetuated by the accepted

means of education. Examination shows that the adult characters in Tiriel are more than self-contained protagonists in a somewhat obscure, though not formless, human tragedy. They are both self-centred promulgators and warped products or victims of Natural Law and Natural Religion, and they represent individuals and human society at large.

As the protagonists in Tiriel are symbolic correlatives of a wide variety of empirical phenomena outside the immediate poetic context, their characteristic features are somewhat stylised. In the personalities of Har and Tiriel, for instance, the historical dimension is suspended. They are poetic creations equally relevant to Blake's own time, as to our's, and applicable to a broad spectrum of human experience. Although these characters enjoy a considerable degree of independence from possible historical precedents and literary sources, their scope of action remains limited as they are ultimately anthropomorphic projections of specific interdependent attitudes of mind. The reader receives only a dim impression of their actuality when he learns that the past fortunes of Har and Heva and of Tiriel differ from their present circumstances. By refusing to outline their past in definite terms and by being rather vague about the reasons for the changes, Blake leaves too wide a scope for speculation. Furthermore, the 'narrative' is too loosely

assembled to offer, with regard to its subject-matter, sufficient resilience to a whole myriad of conjectures. Because of this lack of self-evident lucidity, knowledge of Blake's contemporaneous epigrams on Natural Religion, and on the Poetic Genius as the true source of inspiration, and of later explications of his thought in poetry and prose, helps to clarify the form of thought which provides the poem with intellectual and imaginative consistency. However, precise and concise statements by the poet elsewhere may be applied to Tiriel only with considerable caution. The complex vagueness of the poem, whether regarded as a failure or a success, contributed to a more definite shaping of Blake's thought and symbolism in his later poetry.

FOOTNOTES

¹All quotations from Blake's poetry and prose, unless otherwise indicated, will be taken from The Poetry and Prose of William Blake, ed. David V. Erdman, Commentary by Harold Bloom (1965; 4th Printing, with Revisions, New York, 1970). Hereafter cited as Erdman, or E in connection with page number. For Erdman's transcript of the manuscript of Tiriel, see Erdman, pp. 273-282. Quotations from Tiriel will be specified by the number of the leaf in the manuscript and the line number in Erdman's edition.

²For the most extensive description and discussion of the manuscript, see William Blake: Tiriel, Facsimile & Transcript of the Manuscript, Reproduction of the Drawings and a Commentary on the Poem, ed. G. E. Bentley, Jr. (Oxford, 1967), pp. 19-57. Quotations from Bentley's edition of the text will be cited by page and line number. See also Erdman, p. 735.

³See Bentley, Tiriel, pp. 28-29, and pp. 49-50.

⁴A brief discussion of some aspects of this problem can be found in Bentley, Tiriel, pp. 19-25. The motif of perception both in the text and in seven designs is explored by Robert N. Essick, "The Altering Eye: Blake's Vision in the Tiriel Designs," William Blake: Essays in Honour of Sir Geoffrey Keynes, ed. Morton D. Paley and Michael Phillips (London, 1973), pp. 50-65.

⁵For a discussion of this problem, see Bentley, Tiriel, pp. 25-26.

⁶The most detailed account is provided by Bentley, Tiriel, pp. 50-51. See also Erdman, p. 735. Robert F. Gleckner, The Piper and The Bard: A study of William Blake (Detroit, 1959), pp. 142-144. Hereafter cited as Gleckner. The Poetical Works of William Blake, ed. John Sampson (Oxford, 1905), p. 330. The Complete Writings of William Blake, ed. Geoffrey Keynes (London, New York, Toronto, 1966), p. 886. Hereafter cited as Keynes. E. D. Hirsch, Jr., Innocence and Experience: An Introduction to Blake (New Haven and London, 1964), pp. 310-311. Hereafter cited as Hirsch. For concise discussions of the dating of The Songs of Innocence and The Songs of Experience, see, for example, Erdman, p. 714 and Gleckner, pp. 142-143.

⁷Kathleen Raine, Blake and Tradition (London, 1969), I, 34-35. Hereafter cited as Raine.

⁸The Works of William Blake, Poetic, Symbolic and Critical, ed. E. J. Ellis and W. B. Yeats (London, 1893), II, 81. Hereafter cited as Ellis and Yeats.

⁹David V. Erdman, Blake: Prophet Against Empire: A Poet's Interpretation of the History of his own Times (Princeton, N.J., 1969), pp. 133-134.

¹⁰See Erdman, Blake, p. 135.

¹¹Kathleen Raine, "Some Sources of Tiriel," Huntington Library Quarterly, 21 (1957), 1-2.

¹²See Raine, "Some Sources of Tiriel," 1-36. Raine, I, 34-66. Nancy Bogen, "A New Look at Blake's Tiriel," BNYPL, 73 (1969), 153-165. Mary S. Hall, "Blake's Tiriel: A Visionary Form Pedantic," BNYPL, 74 (March, 1970), 166-177.

¹³Bentley, Tiriel, p. 14.

¹⁴John Beer observes "that whereas in later works Blake's names are usually either obvious or fictitious, here they can all be traced to further sources." John Beer, Blake's Visionary Universe (Manchester, 1969), p. 338.

¹⁵S. Foster Damon, William Blake: His Philosophy and Symbols (London, 1969), p. 306. Hereafter cited as Damon. Beer suspects "that Blake's mind worked through an identification of Mercury the Greek god with the qualities of mercury the substance to create an image for the human self with the composite suggestion of the light-giving god who falls; who becomes as elusive as quicksilver in his metamorphoses; yet who remains the 'messenger of the gods,' holding a key to the meaning of the universe." Beer, Blake's Visionary Universe, p. 367.

¹⁶Raine, I, 35.

¹⁷Ellis and Yeats, II, 81.

¹⁸Beer, Blake's Visionary Universe, p. 63. Bloom suggests that "Tiriel's name may contain a reference to the Prince of Tyre in Ezekiel 28:13-16. That Prince, once a guardian of the Ark of God, becomes the Covering Cherub who constitutes a barrier between man and the re-entry into Paradise." Harold Bloom, Blake's Apocalypse: A Study in Poetic Argument (London, 1963), p. 30.

¹⁹Beer approaches the problem from a different direction. He demands that "the references must themselves be interpreted in the light of Blake's interpretation of Genesis. The real point of the Fall, as he saw it, was not the moral one (that Eve disobeyed), but a psychological one. Vision and desire became separated, so that both forces henceforward existed in isolation as light and energy. In consequence, both sides suffered." While agreeing with Beer's conclusion, I question his method. Beer, Blake's Visionary Universe, p. 63.

²⁰Damon comments on "the fact that the symbolism of Tiriel, being early, has not too much in common with the later books." While I disagree with Damon on this point, his subsequent remarks support my decision to deal with this passage first: "Blake imagined he had forestalled any . . . literal interpretations by concluding the poem with a frankly symbolic section . . . The climax, being a direct growth from the esoteric meaning, should lead the thinker back to Blake's real thought." Damon, p. 71.

²¹Bentley, Tiriel, 14:361.

²²"One Law for the Lion & Ox is Oppression." The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, Pl. 24, E43.

²³John Milton, Paradise Lost, Book I, 26. The Poems of John Milton, ed. John Carey and Alastair Fowler (London, & Harlow, 1968).

²⁴'The Divine Image,' l. 15, Songs of Innocence, E13

²⁵The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, Pl. 12, E38.

²⁶Poetical Sketches, E433.

²⁷See Charles Dickens, Hard Times.

²⁸The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, Pl. 12, E38.

²⁹John Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, ed. John W. Yolton, 2 vols (1961; rev. rpt. 1972). Hereafter cited as Essay. Quotations from the Essay will be cited by book, chapter and paragraph number.

³⁰Annotations to the Works of Sir Joshua Reynolds, Discourse VII. E649.

³¹Essay, II,9,15. Compare also II,1,2-11.

³²See Genesis, 3:14 and 3:17-19.

³³This term is borrowed from Rosalie Colie, "Time and Eternity: Paradox and Structure in Paradise Lost," in Milton: Modern Judgements, ed. Alan Rudrum (London, 1968), p. 193.

³⁴Bentley reads "to handle the immortal spirit." Tiriel, 15:387.

³⁵Genesis, 3:1. See Paradise Lost, Book IX, 83-96.

³⁶Compare Paradise Lost, Book I, 84-87; 95-97. Book IV, 800. Book X, 511-520. John, 8:44.

³⁷The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, Pl. 12, E38.

³⁸Peter F. Fisher, The Valley of Vision: Blake as Prophet and Revolutionary, ed. Northrop Frye (Toronto, 1961), p. 202.

³⁹Damon, p. 306.

⁴⁰12 April 1827. E707.

⁴¹Raine, I, 35.

⁴²The original (deleted) second line read: "But dark were his once piercing eyes." Bentley, Tiriel, 1:2. Beer describes Tiriel as "a Cain-like figure," and draws attention "to an interesting parallel in the writings of Coleridge. Tiriel's 'once-piercing eyes' remind us that Coleridge too regarded 'piercing eyes' as the sign of a visionary nature." Blake's Visionary Universe, p. 64.

⁴³Bentley, Tiriel, p. 18.

⁴⁴Compare drawings Nos 7 and 8. For a discussion of the architectural motifs, see Essick, "The altering Eye," 59-61.

⁴⁵Beer, Blake's Visionary Universe, p. 339.

⁴⁶Raine, "Some Sources of Tiriel," 2.

⁴⁷Damon, p. 306. Damon explains that with Agrippa "the philosophic 'fire' was the principle of Will, which is the soul of all things. . . . As Blake uses the term, he means to express the inability of the Will to revivify dead Inspiration."

⁴⁸The 'West' is a very ambiguous symbol in this context. This impression is confirmed by the Egyptian pyramids in the background of the first design. They suggest, as Bentley observes, "that the scene is Egypt" (Bentley, Tiriel, p. 11), where Israel was held in bondage. Tiriel's children ominously remain in the 'West' and thus in the immediate neighbourhood of the pyramids and of Tiriel's palace. See Bentley, pp. 14-15, for a discussion of possible parallels with the story of Joseph in Egypt. I emphatically agree with his conclusion that "Blake seems to have been taking over details and metaphors rather than a whole story."

⁴⁹3:16-19.

⁵⁰1:11-16. See drawings Nos 1, 7, 8; and Bentley, Tiriel, p. 30.

⁵¹Damon, p. 308.

⁵²Damon, p. 72.

⁵³See Bentley, Tiriel, p. 31.

⁵⁴Bentley, Tiriel, p. 30.

⁵⁵See Bentley, Tiriel, pp. 42-45.

⁵⁶On Virgil, E267. Dated by Keynes about 1820. The text continues: "Mathematic Form is Eternal in the Reasoning Memory. Living Form is Eternal Existence." The preceding lines are equally revealing: "Sacred Truth has pronounced that Greece & Rome as Babylon & Egypt: so far from being parents of Arts & Sciences as they pretend: were destroyers of all Art." With reservations this notion may be usefully employed in decoding aspects of Tiriel's actions.

⁵⁷In his summary of the narrative, Bentley (Tiriel, p. 8) points out that after their rebellion Tiriel's sons "may have kept Zazel's sons as their own slaves, for one 'son of Zazel' seems to be in a menial position to them." (See 1:34.)

⁵⁸See drawings Nos 7 and 8.

⁵⁹Damon, p. 308.

⁶⁰The text does not clarify whether this "rest" is identical with Tiriel's thirty remaining sons.

⁶¹In The Marriage of Heaven and Hell the voice of the Devil proclaims that "All Bibles or sacred codes have been the causes of the following Errors. . . . 3. That God will torment Man in Eternity for following his Energies." (E34)

⁶²Hirsch, p. 299.

⁶³Essay, II, 23, 36.

⁶⁴Fisher, The Valley of Vision, p. 203. Kathleen Raine is of essentially the same opinion: "symbolically, old age stands for the temporal, which alone ages. . . . Only the temporal selfhood can grow old, for it alone is built up in time, nourished on memories, and its final fate--whether in man or institution, church or state . . . can only be death." (I, 66)

⁶⁵Bloom (Blake's Apocalypse, p. 31) stresses the psychological and moral implications of Tiriel's blindness and states that it "is the involuntary and ironic consequence of a vision totally unconcerned with the reality of other selves." Drawing on Damon's commentary, he indicates the subtle fusion of ontological and moral issues: "Tiriel was King of the West, the realm of man's body in Blake, and therefore the gate back to Eden, since it is by an increase in sensual fulfillment that man is to recover himself. But Tiriel was a restrictive and moralizing ruler of the body, as his name of the Almighty Tyrant symbolises." Using his knowledge of Blake's later symbolism, Damon explains that the "West" means "the body (for there also lay the Atlantic, in its turn a symbol of the Sea of Time and Space)." (p. 306) According to Damon, Tiriel's five daughters "represent the five senses. They immediately and openly protest against the curse, for Tiriel's reign has been over the West, which is primarily sensuous. . . . It is [the] closing in by the flesh which is about to follow Tiriel's curse." (p. 308)

⁶⁶See Patrick Cruttwell's review of Kathleen Raine's Blake and Tradition in The Hudson Review, 23 (Spring 1970), 133-142.

⁶⁷Northrop Frye, Fearful Symmetry: A Study of William Blake (1947; rpt. Boston, 1962), p. 242. Hereafter cited as Frye. When Ijim confronts the sons of Tiriel with their father (see the deleted passage in Bentley, Tiriel, 76:227-232) they significantly describe themselves as "slaves of Fortune" (line 229). As their powers of vision were stifled they have become slaves to fate, helpless victims to inscrutable and irresistible forces which they associate with Tiriel and also with his brother Ijim. His "words were as the voice of Fate" (4:26).

⁶⁸Frye, p. 243. He quotes from Swedenborg's True Christian Religion, and explains that the 'ochim,' 'tziim' and 'ijim' are "Hebrew words, which occur in Izaiah xiii, 21 [which] are translated in the 1611 Bible as 'doleful creatures,' 'owls' and 'satyrs.'"

⁶⁹Raine, I, 61.

⁷⁰Raine, I, 62.

⁷¹According to Raine (I, 63) "Proteus is matter, the same 'prima materia' of all transformation that gives Tiriel his name. This symbol is not only alchemical but is given by Bacon in his tract On the Wisdom of the Ancients. An examination of Blake's list is revealing, and shows how deliberately he worked with his symbols."

⁷²Various references to Tiriel's tongue as "glib & eloquent" (4:36) and "evil" (6:35) are reminiscent of Paradise Lost: "though fallen on evil days . . . and evil tongues" (Book VII, 25-26). In The Four Zoas, Tharmas is associated with both the West and the tongue.

⁷³Raine, I, 60-61.

⁷⁴Gleckner, pp. 152-153.

⁷⁵Damon, p. 307.

⁷⁶Damon, p. 72.

⁷⁷Beer, Blake's Visionary Universe, p. 65.

⁷⁸Damon (p. 308) suggests that "Matha seems to be a corruption of 'Matter,' while Orcus is a Latin name for 'Hell.'"

⁷⁹Gleckner, p. 154.

⁸⁰Raine, I, 56. Damon (p. 306) also suggests that the name 'Zazel' could "be an apocopated form of Azazel, the first of the demons to fall, according to the Book of Enoch. The Lord's accusations and treatment of Azazel are a fair parallel to Tiriel's actions toward Zazel."

⁸¹Genesis, 3:14: "And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life."

⁸²Raine (I, 57) explains that "it is not, according to isoteric tradition, the supreme God who declares that man is dust of the earth; 'Adam is only The Natural Man & not the Soul or Imagination.'" (The Laocoön, E271.)

⁸³Damon, pp. 306, 308.

⁸⁴Damon, p. 308.

⁸⁵Frye, p. 245. This is not entirely true since Tiriel can still hear; see 6:5-6.

⁸⁶These constraints on sensual fulfilment, and the corruption of the senses, are described by the "voice of sorrow" which Thel hears when sitting beside "her own grave plot" (The Book of Thel, 6:9-10).

Why cannot the Ear be closed to its own destruction?
Or the glistening Eye to the poison of a smile!

. . .
Why a Tongue impress'd with honey from every wind?
Why an Ear, a whirlpool fierce to draw creations in?

. . .
Why a tender curb upon the youthful burning boy!
Why a little curtain of flesh on the bed of our desire?
(6:11-20)

Unwilling or unable to face this experience "The Virgin . . . / Fled back unhindered till she came into the vales of Har" (6:21-22).

⁸⁷Damon (p. 308) relates the effects of the curse levelled against Hela (Sex) with the fate suffered by Medusa.

⁸⁸Bentley, Tiriel, 64:63.

⁸⁹See Damon, p. 307; Bentley, Tiriel, p. 3.

⁹⁰Damon, p. 307. See Harold Bloom's Commentary in Erdman's edition of The Poetry and Prose of William Blake, E863. Hereafter cited as Commentary. Bentley (Tiriel, p. 4) draws attention to another complementary meaning: "'Har' is actually described as a wise king (as Blake's Har evidently once was) among the Scandinavians in Mallet's Northern Antiquities, a book with which it is very likely Blake was familiar." Raine (I, 53-54) is more explicit on this point.

⁹¹Bentley, Tiriel, p. 16. In The Song of Los this symbolism is developed and rendered more explicit.

⁹²Blake expresses his abhorrence of caging birds in Auguries of Innocence ("A Robin Red breast in a Cage / Puts all Heaven in a Rage" lines 5-6, E481) and in 'The Schoolboy' in Songs of Experience ("How can the bird that is born for joy, / Sit in a cage and sing." Lines 16-17, E31).

⁹³Bentley, Tiriel, p. 33.

⁹⁴Raine, I, 52-53.

⁹⁵Essick, "The Altering Eye," 52-53.

⁹⁶Beer offers a similar interpretation: "Vision and desire became separated, so that both forces henceforward existed in isolation as light and energy. In consequence, both sides suffered. [Blake's] Adam and Eve continued to exist in innocence, but impotent as a result of their loss of energy, while the spirit of energy and wisdom, cut off from true vision, became progressively corrupted." (Blake's Visionary Universe, p. 63.) The spiritual histories of Har and Tiriel are summed up on Plate 5 of The Marriage of Heaven and Hell:

Those who restrain desire, do so because theirs
is weak enough to be restrained; and the restrainer
or reason usurps its place & governs the unwilling.

And being restrained it by degrees becomes passive
till it is only the shadow of desire. (E34)

⁹⁷With reference to the second drawing, John Beer (p. 61) dismisses Frye's description of Har and Heva as "a couple of hideous imbeciles, senile children." (Frye, p. 243.) Yet, Beer on his part finds the impressions made by the text and by the drawings irreconcilable. Contrary to Beer's view, I consider text and Drawing No. 2 to be complementary, as the drawing does not simply illustrate the text but widens its scope of significance.

⁹⁸See, for instance, Damon, p. 307.

⁹⁹Frye, p. 244.

¹⁰⁰See 2:22-24.

¹⁰¹Essick, "The Altering Eye," 58-59.

¹⁰²A Vision of the Last Judgment, E544. Commenting on the second drawing, Essick points out that "Mnetha appears to be as transfixed as her dependants, staring blankly off into space, or into her memories . . . Art is nourished by Memory." Essick thus discovers "tentative iconic possibilities in the Tiriel designs [which] are harbingers of Blake's mature commentaries on the 'Daughters

of Memory' ('Annotations to Reynolds,' [E632]) and the limitations of an aesthetic based on memory rather than imagination." (Essick, "The Altering Eye," 54-57.)

¹⁰³On 'entelechy,' see Aristotle, Metaphysica IX; 1050a 21 ff.; 1071a 35 f.; and De Anima, 412a 27 f.; 414a 16f.

¹⁰⁴According to Damon (p. 307) "Har and Heva symbolise poetry and painting in a degraded state." However, Damon confuses the issue by asserting that "Har is the Poetic Genius . . . when compared with the 7th Principle of All Religions are One: ' . . . the True Man is the source, he being the Poetic Genius.'" Har certainly is neither.

¹⁰⁵It is mainly for this reason that I disagree with Gleckner who regards "Tiriél's return to 'innocence' [as/ doubly damnable." (p. 149)

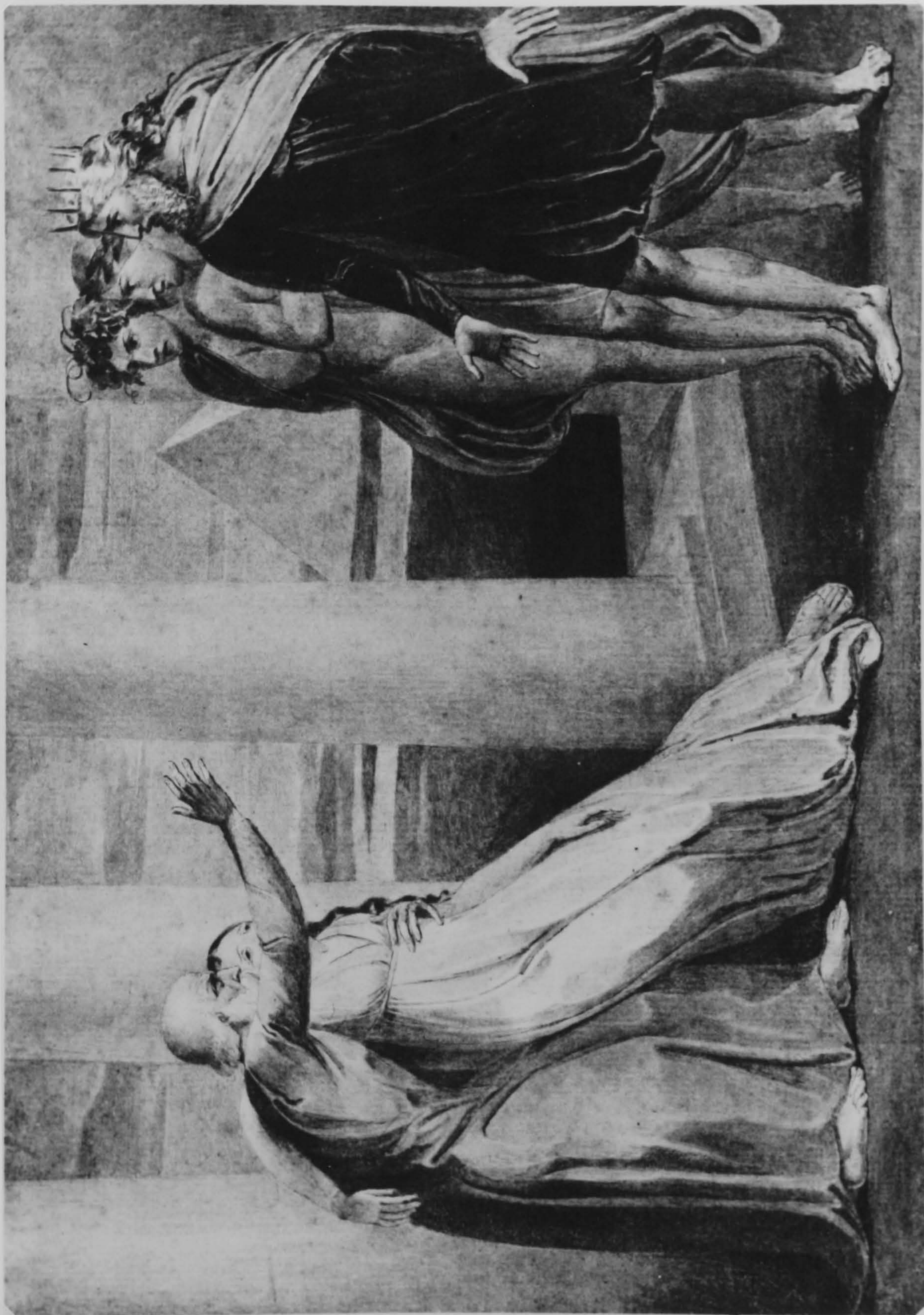
¹⁰⁶Bentley thinks that "Tiriél himself is evidently aware of this force above men, for in a deleted passage he says, 'God bless my benefactors' (l. 137)" (Tiriél, p. 12). Blake probably deleted this utterance because it might have obscured his intended characterisation of Tiriél. Notwithstanding these speculations, the context reveals the phrase as being devoid of any genuine compassion. It may contain an ironic reference to Har's "God of Love." This God is an institutionalised phenomenon without immediacy to whom Har refers in the context of a meaningless yet convenient formula such as "God bless thy poor bald pate. . . ." (2:32-33).

¹⁰⁷The pattern underlying Tiriél's history from rebel son to tyrant father is an early version of what Frye in a different context describes as the Orc cycle. See Frye, pp. 207-235.

¹⁰⁸All Religions are One, E3. There is No Natural Religion (a), E1.

¹⁰⁹According to Bloom, "Tiriél's name may compound the Greek root of 'tyrant' and the Hebrew 'El' for 'the Almighty,' one of the names of God." (Blake's Apocalypse, p. 30.)

¹¹⁰See 5:4-34.



Tiriel, Plate I (Drawing no. 1)



Tiriel, Plate II (Drawing no. 2)



Tiriel, Plate III (Drawing no. 4)



Tiriel, Plate VIII (Drawing no. 11)

THE /FIRST/ BOOK OF URIZEN

Compared with Tiriel, The /First/ Book of Urizen is a considerably more elaborate, precise, homogeneous and mature poetic expression of Blake's convictions concerning the nature and causes of the fallen human condition.¹ The title-page of the poem carries the date 1794. There are seven copies extant. Of the twenty-eight plates--not all the known copies are complete--ten are full-page designs.² With one notable exception, the order of the text is rendered unequivocal by its being arranged into numbered chapters.³ However, the positions of the ten pictorial plates vary in each copy. Obviously, most of the illustrations relate to more than one passage in the text. This has implications for its internal structure. Narrative chronology is rendered of subordinate importance as subsequent scenes and activities performed by different characters merely portray different aspects or manifestations of the same archetypal 'lapse.' Also, the temporal priorities implicit in 'before' and 'after,' and the logical priorities of cause and effect are dissolved to create in the reader's mind the impression of the possible simultaneity and relative validity of

different perspectives. The poet may be unable to recreate original unity and universal harmony in a fragmented world. But he attempts, and succeeds, in rejecting some of its fundamental premises even through his unique mode of poetic and pictorial presentation.⁴

Tiriel is a dramatic account of the possible and invariably negative effects the transition from a state of youthful innocence to adult experience has on man's conception of himself in relation with other people, and on his conception of reality. Throughout the poem emphasis is implicitly placed on the moral and the cognitive aspects of this transition. Urizen has similar objectives as Tiriel in being a determined attack on all manner of dogmatism, especially in ethics and metaphysics. At the same time Urizen refers to Blake's own idealist metaphysics of reality less obliquely than Tiriel. In the present poetic context Eternity signifies a reality which is of a different ontological order from our familiar empirical environment, and the means by which it is perceived are not identical with the ones by which we come to know the empirical world.

In correspondence with the widening of philosophic scope in Urizen, as compared with Tiriel, the thematic transition from innocence to experience is presented on a cosmic scale as a fall from Eternity into a world of

time and space, as a withdrawal from universal harmony into chaos and isolation, from light into darkness, from spiritual life into materialism. Urizen, like Tiriël, imposes his will on his now hostile natural and social environment. His search for knowledge, too, is ultimately a search for his true identity. Despite these analogies, the poetic mode in which the transition from a higher to a lower state of being and the subsequent quest are presented in Urizen, differs considerably from that of the earlier poem. In this respect Urizen closely resembles the complementary and nearly contemporaneous The Book of Ahania and The Book of Los, both printed by Blake in 1795, and it anticipates essential features of The Four Zoas. The mythopoeic medium uncompromisingly identifies the natural, social and religious macrocosm with the microcosm of individual physicality and consciousness, and contrasts both with the, presumably perennial though precarious, ideal reality of an anthropomorphic spiritual universe. There is an analogy between Genesis, Paradise Lost (especially Books V and VI) and Urizen in as far as man's fallen condition is associated with a mythical event which apparently took place at the beginning of human history. However, in Urizen beginning and end in time play only a minor part. And while The French Revolution, Europe and America relate to specific historical events without being historicist in character, the theme of Urizen is supra-historical. The poem deals with the dramatic fall of the

human mind into chaos and, therefore, with the Fall of "a world defined as a human mind."⁵ At the same time the potentially positive function of time is demonstrated by the more constructive aspects of Los's activities.

In his essay entitled "William Blake," T. S. Eliot dismisses any suggestion that Blake possessed the kind of intellectual discipline which results from a poet's adherence to "a framework of accepted and traditional ideas."⁶

What his genius required, and what it sadly lacked, was a framework of accepted and traditional ideas which would have prevented him from indulging in a philosophy of his own, and concentrated his attention upon the problems of the poet . . . The concentration resulting from a framework of mythology and theology and philosophy is one of the reasons why Dante is a classic, and Blake only a poet of genius. The fault is perhaps not with Blake himself, but with the environment which failed to provide what such a poet needed; perhaps the circumstances compelled him to fabricate, perhaps the poet required the philosopher and mythologist; although the conscious Blake may have been quite unconscious of the motives.

Contrary to Eliot's view, the cultural and social environment in which Blake lived and worked provided everything the artist Blake needed. He consciously "required the philosopher and mythologist" not simply because political or cultural circumstances "compelled him to fabricate," but because this was his uniquely personal way of dealing with the ontological, ethical and aesthetic issues of his own, and of any other, time. In his approach to art and

the presentation of reality through art, Blake was even more radical than, for instance, Shelley. With regard to Prometheus Unbound which was composed some twenty-five years after Urizen was engraved, Maurice Bowra expounds: "Aeschylus provided Shelley with the material for his myth, but not with very much more . . . Once he had found a suitable vehicle for his ideas, Shelley had to go his own way just because they were not Greek."⁷ Blake, too, gives "shape to huge modern issues." However, he does so by means of an invented myth to which he assimilates traditional material, rather than "through a story which was familiar enough for his readers to approach it without such misgivings" as voiced for instance by Eliot.⁸ Blake always insisted that the material he used, be it poetic, philosophical or both, must not curtail his own imaginative autonomy.⁹ But it also had to focus the reader's attention on the issues in hand and not distract it by raising conventional expectations through overt use of familiar myth, or positively misdirect or confuse his reader through strict adherence to, or advocacy of, orthodox Christian doctrine.

Kathleen Raine sets out, among other things, to disprove Eliot's allegations by following the individually distinct, though related, critical approaches to Blake by Yeats, Damon, Percival, Saurat, Frye, Todd and Harper. First, she establishes her own position opposite other

schools of Blake-criticism by observing that "the psychological themes detected by Wicksteed and others since, the historical and political subject-matter upon which Erdman, Bronowski, and their school have thrown much light, are not in themselves unifying principles; mythology, not history, is Blake's cosmos."¹⁰ Yet, at the same time it must be stressed that Blake's art is emphatically non-escapist, and mythology, which according to Blake is inspired poetry, does not exclude history. If mythology is Blake's cosmos, it is so in an imaginative sense. It comprises and transcends the formal limitations in time and space of actual events and of recorded history. But it also has an immediate bearing on the historical world without being confined to it. Indeed, to borrow Kathleen Raine's phrase, "Blake's myths describe a cosmic process enacted upon all the planes of being,"¹¹ including the historical plane, and the appropriate language employed is "the language of cosmic analogy."¹² Because this is so, neither psychological themes nor historical or political subject-matter can in themselves be unifying and ordering principles. Kathleen Raine discovers this unifying and ordering principle in ancient Mysteries: "the key for which many have sought is traditional metaphysics with its accompanying language of symbolic discourse."¹³ Furthermore, she broadly states that "Blake claimed to teach the Everlasting Gospel, and it is only in the light of this doctrine that he can be understood.

I have attempted to relate his thought to the basic texts known to Blake, in which this doctrine is embodied."¹⁴ The ancient Mysteries, to which Miss Raine refers, may resemble Urizen in the symbolic manner of presentation. Also, no doubt, traditional metaphysics contributed to the development of Blake's symbolism and, indeed, supplied him with a wide framework of traditional ideas. It is a valuable contribution to scholarship to establish such parallels. Yet, the unifying and ordering principle of any poem, or of any work of art, can only be discovered from a close study of the poem itself. In fact there is a positive danger in a commentator sharing what Miss Raine describes as "Blake's essential premises." Allegedly, Ellis and Yeats "most nearly" did so,¹⁵ and one example of such an approach founded on enthusiasm rather than close scrutiny can be found in Yeats's belief that Urizen

is page by page a transformation, according to Blake's peculiar illumination, of the doctrines set forth in the opening chapters of the Mysterium Magnum of Jacob Boehme.¹⁶

Kathleen Raine is close to subscribing to a related misconception when advocating that it is "necessary at this time to relearn both traditional doctrine and its symbolic language, before poetry like that of Dante or of Blake can be more than superficially understood." However, if "the organizing idea is what makes the poem,"¹⁷ why should the reader have to search for the sources of

supposedly accidental images or for obscure philosophical 'origins,' unless the poem is incomprehensible on its own terms and, therefore, a failure? Blake would have failed and, indeed, betrayed his own postulate of the existence of a universal "Poetic Genius" had he expected his poetry could only be appreciated by those already "learned in the kind of thought of which his poetry," according to Miss Raine, "is an expression."¹⁸ Quite the opposite is true. As befits the author of a 'Bible of Hell,' Blake preaches to the unconverted 'angels' rather than to the converted 'devils.'¹⁹ Therefore, Urizen, like the bulk of Blake's poetry, is to a considerable degree didactic in character. The poem is a tacit and original affirmation of Blake's belief in the perennial nature of the imaginative faculty and its creations. But it is also an explicit satire upon its negations in philosophy, religion, politics and the arts.

While it is true that "sources as such have always a certain interest," there is no guarantee that by establishing sources or parallels or even the nature of Blake's "origins," the reader is truly following "Blake back to his origins," as Miss Raine believes.²⁰ Nor can the reader invariably be expected to reconstruct the vagaries of the poet's conscious or unconscious memory to appreciate the poetic result of such imaginative assimilation.²¹ With Blake, as with Coleridge, "'the hooks and eyes of memory'

bring together by association ideas and images of diverse origins;" and examination showed that the imagery in Tiriel is purposefully selected. Hence, Miss Raine's generalisation that "images are accidental" is, to some extent, in conflict with her own argument that Blake "constantly introduces from his reading phrases and images so precise that it is impossible to doubt that he intended these to evoke, like quotations, this or that work or body of knowledge, and to give scope and resonance of a certain kind in a particular context."²² Her generalisation also contradicts Blake's self-professed attention to "minute particulars."²³

In Urizen, as in Tiriel, Blake assimilates material from most disparate and partly esoteric sources. Earl R. Wasserman's explanation for Shelley's eclecticism also holds true for Blake; their "abundant recourse to the ancient philosophers was an eclectic search for partial aid in" their individual quests for truth.²⁴ Yet, as Martin K. Nurmi points out, "in searching for the original of something in Blake, it is often possible that the 'source,' if it is not the Bible or Milton, is a negative one, a philosophical enemy rather than a friend, and one close at hand rather than an obscure one."²⁵ It stands to reason that the nature and original thought-content of some 'source' materials is of greater relevance than that of others with which they have been assimilated within an

entirely new and coherent symbolic entity incorporating its very own organising idea. Although the intellectual scope and subtlety of Blake's poetry will possibly be better appreciated by a reader well versed in the writings of Plato and Plotinus, in the Hermetica and the alchemists, knowledge of these is not an indispensable requirement for an understanding of Blake's poetry. For instance, as Peter Butter points out in his discussion of the relationship between Urizen and Jacob Boehme's Mysterium Magnum,²⁶

It is of great interest to compare these two works, but it is not right to suggest that the one derives, except in a very minor degree, from the other. I see no reason for supposing that Blake wished the reader to have Boehme's system in mind when reading the poem or that he meant to comment on it.

Blake is not in any apparent disagreement with Boehme of which we are aware. He merely adopts and integrates features of Boehme's thought within his far less esoteric Urizen, and for utterly unmythical purposes. However, by choice of theme, dramatic structure, language and overt or concealed allusion the poem takes issue with other literary works and schools of thought dealing with similar ontological and ethical problems as Urizen while offering different solutions. Thus, any critical discussion of Urizen has to take special notice of the Bible and of Milton's Paradise Lost on the one hand, and of empiricist philosophy as representatively incorporated in John Locke's

An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, on the other. The general reader of Blake's day could be expected to be familiar with the Bible and with Paradise Lost. He could also be expected to be in some degree aware of the premises and ratiocinations of Lockean empiricism.

The Bible and Paradise Lost are not simply easily recognisable 'sources' from which Blake drew much of his symbolism and thought, but imaginative paradigms, specific interpretations of eternal truths, which are not to be imitated but to be reassessed and, if necessary, corrected in the light of the spiritual experiences of modern man. Contrary to Eliot's view, Blake adopted both traditional material and a framework of accepted traditional ideas. He did so precisely in order to create something entirely new, something that could be understood on its own terms while ironically and, as will be shown to be the case in Urizen, even satirically reappraising some of the respective ontological and moral premises on which for instance Milton's orthodox interpretation of the Bible and, more important for this investigation, Locke's conceptions of reality, law and religion are founded.

Peter Butter rightly observes that "the poem can be felt as having emotional value without our assenting to any system of belief,"²⁷ and it "can be accepted as imaginatively true without our being required to believe

in it as history."²⁸ This does not mean that Urizen is no more than a self-closed aesthetic object. Any reading of the poem must take into account that Blake invents a fanciful quasi-mythical scenario not simply to entertain, but as a suitable medium for the purposeful dramatic presentation of a number of vital issues.

In contrast with Tiriel, no explicit summary by one of the protagonists is required to provide Urizen with a readily intelligible theme and to reveal the motivations which prompt the characters to act, because the argument of Urizen is completely integrated within the dramatic movement of the narrative--if narrative is the correct description for Blake's mode of poetic presentation in his 'prophecies.' From the start the attentive reader may pick up vital clues to the apparent obscurities of the poem and, thus, to its adequate appreciation, and he will soon understand that Urizen is both an attack on the philosophical premises and the material manifestations of empiricism in society as well as an implicit affirmation of Blake's own metaphysics of reality.²⁹

"Satiric poetry sets the flawed reality of the world against the ultimate reality of the ideal."³⁰ In accordance with Friedrich Schiller's succinct statement, portions of

Urizen may be read as satire directed against John Locke's theory of knowledge in particular, and the ramifications of seventeenth-century and eighteenth-century British empiricism, in general. While attention is focused in this chapter on Locke, it should be understood that he represents a school of thought which Blake also associates with Bacon, Newton and, in a wider sense, with Rousseau and Voltaire. In his annotations to Reynolds' 'Discourse' VIII, Blake claims to have "read Burkes Treatise when very Young at the same time I read Locke on Human Understanding & Bacons Advancement of Learning on Every one of these Books I wrote my Opinions & on looking them over find that my Notes on Reynolds in this Book are exactly Similar. I felt the Same Contempt & Abhorrence then, that I do now." (E650) As Blake's copy of Locke's An Essay Concerning Human Understanding is not extant, this claim cannot be conclusively verified.³¹ There are, however, early references to Locke in An Island in the Moon and in The Song of Los, besides numerous later ones in poems, marginalia and in one letter.³² Mark Schorer finds such references "consistently annoying until the symbol they compose is defined; this is possible only by locating it in Blake's cosmology. Once located, the symbol may be cracked, and the criticism it contains may then throw some light on the thought that formed Blake's cosmos."³³ In this chapter the attempt will be made to establish in Urizen significant symbolic correlatives especially with aspects of Locke's theory of knowledge.

Miss Raine is on the whole concerned with establishing "essential unity of thought where there are formal differences."³⁴ It will be argued in this chapter that in Urizen this principle is satirically inverted. It is precisely the formal similarities and parallels in imagery with portions of the Bible and Paradise Lost, and the visualising poetic displacement of Lockean principles of perception and abstract reasoning, which strongly point to the inherent discrepancies of thought. The notion of an original "unity of thought," a Blakean ideal incorporated in the first Principle of All Religions are One, easily leads to fruitless source-hunting and reductionism if adopted as a critical maxim.

That the Poetic Genius is the true Man. and that the body or outward form of Man is derived from the Poetic Genius. Likewise that the forms of all things are derived from their Genius. which by the Ancients was call'd an Angel & Spirit & Demon. (E2)

The critical reader must rationalise Blake's conviction concerning myths and religions. Not only do they "all tell of the same reality,"³⁵ but they originate in an idealistic conception of reality, which is ontologically distinct from a detached materialist-determinist conception.³⁶

Blake's intimations of the imaginative absolute or ideal being on the one hand, and of Urizen's fallen condition as revealed by his efforts on the other, gain in significance

if examined in the light of some of the tenets of philosophic idealism and of Locke's epistemology, respectively. As has been pointed out in our discussion of Tiriel, Book I of the Essay sets out to prove that neither principles, practical or speculative, nor ideas are innate; that the ideas of God, of Divine, Moral and Natural Law, of reward and punishment are acquired by education and retained by memory. Ideas originate in sensation and reflection. However, Blake rejected the rationalist premises that there are no innate 'ideas' and that all our knowledge is derived from experience. He maintained that these premises served no other purpose but to render "Mind & Imagination" dependent on "Mortal & Perishing Nature." In the preceding chapter on Tiriel attention has already been drawn to the fact that in the early tractates There is No Natural Religion and All Religions are One, his position is systematically and effectively outlined. Later, in Blake's annotations to Reynolds, we meet the same sentiments.

Reynolds Thinks that Man Learns all that he Knows
I say on the Contrary That Man Brings All that he
has or Can have Into the World with him. Man is
Born Like a Garden ready Planted & Sown This World
is too poor to produce one Seed. (E645-6)

One and a half decades before making this telling comment, Blake had incorporated in Urizen the tension generated by his own and Locke's opposing view-points. Theme, structure

and symbolism of the poem reflect this opposition. First, Eternity, Blake's "ultimate reality of the ideal," is contrasted with the "flawed reality" of Urizen. Secondly, by way of ingeniously inverting Locke's methodology, Blake's attack takes the form of a genesis--presented on an epic scale and in theogonic-cum-cosmogonic symbolism--of empirical premises and their disastrous universal effects. According to the biblical account

1. In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.
2. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

In contrast, Urizen adumbrates ideal being in circumstances which differ essentially from biblical chaos, whereas the world 'created' or, better perhaps, the condition caused by Urizen does not--provided, of course, one disregards the fact that Urizen's 'chaos' is animated. Before Urizen's withdrawal from Eternity,

Earth was not: nor globes of attraction
The will of the Immortal expanded
Or contracted his all flexible senses.
Death was not, but eternal life sprung (3:36-39).

While ironically alluding to Genesis, these lines are an appropriate introduction to Blake's poetic exploration of the relationship between spirit and matter and, therefore,

of the metaphysics of the world of time and space. They adumbrate a universal harmony of mind and body upon which "the limited order of a Cartesian universe has yet to be imposed,"³⁷ and thus incorporate Blake's tentative solution to what Mitchell describes as "the traditional paradox of attempting to represent an uncreated (or at least qualitatively different) world in language and imagery which are, by their very nature, post-creation entities."³⁸ The inherent allusion to Genesis is an ironic and aesthetic device pointing to a generic relationship between the First Book of Moses and The /First/ Book of Urizen, rather than a specific critique of the biblical Creation account by Blake.

Founded on principles other than energy generated by matter, Eternity does not support spheres formed by material bodies whose gravitation ensures the relative stability of Newton's universe. To the unfallen mind, Eternity offers no basis for rationalist premises and the axioms of natural science, nor is it a suitable object for accurate observation and description. Comprising matter and motion and thus involving the 'ideas' of time and space, the image 'globe' has to be associated with a number of properties or 'primary qualities' as defined by Locke, such as impenetrability, extension, figure, mobility and, in a wider sense, number.³⁹ The globe is a most effective symbol of empirical methods of contemplating the universe, of specific

conceptions of 'ideas' of the world as manifest, for instance, in Newtonian cosmology; and, indeed, of the observer's state of consciousness.

In lines 37-38, quoted above, empirical notions of space, matter and the mechanism of sensory perception are inverted. In contradistinction to Locke's view, the will exerts control over the senses independent of external causes or objects of experience. In Eternity, the scope of the senses is neither restricted by anatomical deficiencies nor are they dependent on the weakness or intensity of impressions received from an as yet unperceived 'external' world. The active mind is autonomous and instantaneously fulfils its desires; sensory perception is a function of the mind. In Locke's terminology, 'understanding' (the 'power' of perception) and the 'will' (the 'power' to prefer, choose, or forbear the consideration of any 'idea,' the motion of the body or of thought) are faculties of the mind.⁴⁰ According to Blake, in Eternity mind, of its own volition, determines the flexible movements of the senses, rather than

being every day informed by the senses of the alteration of those simple ideas it observes in things without; and taking notice how one comes to an end, and ceases to be, and another begins to exist which was not before; reflecting also on what passes within itself, and observing a constant change of its ideas, sometimes by the impressions of outward objects on the senses, and sometimes by the determination of its own choice; and concluding . . . that the like changes will for the future be made in the same things, by like agents, and by the like ways . . . (II,21,1).

By conceiving of the will as the elective 'power' of the mind, determining thought and action in absolute liberty, Blake repudiates the premise to Locke's theory of knowledge, thus placing greater responsibility on the spiritual capacity of individual man. In Eternity there are no 'agents' distinct from 'powers.' Consequently, there are no empirical relations.⁴¹ Urizen declares:

I have sought for a joy without pain,
For a solid without fluctuation
Why will you die, O Eternals?
Why live in unquenchable burnings? (4:10-13)

This declaration implies the co-existence of the contraries of joy and pain in Eternity and corresponds with Blake's dialectic maxim of spiritual activity in, and progress toward, Eternity:

Without Contraries is no progression. Attraction and Repulsion, Reason and Energy, Love and Hate, are necessary to Human existence.

From these contraries spring what the religious call Good & Evil. Good is the passive that obeys Reason[.] Evil is the active springing from Energy.

Good is Heaven. Evil is Hell.

(The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, 3; E34)

A similar conception of the eternal world embracing contraries such as wrath and love, light and darkness, pain and joy, can be found in Boehme's Mysterium Magnum.⁴² Through these contraries God may see and contemplate Himself.

The Divine Understanding does therefore introduce itself into an anxious Fire-will, and Life, that its great Love and Joy, which is called God, might be manifest; . . . Else, if there were no Anguish, then Joy would not be manifest to itself; and there would be but one only Will, which would do continually one and the same thing.⁴³

Boehme's Lucifer and Blake's Urizen are free to choose their respective courses of action. Boehme's angels "had Free Will from the manifested Will of God's Will. Lucifer had still been an Angel, if his own Will had not introduced him into the Fire's Might, desiring to domineer in the strong Fiery-might, . . . as an absolute sole God in Darkness and Light . . . For his own Desire went into the Center; he would himself be God; he entered with his Will into Self . . ." ⁴⁴

Both in Mysterium Magnum and in Urizen, Creation is caused by introspection in an eternal being.⁴⁵ It is also an aspect of the Fall which, in Urizen, takes place in several stages: the Fall of Urizen, which is synonymous with the creation of the material universe; the division of Los into male and female portions; the birth of Orc constitutes a further division. Peter Butter arrives at the conclusion that

Urizen has something in common with Boehme's Lucifer and even with his God (in his self-contemplation), and with the God of the Old Testament and with Milton's Satan and Milton's God. But consideration of such parallels has tended to obscure Blake's success . . . in creating a self-sustaining myth and a character who exists in the poem as himself. Urizen is Urizen, not anyone else's character, and not merely a symbol of a state of being.⁴⁶

Consideration of these parallels has also obscured the pertinent ontological issues which are being dramatised in Urizen, as well as the "constant social and moral emphasis"⁴⁷ which is certainly absent from Blake's supposed mystical sources. These aspects are not absent from Locke's philosophy. For instance, reference to Locke's conception of the 'will' contributes towards a better understanding of Blake's technique of assimilating concepts and ideas, if not to a deeper appreciation of Urizen's motivation.

It must be understood that the intentions prompting Urizen to withdraw from Eternity are not outright evil, notwithstanding the tragic consequences of this act. Living in the flames of inspired energetic activity with its complementary potential for 'joy' and 'pain' is associated by Urizen with "death" in life. Due to its aptness to produce 'pain,' this is 'evil' as defined by Locke, whereas Urizen desires 'joy,' permanent and exclusive. Dualistic moral categories have their origin in subjective sensations and emotions. Locke calls joy "a delight of the mind, from the consideration of the present or assured approaching possession of a good" (II,20,7). In the absence of this 'good,' Urizen lives with an "uneasiness of desire" (II,21,33). Originating "in the mind from thought" (II,21,41), later in the poem, from change in general, it 'naturally' and "successively

determines" (II,21,31) Urizen's 'will' to deliberate and perverted action. His appreciable desire for unqualified happiness, absolute fixity and uniformity is the longing for that unknown extreme "the utmost bounds whereof we know not" (II,21,41), as Locke claims. Urizen, like Locke's God, is under the self-imposed necessity of being happy.⁴⁸ Ironically, his liberty, like that of "finite intellectual beings," consists in the "great privilege" (II,21,52) of being endowed with the "constant desire of happiness, and the constraint it puts upon us to act for it" (II,21,50). Originating in Urizen's own mind, his 'idea' of liberty is necessity; his 'idea' of infinitude will be shown to be limitation.

Urizen's name first suggests his identity as the horizon of the human mind and also indicates his tendency to self-limitation and introspection whether one chooses to read it as a contraction of "your reason" or as a transliteration of the Greek verb "ourizein." Frederick E. Pierce suggests the latter possibility and correlates the meaning of the Greek word--"to mark out by boundaries, lay down, mark out: to limit, define"--with Urizen's character.⁴⁹ Harold Bloom adopts Pierce's explanation and surmises that "in Eternity, Urizen was the entire intellect of Man. The poem's central irony is its constant implicit contrast between what Urizen is and what he was."⁵⁰

In his fallen condition, as viewed 'sub specie
aeternitatis,' Urizen appears

Dark revolving in silent activity:
Unseen in tormenting passions;
An activity unknown and horrible;
A self-contemplating shadow,
In enormous labours occupied (3:18-22).

It is hardly coincidental that Locke's "Pleasure and pain and that which causes them, good and evil," should be "the hinges on which our passions turn" (II,20,3). At the same time, Blake's lines may be read as the qualifying poetic projection of "thinking and motion" to which, according to Locke, all "the actions that we have any idea of" (II,21,8) reduce themselves. Urizen is identified with his activities--physical and spiritual aspects being metaphorically fused--which, in turn, reveal his self-centred motivations and intentions. Despite certain resemblances, the mode of transformation employed by Blake in Urizen and in The Four Zoas, where he encompasses an even wider scale of human consciousness, goes well beyond Shelley's mode of imaginative transformation as described in the 'Preface' of Prometheus Unbound.

The imagery which I have employed will be found, in many instances, to have been drawn from the operations of the human mind, or from those external actions by which they are expressed. This is unusual in modern poetry, although Dante and Shakespeare are full of instances of the same kind.⁵¹

nothing else but modes of thinking and willing; in corporeal agents, nothing else but modifications of motion." Urizen is the 'power,' "the source from whence all action proceeds" (II,22,11). His self-centred desire is the motivation implicit in his withdrawal from Eternity. The emergence of a fallen universe is not so much the effect as the symbolic projection of Locke's 'idea' of 'power' and, therefore, of 'relation.' Or, put differently, Urizen is at once subject and object of 'power,' cause and effect. Through his motivation, his actions and transformations, he will finally reveal himself as the principle of universal abstraction, be it Locke's dubious 'complex idea' of 'substance,' or the God of the deists.

Although broadly following a theogonic-cosmogonic pattern familiar from Genesis and from Plato's Timaeus, Blake's rendering of the Creation myth is far from unequivocal. Most important, the intentional ambiguities of Urizen stand in marked contrast to the moral simplicity of the biblical account. In Genesis the Lord creates order from chaos. His Creation is presented as the constructive division of light and darkness, day and night, of the waters from the firmament and the earth. He creates the heavenly bodies ("for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years" Genesis, I,14), and the multiplicity of life in nature. Urizen's activity, in contrast, is presented as a perversion of creativity.

In his "stern counsels / Reserv'd for the days of futurity" (4:8-9), Urizen claims to have sought for the fulfilment of his desires in a world where everything only exists in relation to him. Judging by the specific nature of his actions, and bearing in mind his reference to "futurity," he has not realised his ambition, so far. He may hope to achieve ultimate happiness by temporarily suspending execution and satisfaction of his desires. In pursuit of this distant aim, Urizen accumulates empirical knowledge by division and analysis.

Times on times he divided, & measur'd
Space by space in his ninefold darkness
Unseen, unknown! changes appear'd (3:8-10).

Urizen exercises--indeed, he is--the presumptuous 'power' or faculty of the mind "to suspend the execution and satisfaction of any of its desires, and so all, one after another, is at liberty to consider the objects of them, examine them on all sides, and weigh them with others" (II,21,47). In this consists liberty as defined by Locke, and as exercised by Urizen. His considered actions in abstraction and secrecy are perversions of the spontaneous display of imaginative activity, guided though unfettered by reason, in Eternity. Ironically, Urizen's autocratic laws exhaust themselves in the "contemplation of remote and future good" (II,21,57). They predetermine nature and direction of any future actions and anticipate their results.

These actions will constitute nothing but Locke's "chain of consequences, linked to one another" (II,21,52). Blake inverts Locke's order of determination. Before the 'will' can possibly suppose "knowledge to guide its choice," (II,21,52) the will must have determined such a procedure.

At the same time, however, Urizen is unsuccessfully attempting to control the unwanted volatile products of his 'creative' efforts. He strives

in battles dire
In unseen conflictions with shapes
Bred from his forsaken wilderness,
Of beast, bird, fish, serpent & element (3:13-16).

In trying to suppress these natural embodiments of energy, he acts in accordance with the erroneous belief, commonly originating in "Bibles or Sacred codes," "That Energy, call'd Evil. is alone from the Body. & that Reason. call'd Good. is alone from the Soul."⁵⁵ Urizen fails to realise that sinfulness is not an absolute but that it is contingent upon the artificial concept of moral dualism, and not vice versa. Antagonised by the Urizenic provocation the powers of Eternity react

Rage siez'd the strong
Rage, fury, intense indignation
In cataracts of fire blood & gall
In whirlwinds of sulphurous smoke:
And enormous forms of energy;
All the seven deadly sins of the soul
In living creations appear'd
In the flames of eternal fury. (4:44-5:2)⁵⁶

Although it is not quite clear whether "eternal fury" is the condition generally prevailing in Eternity, or whether these flames are Eternity's reaction to Urizen's challenge, these are the same

monsters Sin-bred:
Which the bosoms of all inhabit;
Seven deadly Sins of the soul (4:28-30)

whom Urizen fought and whom he hoped to subdue by means of his "secrets of wisdom." The forces of Eternity manifest themselves "In cataracts of fire, blood & gall" (4:46) as pure embodiments of spiritual energy, the fluid substance of life, and the bitterness pertaining to any form of existence. Urizen accuses them of living "in unquenchable burnings" as he regards any energetic activity as sinful, as being opposed to cold abstract reason, which ought to contain energy, not suppress it. Uncontrolled energetic activity is also deadly to selfhood, be it psychologically, philosophically, politically or religiously motivated.

The paradox of Urizen's chaotic world of law and order is not created 'ex nihilo.' Eternity exists before its 'creation.' Later, in A Vision of the Last Judgment, Blake sums up this aspect of Urizen:

Many suppose that before . . . /the Creation/ All was Solitude & Chaos This is the most pernicious Idea that can enter the Mind as it takes away all sublimity from the Bible & Limits All Existence to Creation & to Chaos To the Time & Space fixed by the Corporeal Vegetative Eye & leaves the Man, who entertains such an Idea the habitation of Unbelieving Demons Eternity Exists and All things in Eternity Independent of Creation which was an act of Mercy (E552-553).

In Urizen, of course, Blake's attitude concerning this final point is considerably more ambiguous.

Urizen's world is a "void" or "vacuum" (3:4,5), "form'd" or abstracted from the Eternal matrix. In Paradise Lost Milton's God can say of himself:

Boundless the deep, because I am who fill
Infinite, nor vacuous the space.
Though I uncircumscribed my self retire,
And put not forth my goodness, which is free
To act or not, necessity and chance
Approach not me, and what I will is fate.
(Book VII, 168-173)

Urizen, in contrast, retires to a mere "place" (2:3) which, ironically, becomes a "void" or "vacuum" because Urizen fills it. He circumscribes this "deep world within" (4:15), himself being surrounded by Eternals, "Myriads of Eternity" (3:34) and, later, by the tent of "Science" (19:9).

Alastair Fowler's suggestion, based on Adamson, "that the corollary of an ex Deo theory of Creation is a deiform nature" is applicable to both Paradise Lost and Urizen.⁵⁷

In Blake's satirical adaptation of this theory, both its moral and ontological implications are parodied. The "ruinous fragments of life" (5:9) and "An ocean of voidness unfathomable" (5:11) reflect Urizen's desolate state of mind. He is an impostor, a "Priest" (2:1), not God Almighty. He does not create. He merely abstracts in accordance with his restrictive criteria as revealed in the course of the poem. This perversion of creativity is depicted as his deliberate withdrawal into 'self,' and complemented by the Eternals allocating to him "a place in the north" (2:3). The images establishing spatial relations suggest division within Eternity, and Urizen's retirement from altruistic spiritual interaction pertaining to Eternity.

According to Urizen's own report, the "fire" pertaining to Eternals forced him to retreat into his innermost self, so to speak,

consum'd
Inwards, into a deep world within:
A void immense, wild dark & deep,
Where nothing was; Natures wide womb.
And self balanc'd stretch'd o'er the void

. . .
strong I repell'd
The vast waves, & arose on the waters
A wide world of solid obstruction (4:14-23).⁵⁸

Regarding himself as the principle of stability and continuity, Urizen intends, aided by his "Book / Of eternal brass" (4:32-33), to transform his sinister realm into

the objective manifestation of his ideas and, thereby, of himself. The "Immortal," whose will freely "expanded / Or contracted his all flexible senses" in Eternity, has become a shadow of his Eternal identity. As revealed by the arbitrary nature of his reductive actions and their manifestations, the "self-contemplating shadow" (3:21) and commander of "self-begotten armies" (5:16) is both subject and object of the process of division and abstraction, of contraction and expansion.

Urizen's personal transformation signifies a change of consciousness rendered explicit and qualified by being projected on a seemingly objective cosmic scale. He has come to personify the solipsistic, introspective and retentive principle visualised as an isolated world, "Unknown, unprolific! / Self-closed, all-repelling" (3:2-3), thus safeguarding the continuity of his fallen identity. He is Blake's poetic embodiment of Locke's 'self,' "that conscious thinking thing (whatever substance made up of, whether spiritual or material, simple or compounded, it matters not) which is sensible or conscious of pleasure and pain, capable of happiness or misery, and so is concerned for itself, as far as that consciousness extends" (II,27,17). As Urizen's actions of measuring and dividing are manifestations of "self derived intelligence" which "is worldly demonstration," 'self,' or the Urizenic will, proves to be its own internal circumference and external centre.⁵⁹

The frontispiece of Europe presents Urizen's view of himself as Creator. Magnificently leaning out into the abyss, reminiscent of Milton's "vast profundity obscure," Urizen is occupied in the act of dividing and circumscribing a vacuum of dark cosmic space.⁶⁰ This illumination corresponds with, and complements, Urizen's own conception of his creative efforts in Urizen. However, if correlated and contrasted with Urizen's introspective brooding as presented in the narrative and pictorially satirised on the title-page of Urizen (Plate 1), the apparently 'external' space or vacuum is revealed as an illusion, a projection both of Urizen's conception of the world before Creation and of his conception of the human consciousness at birth. Blake does not accept the Lockean doctrine that there are no innate ideas and that at birth the human mind is a 'tabula rasa;' and, as has been demonstrated in this chapter, Blake does not believe in Creation 'ex nihilo.' Hence, this one illumination (frontispiece) in Europe reveals as fallacious the orthodox Christian notion, based on Genesis, of the conditions preceding the Divine act of Creation and conflates it with the 'enlightened' conceptions of an external cosmic void and of an empty mind.

Throughout Urizen the apparently 'objective' phenomenon of Urizen's creation is presented as a modification of his consciousness.⁶¹ This "deep world within" which is soon

to become to him an 'external' object of perception, is a function of Urizen's mind or a projection of his self-awareness. Thus, for the time being, Urizen's solipsism ironically resolves the persistent contradiction between reality and ideality, thought and thing, subject and object, being and seeming, because

What seems to Be: Is: to those to whom
It seems to Be, & is productive of the most dreadful
Consequences to those to whom it seems to Be: even of
Torments, Despair, Eternal Death;

as Blake was to sum up his notions concerning 'reality' in Jerusalem.⁶² As Urizen takes his illusions for real, they are real. He thus perversely, if inadvertantly, affirms Blake's own radically subjective idealism of a later period, which maintains that

Mental Things are alone Real what is Calld Corporeal
Nobody Knows of its dwelling Place /it/ is in Fallacy
& its Existence an Imposture Where is the Existence
Out of Mind or Thought Where is it but in the Mind of
a Fool. (A Vision of the Last Judgment, E555)

According to Blake empiricists and deists are such fools.⁶³

T. S. Eliot insists that "you cannot create a very large poem without introducing a more impersonal point of view, or splitting it up into various personalities."⁶⁴

Surely Blake cannot be accused of failing to have done so in Urizen and in The Four Zoas. The poet's invocation of his 'muses,' with which he introduces Urizen, is a case in point.

Eternals I hear your call gladly,
Dictate swift winged words, & fear not
To unfold your dark visions of torment. (2:5-7)

Significantly, the "Preludium" to Urizen is not conceived as a theodicy comparable to "The Argument" of Paradise Lost. Blake's muses do not find fulfilment in glorifying an almighty and benevolent God. Indeed, in Urizen there is no indication of the existence of such a transcendent Deity, nor of any source of inspiration uninvolved in the epic conflict. Parodying Milton's thematic declaration, Blake proposes to sing

Of the primeval Priests assum'd power,
When Eternals spurn'd back his religion;
And gave him a place in the north,
Obscure, shadowy, void, solitary. (2:1-4)

A detached report cannot be expected from these Eternals because they are emotionally and actively involved with Urizen's Fall and the 'Creation' of a new universe. If-- in correspondence with Blake's ontological idealism and its empiricist negation--the cosmic setting of Urizen may be interpreted as the symbolic correlative of the world defined as mind, both the Eternals and Urizen are actors

in this now chaotic world. And as in Urizen there is no source of inspiration superior to the faculties of the human mind, the poet has no choice but to consult the fragmented remnants of its former universal unity. The Eternals, Blake's 'muses,' are eternal beings whose epic struggle against Urizen is one aspect of the events related in the poem. They perceive and relate these events as "dark visions of torment." Urizen's point of view is a different one. The contrasting perspectives of Urizen, the Eternals and of Los are effectively juxtaposed and even fused throughout the poem. Furthermore, familiar notions of hierarchy and the chronology of events are at once introduced and suspended. This principle applies, for instance, to Blake's treatment of the relation of cause and effect. Locke calls it "the most comprehensive relation wherein all things that do or can exist are concerned" (II,25,11). Only operating within Urizen's world, it does not affect the poem's narrative sequence, its internal structure or the configuration of the protagonists. Although Urizen's world is the comprehensive symbol of "all artificial things" (II,26,2) as conceived by Locke, it has no extrinsic cause. When, in the course of the poem, "a sensible separation, or juxtaposition of discernible parts" (II,26,2) is depicted, no more is signified by this than an immanent reflection and mechanical continuation, in the linear form of cause and effect, of a spiritual defect inherent in Urizen's world.

Opposite the Eternal absolute his barren wilderness symbolises a world of immanent and of supposedly transcendent 'relations' ruled by priest, king, god and law.

"Priest" and "religion" are 'correlative terms' (II,25,2), to use Locke's diction. They associate Urizen with such, ultimately, 'instituted' or 'voluntary relations' (II,28,3) as deity and worshippers with moral rules and with a divine law. Furthermore, Urizen becomes the first and archetypal priest when assuming "power," thus adopting a priestly consciousness. In the absence of a supreme deity his authority originates in his desire for supreme power. Yet, he is an impostor, the originator of all artificial 'relations,' be they temporal, spatial, moral, or generally empirical. His actions ironically reveal the fallacious nature of the 'ideas' represented by such 'relations' which, according to Locke, are "not contained in the real existence of things, but something extraneous and super-induced" (II,25,8). Urizen himself is the Lockean cause "which makes any other thing, either simple idea, substance, or mode, begin to be" (II,26,2). He personifies the power of abstraction, revealed by the objectified operations of his mind.

Urizen is a lawmaker. Promulgated to determine man's private and public conduct, as well as the methods for acquiring knowledge, his rules correspond to the consistence

of the material on which they are engraved. Like "eternal brass" (4:33), and like the "rock of eternity" (4:43) on which they are placed, they cannot be adjusted to the specific requirements of the moment.⁶⁵ As they were not conceived in consultation with those concerned, but in Urizen's "solitude" (4:33), they do not meet the needs of individuals. By allocating to each of his laws the relative absolute of "one habitation: / His ancient infinite mansion" (4:36-37), Urizen emphasises his restrictive value standards. Law prevails over Eternal spontaneity; old age is considered a distinction; and everything is confined within spatial dimensions. Finally, in an overt parody of the "Decalogue," the "primeval Priest" announces his lore of enforced uniformity, sterility and abstraction:

One command, one joy, one desire,
One curse, one weight, one measure
One Kind, one God, one Law. (4:38-40)

According to Locke, there is no 'idea' "more simple, than that of unity, or one: it has no shadow of variety or composition in it" (II,16,1). Infinitely "repeated additions of certain ideas of imagined parts of duration and expansion" produce the "ideas of eternity and immensity" (II,16,8). Potentially, 'one' is the most particular as well as the most general unit. In connection with Urizen's aspirations it suggests his monism. The freedom of the will is severely curtailed by Urizen's

conception of proportional and moral relations, and of uniform desire, as universal absolutes. These relations originate in Urizen's archetypal withdrawal into 'self.' They terminate in, and are ultimately founded on, Urizen's imposition. "One joy" is the alleged reward, the morally good, drawn on Urizen's victims by 'voluntarily' conforming to his laws from fear of punishment. Blake pointedly correlates divine and civil law with the laws of proportion imposed on man and nature by the arbitrary "decree of the law-maker" (II,28,5), be he priest or scholarly enquirer. The sequence "One King, one God, one Law"--all of these being 'correlative' appellations--is not accidental. The personal and remote authorities of king and god terminate in the rule of an abstract law, the culmination of tyranny.

Having come to represent the blind, sterile principle of egocentric introspection, Urizen embodies his own notion of uniformity and stability. He is priest, king, god and law in personal union. He promulgates "secrets of wisdom / . . . of dark contemplation" (4:25-26) as secrets, and engraves them with illegible scrawls in his "Book / Of eternal brass" (4:32-33), elsewhere referred to as "the Book of My Remembrance."⁶⁶ The illumination on Plate 5 depicts Urizen emerging "from the darkness" (4:42), his head surrounded by a radiant halo. He confronts the reader with his open book. Far from revealing the truth, Urizen projects his own confused state of consciousness in the

form of abstract principles outside himself, so to speak, thus providing them with an apparently independent existence of their own. The foundations are laid for a world which in its objective particulars is as yet unknown to its deluded maker.

Mitchell points out that Urizen's "rebellion took place 'when' the [Eternals'] reaction occurred. Before, after, or concurrently are all equally plausible interpretations of the time sequence described in the opening lines. . . . In Urizen these priorities are evoked only to be dissolved in a world which denies their validity."⁶⁷ "When" repelling the "primeval Priest's . . . religion," the Eternals fail to squash his rebellion. They merely contain it by allocating to Urizen "a place in the north." As indicated by this quasi-spatial relation and by the quasi-temporal relation of simultaneity suggested by 'when,' the Eternals' reaction is correlative with, rather than obstructive to, Urizen's hiding in abstraction and secrecy, and to the means designed by him for the realisation of his perverted ideas. Though detached from Eternity, this "place in the north" is surrounded by it. The expansion of Urizen's world is rendered possible when

Rent away with a terrible crash
Eternity roll'd wide apart

. . .
Leaving ruinous fragments of life
Hanging frowning cliffs & all between
An ocean of voidness unfathomable.

(5:4-11)

Apparently, this rupture is consolidated when Urizen, in an attempt to protect himself from "the flames of Eternal fury" (5:18), retires under "a roof, vast petrific around, / . . . like a womb" (5:28-29). The emergence of this monstrosity is "View'd by sons of Eternity, standing / On the shore of the infinite ocean" (5:34-35). Due to the contrast of Eternity and "place," and intensified by paradoxes like ". . . all between / An ocean of voidness . . ." and "the shore of the infinite ocean," the notion of spatial relation is at once introduced and suspended. Metaphorical projection achieves the conflation of Locke's 'idea' of place, the "relative position of anything" (II,13,10) in space, and of "uniform space or expansion" (II,13,10), "the undistinguishable inane of infinite space" (II,13,10). Apart from revealing Blake's own metaphysics of space, the image of Eternity encompassing spatial infinitude, of the relative position of Urizen's world opposite Eternity, constitutes a satirical reinterpretation of the empirical view of space as "only a relation resulting from the existence of other beings at a distance" (II,13,27). Urizen's "Immensity" (3:43) corresponds to Locke's "infinity of space . . . [which] is nothing but a supposed endless progression of the mind over what repeated ideas of space it pleases." (II,17,7) It is encompassed by Eternity, or "space infinite, which carries in it a plain contradiction" (II,17,7) as Locke believes, implying the notion of the

mind "actually to have a view of all those repeated ideas of space which an endless repetition can never totally represent to it" (II,17,7).

Though surrounded by Eternity, Urizen's world, paradoxically, is infinitely extended, with Urizen, "That solitary one in Immensity" (3:43), as the centre of reference. It has 'figure' (globe, womb) which Locke defines as "the relation which the parts of the termination of extension or circumscribed space have amongst themselves." (II,13,5) In this early phase of Urizen, Locke's "sight and touch, by either of which we receive into our minds the ideas of extension or distance" (II,13,10) play no part. Hence, contrary to Locke's theory of perception, Urizen's 'ideas' of spatial relation originate in reflection, not in sensory experience. Locke's "ideas of certain stated lengths" (II,13,4), infinitely repeated, produce the 'ideas' of empirical immensity and eternity. Associated with "Immensity" and with "eternity," as in "the rock of eternity," Urizen is the rational "power we find in ourselves of repeating, as often as we will, any 'idea' of space . . . and the 'idea' of any length of duration" (II,17,5), thus producing the 'ideas' of numerical immensity and eternity, respectively. Extension and solidity are eternal or infinitely continuous in the sense that they remain unaffected by mechanical division. Similarly, the continuity of 'pure space' as conceived by Locke,

"cannot be separated, neither really nor mentally" (II,13,13). At the same time 'pure space' offers no "resistance to the motion of body" (II,13,14). In the context of Urizen, Locke's concepts of extension, duration and number which "all contain in them a secret relation of the parts" (II,21,3) are identified with Urizen's consciousness. They constitute the "wide world of solid obstruction" (4:23) which excludes "eternal life," and the "vacuum" or "space undivided by existence" (13:46) which horrifies Los. This is a far cry from Blake's own conviction that "One thought. fills immensity."⁶⁸

The emergence of Urizen's world is a novel phenomenon in Eternity. As it is eventually contained by the Eternals inside its own conceptual reflection, the equally relative "woof . . . called . . . Science" (19:9),⁶⁹ this is a parody on ideal being, as conceived by Blake, where "Reason is the bound or outward circumference of Energy."⁷⁰ Urizen's world is alternately identified as a "soul-shudd'ring vacuum" (3:5), "a fathomless void" (6:5), "vast forests" (3:23), "a dark globe" (5:38), a "petrific abominable chaos" (3:26) and

bleak desarts
Now fill'd with clouds, darkness & waters
That roll'd perplex'd labring . . . (4:1-3).

Some of these images, associated in Urizen with material chaos, are unequivocally identified with empiricism. In

A Descriptive Catalogue, "The Horse of Intellect is leaping from the cliffs of Memory and Reasoning; it is a barren Rock: it is also called the Barren Waste of Locke and Newton."⁷¹ A Compound of chaotic flux and fixity, of voidness and matter, Urizen's world of fragments is at once metaphorical projection and critique of the metaphysics underlying Locke's distinct 'ideas' of solidity, body, extension and motion. All these 'ideas' require space for their existence. Significantly, Urizen's egotism manifests itself in his desire for "solidity" which Locke defines as consisting "in repletion, and so an utter exclusion of other bodies out of the space it possesses" (II,4,4). As Urizen's efforts of dividing and measuring of mental space prove, his thinking includes the 'idea' of extension. The modifications of thought, so far irregular, are metaphorically identified with body and motion--and thus with a materialistic conception of reality--neither of which exist without space. Finally, Urizen's consciousness hardens into "the rock of eternity," a conclusion supported by The Book of Ahania:

For when Urizen shrunk away
From Eternals, he sat on a rock
Barren; a rock which himself
From redounding fancies had petrified. (3:55-58)

The 'ideas' of space and matter are identified with Urizen when chaos speaks with his voice, proclaiming his desires, his doubtful achievements, and the tyrannic means designed

to perpetuate his rule. Ironically, Urizen, the demiurge, has adopted the attributes of Locke's 'complex idea' of 'substance,' the unknown, abstract "substratum wherein . . . [simple ideas] subsist, and from which they do result" (II,23,1). In him subsist thinking, willing and the power of moving, as well as the 'ideas' of coherent solid parts and, eventually, a power of being moved (cf. II,23,3-5). He is the unknown "cause of their union" (II,23,6), as in him, paradoxically, the 'ideas' of immaterial spirit and of matter co-exist. Like Locke's "ideas of particular sorts of substances," and like his remote God, Urizen is only known by his 'accidents' which Locke supposes "to flow from the particular internal constitution or unknown essence of that substance" (II,23,3).

In Urizen, there is neither a linear narrative sequence nor a readily discernible "chronology of motivation."⁷² Due to constantly shifting perspectives, successive scenes form complementary units. They are thematic fragments forming an increasingly comprehensive and progressively detailed texture of imaginatively interrelated and mutually reflecting events.⁷³ Analysis of the "Preludium" has led to the conclusion that Urizen's withdrawal from Eternity and his hiding in abstraction are correlative with the reactions of the Eternals. This

central event is further elaborated with attention focusing on Los and Urizen. The "eternal Prophet" (10:7) represents the Eternals' cause in Urizen's world. His first task is to isolate, not to recover, Urizen's creation.

And Los round the dark globe of Urizen,
Kept watch for Eternals to confine,
The obscure separation alone;
For Eternity stood wide apart (5:38-41).

"Howling around the dark Demon" (6:2), Los suffers utmost spiritual pain

for in anguish,
Urizen was rent from his side;
And a fathomless void for his feet;
And intense fires for his dwelling. (6:3-6)⁷⁴

Urizen, on the other hand, "laid in a stony sleep / Unorganiz'd, rent from Eternity" (6:7-8). His state of consciousness--or rather unconsciousness--is identified with the 'objective' paradox of his petrific chaos. The Eternals call him "Death" and "a clod of clay" (6:9,10), while Los is "affrighted / At the formless unmeasurable death" (7:8-9). "Death," in this context, does not signify an absolute end in the temporal sense, but the fatal dissolution of mind in matter. Urizen's condition suggests the fallacious conception of the universe as purely material. Confused Lockean modifications of thought

and motion come alive as "direful changes" (7:6), uncontrolled and devoid of purpose. These are the only activities taking place in Urizen's nightmarish wasteland of self-imposed isolation. The atmosphere prevailing in this chaos of mind and matter is visualised by an impressive fusion of cosmic and anthropomorphic imagery, ultimately achieving the metaphorical identification of Urizen with his unfulfilled desires and with the objective projections of his disorganised state of consciousness.

The rescue operation performed by Los on the tormented "Immortal" with whom he had been united in Eternity, is correlative with Urizen's own protective action as related on Plate 5. Prompted by 'pain,' and with the aid of 'time,' Los binds "the changes of Urizen" (8:12), every fleeting shape, into a measurable anthropomorphic universe. Trying to arrest the process of dissolution of what already is a "formless unmeasurable death," Los himself has to resort to Urizenic activity. First, Urizen has the appearance of the surface of a young planet growing older. Like the irresistible billows of an ocean

Ages on ages roll'd over him!
In stony sleep ages roll'd over him!
Like a dark waste stretching chang'able
By earthquakes riv'n, belching sullen fires
On ages roll'd ages in ghastly
Sick torment; (10:1-6).

By destroying the dynamic balance of contraries prevailing in Eternity, Urizen, very much against his intention, has brought about monotonous flux, unpredictable mutability and tormenting instability. These are the objective manifestations of Urizen's progressive spiritual dissociation from Eternal reality.

And Urizen (so his eternal name)
His prolific delight obscurd more & more
In dark secrecy hiding in surgeing
Sulphureous fluid his phantasies. (10:11-14)

So far, duration has had no visible effect on his irregular and unpredictable "changes." Its uniform flux merely perpetuates the misery of Los and Urizen, until Los, addressed as "The eternal Prophet," imposes temporal demarcations on the rolling "Ages." Monotonous duration is organised, and the "changes" co-ordinated, when Los forges

chains new & new
Numb'ring with links. hours, days & years (10:17-18).

In correspondence with Urizen's reductive effort of forming relations of space, Los forms periods or relations of time, "dividing / The horrible night into watches" (10:10). Los assumes the functions both of a cosmic sentinel and of another demiurge, though in a more positive sense than Urizen.⁷⁵ He acts in accordance with Locke's view that

"Without some such fixed parts or periods, the order of things would be lost to our finite understandings, in the boundless invariable oceans of duration and expansion, which comprehend in them all finite beings, and in their full extent belong only to the deity" (II,15,8). However, there is no transcendent Deity in Urizen, only a presumptuous "Priest" who cannot cope with infinite expansion and duration, although he caused them to exist. Los creates the chain of time, interconnected measurable periods with a beginning and an end, and he imposes both finite duration and continuity on otherwise disconnected mental and material phenomena. He thereby provides a mechanical framework which may not reassemble the fragments of life into their former unity. Nevertheless, he arrests the process of further disintegration. Due to the labours of Los, the

eternal mind bounded began to roll
Eddies of wrath ceaseless round & round,
And the sulphureous foam surgeing thick
Settled, a lake, bright, & shining clear:
White as the snow on the mountains cold. (10:19-23)

The identity of the "eternal mind" remains equivocal in these lines. It may only refer to Urizen. But it is equally likely to refer to Urizen and Los in their Eternal aggregate.⁷⁶

Previously, Urizen was described as "Dark revolving in silent activity: / Unseen in tormenting passions." This we associated with "thinking and motion" to which, according to Locke, "the actions we have any idea of" reduce themselves. Now, Los imposes order on the "eternal mind" by forming Urizen's disorganised thoughts into "a constant train of successive ideas" (II,14,6), as described by Locke. Locke's notion of a "constant and regular succession of ideas in a waking man" becomes to Urizen "the measure and standard of all other successions" (II,14,12). Locke's "waking man" is Urizen tossing in a "horrible dreamful slumber" (10:35). As the sense organs have not yet been formed, Locke's claim that the 'ideas' of duration and its measures are derived from sensation and reflection is implicitly repudiated.⁷⁷ Los forces the preconceived 'idea' of time and its periods upon the confused "eternal mind." The concept of a constant and regular succession of 'ideas' in time is combined with the notion of cyclic patterns of thought. Together they produce the spatial metaphor of the "eternal mind bounded" and rolling "round & round," thereby implicitly inverting Locke's observation "that even motion produces in his mind an idea of succession no otherwise than as it produces there a continued train of distinguishable ideas" (II,14,6). By repeating in his mind Locke's "measures of time, or ideas of stated lengths of duration, . . . [Urizen] can come to imagine duration, where nothing does really endure

or exist;" (II,14,31) and thus he imagines "futurity." By binding the "eternal mind," Los commits himself to maintaining the consolidating cyclic motion, thus binding himself.⁷⁸ As motion is associated with the 'idea' of space, the imaginative limitation of his achievement is revealed.⁷⁹

In The Book of Los, an analogous scene is depicted which may shed some light on the psychological and epistemological implications of Los's rescue operation in Urizen. Once Los's "Prophetic wrath" (4:19) has succeeded in destroying "the vast rock of eternity" (4:12) in which he was imprisoned, Los finds himself surrounded by a vacuum. He falls.

Times on times, night on night, day on day
Truth has bounds. Error none: falling, falling:
Years on years, and ages on ages
Still he fell thro' the void, still a void
Found for falling day & night without end.
For tho' day or night was not; their spaces
Were measurd by his incessant whirls
In the horrid vacuity bottomless. (4:29-36)

The "Immortal revolving" (4:37) undergoes a consolidating change:

wrath subsided
And contemplative thoughts first arose
Then aloft his head rear'd in the Abyss
And his downward-borne fall chang'd oblique
Many ages of groans: till there grew
Branchy forms: organizing the Human
Into finite inflexible organs. (4:39-45)

The whole process of the Cosmic Fall is then summarised in terms which plainly reveal its metaphysical character:

Incessant the falling Mind labour'd
Organizing itself: till the Vacuum
Became element, pliant to rise,
Or to fall, or to swim, or to fly:
With ease searching the dire vacuity (4:49-53).

Suggesting a psychological and ontological phenomenon, the spatial metaphor of the "eternal mind" immersed in matter is satirically depicted by the illumination on Plate 6 of Urizen.⁸⁰ One print of this Plate in Legends in a Small Book of Designs bears the inscription "I labour upwards into futurity" (E662). It is widely accepted by Blake scholars that one illustration can signify different things in different contexts. As a rule these meanings are complementary rather than contradictory. The illumination on Plate 6 conflates the Neo-Platonic image of the sea of time and space with Urizen's chaotic ocean of materialism and with his spatial vacuum which is identical with his spiritual darkness. His "fluid phantasies" induce him with the illusion of an upward motion in a spatial and, figuratively, in a temporal and an intellectual sense, whereas in truth he makes no spiritual progress and merely marks time. His stagnation is revealed by his beard weightlessly streaming to the left and to the right which indicates that Urizen physically and spiritually floats in his pliable environment without moving in any

specific direction. The futility of his physical and intellectual efforts is further exemplified on Plate 4 of Urizen where he is depicted, with his eyes closed, being weighed down by masses of rock. One print of this Plate in Legends in a Small Book of Designs is inscribed with Urizen's stubborn claim "Eternally I labour on" (E662). Considered as a complementary whole, poetic text and illuminations thus reveal the fallacy inherent in the specifically Urizenic Lockean doctrine concerning the acquisition of knowledge and the advancement of learning. By suspending the fulfilment of desire in the pursuit of positivistic empirical knowledge no spiritual progress is made. Man does not truly improve his condition.

In Urizen the process of fiery Eternal energy fading, first depicted as the freezing of volcanic lava into an icy lake, is followed by a significant shift from metaphor to simile. The implicit identification of the "eternal mind" with the "lake . . . / White as the snow on the mountains cold" (10:22-23) and with the "nerves of joy" (10:41) of the "Immortal," rendered explicit in The Book of Ahania, is now dissolved in a discursive equation:⁸¹

Forgetfulness, dumbness, necessity!
In chains of the mind locked up,
Like fetters of ice shrinking together
Disorganiz'd, rent from Eternity (10:24-27).

Ultimately consisting of an infinite number of links, the "chains of the mind" may be taken to symbolise Locke's "chain of consequences" as well as his notion of linear "eternity, as the future eternal duration of our souls, as well as the eternity of that infinite Being which must necessarily have always existed" (II,14,31). "Forgetfulness" is the most harmful defect. For the chained mind, "locked [sic] up" within the circumference of its own preconceptions and, later, by empiricist theory of knowledge, the ideal reality of Eternity has not simply vanished in an obscure past. Like innate 'ideas,' it has never been. Consequently, there is no hope for its recovery in the future. Separation from Eternity entails the loss of the Eternal present.

Under the restraining effect of the chain of Los the eternal mind resigns itself to inarticulate passivity. Locke describes this condition: "Wherever thought is wholly wanting or the power to act or forbear according to the direction of thought, there necessity takes place" (II,21,13). The mind's submission to Urizen's "necessity" signifies its ultimate acceptance of the mysterious power which, by its worshippers, is believed to govern all rationally unintelligible processes in life. To Blake, an irrational belief in mystery and fate, submission to inhumane laws of any kind, on the one hand, and Locke's theory of knowledge with its blind trust in reason and

abstraction on the other, have their common origin in a passive mind, a mind without creative energy. Ignorant of his own corruption, Urizen is its origin, agent and symbolic projection.

Through seven eventful "Ages," Los proceeds to render permanent Urizen's "changes." From an amorphous mass of mind and matter, a universal, yet finite, man is formed, imprisoned by temporal and anatomical form. While motion continues, Los encloses in spherical shape Urizen's mind,

a roof shaggy and wild inclos'd
In an orb, his fountain of thought. (10:33-34)

The human skull is both protecting "roof" and constricting "orb." While preventing the total disintegration of the "eternal mind," it also limits its future scope and flexibility. When the "vast world of Urizen" assumes human features of cosmic proportions, it incorporates its own space or "Abyss" (11:4) formed by

Ribs, like a bending cavern
And bones of solidness, froze
Over all his nerves of joy. (10:39-41)

The former "void," symbolising one aspect of Urizen's consciousness, is being further encompassed by a rib cage, bones, veins and nerves from the brain to prevent the "Abyss" from spreading.⁸² First, Los forced thought in a

cyclic motion, thus severely limiting the scope of the will, "the power to prefer or choose." Now, the once "all flexible senses" are becoming rigid and will eventually depend on external stimuli for whatever impressions they are capable of receiving. With the will no longer determining thought and action freely, conditions congenial to Locke's theory of knowledge are about to be provided.

The complex symbolism of 'orb' and 'cave,' associated with the contraction of otherwise expansive potentials, is further developed with regard to the "Immortal's" eyes ("two little orbs / . . . fixed in two little caves" [11:13-14]), ears ("Two Ears in close volutions. / . . . / Shot spiring out and petrified" [11:21,23]), nose (13:1), stomach (13:5-6) and throat (13:7). Beholding "the deep" (11:16), his attention is captured by his own "deep world within," "Natures wide womb." By identifying material nature with Urizen's mental world, poetic symbolism ingeniously solves the pervasive contradiction between material reality and ideality, the dualism of subject and object, thought and thing, being and seeming. The objective universe of things is thus revealed not as self-sustaining matter, but as a function of mind, as Urizen's and Los's 'creation.'

Now, moderate modes of pain make themselves felt:
"The pangs of hope began," (11:19) incidentally hope being,

in Locke's definition, "that pleasure in the mind which everyone finds in himself upon the thought of a profitable future enjoyment of a thing which is apt to delight him" (II,20,9). It is just another form of the suspense of the fulfilment of desire, comparable to the exercise of reason, previously discussed. Nevertheless, this state of mind is a considerable advance over Urizen's labouring "In despair and the shadows of death" (5:27). Traditionally despair is the sin against the Holy Spirit or, in Locke's version, "the thought of the unattainableness of any good" (II,20,11). Confined by anatomical barriers, the "nerves of joy" become organs of sensory perception or experience, petrified external receptacles for the 'simple ideas' and modes of pleasure and pain of mind and body, provided by "the deep," be they passions like hope and fear, or simpler modes such as the pains of hunger and thirst.⁸³

Directed against Locke's conceptions of man's powers, modes of thinking, of pleasure and pain, Blake's satire takes the form of a parody of the seven days of Creation in Genesis. Having created heaven, earth and all living creatures, God made man in his own image. Finally, "God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good." (1:31) In Urizen, however, the forming of a limited anthropomorphic universe, of prisons for thought, desire, will and senses is a perversion of creativity. It also suggests a specific conception of being. Urizen will be

unable to conceive of himself in a way transcending the boundaries of his fettered, self-centred consciousness. Both he and Los are among Blake's "Giants who formed this world into its sensual existence and now seem to live in it in chains."⁸⁴

The spatial metaphor of the "eternal mind" submerged in matter suggests that the perceptive faculty is now confined to receiving sensations from external objects. At the same time, however, and unknown to him, Urizen is surrounded by Eternity.⁸⁵

All the myriads of Eternity:
All the wisdom & joy of life:
Roll like a sea around him,
Except what his little orbs
Of sight by degrees unfold. (13:28-32)⁸⁶

Eternity and Urizen's world are not successive in time. They are "discrete" or discontinuous "degrees" or states of consciousness co-existing on mutually exclusive levels of reality.⁸⁷ Once Urizen's "perceptions are . . . bounded by organs of perception," he cannot perceive "more than sense (tho' ever so acute) can discover."⁸⁸ "Organic perceptions" only produce "natural or organic thoughts."⁸⁹ As a result, Urizen's "eternal life / Like a dream was obliterated" (13:33-34). Both Urizen and Los are "rent from Eternity" and closed in by "a cold solitude & dark void" (13:39). Having 'suffer'd his fires to decay / . . .

[Los] look'd back with anxious desire." He becomes aware that they are "Cut off from life & light" by "the space undivided by existence." Los is horrified by the sight of what may be taken to be the metaphorical projection of a "natural Idea" in which, according to Swedenborg, "there is Space."⁹⁰ In contrast to the petrified, sterile, cold, dark world of primary qualities and abstraction revolving in regular motion in a wasteland of space and time, "existence" signifies a "spiritual Idea" of life. It "doth not derive any Thing from Space, but it derives every Thing appertaining to it from State."⁹¹ Obviously, Blake takes Swedenborg's "spiritual Idea" to correspond with his own "Poetic idea."

In the first part of the poem Urizen becomes a "self-contemplating shadow" by withdrawing from Eternity. He reflects and perceives in the manner described by Locke: "the mind turns its view inward upon itself and contemplates its own actions, thinking is the first that occurs. In it the mind observes a great variety of modifications, and from thence receives distinct ideas." (II,19,1) Urizen, accordingly, proceeds to divide, measure and, generally, to compartmentalise mental "space" and the actions of the mind. Abstract principles of law and order are correlated with a variety of objectified chaotic "modifications" of

motion ("direful changes") taking place in a perturbed mind. The consequences of Urizen's reflective "actions are projected into the actions themselves," which is an important feature of literary satire, as pointed out in a wider context by Martin Price.⁹² Examined in the light of Blake's contempt for Lockean epistemology, the satiric character of these complex configurations becomes obvious.

When "Los suffer'd his fires to decay" (13:44), and when he ceased in his 'prophetic' task of rendering concrete and visible the otherwise intangible and mysterious by giving it temporal form,

a cold solitude & dark void
The Eternal Prophet & Urizen clos'd (13:39-40).

"Frozen / Into horrible forms of deformity" (13:42-43), their state of physical immobility symbolises spiritual sterility and, in a truly satirical fashion, Urizen's conception of being. This recurrent feature in Blake's poetry of encompassing in one complex image psychological, social and ontological issues is summed up by Kathleen Raine: "For Blake, outward events and circumstances are the expressions of states of mind, ideologies, mentalities and not, as for the determinist-materialist ideologies of the modern world, their causes."⁹³ The subjective idealism on which Blake's own conception of reality is founded, and

which accounts for his determined rejection of seventeenth-century and eighteenth-century empiricism, is succinctly expressed in Europe:

Thought chang'd the infinite to a serpent; that
 which pitieth:
To a devouring flame (10:16-17).

With man's senses rigidified, "bended downward" and "Turn'd outward, barr'd and petrify'd against the infinite,"⁹⁴ the Urizenic conception of reality is combined with the regular motion in time and space previously associated with the consolidating activities of Los. The animated serpent of the title-page of Europe, which may be taken to symbolise uninhibited energy and desire--note the apparent contrast with the frontispiece of Europe, previously discussed--has been transformed on Plate 9 into a parody of his dynamic potential, thus becoming an "image of infinite / Shut up in finite revolutions."⁹⁵ If correlated with Los's consolidating activities related in Urizen and The Book of Los, the serpent's seven regular coils symbolise "infinity divided by time into seven days, the order of encompassing creation, instead of the 'ever-varying spiral ascents to the heavens of heavens' (13) that his improvement into divinely human form would mean."⁹⁶ This perverse outcome of the separation and reunification of Los and Urizen is anticipated by the illumination on Plate 7 of Urizen, which depicts in the centre a youthful Christ-like or Satanic

figure, depending on one's point of view, representing Los or Orc, "falling headlong wound round by the tail of the serpent."⁹⁷ The serpent's seven coils again indicate the monotonous regularity of the process of the Fall, previously associated with the seven days of Creation or Urizen's "changes" into earth-born man. The Christ-like posture of the central falling character may anticipate his eventual resurrection. Unlike the illumination in America (Plate 5) where, according to Erdman, "Fear moves geometrically downward in a vortex that tapers to nothing, to no return,"⁹⁸ the upright bronze serpent of Europe, (Plate 9) symbolises the fact that the fall has been arrested, although not yet reversed. This process of consolidation is described in the passage of The Book of Los (4:39-45), previously quoted.

For the time being Los has forfeited his capacity for acting with the constructive "fury of a spiritual existence."⁹⁹ As his vision is "obscur'd with mourning" (13:48) he fails to realise that he has already made the first and crucial step toward overcoming the chaotic manifestations of Urizenic consciousness by providing them with definite material and temporal form. Instead of carrying on and overcoming this deluded consciousness once its spiritual deformity has been rendered tangible, Los in fact further consolidates error by indulging in unproductive emotional distress. Overcome by pity, he unwittingly starts an unending series of further divisions and separations.

In anguish dividing & dividing
For pity divides the soul
In pangs eternity on eternity
Life in cataracts poured down his cliffs (13:52-55).

Having accepted the purely "sensual existence" of the world as real, and forgetting that he and Urizen are "the causes of its life & the sources of all activity" he limits himself.¹⁰⁰ The dynamics of eternal life, generated by energetic contraries are being perverted into monotonous, painful and futile duration identified with a river ineffectively pouring down indestructible cliffs. This image correlates the passive flux of life with the mechanical passage of 'passive' time. Life is seen as a meaningless function of clock-time which merely perpetuates the Urizenic state of visionless sterility.¹⁰¹

Urizen's initial separation from Eternity is being re-enacted time and again. Most important, Los performs his personal act of obscuring his Eternal identity by being "divided / Before the death-image of Urizen" (15:1-2). Imprisoned by Urizenic consciousness and by the conception of reality that goes with it, he has created his own "Abyss" (15:5), with "a round globe of blood / Trembling upon the Void" (13:57-58). "At length" his deluded "dark visions" (15:12)

in tears & cries imbodied
A female form trembling and pale
Waves before his deathly face

All Eternity shudderd at sight
Of the first female now separate (18:6-10).

While the imagery of the preceeding lines (1-5) captures the maternal experience of giving birth, (blood, milk, tears, pangs), "eternity on eternity" (18:5) suggests the intensity as well as the perpetual occurrence of the generative process which is the fallen natural counterpart of spiritual creativity. At the same time, this type of continuity indicates the futility of Urizen's hope for permanent "joy without pain."

The "eternal myriads" (18:14) who were previously mentioned in one breath with the "wisdom & joy of life," now perform their own Urizenic action. Petrified by "wonder, awe, fear, astonishment" (18:13) they "fled" (19:1), and are transformed into distant constellations. Formerly portions of Eternal existence, later objects of visual perception and of scientific enquiry, they roll like an amorphous chaotic sea around Los, obscuring "the wisdom & joy of life . . . Except what his little orbs / Of sight by degrees unfold" (13:29-32).

Chapter VI introduces the reader to the human drama within the spatial and spiritual confines of the immanent world. The ensuing conflicts are a direct outcome of Los's

self-division and the projection of a portion of his being outside himself. Prompted by pity for Enitharmon, the timid and passive "female form," Los

embrac'd her, she wept, she refus'd
In perverse and cruel delight
She fled from his arms, yet he followd (19:11-13).

Eternal harmony has degenerated into a tense and frustrating relationship between a mocking female and her male pursuer. Eternity, as the living aggregate of the Eternals,

shudder'd when they saw,
Man begetting his likeness,
On his own divided image. (19:14-16)

Possibly, Los is driven by the urge to regain what he senses to be part of him. Yet, as he has no clear notion of his former Eternal identity, he is not properly re-united with his female portion who has become the elusive object of his desire. He merely possesses her physically and only for a short time. Spiritual creativity, love and the uninhibited instantaneous fulfilment of desire have degenerated into libidinous instincts and frustrated lust. Physical and spiritual division and generative multiplication replace Eternal harmony. In time, Enitharmon, the poetic embodiment of the universal female principle, "Felt a Worm within her womb" (19:20). Its embryonic state of helplessness only lasts until the "worm" has been "moulded into existence"

(19:23). This is distinctly reminiscent of Tiriel's repressive upbringing. Like Tiriel, this "worm" undergoes physical metamorphoses, symbolising its spiritual development. Having grown into a serpent (19:26), a menacing symbol of eroticism ("With dolorous hissings & poisons / Round Enitharmons loins folding" 19:27-28) he casts his scales.

With sharp pangs the hissings began
To change to a grating cry,
Many sorrows and dismal throes
Many forms of fish, bird & beast,
Brought forth an Infant form
Where was a worm before. (19:31-36)

The parallelism of lines 33 and 34 suggests that mental and physical suffering produce their very own offspring as 'naturally' as Nature's own procreative powers. Finally, when "Enitharmon groaning / Produc'd a man Child to the light" (19:39-40), the relevance to human affairs of this painful event becomes unmistakable. Appropriately, this child Orc is associated with the traditionally ambiguous serpent symbol. In the present context it alludes both to the seductive Satanic serpent of Genesis, habitually associated by Blake with energy, and to Moses' "fiery serpent" in the desert, which has a healing function.¹⁰² There is nothing peaceful or benevolent about Orc, the violent, energetic "Human shadow."

Delving earth in his resistless way;
Howling, the Child with fierce flames
Issu'd from Enitharmon. (19:44-46)

This is the mythopoeic expression of Blake's doctrine that Urizenic "Thought chang'd . . . that which pitieth: / To a devouring flame."¹⁰³ Cut off from Eternity, Los can only introduce Orc to the immanent world which is a projection of Urizenic consciousness, to time and space and misery:

He bathed him in springs of sorrow
He gave him to Enitharmon. (20:4-5)

By now Los, the Eternal Prophet, has turned into a possessive male who is jealous of the close relationship between Enitharmon and her fiery son. Tightening "girdles" grow round his bosom. Unlike Urizen's "chains of the mind" these emotional restraints can be burst by night.¹⁰⁴ Nevertheless, in their aggregate they form the links of "an iron Chain" (20:19). This image suggests the regular recurrence of Los's suffering and his temporary self-liberation, a phenomenon applicable to human relationships both private and public.

The archetypal quality of these symbolic actions is underlined when Los and Enitharmon take "Orc to the top of a mountain" (20:21) and

chain'd his young limbs to the rock
With the Chain of Jealousy
Beneath Urizens deathful shadow (20:23-25).

Orc's primitive sacrificial confinement on the mountain top tentatively associates him with Prometheus, Moses and Christ. These men were, in their own ways, visionaries, revolutionaries and, up to a point, liberators of their peoples from slavery. In consequence, they had to suffer for their convictions. Read as allegory, Orc's birth and confinement on the mountain top may signify how a revolutionary idea is conceived and subsequently abandoned by its promulgator (Los) for selfish reasons and in favour of personal gratification and comfort. Orc is sacrificed on the altar of orthodoxy and conformism, be it in politics, philosophy, or the arts. Orc is everything Urizenic man dreads most. He is the immanent energetic force that brings about violent change if released. But even when chained to the rock of intellectual sterility, he has an animating influence on the spiritually dead world dominated by Urizen's laws.

The dead heard the voice of the child
And began to awake from sleep
All things heard the voice of the child
And began to awake to life. (20:26-29)

Up to this point in the poem, mental operations and material phenomena were metaphorically identified. Now, the separation of mind and matter, of subject and object is accomplished. All three elements in Lockean perception, the observer, the 'idea' and the object represented by the 'idea,' come alive, so to speak, when

Urizen craving with hunger
Stung with the odours of Nature
Explor'd his dens around

(20:30-32).

Once Urizen is woken up from "sleep" by "the voice of the child" (20:26) he experiences sensations, "the actual entrance of any idea into the understanding by the senses."¹⁰⁵ Desire, an "uneasiness of the mind," determines the will to act.¹⁰⁶ He is oblivious of the existence of Eternity. At the same time, "Natures wide womb" has become alien to its maker who displays a newly acquired sensitiveness, perverse by Eternal standards, to 'secondary qualities' as defined by Locke. "Such qualities which in truth are nothing in the objects themselves but powers to produce various sensations in us by their primary qualities, i.e. by the bulk, figure, texture, and motion of their insensible parts, as colors, sounds, tastes, etc." (II,8,10) These 'qualities' subsist in the 'substance' of matter, which, according to Locke, is "supposed to be (without knowing what it is) the substratum to those simple ideas we have from without" (II,23,5).

Urizen adopts the role of an observer. With the will having forfeited its absolute control over the senses, Urizen is entirely dependent on sensation and reflection to determine the will to act. The chained mind passively receives simple ideas furnished by sense organs. "It is about these impressions made on our senses by outward

objects that the mind seems first to employ itself, in such operations as . . . [Locke calls] perception, remembering, consideration, reasoning, etc." (II,1,23) The will has become a function of understanding. Formerly, Urizen divided and measured his "deep world within." Now, he continues on the same lines "to divide the Abyss beneath" (20:34). For the purpose of acquiring empirical knowledge he forms mechanical tools: "a dividing rule," "scales," "a brazen quadrant," and "golden compasses" (20:35-39). Unwittingly, he deceives himself. He relies on a natural source of light, "a globe of fire lighting his journey" (20:48), as illustrated on Plate 22. According to Locke, the will supposes knowledge to guide its choice. As, on awakening, Urizen's mind appears to be a 'tabula rasa,' his will remains undetermined with regard to the fulfilment of any immediate desires. Urizen merely decides on the mode of acquiring knowledge about the immanent manifestations of his misery, but not about its true, spiritual, cause. His uninspired decision entails a rational and sensible suspension of desire and merely perpetuates Locke's "chain of consequences."¹⁰⁷ His dilemma is anticipated in There is No Natural Religion. As Urizen "sees the Ratio only, he sees himself only."¹⁰⁸ The "globe" is the material symbol for this Urizenic "Ratio." Projected on the outside world, so to speak, Urizen's condition, his deluded state of consciousness, has turned into the deceptive object of an impaired understanding. With empirical

methods of enquiry leading to the accumulation of positive knowledge, Urizen merely rediscovers accidents of his own spiritual 'substance.' His perceptions are "organic," and his desires are necessarily limited by them. Both being "untaught by any thing but organs of sense, must be limited to objects of sense."¹⁰⁹ He is a prisoner of Locke's theory of knowledge:

it seems probable to me that the simple ideas we receive from sensation and reflection are the boundaries of our thoughts; beyond which the mind, whatever efforts it would make, is not able to advance one jot; nor can it make any discoveries, when it would pry into the nature and hidden causes of those ideas. . . . For whensoever we would proceed beyond these simple ideas we have from sensation and reflection, and dive further into the nature of things, we fall presently into darkness and obscurity, perplexedness and difficulties, and can discover nothing further but our own blindness and ignorance. (II,23,29/32)

Urizen acts in accordance with Locke's doctrine without attempting to elevate "his mind above the Ideas of Thought which are derived from Space and Time," as Swedenborg claims.¹¹⁰ Yet, as has been pointed out, "worldly demonstration" is "self derived intelligence." And the object of Urizen's enquiry is no more than the projection of his subjective fallacy. In The Four Zoas, Albion suffers a similar fate. When "Rising upon his Couch of Death Albion beheld his Sons / Turning his Eyes outward to Self. losing the Divine Vision" (23:1-2).

The design on the title-page of Urizen satirically captures, among other things, Urizen's method of acquiring knowledge. Urizen is depicted as a bearded patriarch squatting on an open book which is covered with illegible scrawls and blots. Only his right foot is visible, resting on the book. Roots grow from the book and cling to what looks like a base of rock. Urizen's eyes are closed and his arms rest on stone or metal tablets. He is holding a different writing implement in each hand. Mitchell suggests that Urizen "is to be seen at least partially as an emblem of a certain kind of relationship between the arts of poetry and engraving."¹¹¹ The two upright stone tablets in the background, which have the appearance of tombstones or the Tables of the Law, indicate an association with Urizen's monolithic world of "One command, one joy, one desire, / One curse, one weight, one measure / One King, one God, one Law."¹¹² Blake's satire is almost certainly directed against empiricism, the rule of inflexible laws, moral and otherwise, and possibly against the principle of imitation in art.¹¹³

Urizen is literally reading the 'Book of Nature' (alternatively 'The Book of the World' or 'The Book of Experience'), a metaphor deriving from the Latin Middle Ages and commonplace in Renaissance literature.¹¹⁴ Paracelsus, for instance, with whose writings Blake may have been acquainted, describes Nature

as a collection of books which are entire and perfect "because God himself wrote, made, and bound them and has hung them from the chains of his library." "From the light of Nature must enlightenment come, that the text 'libri naturae' be understood, without which enlightenment no philosopher nor natural scientist may be." . . . Finally, the whole earth is a book or a library "in which the pages are turned with our feet," which must be used "pilgrimly."¹¹⁵

Sir Thomas Browne is familiar with two books from which he derives his "Divinity:"

besides that written one of God, another of his servant Nature, that universall and publik Manuscript, that lies expans'd unto the eyes of all; those that never saw him in the one, have discovered him in the other: This was the Scripture and Theology of the Heathens . . . surely the Heathens knew better how to joyne and reade these mysticall letters, than wee Christians, who cast a more carelesse eye on these common Hieroglyphicks, and disdain to suck Divinity from the flowers of nature.¹¹⁶

By tracing nature's apparently confused hieroglyphs with his right foot, step by step as it were, Urizen attempts to 'read' the 'Book of Nature.' A caption in Legends in a Small Book of Designs suggests that his mode of enquiry is experimental; being unsure "Which is the Way / The Right or the Left" (E662), he accumulates random experience of the world which he conceives as external. His closed eyes indicate that he is spiritually blind and that he is reflecting on the information obtained. Before committing them to the stone or metal tablets on his left and right, he rationalises the dissociated fragments of information,

thus transforming them into abstractions. The tablets may suggest memory, iconographically conceived as a written record.¹¹⁷ However, as Eaves points out, "there is no sign of handwritten or engraved script on either tablet, and no sign of life or motion in either arm."¹¹⁸ These tablets, therefore, do not merely symbolise leaves in Urizen's metal books of already acquired wisdom; they also symbolise his "state of mind before it applies itself to an object of cognition."¹¹⁹ According to Aristotle, the state of such a mind is "like that of a tablet upon which nothing has yet been written."¹²⁰

In turning his back on Eternity, Urizen passed from light to darkness. On waking up, he has lost sight of the Eternal "Infinite."¹²¹ Consequently, he fails to question the validity of his mode of perception and his understanding of the world. Nor does it occur to him to reverse the process of degeneration suffered by mind and senses, to shake "off the Darkness of natural Light, and . . . [~~remove~~] its Fallacies from the Center to the Circumference," as Swedenborg demands.¹²² In Urizen, this fallacy is everywhere, in the centre as well as in the circumference. Enslaved by the results of his own imposition, Urizen is forced to follow Blake's dictum: "When the fallacies of darkness are in the circumference they cast a bound about the infinite."¹²³ Urizen weaves his own "curtains of darkness" (19:5) in a truly Lockean fashion.

The senses at first let in particular ideas, and furnish the yet empty cabinet, and the mind by degrees growing familiar with some of them, they are lodged in the memory, and names got to them. Afterward, the mind proceeding further, abstracts them, and by degrees learns the use of general names. In this manner the mind comes to be furnished with ideas and language, the materials about which to exercise its discursive faculty.
(I,1,15)

Taken to their limits of abstraction, empiricism and nominalism combine and suffocate the human mind under "A woof . . . called . . . Science," or ensnare it in a "Web . . . calld . . . The Net of Religion" (25:19,22).

According to Blake, there is no value in objective results provided by positivistic science because the underlying theory of knowledge is false. The exact and strictly empirical methods employed are derived from this very theory and are designed to produce results justifying and perpetuating it. In Eternity, as adumbrated in the beginning of Urizen, there is no basis for the premises of Locke's theory of knowledge. 'Simple' and 'complex ideas' come into their own only after the "eternal mind" has reduced itself to the level of Lockean 'substance,' bound by Urizen's premeditated laws of science, of social and religious tyranny. When this reduction has occurred, uninspired experience, ambitiously presenting itself as empiricism, becomes indispensable.

Locke believes that man cannot know for certain whether anything and, if so, what is represented by an 'idea.' Concerning this third element in Lockean perception, Blake takes a firm idealist stance. Neither Urizen's "dark world within" nor the external and, supposedly, infinite "Abyss" are 'things.' They are 'ideas'--illusions. Reliance on 'substances' of matter and spirit is "death." As has already been demonstrated, in A Vision of the Last Judgment Blake opposes his own view of reality with the empiricist ideal. If there is such a thing as a third element in perception, it ought to be Eternity itself, the second element being individual man's notion of Eternity, which depends on his "reception of the Poetic Genius" or "Spirit of Prophecy."¹²⁴

By refusing to "pry into the nature and hidden causes of . . . ideas," Locke takes a truly Urizenic stance. Rather than examining his own condition, Urizen unquestioningly accepts the "boundaries of . . . thought"--now associated with the notions of space and time. Instead of being recognised as a prerogative of Eternity, infinitude has become an attribute of the material universe. The "Abyss" is infinite only in a spatial and immanent sense. Truth, with Urizen, is "confined to Mathematical Demonstration;" and for Los and his sons there will be "a great deal to do to Prove that All Truth is Prejudice for All that is Valuable in Knowledge is Superior to Demonstrative Science such as is Weighed or Measured."¹²⁵

According to Urizen's doctrine, ultimate knowledge is circumscribed by "one weight, one measure," and morality is determined by "One command . . . / One curse." His "self derived intelligence," symbolised in the poem by the objective manifestations of introspective brooding, formulates its own theories of knowledge and of morals, its own boundaries of thought and action, comprising all conceivable relations. Mind renders itself dependent on the mysterious 'substance' of matter, on nature and on an equally elusive deity. Their respective forms of worship are the pursuits of "Science" and of "Religion." Knowledge is the goal of the former, ultimate happiness that of the latter. Supposedly total knowledge is a compound of innumerable pieces of information. While the mind accumulates facts, the will has to be determined by reason to prevent it from acting rashly as Locke believes. Any systematic rational enquiry demands the suspense of desire to forestall error. This important aspect, implicit in Urizen's method of exploring "the Abyss," provides the connecting link with his planting "a garden of fruits" (20:41). Both activities symbolise different forms of tyranny, because both aim at the subjection of the human mind to Urizen's law.

In Urizen, the "garden of fruits" is a poor, perverted substitute for Eternity and, at the same time, the natural symbol of Urizen's utopia of joy and permanence, founded

on an implicit conception of moral dualism. It is a trap set up to catch the human spirit. In allusion to the Garden of Eden in Genesis, Urizen's "garden" is implicitly associated with the tree of knowledge and its fruits, good and evil, previously correlated with joy and pain. Unable to restrain their individual desires, Urizen's "sons & daughters" (23:24) disobey his command of uniformity and are "curs'd / . . . for he saw / That no flesh nor spirit could keep / His iron laws one moment" (23:23-26). By way of punishment, Urizen's victims are inflicted with the consciousness of guilt, which is tantamount to their having lost their innocence, and with mortality. The "garden of fruits," thus, becomes the timeless symbol of man's nostalgia for a state of permanent joy somewhere in a fictitious past.

Urizen's hypocritical "Pity" (25:3) provides his victims with religion through which they hope to gain salvation. Every single one of their actions is now considered to bear some relation to a supposedly divine law. Depending on "the conformity or disagreement of . . . [their] voluntary actions" to Urizen's law, moral good and evil, pleasure and pain, are drawn on them from his decree.¹²⁶ The "sorrows of Urizens soul" (25:17) weave the "Net of Religion" (25:22). Significantly, Locke defines sorrow as "uneasiness of the mind upon the thought of a good lost, which might have been enjoyed longer; or the sense of a

present evil" (II,20,8). The "woven hypocrisy" (25:32) of Urizen's "Net of Religion" is "twisted like to the human brain" (25:21), enmeshing man in reasonings over the origin of his misery and the means of remedy. Also, Urizen's "Net" is associated with his "aged heavens" (25:8), relics of a distant past which may once have been an inspired present. They sustain man's deluded hope for a glorious future which will never come. The web of "sorrows" also divides the "dungeon-like heaven" (25:12) into numerous religious creeds, turning man against man.¹²⁷

Blake emphatically agreed with Locke on several points: morality is not an innate principle. It is acquired by the exercise of reason, motivated by self-love, and instilled by education--or indoctrination. Indeed, the exercise of reason is an expression of self-love. This applies to both Urizen and his victims. Natural and moral law originate in Urizen's self-contemplation, his self-centred desires. It is reasonable for man to observe these laws in an effort to secure ultimate personal happiness.

In the pursuit of happiness and in the pursuit of knowledge man has to suspend his desires, as Locke demands; be it to avoid error, be it in conformity with rules of moral rectitude. Thus, scientific methodology and religious practice equally render man a worshipper of Urizen and expose him to the consequences of Urizen's dualistic

dust, suggesting the lowest form of sensory experience. Epistemological and moral spheres are thus symbolically conflated into the image "reptile forms." Transformed into anthropomorphic reptiles, men become serpents to themselves. Seducer and victim are identical.¹²⁸

In this part of the poem, the infectious moral code is held responsible for stifling man's imaginative faculty, symbolically expressed by his becoming dependent on sensory perception. This apparent physical defect serves to account for man's inability henceforth to "rise at will / In the infinite void" (25:45-46). However, the degenerate state of the senses merely reflects an impaired understanding which erroneously accepts the "streaky slime" (25:33) of Urizen's hypocrisy for transparent truth. In both Urizen and The Four Zoas the victims suffer the same fate as the deluded tyrant, since "Beyond the bounds of their own self their senses cannot penetrate."¹²⁹ Man has become a "finite intelligence," as described by Locke, with "its determinate time and place of beginning to exist, the relation to that time and place will always determine to each of them its identity, as long as it exists" (II,27,2). After a man's death, "Tombs" (28:5) are built in memory of his past achievements. Symbolising the veneration of any form of traditional authority, the building of "tombs" renders man blind to the possibilities offered by the present.

In contrast with the cosmic setting of the earlier Plates, Blake reveals on this final Plate of Urizen the root of human depravity in quasi-historical and evolutionary terms. Man himself "form'd laws of prudence, and call'd them / The eternal laws of God" (28:6-7). The restraints imposed on man to curb his will and stifle his desires, are man-made, "mind-forg'd manacles."¹³⁰ A remote deity and the mysterious 'substance' of matter are both fabrications of minds forgetful of "their eternal life."

The uninspired inhabitants of Urizen's "cities" fall victim to divisive religious fanaticism. Their inability to communicate with members of other religions is symbolically attributed to the degeneration of their organs of perception:

For the ears of the inhabitants
Were wither'd & deafen'd, & cold.
And their eyes could not discern,
Their brethren of other cities. (28:15-18)

The thirty cities inhabited by Urizen's victims are identified with the African continent.

Surrounded by salt floods, now call'd
Africa: its name was then Egypt. (28:9-10)

These "salt floods" symbolise the sea of time and space as well as the deluge of the senses of which the external material universe is the corollary.¹³¹ The reference to Egypt recalls Exodus where, incidentally, Egypt is called "the house of bondage."¹³² Guided by Moses, the Children of Israel left their exile in Egypt and miraculously crossed the Red Sea, while the pursuing Egyptian army was drowned in the floods. Correspondingly in Urizen the ambiguous Moses-like figure of Fuzon gathers

The remaining children of Urizen:
And they left the pendulous earth:
They called it Egypt, & left it.

And the salt ocean rolled englob'd (28:20-23).

This act of dissociation by Fuzon and his followers from dependence on their 'father' has several equally relevant levels of meaning. These may not be identical with "the medieval fourfold method of exegesis," as suggested by Paley.¹³³ Nevertheless, the complex implications of these lines can only be illuminated by a figurative reading. The obvious allusions to Paradise Lost and to the Bible are qualified by the poetic context with its pervasive psychological, cognitive, historical, moral and ontological relevance.¹³⁴

From a historical point of view, Fuzon's initiative may be associated with the French Revolution, while on the psychological level "Fuzon is the Energy principle that

will redeem man from the bondage of Urizen's repressive law," as Paley suggests.¹³⁵ Leaving Urizen's spiritual Egypt which Blake here identifies with Milton's "pendulous earth," may also be taken to signify man's self-liberation from the Urizenic prison of moral dualism and from his spiritual exile in a life which is eternal "death."

In The Book of Ahania which continues where Urizen ends, Fuzon fails to maintain his apparently beneficial energetic impetus and fiery wrath. His exodus suggests yet another division, and not the restoration of man to prelapsarian unity. As he declares himself God, "eldest of things" (3:38), he is smitten by Urizen's rock which "enter'd his bosom" (3:40). He himself is transformed and his world with him.

His beautiful visage, his tresses,
That gave light to the mornings of heaven
Were smitten with darkness, deform'd
And outstretch'd on the edge of the forest
(3:41-44).

Like Moses, Fuzon becomes another Urizenic pillar of the establishment, of law and punishment.

But the rock fell upon the Earth,
Mount Sinai, in Arabia. (3:45-46)

FOOTNOTES

¹Subsequent references to The /First/ Book of Urizen will be cited as Urizen and specified by Plate and line number.

²For a discussion of the characteristics of individual copies and their possible order see Erdman, pp. 725-726.

³With the exception of Plate 8 which, according to Erdman, duplicates the numbers of Plate 10 and was probably meant to replace it. See Erdman, p. 725.

⁴With regard to Blake's illuminations, especially Plates 9 and 26, W. J. T. Mitchell draws attention to Blake's "systematic refusal to employ the techniques of three-dimensional illusionism which had been perfected in Western art since the Renaissance. There was nothing wrong with Blake's draughtsmanship: he simply has very little use of empirical notions of 'objective' space." W. J. T. Mitchell, "Poetic and Pictorial Imagination in Blake's The Book of Urizen," Eighteenth-Century Studies, 3 (1969), 104. For a general discussion of Blake's treatment of illusion, and its relation to similar Continental movements, Mitchell refers to Robert Rosenblum, Transformations in Late Eighteenth-Century Art (Princeton, 1967), Chap. 4, esp. pp. 155-156.

⁵Mitchell's phrase. "Poetic and Pictorial Imagination," 96.

⁶T. S. Eliot, Selected Essays (London, 1969), p. 322.

⁷Cecil Maurice Bowra, The Romantic Imagination (London, 1961), p. 106.

⁸Bowra, p. 106.

⁹"I must Create a System or be enslav'd by another Mans" Jerusalem, 10:20.

¹⁰Raine, I, XXV.

¹¹Raine, I, XXXI.

¹²Raine, I, XXVII.

¹³Raine, I, XXVI. "Traditional metaphysics . . . is the recorded history of imaginative thought." I, XXVII.

¹⁴Raine, I, XXVI.

- ¹⁵Raine, I, XXV.
- ¹⁶Uncollected Prose by W. B. Yeats, ed. John P. Frayne (London, 1970), I, 402.
- ¹⁷Raine, I, XXIX.
- ¹⁸Raine, I, XXXI.
- ¹⁹See The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, Pl. 24, E42-43.
- ²⁰Raine, I, XXIX.
- ²¹Patrick Cruttwell questions Miss Raine's procedure on similar grounds. "Blake, Tradition, and Miss Raine," 133-142.
- ²²Raine, I, XXXI.
- ²³Raine, I, XXIX. For "minute particulars" see for instance Jerusalem, 45/31:8 and 38/43:61.
- ²⁴Earl R. Wasserman, Shelley's 'Prometheus Unbound': A Critical Reading (Baltimore, 1965), pp. 5-6.
- ²⁵Martin K. Nurmi, "Negative Sources in Blake," William Blake: Essays for S. Foster Damon, ed. Alvin H. Rosenfeld (Providence, 1969), p. 303.
- ²⁶Peter H. Butter, "Blake's Book of Urizen and Boehme's Mysterium Magnum," MS p. 14. The printed version of this article in Le Romantisme Anglo-Américain: Melanges Offerts a Louis Bounerot (Etudes Anglaises), ed. Roger Asselineau, et al. (Paris, 1971), pp. 35-44, was unavailable.
- ²⁷Butter, MS p. 14.
- ²⁸Butter, MS p. 7.
- ²⁹I am developing the theme of Northrop Frye's "The Case Against Locke" in Fearful Symmetry, pp. 3-29. I have also gleaned valuable information from Kathleen Raine, especially from her chapter "The Sensible World" in Blake and Tradition, II, 101-130. Like Martin K. Nurmi, I intend "to show how Blake formed certain of his visionary ideas partly in reaction against philosophical enemies, or at least how the particular form in which he cast these ideas arises out of an attempt to expose the errors of these enemies by his taking some of their central concepts and reconceiving them in a visionary context. According to Blake, 'you cannot behold . . . Satan till he be revealed in his System' (Jerusalem, 43/29:10, E189) and one of his main purposes was to display various aspects of systems of satanic thought in such a way that what was satanic about them would be recognizable." "Negative Sources in Blake," pp. 303-304.

³⁰Friedrich Schiller, "Ueber Naive und Sentimentalische Dichtung," Saemmtliche Werke, mit Einleitungen von Karl Goedeke (Stuttgart, 1872), VI, 398. My translation.

³¹See Geoffrey Keynes, "William Blake and Sir Francis Bacon," in Blake Studies: Essays on his Life and Work (Oxford, 1971), p. 90.

³²An Island in the Moon, Chap. 8, E447; Chap. 9, E451. The Song of Los, 4:17, E66. Letter to George Cumberland, 6 December 1795.

³³Mark Schorer, "William Blake and the Cosmic Nadir," Sewanee Review, 43 (1935), 210.

³⁴Raine, I, XXX.

³⁵Raine's phrase, I, XXX.

³⁶See The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, Pl. 11, E37.

³⁷John Beer, Blake's Visionary Universe, p. 80.

³⁸Mitchell, "Poetic and Pictorial Imagination," 85.

³⁹See Essay, II, 8, 23.

⁴⁰See Essay, II, 21, 5-6.

⁴¹See Essay, II, 21, 1-4.

⁴²See for instance Part I, Chap. 3, Sec. 22 and I, 5, 7 where Boehme justifies their necessity. See Butter, MS pp. 1-2.

⁴³Mysterium Magnum, I, 3, 22; as cited by Butter, MS p. 2.

⁴⁴Mysterium Magnum, I, 5, 5-7. Butter, MS pp. 2-3.

⁴⁵See The Poems of William Blake, ed. W. H. Stevenson (London, 1971), p. 248.

⁴⁶Butter, "Blake's Book of Urizen and Boehme's Mysterium Magnum," MS p. 3.

⁴⁷Stevenson, p. 249.

⁴⁸Compare Essay, II, 21, 50.

⁴⁹Frederick E. Pierce, "Etymology as Explanation in Blake," PQ, 10 (1931), 395-396.

⁵⁰Bloom, Commentary, E819.

⁵¹ Percy Bysshe Shelley, Prometheus Unbound. Preface. Quoted from The Complete Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley, ed. Thomas Hutchinson (London, 1961), p. 205.

⁵² Letter to Thomas Butts, 6 July 1803. The Letters of William Blake, ed. Geoffrey Keynes (London, 1968), p. 69.

⁵³ The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, Pl. 11, E37.

⁵⁴ Mitchell, "Poetic and Pictorial Imagination," 90. See Urizen, 4:10-11.

⁵⁵ The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, Pl. 4, E34.

⁵⁶ This scene corresponds with The Book of Los, 3:27.

⁵⁷ The Poems of John Milton, p. 785. Fowler refers to J. H. Adamson, "Milton and the Creation," JEGP, 61 (1962).

⁵⁸ Compare Milton's description of Chaos in Paradise Lost, Book II: "where eldest Night / And Chaos, ancestors of Nature, hold / Eternal anarchy . . ." (894-896). Satan fought his way through "this wild abyss, / The womb of nature and perhaps her grave" (910-911).

⁵⁹ Annotations to Swedenborg's The Wisdom of Angels Concerning Divine Love and Divine Wisdom, E596. See Jerusalem, 71:6-9. This theme will be further developed in connection with Urizen's awakening.

⁶⁰ Paradise Lost, VII, 229.

⁶¹ See Mitchell, "Poetic and Pictorial Imagination," 93, where he argues on similar lines.

⁶² Jerusalem, 32:51-54. Although this is reminiscent of Berkeley's famous 'esse est percipi,' we cannot be sure whether Blake was familiar with his philosophy when writing Urizen. Keynes dates Blake's annotations to Berkeley's Siris (Dublin, 1744) circa 1820. See Keynes, p. 773.

⁶³ Locke holds an equally determined view: "Is it worth the name of freedom to be at liberty to play the fool and draw shame and misery upon a man's self? If to break loose from the conduct of reason and to want that restraint of examination and judgment which keeps us from choosing or doing the worse be liberty, true liberty, madmen and fools are the only freemen" Essay, II, 21, 50.

⁶⁴ T. S. Eliot, Selected Essays, pp. 320-321.

⁶⁵ Although Blake's spelling is generally erratic, his differentiation between 'Eternity' and 'eternity' throughout Urizen is consistent with an underlying ontological distinction. Eternity (capital 'E') invariably refers to the absolute 'reality of the ideal' previously discussed, whereas 'eternity' (small 'e') conveys everlasting duration in time and stability within spatially confined surroundings. (This principle does not apply to the other Lambeth-Books.) Founded on the "rock of eternity," Urizen's rules exclude change. The spelling of the adjective 'eternal' varies in Urizen. For instance "flames of eternal fury" (5:2), "flames of Eternal fury" (5:18).

⁶⁶ This is the caption for a separate print of Plate 5 of Urizen in Legends in a Small Book of Designs, E662. See David Erdman's commentary in The Illuminated Blake (New York, 1974), p. 187.

⁶⁷ Mitchell, "Poetic and Pictorial Imagination," 87.

⁶⁸ The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, Pl. 8, E36.

⁶⁹ See Jerusalem, 15:14-16. "I turn my eyes to the Schools & Universities of Europe / And there behold the Loom of Locke whose Woof rages dire / Washd by the Water-wheels of Newton."

⁷⁰ The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, Pl. 4, E34.

⁷¹ A Descriptive Catalogue, p. 51, E536. For further symbols of this account and their elaborations see Jerusalem, 30/34/:40; and 66:1-14.

⁷² See Chapter I, Tiriel, note 33.

⁷³ For more detailed discussions of the structure of Urizen, see Mitchell, "Poetic and Pictorial Imagination," and especially Robert E. Simmons, "Urizen: The Symmetry of Fear," Blake's Visionary Forms Dramatic, ed. David V. Erdman and John E. Grant (Princeton, 1970), pp. 146-173.

⁷⁴ The same scene is depicted in The Song of Los, 3:30-4:10.

⁷⁵ Compare The Book of Los, 3:30-31.

⁷⁶ In The Book of Los, for instance, Los is described as "the fierce raging Immortal" who is bound in by "Coldness, darkness, obstruction, a Solid / Without fluctuation" (4:4-6).

⁷⁷ See Essay, II,14,31.

⁷⁸ In The Book of Los, "The Eternal Prophet / is bound in a chain / Compell'd to watch Urizens shadow" (3:30-31). See also 4:1-14.

⁷⁹ I agree with Frye's view that the "cycle thus becomes the basis of all future developments." Yet, as far as Urizen is concerned, I cannot corroborate his claim that thus "the essential form of Los in this world, creative time, is established." See Frye, p. 257.

⁸⁰ According to Geoffrey Keynes' description in the Blake Trust facsimile, the illumination shows "Urizen, the Creator, struggling in the waters of materialism." Clark Emery sees Urizen in his "ocean of voidness unfathomable." William Blake, The Book of Urizen, ed. Clark Emery (Coral Gables, Florida, 1966), p. 50. David Erdman is more explicit: "The baptism of the thinker as athlete swiftly reduces his dignity (is he still sitting?) and sends his beard streaming in opposite directions. The elementary liquid is water . . . or darkness . . . the text has him 'hiding in surging Sulphureous fluid his phantasies' (10:13-14) or, earlier, strongly repelling the 'vast waves' (4:22). This is Urizen's contribution to the etching process [why?] and to regeneration. It is hard to tell whether, as a swimmer, he is trying to rise or sink. But his hands imitate the resurrection posture of Los in Plate 6," Plate 7 in the Blake Trust facsimile. Erdman, The Illuminated Blake, p. 194. A parody of Christ on the Cross is suggested by the stigmata on Urizen's feet, which are especially clear in copy D.

⁸¹ See The Book of Ahania, 4:11-15.

⁸² See Urizen, 10:33-11:18.

⁸³ See Urizen, 13:5-9; Essay, II, 20, 18.

⁸⁴ The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, Pl. 16, E39.

⁸⁵ See also Urizen, 3:1-2; The Book of Ahania, 4:11-12.

⁸⁶ In Europe the degeneration of man's perceptual faculties is presented in terms of a cosmic catastrophe:

when the five senses whelm'd
In deluge o'er the earth-born man; then turn'd the
fluxile eyes
Into two stationary orbs, concentrating all things
The ever-varying spiral ascents to the heavens of
heavens
Were bended downward; and the nostrils golden gates
shut
Turn'd outward, barr'd and petrify'd against the
infinite. (10:10-15)

⁸⁷ See Annotations to Swedenborg's The Wisdom of Angels, E595.

⁸⁸There is No Natural Religion (b), E2. A remedy is suggested in The Marriage of Heaven and Hell: "If the doors of perception were cleansed every thing would appear to man as it is, infinite. For man has closed himself up, till he sees all things thro' narrow chinks of his cavern." (Pl. 14, E39)

⁸⁹There is No Natural Religion (a), E1.

⁹⁰From Emanuel Swedenborg's The Wisdom of Angels Concerning Divine Love and Divine Wisdom, as quoted by Erdman, p. 592.

⁹¹Swedenborg, The Wisdom of Angels, E592.

⁹²Martin Price, To the Palace of Wisdom: Studies in Order and Energy from Dryden to Blake (New York, 1965), p. 429.

⁹³Kathleen Raine, William Blake (London, 1970), p. 72.

⁹⁴Europe, 10:14-15.

⁹⁵Europe, 10:21-22.

⁹⁶Erdman, The Illuminated Blake, p. 168.

⁹⁷A Vision of the Last Judgment, E546. Blake explains that "the Modern Church Crucifies Christ with the Head Downwards" E554.

⁹⁸Erdman, The Illuminated Blake, p. 143.

⁹⁹The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, Pl. 19, E40.

¹⁰⁰The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, Pl. 16, E39.

¹⁰¹"The hours of folly are measur'd by the clock, but of wisdom: no clock can measure." The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, 'Proverbs of Hell,' E35.

¹⁰²See Numbers, 21:8-9; St. John, 4:14. Frye (p. 137) identifies the Mosaic serpent with a type of Christ. Paley expands on Frye's discussion, basing his own argument on Dante, Epistola, X, 7. Morton D. Paley, Energy and the Imagination: A Study of the Development of Blake's Thought (Oxford, 1970), pp. 62-63 and p. 80.

¹⁰³Europe, 10:16-17.

¹⁰⁴See Urizen, 20:16-17.

¹⁰⁵Essay, II, 19, 1.

- 106 Essay, II, 21, 31.
- 107 Essay, II, 21, 52.
- 108 There is No Natural Religion (b), E2.
- 109 There is No Natural Religion (a), E1.
- 110 Swedenborg, The Wisdom of Angels, E594.
- 111 Mitchell, "Poetic and Pictorial Imagination," 84.
- 112 See Mitchell, 84.
- 113 The latter possibility is suggested by Morris Eaves, "The Title-Page of The Book of Urizen," William Blake: Essays in Honour of Sir Geoffrey Keynes, ed. Morton D. Paley and Michael Phillips (London, 1973), pp. 228-229.
- 114 See Ernst Robert Curtius, European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York, 1953), pp. 319 ff.
- 115 Curtius (p. 322) quotes from W. E. Peuckert, Paracelsus, Die Geheimnisse. Ein Lesebuch aus seinen Schriften (1941), pp. 172-178. In The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, Pl. 21, Blake refers to the sublime writings of Paracelsus and "Jacob Behmen" (E42).
- 116 Sir Thomas Browne, Religio Medici, I, 16.
- 117 Curtius (p. 304) refers to Pindar.
- 118 Eaves, "The Title-Page of The Book of Urizen," p. 228.
- 119 Curtius, p. 305.
- 120 De Anima, III, 4, 430 a 1. Incidentally, as Curtius points out, Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas describe reason as an unwritten tablet, a 'tabula rasa.'
- 121 There is No Natural Religion (b), E2.
- 122 Swedenborg, The Wisdom of Angels, E594.
- 123 Annotations to Swedenborg's The Wisdom of Angels, E594.
- 124 All Religions are One, E2.
- 125 Annotations to Reynolds, E648.
- 126 Essay, II, 28, 5.

127 See Urizen, 25:43.

128 "I do not consider either the Just or the Wicked to be in a Supreme State but to be every one of them States of the Sleep which the Soul may fall into in its deadly dreams of Good & Evil when it leaves Paradise . . . following the Serpent." A Vision of the Last Judgment, E553. See also Europe, 10:16-23.

129 The Four Zoas, 70:12.

130 London, E26-27.

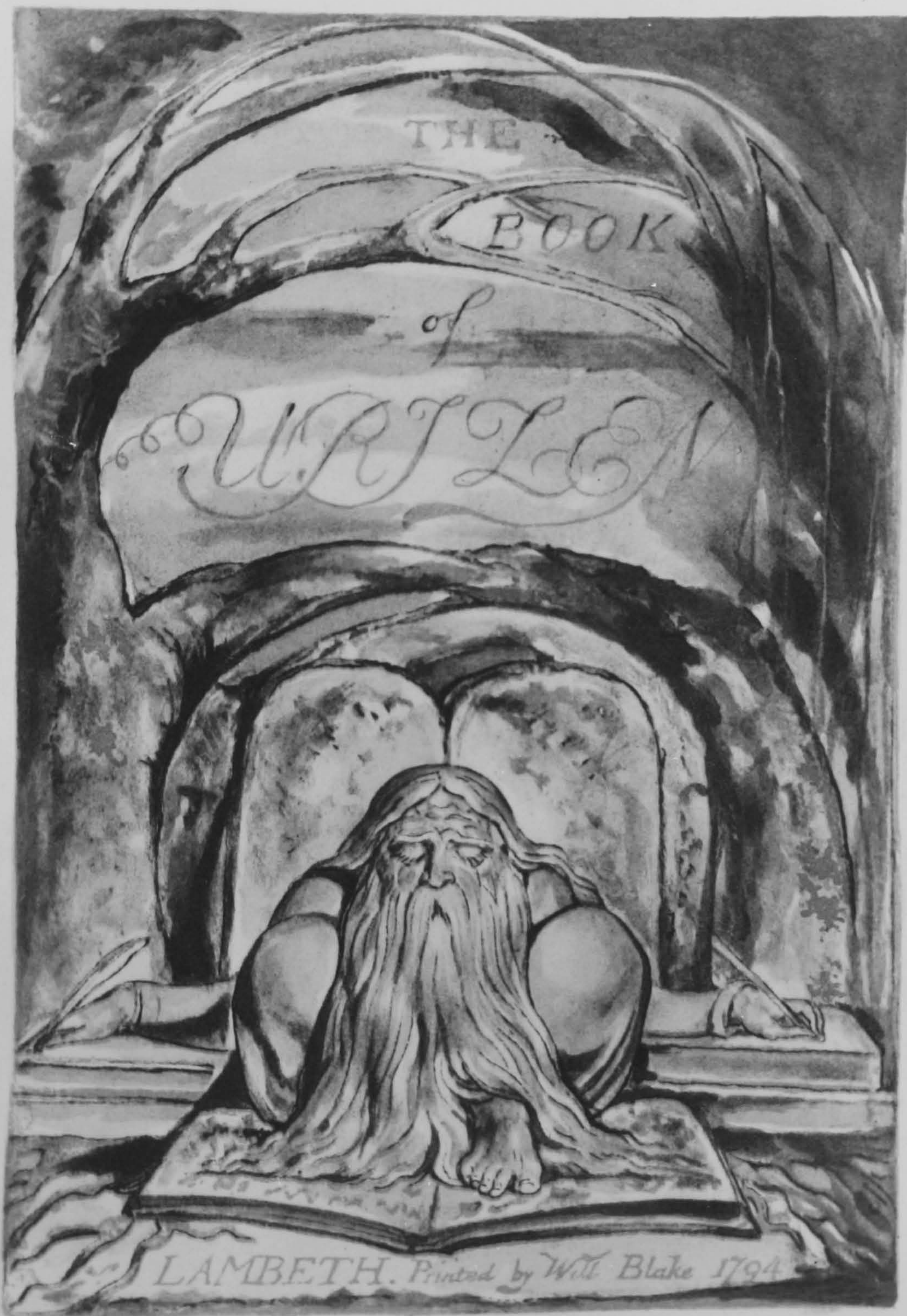
131 Compare Europe, 10:10-12.

132 Exodus, 20:2. See Dante's commentary in Epistola, X, 7: "when Israel went out of Egypt . . . if the anagogical [sense is applied], the passing of the sanctified soul from the bondage of the corruption of this world to the liberty of everlasting glory is signified." Dante, The Letters of Dante (Oxford, 1920), p. 199.

133 Paley, Energy and the Imagination, p. 62.

134 Mark Schorer characterises the Lambeth books as "Blake's first complete attempt to state, by means of an explicit myth, the simultaneity of cosmic, historical and psychological events." Mark Schorer, William Blake: The Politics of Vision (1946; rpt. New York, 1959), p. 73.

135 Paley, Energy and the Imagination, p. 63.



Urizen, Plate 1 (Title-Page)



In living creations appear'd
In the flames of eternal fury.

3. Sundering, darkening, dividing:
Rent away with a terrible crash
Eternity roll'd wide apart
Wide asunder rolling
Mountainous all around
Departing; departing; departing;
Leaving ruinous fragments of life
Hanging brownish dirt & all between
An ocean of winds unathomable.

4. The roaring fires ran o'er the heaves
In whirlwinds & convicts of blood
And o'er the dark deserts of Urizen
Fires pour thro' the void on all sides
On Urizen's self-begotten armies.

5. But no light from the fires, all was
darkness

In the flames of Eternal fury

6. In fierce anguish & quenchless
flames

To the deserts and rocks he ran
To hide, but he could not; combining
He dug mountains & hills in vast strength
He piled them in incessant labour,
In howlings & pangs & fierce madnels
Long periods in burning fires labouring
Till hoary, and eye-broke, and aged
In despair and the shadows of death.

7. And a roof vast petrific around,
On all sides he travell'd: like a womb;
Where thousands of rivers in veins
Of blood pour down the mountains to cool

The eternal fires' beating without
From Eternals; & like a black globe
View'd by sons of Eternity, standing
On the shore of the infinite ocean
Like a human heart struggling & beating
The vast world of Urizen appear'd.

8. And Loos' round the dark globe of
Urizen,

Kept watch for Eternals to confine,
The obscure separation alone;
For Eternity stood wide apart.



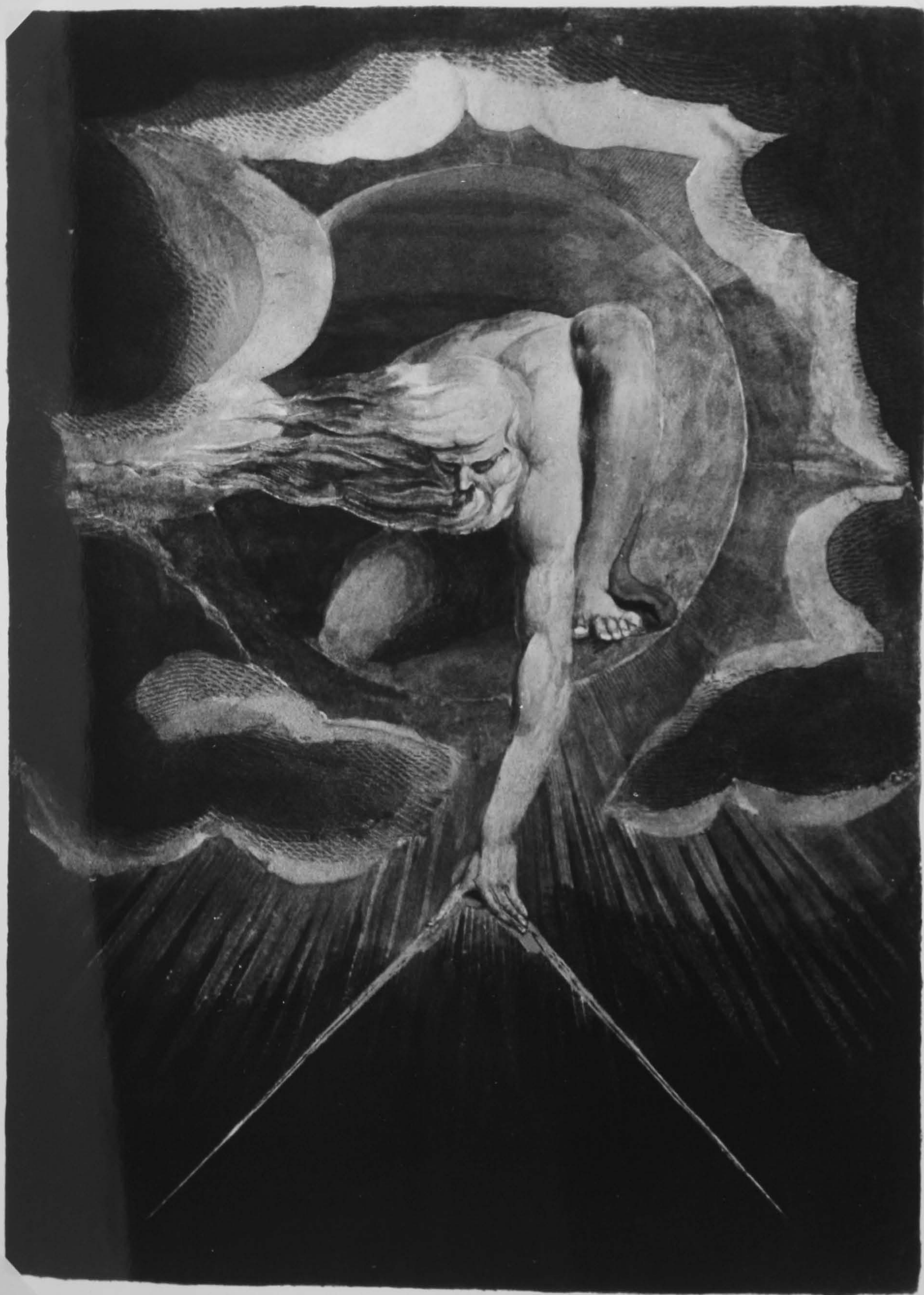
Urizen, Plate 6.

"Urizen, C. VIII."

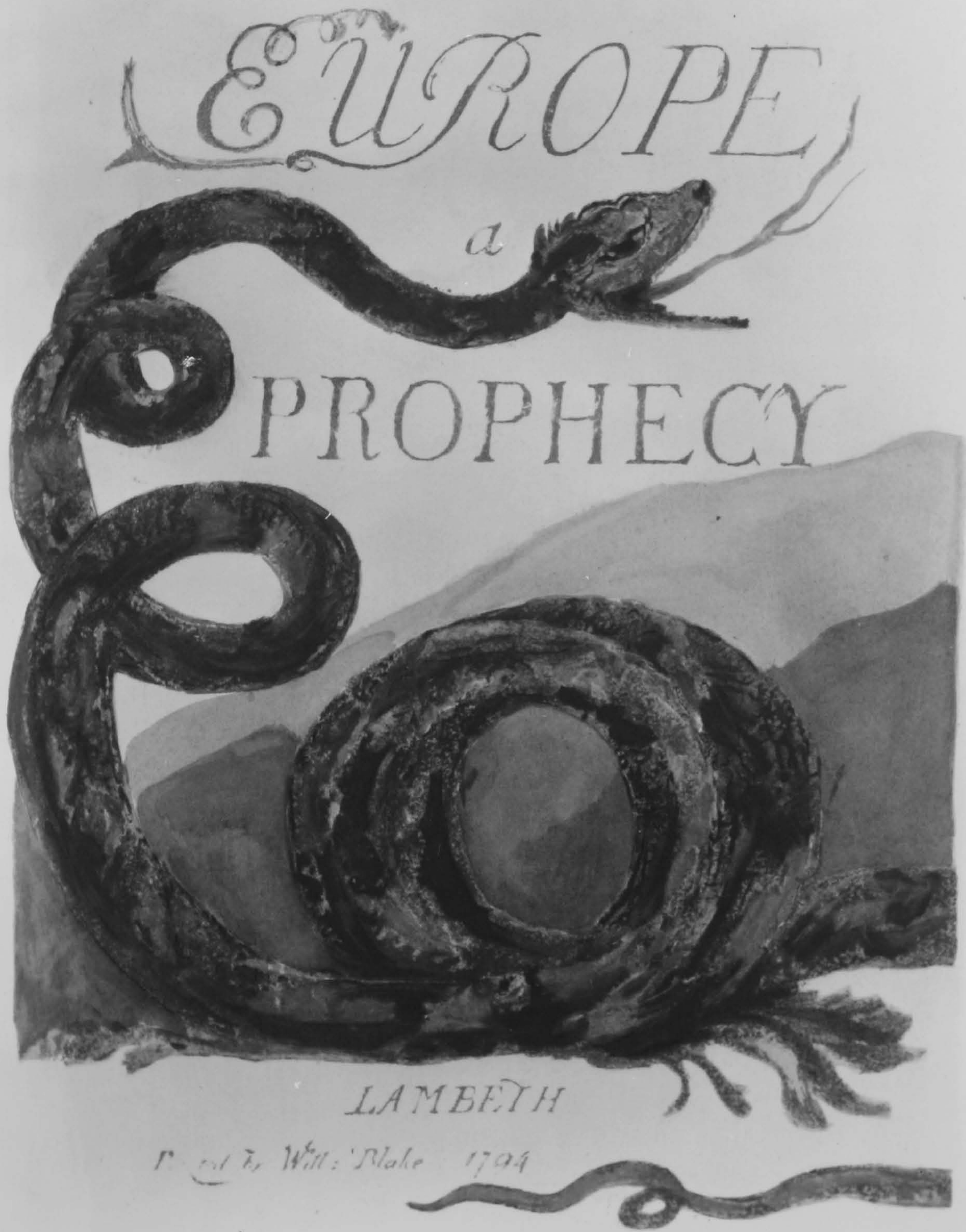
Of life on his forsaken mountains / Grodna rent the deep earth howling
 And his world teem'd vast enormities / Amaz'd! his heavens immense cracks
 Frightning; faithless; fawning / Like the ground par'd with heat; then
 Partisans of life; similitudes / Fuzon
 Of a foot, or a hand, or a head / Flamid out! first begotten, last born.
 Or a heart, or an eye, they swam / All his eternal sons in like manner
 -chevous / His daughters from green herbs & cattle
 Dread terrors! delighting in blood / From monsters, & worms of the pit.
 Most Urizen sicken'd to see / 4. He in darkness cloid, view'd all his
 His eternal creations appear / race
 Sons & daughters of sorrow on mountains / And his soul sicken'd! he curs'd
 Weeping! wailing! first Thord appear'd / Both sons & daughters: for he saw
 Astonish'd at his own existence / That no flesh nor spirit could keep
 Like a man from a cloud born, & Utha / His iron laws ore moment.
 From the waters emerging, lamenting! / 5. For he saw that life liv'd upon
 death.



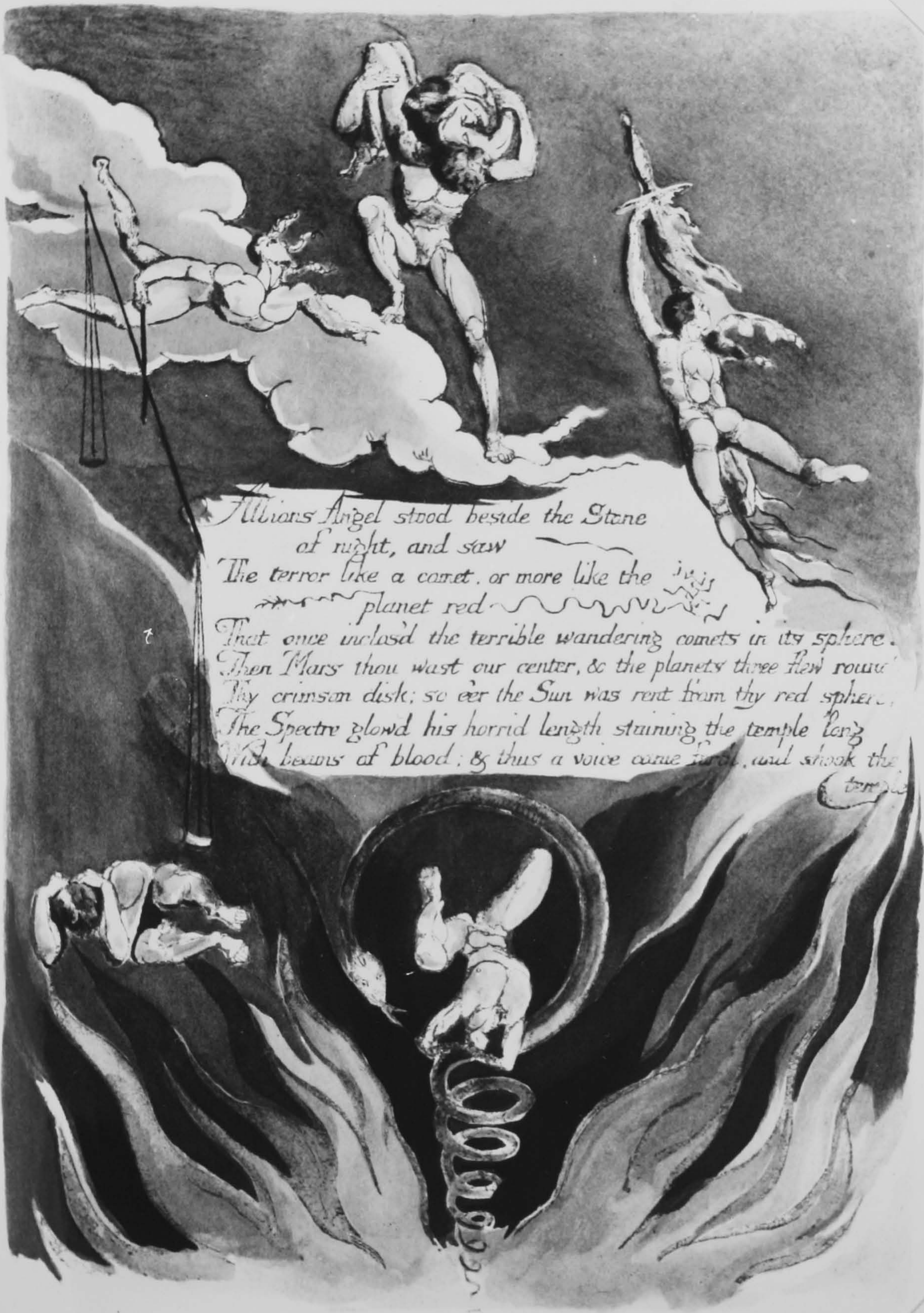
Urizen, Plate 22.



Europe, Frontispiece.



Europe, Title-Page.



Allians Angel stood beside the Stone
of right, and saw
The terror like a comet, or more like the
planet red
That once includ'd the terrible wandering comets in its sphere.
Then Mars thou wast our center, & the planets three flew round
thy crimson disk; so e'er the Sun was rent from thy red sphere,
The Spectre glow'd his horrid length staining the temple long
with beams of blood; & thus a voice came forth, and shook the
temple

THE SONG OF LOS

According to the title-page, The Song of Los was printed in 1795. The poem comprises eight plates, including frontispiece, title-page and two full-page designs. The five known copies are without textual variant.¹ As Damon observes, this poem continues the stories of The Book of Los, The Book of Urizen and of The Book of Ahania "by showing the growth of Urizen's religion in its various forms, the spreading of statecraft, and the eventual Revolt of Man."² Although it is also generally agreed that the two distinct parts of The Song of Los, namely 'Africa' and 'Asia,' provide "the background for the action of America and Europe," this characterisation is problematic.³ 'Africa,' in particular, sketches the metaphysical origins and the outlines of various aspects or phases of human history which are identified with the four ancient continents.⁴

Bloom dismisses 'Africa' as "merely pedestrian" without disclosing the criteria on which his judgment is based.⁵ In this chapter it will be argued that a number of

features distinguish this particular section of The Song of Los, which render it vital for an appreciation of Blake's major prophecies. Close study, especially of the 'Africa' section, will contribute to a better understanding of Blake's ingenious manipulation of historical perspective and of his method of combining received and private myth with religious, political and intellectual history, and of his handling of language and poetic structure.

Blake introduces The Song of Los by declaring his intention to sing

a song of Los. the Eternal Prophet:
He sung it to four harps at the tables of Eternity.
In heart-formed Africa. (3:1-3)

While adopting Los's prophetic voice and, by implication, his exalted position "at the tables of Eternity," Blake does not employ the topic of imploring the conventional poetic muse for inspiration. Nor does he appear to be proudly claiming Promethean autonomy from an ulterior source of inspiration because the Eternal Prophet's authority is invoked, his song, it seems repeated. However, the issue is complicated by the fact that Los is Blake's own invention. Furthermore, an examination of Blake's use of verb tense in relation to his conception of time opposite Eternity will reveal additional problems.

Though associated by their common object--"a song of Los"--the first two lines form independent syntactical periods governed by the future and the past tense, respectively.⁶ It is characteristic of Blake's procedure in The Song of Los that this temporal differentiation should be underlined and at the same time obscured by the concluding "And thus the Song b e g a n."⁷ A more than purely grammatical link is established between the historical event of the poet's rendering of the 'Song' in the present and a memorable event, supposedly past, yet pertaining to Eternity which is conceived as a geographical locality. The general inference being that this 'Song' is as relevant here and now as it was/is there and 'then.' The reader's notions of times past and present, and of geographical place are at once drawn upon and suspended, especially since Eternity is normally considered as timeless.

Blake's poem must be read as a faithful recording of Los's original 'Song,' with the poet assuming the Eternal Prophet's voice. Being rendered in the past tense almost throughout,⁸ it manifestly does not have the character of an inspired prediction of future events. Nor does Blake repeat the 'Song' merely to confirm in poetic language, and with the wisdom of hindsight, what events have already borne out in history. The poet's connection with Los may, in Auerbach's terms, be said to be 'vertical,' not

'horizontal.'⁹ He partakes of the timeless visionary propensity identified in All Religions are One as the "Poetic Genius which is every where call'd the Spirit of Prophecy." Los, the mythopoetic agent of vision, is portrayed as commanding a view 'sub specie aeternitatis,' while Blake's actual "reception of the Poetic Genius" (E2), which takes the form of "a song of Los," is manifestly 'prophetic' in accordance with Blake's own definition of the term.¹⁰ By drawing upon his spiritual experience of the past and the present he comes to discern vital features in the intellectual history of mankind by non-rationalist criteria and to account for the spiritual darkness shrouding Europe, Asia, and Africa toward the end of the eighteenth century. Milton, in Paradise Lost, calls upon the Holy Spirit and relies on received mythology, biblical and otherwise, whereas Blake, by invoking Los, ultimately invokes the authority of his own creation. In very different ways both poets add "another dimension to the times [they present] and . . . psychologically and poetically, another phase of immediacy."¹¹ While it is not clear whether at this point in his career Blake consciously conceives of himself as the last one, to date, in a long line of seers descended from Los, he seems to subscribe to the postulate of a potential unity, not of space and time, but of space and/or time with Eternity. A detailed examination of The Song of Los may well prove that with Blake, as with St. Augustine

nec futura 'sunt' nec praeterita, nec proprie dicitur: tempora 'sunt' tria, praeteritum, praesens et futurum, sed fortasse proprie diceretur: tempora 'sunt' tria, praesens de praeteritis, praesens de praesentibus, praesens de futuris.¹²

Ideally, the poet partakes of both his own immanent world, his historical point in time and geographical place, and of Eternity. In him, both co-exist.

The 'advertisement' seems to project Eternity back to a mythical 'Urzeit.' On Plate 3 of The Song of Los Eternity is not mentioned at all, while Plate 4 factually reports that "like a dream Eternity was obliterated & erased" (4:4) in a context adumbrating a specific stage in the development of religious and social institutions. Nothing in this context or anywhere else in the poem indicates its previous loss, its permanent loss to mankind henceforth, or its destruction 'ad infinitum.'¹³ On the contrary, Blake's introductory declaration with its intricate verbal fusion of times past, present, and future suggests its continued existence--to employ the language pertaining to the space-time continuum, paradoxical as it is in this context--as a transcendent reality. The "tables of Eternity" had and, possibly, still have their place in "heart-formed Africa," the emotional centre of an anthropomorphic Earth; and "four harps" may well signify the continents of Africa, Asia, Europe and America, and perhaps even Blake's own four poems dealing with these continents in their timeless

spiritual forms.¹⁴ There is a marked contrast between the harmony of the "four harps" in Eternity, and the reader's notions of historical and geographical reality. At the same time their 'tunes' combined with the words attributed to Los have an immediate bearing on the reader's understanding of this reality, and vice versa. The nature of this reciprocal relationship remains to be examined.

Plate 3 of The Song of Los confronts the reader with a series of cryptic statements. In the absence of a self-revealing plot or a continuous and readily intelligible story line there remains a wide margin for conjecture, even if Plate 3 is considered in conjunction with Plate 4 ('Africa') and with 'Asia.' It is not apparent whether the principle organising the configurations of Plate 3 is identical or comparable with that of the succeeding plate. As The Song of Los was printed as early as 1795, any explanation of these complex configurations based on information derived from The Four Zoas, Jerusalem and A Vision of the Last Judgment will provide a degree of lucidity manifestly absent from the first part of the poem.¹⁵

First, we are offered a catalogue of names of biblical characters and of the places commonly associated with them: Adam-Eden; Noah-Ararat; Abraham-Chaldaeae; Moses-Sinai; Jesus-Judaea/Jerusalem. In addition, three representatives of different religious traditions are mentioned: "Brama in

the East" (3:11), Mahomet (3:29) and Odin "in the North" (3:30). In a third group the ancient proponents of "an abstract Law" are assembled: Trismegistus, Pythagoras, Socrates and Plato (3:18-19). Newton, Locke, Rousseau and Voltaire (4:17-18)--philosophers of deism, empiricism, and the enlightenment bring the reader up to date, so to speak, with the poet's own historical point in time. Rintrah (3:11), Palambron (3:18), Oothoon (3:22), Theotormon (3:24), Har and Heva (4:5) and other characters of Blake's invention supplement this illustrious company.

Blake is not trying his hand at positivistic historiography. He is not attempting to draw an outline of allegedly 'objective' history as the record of an uninterrupted chain of causally and temporally connected events.¹⁶ Purely temporal order of succession, though relevant, is not the decisive principle underlying the poem's intricate configurations and, by the same token, its internal structure. The notion of linear horizontal flux of time, this mechanical guideline and means of orientation cutting through the vast mazes of human history may be at the back of the reader's mind. It is not expressed by the poet. Nor is it the inherent principle organising events and ideas Blake associates with the names mentioned; and it does not account for a poetic (an essentially ahistorical) correlation of representatives of different religious traditions, of philosophy and of science, starting with Adam in Eden and

leading up to Blake's own day. The problem is rendered even more complex by the fact that Blake's interpretations of matters religious, philosophic, and scientific are often unorthodox.¹⁷

The artistic principle of organisation on Plates 3 and 4 of The Song of Los requires close examination, as does the thinking behind Blake's assembling such an incongruous company separated in 'real' life by vast periods of time, by space, background, occupation, outlook, motivation, fate--even distinguished by mode of existence, as in the case of Har and Heva and other characters of Blake's invention. The poet's adopted viewpoint 'sub specie aeternitatis' is that of the visionary artist whose objectives are at once aesthetic, ontological and apocalyptic. He creates artistic space and time by breaking through the barriers of the immanent dimensions, placing side by side, and even partially fusing, allusions to episodes and characters from the Old Testament and to historical personages, with mythopoeia. Even by itself, the introduction of the mythopoeic element suggests that Blake's idiosyncratic survey of human affairs, covering several millenia and four continents, is prompted by considerations other than purely aesthetic.

The poem proper starts with a series of biblical references.

Adam stood in the garden of Eden:
And Noah on the mountains of Ararat (3:6-7).

The parallelism and syntactical unity of these two lines is significant and suggestive of a different kind of analogy. According to the Bible, Adam lived and died long before Noah was born. Nevertheless, both patriarchs are presented here as virtual contemporaries. One gathers, however, that they were not united by time but by a common experience.

They saw Urizen give his Laws to the Nations
By the hands of the children of Los. (3:8-9)

From their respective vantage points, Eden and Ararat, they had the same fateful vision. It remains ambiguous whether Adam and Noah are supposed to have been immediately affected by this vision or, less directly, by the Nations' implementation of Urizen's laws and their effects on these Nations in the course of history. Be this as it may, for the time being. As a result "Adam shudderd! Noah faded!" (3:10)¹⁸
Eventually

Noah shrunk, beneath the waters;
Abram fled in fires from Chaldea;
Moses beheld upon Mount Sinai forms of dark delusion
(3:15-17).

Worse still, toward the end of the poem, Urizen has triumphed over Judea and he is covering Jerusalem with his clouds.

For Adam, a mouldering skeleton
Lay bleach'd on the garden of Eden;
And Noah as white as snow
On the mountains of Ararat.

(7:20-23)

Obviously, in the Bible Adam and Noah were not contemporaries. They were far removed from each other with regard to their respective times and their places of vision. Yet, time and place are of subordinate importance in this context. What counts is the fact that Adam and Noah are depicted as possessing powers of vision which enabled them to witness the identical phenomenon: "They saw Urizen give his Laws to the Nations / By the hands of the children of Los." The reader's notions of chronology are called upon and dismissed as the temporal and the spatial gulfs separating Adam and Noah from each other, from the Nations and from the "children of Los" are bridged if not closed. This dismissal is effected in two ways. First, both patriarchs are presented as having partaken of the same power of vision. Secondly, transcending temporal and spatial dimensions, their perceptions of the world are supra-historical in essence. The identity of their respective understandings of its vicissitudes, therefore, depends on non-epistemological criteria. They discover the Urizenic character as the common denominator, so to speak; Urizen being at one and the same time the primordial originator and the persistent force co-determining the Nations' fate. Ultimately, in the poem, this force will be identified with specific modes of perception and behavioural patterns and, indeed, with a despotic structural principle permeating human history.

It was pointed out that the linear horizontal flux of time on which recordings of allegedly 'objective' history rely is not the inherent structural principle organising events and ideas which Blake associates with the names of biblical patriarchs. In the absence of a temporal or causal link they are associated by what Blake, in A Descriptive Catalogue, came to call "spiritual agency" (E534). The "comprehension, the 'intellectus spiritualis'" of their association is an imaginative act performed by poet and reader alike.¹⁹ Yet, contrary to familiar 'figural' interpretations of Old and New Testament characters and events, Blake says nothing about Adam, Noah, Abraham and Moses being chosen by God. The 'vertical' link with Divine Providence is notably absent, and no insight is offered into the "working of the purpose of God."²⁰ If 'figuram implere' may serve to circumscribe Blake's method of associating different characters at all, the underlying principle of association must be one of secular typology.²¹

Blake gives no detailed and generally unequivocal account of what precisely Adam and Noah perceived. One may, however, follow Damon in surmising that they witnessed "the arbitrary codes of ethics enforced by 'forms of worship from poetic tales,' the original symbol becoming literal dogma."²² Obviously Blake considered Adam, Noah, Abraham and Moses as having been affected by Urizen's laws in very much the same way. If, as previously stated, an act of

vision constitutes the link between Adam and Noah (the 'intellectus spiritualis,' of their connection being an imaginative act on the part of the poet and the reader), their common decline, like the corruption of the "Nations," must be due to the failure of the imaginative faculty on the part of all the protagonists. Adam and Noah witness a complex historical phenomenon--the corruption of the human race--for which the inspired "children of Los" carry as much responsibility as Urizen. Assuming Blake meant to conceive the biblical Adam as a historical person, how could Adam witness, and be adversely affected by, the corruption of the human race in a long drawn out historical process (his decay and "death" are not a sudden affair) while he was still in Eden, and before history proper had started?

According to orthodox Christian interpretations of Genesis, men are born fallen beings in consequence of Adam's original Fall. In The Song of Los Blake does not subscribe to such overt causality and chronological order. The personal histories of Adam and Noah, as adumbrated in the poem, do not precede the fate suffered by the "Nations"--biblical or otherwise--by way of implicit temporal chronology, nor do they anticipate it within the framework of the poem's chronology of motivation. Instead, Blake correlates figures from biblical mythology (Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses) with historical "Nations" and with the fictitious "children of

Los" on a level transcending that of immanent contemporaneity and causality. In the poem they are associated by a failure of the imaginative faculty. This uncommon connective device renders redundant the reader's familiar notions of a time-space continuum and his expectations of self-evident narrative chronology combined with an evolving 'meaning.' Whatever happens to the "Nations" within the immanent dimensions of time and space is presented as having its mythic correlatives in biblical characters as Blake saw them, and its metaphysical origin in Urizen's Laws as mediated by the "children of Los." From the reader's point of view the various parties involved are connected by what may be called 'visionary' space and time created by his own imagination as he retraces the poet's steps of assimilation.

In the very beginning of the poem Adam and Noah are depicted surveying from their respective vantage points, Eden and Ararat, the "Nations" receiving Urizen's Laws. Their own powers of vision initially enable them to reject Urizen's Laws, to recognize their specific historical manifestations and, possibly, their mechanisms of promulgation. Paradoxically, the very act of inspired perception seems to precipitate the patriarchs' eventual deaths. Although no explanation is given for this radical change of fortune, one gathers that their visionary powers are insufficient to afford them effective permanent protection

against Urizen's imposition. Adam and Noah are gradually reduced to the inanimate natural portions of their total existence. They virtually become assimilated to the dead material, and essentially Urizenic, substance of their former localities of vision. Significantly, Adam does not leave Eden. His natural remains--his skeleton--conceal the matrix of innocence and inspiration.²³ Without necessarily having turned barren altogether, Eden apparently becomes barren to Adam's descendants. It is also essential to note that the Flood, symbolising the sea of time and space, matter, or the deluge of the senses, does not recede in The Song of Los as it does in the Bible. Furthermore, "Noah, the Man of Imagination, who escaped the Deluge of Time and Space"²⁴ at first, is finally overwhelmed. But not by its irresistible force. He simply "shrunk beneath the waters." These are transparent to Los and, therefore, to the poet's and the reader's eye which discovers Noah's corpse "white as snow / On the mountains of Ararat." In keeping with a particular feature of Blake's mythopoetic technique (already encountered in Tiriel) which will be examined in some detail in connection with Har and Heva, the patriarchs' physical decay signifies the loss of their powers of vision and their eventual spiritual deaths.

In their poetic context, Eden and Ararat are associated with specific visions and, more generally, with visionary powers which have been forfeited forever, provided

the uninspired assumption holds true that they exclusively pertained to Adam and Noah, who were 'real' human beings living in the distant past. In The Song of Los Adam and Noah are not conceived as historical persons, nor is the Flood conceived as a unique historical event or an objective and inescapable catastrophe pertaining to the past. Rather, it is associated with the imaginative failure of Adam and Noah, on the one hand, and with the "Nations'" collective and, as shall be seen, continually repeated error, on the other. With Blake the biblical patriarchs become animated images of specific spiritual dispositions pertaining to the "Nations." Reflecting a specific way of reading the Bible, Blake's mode of adaptation anticipates aspects of his doctrine of "States" and its representative explication in A Vision of the Last Judgment:

it ought to be understood that the Persons Moses & Abraham are not here meant but the States Signified by those Names the Individuals being representatives or Visions of those States as they were revealed to Mortal Man in the Series of Divine Revelations. as they are written in the Bible these various States I have seen in my Imagination when distant they appear as One Man but as you approach they appear Multitudes of Nations. (E546)

Expressed in terms of spatial perspective, this postulated identity of 'one-many' also implies the possibility of differentiation or correlation in time. Both aspects are realised in The Song of Los. When adumbrating Adam and Noah's visionary survey of the "Nations" Blake removes the

artificial boundaries of immanent space and time and projects before the reader's mental eye 'visionary space.' A strange fusion of the observer and the observed takes place. Adam and Noah are "distant" visions or personified projections of those "Multitudes of Nations" whose enslavement they perceive from close range. In a sense Adam and Noah witness their own fate. The reader, in turn, perceives from an imaginative distance the decay of their visionary powers which is synonymous with the "Nations'" submission to Urizen's Laws in its various forms. Abraham and Moses are affected in very much the same way. In Blake's reading of their histories as recorded in the Bible, both were inspired men who led their families and people away from idolatry and slavery in Canaan and Egypt, respectively. Abraham was the founding Father of the "Hebrew Church" constituted by his "Children,"²⁵ and Moses was his spiritual successor. Through their own fault their initial visionary achievements were corrupted into self-assertive "Dragon Forms / Religion hid in War, a Dragon red & hidden Harlot," as Blake later, in Milton, was to characterise the final seven of "the Twenty-seven Heavens & their Churches."²⁶

The representative decay of Adam and Noah, as adumbrated in the poem, signifies a satirical inversion of the specifically biblical process of "formation" as described by Auerbach:²⁷

The claim of the Old Testament stories to represent universal history, their insistent relation--a relation constantly redefined by conflicts--to a single and hidden God, who yet shows himself and who guides universal history by promise and exaction, gives these stories an entirely different perspective from any the Homeric poems can possess. . . . Each of the great figures of the Old Testament, from Adam to the prophets, embodies a moment of this vertical connection. God chose and formed these men to the end of embodying his essence and will--yet choice and formation do not coincide, for the latter proceeds gradually, historically, during the earthly life of him upon whom the choice has fallen. . . . [The biblical heroes] are bearers of the divine will, and yet they are fallible, subject to misfortune and humiliation--and in the midst of misfortune and in their humiliation their acts and words reveal the transcendent majesty of God.

In accordance with his overt rejection of religious dogma and legal codes, Blake's sketchy outlines of the fates suffered by Adam, Noah, and, by implicit analogy, by Abraham and Moses may be read as satirical jibes at orthodox interpretations of persons and events in the Old Testament. As previously stated, in The Song of Los neither the patriarchs mentioned nor the "Nations" are depicted as being elected by God. Initially, Adam and Noah were inspired men in their own right, possessing the power of vision which constitutes man's highest achievement. The process of decline of this power constitutes man's gradual submission, not to the Divine, but to Urizen's will as is demonstrated by their enslavement by Urizen's Laws. If--in keeping with Auerbach's contention--immediate personal association with God leads to Adam's eventual exaltation and to his becoming an image of God's "transcendent majesty," association with Urizen, conscious or unconscious, willing or unwilling, must lead

to man becoming assimilated to Urizen's image. As the poem's imagery suggests, man is reduced to a sub-human level, to his natural substance.

In its effort to account for the present human condition, the poem employs a supra-historical perspective and places side by side Blakepoetic, mythical and representative historical personages. It proceeds to reveal the origins and the varied manifestations as well as the apparently progressive nature of the spiritual deprivation of mankind. Rintrah, Palambron, Theotormon, Antamon and Sotha, "children of Los," the Eternal Prophet and perennial source of inspiration, are introduced. They are said to have influenced, if not determined, the history of mankind by being instrumental in handing down Urizen's constraining and repressive Laws to the religious, political and philosophical leaders of the people (Nations), represented by the legendary promulgators of religions and by the founders of schools of philosophy and of natural science.

black grew the sunny African
When Rintrah gave Abstract Philosophy to Brama in
the East:
(Night spoke to the Cloud!
Lo these Human form'd spirits in smiling hypocrisy War
Against one another; so let them War on; slaves to the
eternal Elements)
Noah shrunk, beneath the waters;
Abram fled in fires from Chaldea;
Moses beheld upon Mount Sinai forms of dark delusion:

To Trismegistus. Palamabron gave an abstract Law:
To Pythagoras Socrates & Plato.

Times rolled on o'er all the sons of Har, time after
time
Orc on Mount Atlas howld, chain'd down with the Chain
of Jealousy
Then Oothoon hoverd over Judah & Jerusalem
And Jesus heard her voice (a man of sorrows) he recievd
A Gospel from wretched Theotormon.

The human race began to wither, for the healthy built
Secluded places, fearing the joys of Love
And the disease'd only propagated:
So Antamon call'd up Leutha from her valleys of delight:
And to Mahomet a loose Bible gave.
But in the North, to Odin, Sotha gave a Code of War,
Because of Diralada thinking to reclaim his joy.
(3:10-31)

The prophetic agency of each son of Los provides Urizen's
Laws with distinct personal characteristics which Blake,
in All Religions are One, attributes to "each Nation's
different reception of the Poetic Genius." Especially

The Jewish & Christian Testaments are An original
derivation from the Poetic Genius. this is
necessary from the confined nature of bodily
sensation (E3).

Urizen's influence perverts "The Religeons of all Nations"
and the "sects of Philosophy [which] are from the Poetic
Genius adapted to the weaknesses of every individual" (E2).
The "Abstract Philosophy" which, according to The Song of
Los, Rintrah gave "to Brama in the East," may be taken to
correspond with "The philosophy of the east." This,
according to Blake's Ezekiel in The Marriage of Heaven and
Hell,

taught the first principles of human perception
some nations held one principle for the origin
& some another, we of Israel taught that the
Poetic Genius (as you now call it) was the first
principle and all the others merely derivative,
which was the cause of our despising the Priests
& Philosophers of other countries, and prophecying
that all Gods . . . would at last be proved to
originate in ours & to be the tributaries of the
Poetic Genius (E38).

In the absence of a linear temporal or causal connection,
the act of vision has been described as constituting a
link between Adam and Noah. It has also been established
that their common decline, like the corruption of the
Nations, is due to the failure of their imaginative
faculty which provides essentially non-empirical perception.
In extensive application of the information drawn from All
Religions are One and The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, Brama,
Trismegistus, Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, Jesus, Mahomet
and Odin are also associated by their individual "reception
of the Poetic Genius" and by their common failure to
activate and consistently maintain its humanising potential
which ought to be the motivating principle at the heart of
any act of perception. Qualified by the poetic context,
the religious, philosophic and scientific achievements of
these famous personages are associated, by way of typo-
logical correspondence, with the corruption of Adam and
Noah and with the "forms of dark delusion" perceived by
Moses, and culminate in the ultimate debasement of the
human spirit as manifest in Lockean epistemology and in
deism.²⁸

Increasingly unable to imaginatively and constructively express his energies and desires, man invents physical, intellectual and moral constraints to govern or generally pervert them. These various institutionalised perversions, as perceived by Blake, are implicitly associated with the representative personages listed. Love, the purest form of energy, which transcends any dichotomy of spirit and body, is either suppressed by implacable laws--like the ones Moses received on Mount Sinai--designed to regulate relationships among men and between man and God; or it is supposedly sublimated beyond recognition and practical applicability, as for instance in Greek philosophy; or its physical expressions are declared sinful, as is the case in orthodox Christian tradition with its cult of virginity; or too much stress is placed on eroticism, as in certain Islamic traditions. Finally hatred, the negation of love, isolates energy. The result is war which is "energy Enslavd."²⁹ When "a Philosophy of Five Senses was complete," Urizen himself "gave it into the hands of Newton & Locke" (4:16-17). The same possibly applies to the 'enlightened' rationalists Rousseau and Voltaire who complete this illustrious company (4:18).

There is no indication of a Divine plan of salvation of which the epochs of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses and, indeed, of Jesus might constitute temporal as well as spiritual links; nor is the 'civitas Dei' prefigured by

Adam and fulfilled by Jesus. The teleological element inherent in the biblical episodes dealing with these personages is absent from the poem. Instead, Blake has taken pains to level the symmetrical biblical scheme with its abrupt changes.³⁰ The main line of change in The Song of Los is neither identical with classical patterns of history--primitivistic or cyclical--nor with right-angled Christian history.³¹ Nevertheless, the poet's interpretative and critically qualifying adaptation of fragments of biblical history, supplemented by allusions to champions of non-Hebrew and non-Christian religions, of philosophy and science, suggests that his own powers of vision enabled him to recognise and reveal structural analogy, even typological correspondence, as the formulae underlying and determining Old and New Testament history, history ancient and modern, individual and collective.

Urizen is the "hidden author" and perverse director of the "plot of history . . . and the guarantor of things to come."³² In the absence of a vertical link with truly Divine Providence, and as there is no evidence of the workings of a 'first cause' (there is no indication in the poem of their existence), Urizen usurps both positions. The infernal duplicity of mystery and the principle of secondary causes reigns. Though revealed as links "in an earthly chain of events," 'here' and 'now' are by no means "something which has always been," nor is it certain whether

they "will be fulfilled in the future." This is a far cry from the traditional theological postulate of a Divine perspective which conceives of every single moment in time, of every event as "something eternal, something omni-temporal, something already consummated in the realm of fragmentary earthly event."³³

Assuming Christianity gives man hope, how is the reader meant to interpret the novelty of Jesus receiving "A Gospel from wretched Theotormon"? As "the persistent pressure of the Christian view of history is not retrospective but strongly prospective,"³⁴ The Song of Los cannot be called a Christian poem, at least not in an orthodox sense. There is no indication of Christ's birth being the "turning point in the plot which divides the reign of law and promise from the reign of grace and fulfillment and [which] assures the happy outcome."³⁵ In the poem, Jesus--not necessarily the historical 'person'--figures as the last of biblical visionaries who, by implicit analogy with his predecessors, ultimately fell victim to Urizen in body and spirit. There is no hint in this poem of Christ's Second Coming.

Worse still, the enslavement of mankind by Urizen is progressive in a number of ways. The completion of "a Philosophy of Five Senses" is the epistemological nadir of that notorious historical process otherwise celebrated as the advance of civilisation--including the victory of

Natural Religion or Deism as opposed to revealed religion-- and the progress of science. This process is correlative with the gradual physical decay of Adam and Noah which signifies their loss of visionary power. It is at once the mythical beginning and completion of this process in anthropomorphic guise. In The Song of Los the power of vision gradually declines in Adam and Noah as well as in their descendants (differentiation between 'genealogical' and 'spiritual' is rendered impossible and unnecessary by the mythopoeic medium), never to be recaptured in its original intensity and clarity--at least not in this poem. Thus, apparently, apart from the underlying principle of generic or typological correspondence, the poem's chronology of association (even including Jesus) is also determined by what Blake appears to have considered to be a decline of visionary performance--as distinct from potential--in the cultures represented by the individual character's reception of the Poetic Genius.

Blake is neither concerned with positivistic historiography nor with relationships determined by rationalist causality. Analysis of The Song of Los illuminates his attempts at liberating himself from the deterministic stranglehold of the space-time continuum, and at revealing the doubtful value of historicity by offering imaginative insight into historical relativity through the medium of supra-historical agency. His struggle with the world

compartmentalised by temporal and spatial categories is even reflected in the structure of his language and in the structure of the poem.

Auerbach points out that the Judeo-Christian conception of history did not derive its homogeneity from horizontal mundane relationships of place, time and cause. It was, therefore, essentially alien to the classical-antique spirit and destroyed the structure of its literary language.³⁶ The 'weltbild' emerging from The Song of Los, in analogy with St. Augustine's, does not derive its homogeneity from immanent relationships of place, time and cause, either. At the same time, and contrary to St. Augustine's views, the poem does not have its 'telos' in a personalised Divinity as the ultimate integrating and unifying authority, but in the agency of Los, the Eternal Prophet. By adopting a perspective 'sub specie aeternitatis'--the poetic equivalent of Divine perspective--the poem, up to a point, also adopts the structural principle organising biblical events. However, the 'telos' of Blake's visionary historiography is neither all-embracing Divine Providence, nor is it a goal horizontally projected into the future, analogous to biblical apocalypse.

Harold Bloom claims that lines 1-21 (Plate 4) of 'Africa' in The Song of Los draw a

very rapid sketch of European intellectual history which traces the main stages in Blake's myth of decline, from the loss of Eternity (lines 1-4) to the emergence of natural man (5-12), to the growth of abstraction and empiricism in metaphysics with its culmination in Newton and Locke (13-17) until the final manifestation of natural religion in Rousseau and Voltaire, which comes to cover the whole earth (18-21).³⁷

The passage in question reads:

These were the Churches: Hospitals: Castles: Palaces:
Like nets & gins & traps to catch the joys of Eternity
And all the rest a desart;
Till like a dream Eternity was obliterated & erased.

Since that dread day when Har and Heva fled.
Because their brethren & sisters liv'd in War & Lust;
And as they fled they shrunk
Into two narrow doleful forms:
Creeping in reptile flesh upon
The bosom of the ground:
And all the vast of Nature shrunk
Before their shrunken eyes. (4:1-12)

While I do not disagree with Bloom, his perfunctory summary disregards degrees of distinction and levels of significance more profound than mere temporal succession accompanied by a progressive growth of abstraction and, implicitly, by a decline of the imaginative faculty in the characters depicted. Detached from Plate 3 and only adhering to the very surface of narrative sequence, the chronology suggested by Bloom (the decline started with "the loss of

Eternity" which was followed by "the emergence of natural man") is not supported by textual evidence, external or internal. With more justification it might be claimed that Eternity was "obliterated & erased" a f t e r "Har and Heva fled." Yet, even this suggested chronology does less than justice to Blake's intricate shiftings within the temporal dimension.

Writing about "Time and Space in Blake's Major Prophecies," and his narrative style in particular, Ronald L. Grimes points out that

Connective devices are muted, if not missing altogether. The "spaces" between events seem to be blank, as if inviting the reader to fill them in by himself. Why one event follows another or even why an event occurs at all is seldom evident . . . The causal and developmental linkage that one might expect of epic is simply not there.³⁸

Although referring to The Four Zoas, Milton and Jerusalem, Grimes's contention also sheds light on The Song of Los.

If an act of vision constitutes the link between Adam and Noah, and if the comprehension of the patriarchs' association is a creative act performed by the poet's and the reader's imagination, it stands to reason that the connective devices employed in this poem are imaginative in kind, not empirical or deterministic. Plates 3 and 4 of The Song of Los are also inherently linked by this

principle of imaginative association. Although the principles of structural composition are comparable in both parts of 'Africa,' Plate 4 is distinguished by features of narrative presentation complementary to those employed on the preceding plate. In reiterating the personal history of Har and Heva, Blake introduces peculiar causal and developmental "linkages" which do not conform to familiar standards of causality, chronology, process and evolution.³⁹

Although conjunctions introducing clauses of time, place and reason, as well as co-ordinate and subordinate conjunctions are employed, their potentially subtle effects of chronological and causal differentiation are blurred, thereby drawing attention to the atemporal and acausal nature of poetic relationships on the one hand, and to "spiritual agency" as the principle organising the poem's configurations, on the other. Overt syntactical order and chronological sequence are often devoid of 'rational' function, merely imitating the structure of literary language and simulating a non-existent stream of narrative continuity. Whenever in The Song of Los Blake draws attention to the traditional system of carefully elaborated attributes and adverbs indicating temporal, spatial and causal relationships, he is not employing aesthetic means to aim for a 'realistic' mimesis of mundane conditions. Instead, he leads 'ad absurdum' both abstract mental and

concrete material conceptions conjuring up the illusion of such an immanent world (whether classical-antique in spirit or empiricist and 'enlightened'), as well as the language reflecting and reproducing the erroneous categories pertaining to that world. The reader faces the phenomenon of language ironically suspending its own familiar function. If verbal elements imbued by traditional grammar with the function of providing syntactical and contextual logic, of conveying a sense of necessity and expectation, of establishing temporal and spatial association and, therefore, of 'rational' order, can be said to retain any meaning with Blake at all, they do so precisely by their apparent illogicality, by their calling forth associations pointing beyond the limited regions of empiricism.

In combination with "when," "since" (4:5) is neither a coordinate nor a subordinate conjunction. There is no syntactical connection with the preceding lines, terminating "Till, like a dream, Eternity was obliterated & erased." Contrary to strict narrative chronology, the passage in question conveys the reader back to the starting point of the poem's chronology of motivation, to the origin of abstraction and to its completion, expressed in mythopoeic terms. The process of decline is started and completed by Har and Heva in a representative way. Considered under the aspect of the poem's chronology of motivation this

archetypal event assumes the character of a primordial catastrophe at once providing the empirical basis for, and setting in motion the ultimately universal process of abstraction, and prefiguring its historical "culmination in Newton and Locke."

Lines 5-12, quoted above deal with two distinct themes: with Har and Heva's flight, and with their metamorphoses. "As" (4:7) has the character of a relative conjunction introducing a clause of time if not, implicitly, of place, as well as a clause of reason. This suggests that Har and Heva's escape and the process of shrinking, while associated by quasi-causal relationship, do not occur in temporal succession but simultaneously. Escape and shrinking are distinct images by which the poet captures and dramatises different aspects of the same spiritual defect.

Har and Heva's fate in The Song of Los thus comprises the various aspects of the failure of man's original powers of imaginative perception as attributed to and enacted by different characters in Tiriel. In both poems Har and Heva are presented on two levels of symbolic significance: as primordial (a temporal and therefore 'horizontal' concept) and as archetypal (referring to the traditional sense of 'archetype' as the original form or pattern from which copies are made--a 'vertical' concept) parents of a

corrupt human race and its institutions. They are overtly symbolic figures constituting the anthropomorphic nucleus of a set of ideas expressed in the form of images and actions rather than in a discursive or assertive manner, as is the case in There is No Natural Religion and All Religions are One, and to some extent in Tiriel's final speech in Tiriel and in parts of The Marriage of Heaven and Hell.

Furthermore, there is a plain analogy between the macrocosmic catastrophe brought about by Urizen in Urizen, and the microcosmic and geocosmic tragedies of which Har and Heva are depicted as primordial and archetypal protagonists both in Tiriel and in The Song of Los. Dissatisfied, Urizen withdrew from Eternity. Unlike Adam and Eve who were expelled from Paradise, as Genesis reports, Har and Heva voluntarily, and ostensibly for moral reasons, left their former abode, possibly Eden. They abandoned the original unity with "the true Man" and detached themselves from the Poetic Genius, the true source of inspiration according to Blake. The motive for their escape, as related in The Song of Los, thus retrospectively accounts for their retarded intellectual condition and for the educational principles to which they subscribe in Tiriel. In that early poem, Har and Heva lived in a private paradise. Elaborating the pattern of behaviour established in connection with Tiriel, Urizen's retirement in Urizen from Eternal brotherhood into 'self' was correlated with a philosophy

of abstraction enabling him to conceive of his surroundings exclusively in dualistic categories of good-evil, observer-object observed, male-female. Har, Heva and Tiriel were inflicted with the same spiritual blindness, their respective withdrawals constituted the symbolic correlatives of specific doctrines--ontological, epistemological, religious, social and political. Within the mythopoeic dimension created by Blake withdrawal in space is accompanied by anatomical metamorphosis. The shrinking of man's senses, in turn, concurs with the--subjectivist--shrinking of "the vast of Nature." Finally, total blindness signifies the end of any form of perception which might transcend 'self' and the reflection of 'self,' to put it in psychological terms. Or, expressed in cognitive terms, blindness signifies abstract reflection, with the self-centred mind contemplating its own operations.

In the present context, the Renaissance concept of correspondence involving the human microcosm and geocosm or macrocosm, and, in Swedenborg, the spiritual realm, is adopted and modified by Blake to serve as a base on which he develops a satirical genesis of materialist philosophy. At this point the poet is not concerned with a cosmic catastrophe instigating a gradual process, an age-long change in the appearances of man and nature. His intention is to reveal in exemplary manner a defect in the perceiver's mind. "Man [who] cannot naturally Percieve but through his

natural or bodily organs," voluntarily limits his perceptive faculties to sense perception at the expense of inspired vision. Once again, the seemingly objective facts of a finite nature and finite senses on which empiricism is founded are revealed as subjective, and ultimately collective, fallacies; and once again this point is brought home by implicit reference to Adam and Eve's fall in Genesis, to Satan's metamorphoses in Paradise Lost, the metamorphoses attributed to Tiriel by Ijim, and to the effects of Urizen's Laws as elaborated in Tiriel and Urizen, respectively.

Lines 5-12 of Plate 4 may be considered an interpretative parody of the biblical report and of Milton's adaptation in Paradise Lost where Satan enters the serpent in order to seduce Eve.⁴⁰ Har and Heva's condition of spiritual corruption--like Tiriel's--becomes apparent in their physical transformations, and in their activities being reduced to "Creeping in reptile flesh upon the ground." They, too, have finally assumed the appearance of the biblical seducer. Like him they are forced to feed on dust. The lowest form of Urizenic matter--to which Adam has been assimilated in The Song of Los--will be stimulant and object of their now limited sense perceptions. This is the satirical imaginative inversion of Principle 1st, All Religions are One:

That the Poetic Genius is the true Man. and that the body or outward form of Man is derived from the Poetic Genius. Likewise that the forms of all things are derived from their Genius. which by the Ancients was call'd an Angel & Spirit & Demon. (E2)

Their transformation into anthropomorphic reptiles also renders apparent that Har and Heva have become serpents to themselves. As in Tiriel and Urizen, seducer and victim are identical. And once again, Blake's attack is ultimately directed against materialism, Lockean epistemology and dualist conceptions in ethics.

The argument that there is no mimesis of the linear time-space continuum in the passage dealing with Har and Heva's flight and transformation also applies to their motivation. Although "because" (4:6) suggests an overtly causal relationship between Har and Heva's flight and "their brethren & sisters" living "in War & Lust," the poem is imbued with an inherent identity of motivation, activity and result transcending the reader's common notions of causality. Har and Heva's lack of vision is dramatically presented as setting in motion a universal process of growing abstraction in metaphysics as well as providing the physical and natural basis for man's increasing dependence on his self-imposed immanent and empirical premises. In being particular and specific, their fate renders tangible and transparent the universal and otherwise general. Human history is at once accounted for, comprised and anticipated. Comparison with the characters who determine the poem's chronology of association shows that Har and Heva are representative in a different way. Their fate constitutes what may be described as the poem's centre of negative motivation.

Apparently, Har and Heva escaped from an existence of energetic self-expression which is approvingly described in psychological and moral terms in The Book of Los.⁴¹ The negative reference to "War & Lust" alludes to the collapse of universal harmony, also related in The Book of Los (3:20-30), and anticipates Blake's notion of "the wars of Eden" when "the human pathetic . . . was . . . divided into male and female."⁴² In Blake's symbolism, sexual division generally signifies dualism in its manifold appearances. The present context specifically stresses ethical, social and political aspects, with Blake's technique of mythopoeic projection gradually revealing its implicit dialectics. Har and Heva's deficient vision prompted them to conceive of their fellow men's energetic and potentially creative activities in dualistic categories, and to deprecate them as misguided and repulsive. In the light of Har and Heva's deplorable fate their overtly positive course of action loses its appeal. Possibly, Abraham's flight "in fires from Chaldea" has similarly negative implications. Accepted as objective fact and ultimately exalted to the status of divine truth, the notion of moral dualism is thus implicitly revealed as a subjective fallacy.

By withdrawing from their "brethren & sisters"--again Blake's mythopoeia fuses genetic and spiritual relationships-- Har and Heva have, in fact, turned against them. They have literally become serpentine images of the Urizenic point of view to which the spirit subjects itself. While Adam, the

visionary, dies, Har and Heva are very much alive and multiplying. Expressed in genealogical terms which suggest their origin in the identical spiritual defect, complementary forms of discrimination and repression in history evolve to form a typology of corruption. The poem emphasises the conditioning effect any set of abstract rules has on man's powers of perception:

Thus the terrible race of Los & Enitharmon gave
Laws & Religions to the sons of Har binding them more
And more to Earth: closing and restraining:
Till a Philosophy of Five Senses was complete
Urizen wept & gave it into the hands of Newton &
Locke (4:13-17).

It also emphasises the degenerative effect of a conception of love which rules out its physical expression:

The human race began to wither, for the healthy built
Secluded places, fearing the joys of Love
And the disease'd only propagated:

The parents' motivation, their escape and process of shrinking are emulated by the Nations who are surveyed by Adam and Noah, and by the misguided "sons of Har," apparently represented in this poem by Jesus, Newton, Locke, Voltaire and Rousseau. Urizen's Laws eventually exercise their tyranny over all these characters who are associated by generic identity; and his victims fill, so to speak, the historical 'gaps' cleaving between the typologically associated personages.

The "Secluded places" of refuge, private paradises of philosophical and religious doctrine, and of political ideology are identified with public establishments and social institutions, "Churches: Hospitals: Castles: Palaces"; with places of religious worship and organised charity, with strongholds of martial power and pomp. These are the material manifestations of Urizen's hypocritical tyranny over the minds and bodies of his victims; these are the monuments human society erects celebrating its own enslavement. With the "joys of Love" being rejected and outlawed on false moral grounds, the latent "joys of Eternity" are caught within the "nets & gins & traps" of religious hypocrisy, of social and political repression, "Till like a dream Eternity was obliterated & erased."

Blake's mythopoeia postulates generic identity of the mind's subjection to matter and of man's willing indulgence in martial conflict. Convinced of their own moral or intellectual superiority, yet truly motivated by pretentious self-righteousness and a Urizenic desire for supreme power, individuals or groups of men impose their own limitations on the minds and bodies of others. Blindly following their prophets

these Human form'd spirits, in smiling hipocrisy, War
Against one another; . . . slaves to the eternal
Elements.

Brotherhood among men is being replaced by a wide spectrum of confrontation. Man no longer lives in true harmony with what have become his natural surroundings. Edenic harmony with nature has turned into forms of more or less detached relationships between observer and objects observed. With man's once expansive senses shrunk, man and nature have become finite. Like Noah, natural man shrinks "beneath the waters;" he is overwhelmed by chaos, by time and space unorganised by imaginative vision.

All wars in history are motivated by Har and Heva's original withdrawal, their spiritual failure and its results being paradigmatic for any form of human failure independent of time and place. Indeed, time and place in human history become interchangeable as man's misguided activities are associated not only by typological correspondence but by structural identity.

In imaginative conjunction with Har and Heva's fate the physical decay of Adam and Noah ultimately corresponds with the growth of abstraction and empiricism in metaphysics. It symbolises both the rejection of the poetic genius and a process of immanent assimilation as well as diversification akin to the continually competitive character pertaining to "the early developmental stages of most sciences" as claimed by Thomas S. Kuhn.⁴³

What differentiated these various schools was not one or another failure of method--they were all "scientific"--but what we shall come to call their incommensurable ways of seeing the world and of practising science in it. Observation and experience can and must drastically restrict the range of scientific belief, else there would be no science. But they cannot alone determine a particular body of such belief. An apparently arbitrary element, compounded of personal and historical accident, is always a formative ingredient of the beliefs espoused by a given scientific community at a given time.

Blake conceives of this competitive character as being retained by the later stages of religious, social, political and scientific theory and practice. It is the dualistic perversion of Principle 5th of All Religions are One, which may result from a self-righteous claim to imaginative superiority and its political consequences, as indicated in Ezekiel's comparison of the spiritual condition of Israel with that of other nations.⁴⁴ With Blake, bigotry, rationalism and scientific methodology are equally inadequate and perverted substitutes for original vision submerged under the chaotic sea of time and space. All activities based on scientific methodology or guided by dualistic ethical principles are mistaken. The point in time of their conception or realisation merely affects the form or appearance of error, not its essence. Nevertheless, in having reached the climax of rationalist achievement, the limit of error pertaining to their point in time, Newton and Locke's "nets & gins & traps . . . catch the joys of Eternity" more effectively than preceding or contemporary rival schools

of scientific or philosophic thought. Yet, the quasi-teleological element inherent in the poem's chronology of association suggests that Blake is attempting to place that "apparently arbitrary element, compounded of personal and historical accident" within a wider spiritual context.

Adam and Noah's slow deaths--their assimilation to Urizenic substance in correspondence with some aspect of historical process implicit in the poem's extended chronology of configuration--represent the unexpected and undesirable results of the wrong form of withdrawal from Urizen. As has previously been argued in the chapters on Tiriel and The Book of Urizen, shrinking, like any other form of withdrawal, is associated with self-righteousness, egoism and even with solipsism, the archetypal Urizenic attitudes. Har and Heva in The Song of Los, and previously Tiriel, exemplified that any kind of withdrawal or shrinking entails the establishing of new forms of social, political and religious order, and of particular bodies of belief. Whether designed as means of escape from "War & Lust," or even intended to counteract established forms of order manifestly dominated by Urizen's Laws, these newly established forms of order and bodies of belief gradually reveal their own Urizenic character because they themselves are founded on the principle of exclusion. Adam and Noah, the original visionaries, wither within the Urizenic circumference and their former mode of being is transformed.

In pursuit of personal or national interests, for reasons political or religious or both, Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus are elevated to the status of authorities by posterity, be it institutional Judaism or crusading self-righteous Christianity. They are remembered and venerated as 'persons' for all manner of historical achievements, not as "representatives or Visions" or spiritual fathers of mankind. Their visionary achievements, the essence of their association, are forgotten, disregarded or misrepresented to suit and further the egotistic interests of individuals or groups of men. As visionaries, Adam and Noah were killed by the Nations' uninspired need for authorities and historical precedents. Replacing imagination and vision, the mechanisms of self-limiting causality and the passive flux of time come to be considered the sole links with an indispensable past. Ironically, the 'intellectus spiritualis' of the association between past and present is derived from memory. In such circumstances Blake's own idealistic "spiritual agency" counts for nothing. Assuming a life of their own, historical 'fact' (social, political, religious) and the paralysing interaction of the passive flux of time with the self-interested operations of the human mind produce positivistic historiography at the best of times and falsification of historical fact at their worst. The 'vertical' conception of human affairs is discarded in favour of a 'horizontal' perspective which is retrospective/prospective and which tends to be deterministic and dualistic. Rationalism and mystery-religion

work hand in hand. In keeping with positivistic historical fallacy on the one hand, and with mystification on the other, formalistic imitation is substituted for spiritual identity. Permanence and stability, though manifestly unobtainable in historical past and present--and, therefore, projected as future goals by Urizen in Urizen--are idolised in preference to inspired, energetic, free expression and activity in a liberated present.

Self-righteous reference to moral doctrine and historical precedent, possibly combined with the firm belief in one's exclusive possession of historical truth, and the mistaken faith in organic progress and evolution are associated by Blake with the growth of moral dogma, with the evolution of empiricism, and with the expansion of martial conflicts as suitable means designed to achieve self-limited ends. As limitation and finitude--including spiritual death--pertain to the observer (the philosopher, the moralist, the politician, the scientist, the historian) rather than to his object of observation, any investigation based on material evidence, any action determined by experience or moral doctrine reflects the deficiency of the investigator's or the moralist's imaginative faculty. These defects can affect individuals and whole societies alike, at any given time in their histories.

In The Song of Los Urizen brings Jerusalem under his sway not because the 'persons' Adam, Noah and Jesus are dead, but because they are being conceived of as 'persons'. This misconception is due to their achievements being misinterpreted which, by itself, indicates that the visionary propensity generally associated with these names has declined. Whether it is permanently lost or has temporarily fallen into oblivion seems to remain an open question.

Time and space, being immanent dimensions pertaining to Har and Heva's shrunken world, are symbolically transcended in their totality by Eden, Ararat and, perhaps temporarily, by the Alps which are associated in this context with Rousseau and Voltaire. Eden has vanished and Ararat is no longer a place of genuine vision. According to the poem, Mount Sinai never enjoyed such an unqualified distinction. A victim of Urizen who moulded him after his own image, Moses fell prey to "forms of dark delusion" (3:17). These were subsequently formulated as Mosaic Laws on which Old Testament Judaism is founded.⁴⁵ This appears to correspond with Blake's view of the spiritual history of Rousseau and Voltaire whose position is described in ambiguous terms:

Clouds roll heavy upon the Alps round Rousseau &
Voltaire (4:18).

They are associated with what may be taken to symbolise an exalted place of vision. This indicates that their respective philosophies were fulfilled by the revolutionary activities of the French Revolution, personified by Orc.⁴⁶

Orc, raging in European darkness
Arose like a pillar of fire above the Alps
Like a serpent of fiery flame! (7:26-28)

The "pillar of fire" associates Orc and, implicitly, the 'visions'--not the 'persons'--Rousseau and Voltaire with "the fiery beam of Fuzon" in The Book of Ahania, which "Was a pillar of fire to Egypt" (2:44-45), and with the children of Israel after the death of Moses. However, Rousseau and Voltaire's visions are obstructed by Urizen's "Clouds" of reason and obscuring abstraction. They are also implicitly associated with those "forms of dark delusion" perceived by Moses. In The Book of Ahania, Fuzon refers to Urizen as

 this Demon of smoke,
 . . . this abstract non-entity
This cloudy God seated on waters
Now seen, now obscur'd (2:10-13).

Although Orc "arose like a pillar of fire above the Alps," comparison with "a serpent of fiery flame" stresses the ambiguity of his energetic character, and one is left to wonder whether it is because of, or in spite of his "thought-creating flames" that "The sullen Earth / Shrunk!" (7:29-30)

The last line of 'Africa'⁴⁷ is identical with the first line of America, thereby suggesting that 'Africa' "preceeds America in historical action," as well as attributing to Orc a similarly positive function as in America.⁴⁸ Also, 'Asia' merely "follows the action of Europe in Blake's chronological sequence" in as far as it is a critical commentary if not reappraisal of the hopeful signs associated with Orc's revolutionary activities in Europe.

The Kings of Asia heard
The howl rise up from Europe!
And each ran out from his Web;
From his ancient woven Den;

. . .
For the thick-flaming, thought-creating fires of Orc.
(6:1-6)

The imaginary worldly rulers of that spiritual continent emulate their historical European counterparts in attempting to rationally justify the repressive and conditioning means of government and of education imposed by Church and State (6:7-7:8), which have provoked Orc's revolt in the first place, and which are also designed to quench it. Because of its satirical character this "ostensibly Malthusian defense of their own tyranny" by the Kings of Asia, is aesthetically more effective than Tiriel's denunciation of Har in Tiriel.⁴⁹ However, the ultimate futility of Orc's effort is already indicated in 'Africa.' Mechanically, irresistibly like the billows of a seemingly infinite ocean

Times rolled on o'er all the sons of Har, time after
time
Orc on Mount Atlas howld, chain'd down with the Chain
of Jealousy (3:20-21).

Deprived of Los's creative power and spiritual support, and outlawed by conformist reason, Orc's activity, the self-realisation of the energetic principle, is confined to outbursts monotonously and, in the last resort, ineffectively repeated in the course of human history. His association with "a serpent of fiery flame" (7:28), "raging in European darkness" (7:26) reveals him as an ambivalent immanent power. His periodic outbursts are hopeful signs of a natural apocalypse. Yet one wonders what lasting good can come from his copulation with the grave.

Forth from the dead dust rattling bones to bones
Join: shaking convuls'd the shivring clay breathes
And all flesh naked stands: Fathers and Friends;
Mothers & Infants; Kings & Warriors:

The Grave shrieks with delight, & shakes
Her hollow womb, & clasps the solid stem:
Her bosom swells with wild desire:
And milk & blood & glandous wine
In rivers rush & shout & dance,
On mountain, dale and plain. (7:31-40)

Presented in terms of sexual activity, yet nonetheless symbolically applicable to such a climactic historical event as the French Revolution, Orc's violent eruptions, ironically, form an integral aspect of, and perpetuate the cyclic course of the natural universe. They originate in the intellectual energies latent in the philosophies of

Rousseau and Voltaire which are directed to natural and rational ends rather than to truly spiritual ends in Blake's sense. Their orgiastic release manifests itself as physical violence and in the form of war. Orc's role in The Song of Los is more ambivalent than that of Orc in Europe and America, on the one hand, and that of Fuzon in The Book of Ahania, on the other. Our reading of the relevant passages in The Song of Los also suggests that his activities somewhat cryptically anticipate those of Orc-Luvah in The Four Zoas, especially Night VIIb.⁵⁰

Considered under the aspect of the poem's internal or, more appropriately, its imaginative structure, visionary activity pertains both to primordial time and to what might be called the poem's 'positive' structural beginning. Visionary perception is shown to reveal spiritual corruption which it transcends. With Adam and Noah visionary experience also precedes their spiritual decay, whether considered from the point of view of narrative chronology or of imaginative structure. Though not explicitly stated, this also seems to apply to Har and Heva. With regard to the poem's chronology of configuration, Adam and Noah's fading is the negative beginning. Within the framework of the poem's imaginative structure, Har and Heva's flight and transformation is another negative beginning, complementing, if not implicitly anticipating the former by comprising at once motivation, as well as primordial and archetypal origin of ontological and epistemological fallacy.

If the poem's negative structural beginnings are complementary, so are its negative structural endings.

Urizen

stood over Judea

. . .

For Adam, a mouldering skeleton,
Lay bleach'd on the garden of Eden;
And Noah, as white as snow
On the mountains of Ararat.

(7:17-23)

Its imaginative structural counterpart being

Thus the terrible race of Los & Enitharmon gave
Laws & Religions to the sons of Har, binding them more
And more to Earth, closing and restraining:
Till a Philosophy of Five Senses was complete
Urizen wept & gave it into the hands of Newton & Locke
(4:13-17).

While Adam and Noah's deaths signify the decay of vision, the shrinking of Har and Heva's senses more specifically signifies a restricting of the perceptual faculty to receiving sense impressions, and the abandonment by man of inspired activity in favour of acquiring knowledge by empirical means. The loss of visionary power and its existential effects (spiritual and material) are presented in anthropomorphic guise imbued with a distinctly discursive element.

The poem's negative structural endings render explicit what is implicitly anticipated by its positive and negative structural beginnings. Death of vision is the price man

eventually pays for allowing his once, and potentially still, expansive senses to shrink. This corresponds to, and culminates in Eternity--the original and 'telos' of vision--"like a dream" being "obliterated & erased"; or, more prosaically, the death of vision manifests itself in the mistaken doctrines that there are no innate ideas, and that the human mind can only reflect, but not create. In the poem, the biblical patriarchs' deaths concur with the discursive formulation of error--the doctrine of natural man--by way of correspondence, signifying imaginative identity. Thus, in dealing in different ways with the same theme, the poem's negative structural twin poles reveal several aspects of ultimate error. Its origin or motivation pertains to the human mind. Projected upon the 'outside,' it adopts the appearance of objective fact or truth and affects individual man's relationship with himself, with society and with God. 'Asia' illustrates the same theme by presenting an essentially ahistorical typology of social and spiritual repression.

Negative structural beginnings and endings are connected by events and achievements associated with the names of famous personages. Blake's poetic adaptation of fragments derived from biblical history, from the history of religion, philosophy and science in general suggests that he perceived structural analogy or correspondence of events and typological identity of their protagonists as the

persistent formulae permeating Old Testament and New Testament history, history ancient and modern, collective and individual, and attaining to ever declining levels of visionary activity. In his poetic typology of decline Blake incorporates structural elements derived from biblical, classical and modern conceptions of world history without adopting their respective philosophical backgrounds. The symmetrical biblical scheme with its abrupt changes has been levelled. The principle of prefiguration is reduced to Adam being the type of Jesus only in as far as their visionary potentials and their eventual fates may be taken to correspond. Adam degenerates into natural man, Jesus into Jehova. The notions of scientific progress and of a continual advance of civilisation, concurrent with linear historical process, are implicitly dismissed by being presented as following the "primitivist" pattern of continuous decline. The climactic achievements of empiricism, deism and monarchy (synonymous with mental and physical repression and institutionalised violence) attain to a perverted, immanent apocalypse, not to the permanent restoration of original vision. Coming about with Urizenic necessity, and roughly coinciding with Blake's own historical point in time, the poem's negative structural endings may more appropriately be called its negative 'telos.' Perception of the world from this nadir of vision prompts man to imbue his spatial and temporal environment with his own perceptual defects.

With the historical present rushing by, causality and the linear flux of time establish connections with the past while pointing toward the future. As a result, the biblical patriarchs are transformed into dead 'persons' and Orc's "thought-creating fires" merely stimulate the natural process, imitating a cyclic historical pattern.

Historical "here" and "now" may be called "something which has always been, and which will be fulfilled in the future" only in as far as original vision and spiritual depravity coincide in time. In the same way as Adam and Noah's visionary activities coincide with Urizen giving "his Laws to the Nations," Blake's own creative effort proves that the visionary potential can be activated in the historical present. When St. Augustine interprets the historical present of his day in the light of biblical prefiguration, with the 'telos' of mundane history being a future apocalypae, he combines 'horizontal' and 'vertical' conceptions.⁵¹ Blake, on the other hand, does not interpret the present with a view to future revelation, but to immediate vision. Unlike biblical apocalypse, entelechy of poetic vision--Grimes's "eschatological vision"⁵²--pertains to the present. Life in any historical present always attains to its true meaning through spiritual fulfillment, not through its position in the 'horizontal' flux of time.

As elaborated in our discussion of the introductory lines of 'Africa,' Blake's connection with Los is 'vertical,' not 'horizontal.' The poet partakes of that timeless visionary propensity which permits him to discern vital features in the intellectual history of mankind by non-empirical means. In singing "a song of Los" the poet adopts an Eternal position. Presented as Los's prophetic utterance, the poem accounts for the spiritual darkness shrouding the three ancient continents toward the end of the eighteenth century in the light of Blake's own spiritual experience of the past, extending well beyond the reach of human memory. Encompassing the historical dimension and superseding, so to speak, chronological considerations, visionary experience transcends the poem's negative structural beginnings projected back into primordial time, as well as its negative structural endings. Historical present and the poem's negative 'telos' are transcended by "eschatological time" and entelechy of poetic vision.⁵³ Independent of historical accident, truly visionary experience--be it Los's, Adam and Noah's or Blake's assessment of his own day--is identical. Adam, Noah, Moses and Jesus may be dead in body. Their original visionary propensity, Los, is alive in Blake.

The Song of Los lends support to Wallace Stevens' claim that

There was a myth before the myth began,
Venerable and articulate and complete.⁵⁴

And there still is, one might add. To this 'ur-myth,' as Rose calls it, Blake refers in the introductory lines of 'Africa' and, implicitly, throughout the poem. Contrary to Rose's contention in a more general context, Blake in The Song of Los does not write about this 'ur-myth,' "the one that was before myth began." Yet he surely writes "with it," this 'ur-myth' being "the creative experience which is timeless and beyond us in any strictly personal way."⁵⁵ The Song of Los is a particular manifestation of the creative process and of visionary experience. This is borne out by the illumination on Plate 8. A naked Los, the poet-prophet and blacksmith, is depicted leaning on a large hammer, resting from his visionary labours. He contemplates a red sun, an emblem of the human mind purified by his poetic vision which is The Song of Los.⁵⁶ Although this sun is still somewhat obscured by Urizen's clouds, the major task of purging him "of the runes of Urizenic mystery (see frontispiece)" is accomplished.⁵⁷ Contrary to Erdman's assumption, this achievement is ontologically different from Orc's action in America. It is not just "a variant of stamping the stony law to dust (America 8:5), i.e. a revolutionary destruction of the old order."⁵⁸

The comprehension of the reader's association with Los-Blake or, indeed, his identification with the poet-prophet is an imaginative act performed by the reader in response to the poem. In this sense, a proposition to be distinguished from aesthetic and didactic considerations,

the poem is its own 'telos' regardless of the date of its printing or when it is read. Such an act of imaginative association or even of identification should reveal to the reader the truth about some of the limits he has been conditioned to accept as necessary, inevitable and even as God-given. His senses should expand, and historical present should attain to a significance wider than that of being a fragmentary link in the 'horizontal' course of the world. Such a change in level and scope of perception ought not to fail to have its effects on the reader's life, the potential starting point of a process directed at re-humanising society.

The historic 'person' of the poet and his creative achievement offer hope. Sharing the original vision of Los, of Adam and Noah, and being aware of their and their predecessors' failures, Blake is ultimately writing about himself when writing about mankind and its illustrious representatives. Prompted by visionary experience, his poem is a creative attempt at sustaining vision (even after his physical death, as opposed to Adam and Noah's fading and Har and Heva's flight) by communicating it. In trying to come to terms with his own time, Blake hopes to escape the fate suffered by his illustrious predecessors. The poem is an attempt at revealing both positive and negative aspects of the spiritual form underlying the apparently chaotic history of mankind.

FOOTNOTES

¹See Erdman, p. 725, and Keynes, p. 896.

²Damon, p. 126. Compare Bloom, Blake's Apocalypse, p. 161; Bloom, Commentary, E818-819. John Beer, Blake's Humanism (Manchester, 1968), pp. 132-133.

³Bloom, Commentary, E818-819.

⁴"America and Europe continue the world history where The Song of Los . . . breaks off. The 'Prophecy' of America begins with the very line on which 'Africa' ends." Damon, p. 126. See Bloom, Blake's Apocalypse, pp. 161-162.

⁵Bloom, Commentary, E818.

⁶Punctuation at the end of lines 2 and 3 varies in different editions. Keynes and Erdman terminate both lines with a full-stop. Stevenson's text has no sign after "Eternity." Therefore, lines 2 and 3 form a syntactical period. My interpretation follows Stevenson's version, though Erdman's text is used for quotation.

⁷3:5. My spacing.

⁸Except for the concluding lines of Plate 4 (18-21) and Plate 7 (31-40).

⁹"A connection is established between two events which are linked neither temporally nor causally--a connection which it is impossible to establish by reason in the horizontal dimension (if I may be permitted to use this term for a temporal extension). It can be established only if both occurrences are vertically linked to Divine Providence, which alone is able to devise such a plan of history and supply the key to its understanding. The horizontal, that is the temporal and causal, connection of occurrences is dissolved; the here and now is no longer a mere link in an earthly chain of events, it is simultaneously something which has always been, and which will be fulfilled in the future; and strictly, in the eyes of God, it is something eternal, something omni-temporal, something already consummated in the realm of fragmentary earthly event." Erich Auerbach, Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton, N.J., 1968), pp. 73-74.

¹⁰"Prophets in the modern sense of the word have never existed . . . Every honest man is a Prophet he utters his opinion both of private & public matters Thus If you go on So the result is So He never says such a thing Shall happen let you do what you will. a Prophet is a Seer not an Arbitrary Dictator." Annotations to R. Watson's An Apology for the Bible (London, 1797), E606-607.

¹¹Rosalie L. Colie, "Time and Eternity," p. 202.

¹²St. Augustine, Confessiones, XI, 20, 26.

¹³Bloom suggests that this loss led to the emergence of natural man. Commentary, E819.

¹⁴See Damon, p. 126, and Stevenson's cryptic identification, p. 242; Bloom, Commentary, E819.

¹⁵In A Vision of the Last Judgment (E546 ff.) matters of chronology and the symbolism Blake associates with specific biblical characters are more explicitly treated than in The Song of Los.

¹⁶In A Descriptive Catalogue, Blake ascertains the impossibility of any outsider conveying truth by means of 'objective' historiography:

The reasoning historian, turner and twister of causes and consequences, such as Hume, Gibbon and Voltaire; cannot with all their artifice, turn or twist one fact or disarrange self evident action and reality. Reasons and opinions concerning acts, are not history. Acts themselves alone are history, and these are neither the exclusive property of Hume, Gibbon nor Voltaire, Echard, Rapin, Plutarch, nor Herodotus. Tell me the Acts, O historian, and leave me to reason upon them as I please; away with your reasoning and your rubbish. All that is not action is not worth reading. Tell me the What; I do not want you to tell me the Why, and the How; I can find that out myself, as well as you can, and I will not be fooled by you into opinions, that you please to impose, to disbelieve what you think improbable or impossible. His opinions, who does not see spiritual agency, is not worth any man's reading; he who rejects a fact because it is improbable, must reject all History and retain doubts only. (E534)

See Blake's annotations to Watson's An Apology for the Bible for an equally relevant statement of his position: "PUBLIC RECORDS as If Public Records were True Impossible for the facts are such as none but the actor could tell" (E607).

¹⁷For instance, the cryptic statement "And to Mahomet a loose Bible gave" (3:29) is nowhere elaborated by Blake.

¹⁸The case is further complicated if these two clauses are read as parallels to "black grew the sunny African / When Rintrah gave Abstract Philosophy to Brama in the East" (3:10-11).

¹⁹See Auerbach, Mimesis, p. 73.

²⁰M. H. Abrams, Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature (New York, 1971), p. 36.

²¹According to Auerbach, "Figural interpretation establishes a connection between two events or persons in such a way that the first signifies not only itself but also the second, while the second involves or fulfills the first. The two poles of a figure are separated in time, but both, being real events or persons, are within temporality. They are both contained in the flowing stream which is historical life, and only the comprehension, the 'intellectus spiritualis,' of their interdependence is a spiritual act." (p. 73.) The technical term for this type of 'fulfilment' is 'figuram implere.'

²²Damon, p. 126. Damon also refers to Plate 11 of The Marriage of Heaven and Hell where this process is related in detail.

²³On the frontispiece of The Song of Los a patriarchal figure, probably Urizen, is depicted lying on the ground, his shoulders and head resting against a rock. (According to Erdman "his body is decaying into the earth as in Jerusalem 92." The Illuminated Blake, p. 175.) Urizen's left hand is on a skull. This illumination may well signify Urizen's uninspired domination over dead material form emptied of spirit. Damon draws attention to Jerusalem, 32/367:5 and notes that "the 'Cave of Adam,' obviously meaning the skull, is the place where Reuben sleeps while his senses are being limited." A Blake Dictionary, p. 6. According to the Census (p. 91) the patriarch is Adam. He may also be Noah.

²⁴Damon, p. 126.

²⁵See A Descriptive Catalogue, E533. Damon points out that God changed Abraham's name from Abram ("father of elevation") to Abraham ("father of multitudes"). A Blake Dictionary, p. 3.

²⁶Milton, 37:43; 37:35.

²⁷ Mimesis, pp. 16-18.

²⁸ Having correlated Moses with reason, Brahma, Trismegistus and the Greek philosophers with "an Abstract (inhuman) Philosophy," and the Gospel of Jesus with "frustrate desire," Damon (pp. 126-127) draws on Blake's later poetry to claim that "these four religions are the ethical, the logical, the aesthetic, and the imaginative, corresponding to the fourfold division of Man."

²⁹ The Four Zoas, Night IX, 120:42.

³⁰ See Abrams, Natural Supernaturalism, pp. 32-37.

³¹ Abrams defines the two major categories of the philosophy of history in classical antiquity. "One of these, the primitivist view, which was confined mainly to myth and poetry, held that the best time was at the beginning, or in the very distant past, and that there has been an overall decline ever since. The second view, which was widespread in the sophisticated thinking of philosophers, historians, and political theorists, as well as poets, was the theory of cycles: the overall course of events is from bad to better to best to worse to worst to better, and so on, time without end. Some proponents of this theory held a view of eternal recurrence, maintaining that the kinds of things that have happened before will happen again, as time brings the world back to the corresponding phase in the cycle of human values, or even that each individual being will recur and each particular event will in due course be reenacted. According to the version of individual recurrence proposed by Chrysippus, for example, every historical cycle will end in an 'ekpyrosis,' or total conflagration, followed by a renewal, and 'again there will exist Socrates and Plato and every man'" Natural Supernaturalism, p. 34. Compare Jerusalem, 75:24: "And where Luther ends Adam begins again in Eternal Circle."

³² Abrams, Natural Supernaturalism, p. 36.

³³ Auerbach, Mimesis, p. 74.

³⁴ Abrams, Natural Supernaturalism, p. 37.

³⁵ Abrams, Natural Supernaturalism, p. 36.

³⁶ See Auerbach, Mimesis, pp. 74-75.

³⁷ Commentary, E819.

³⁸ Ronald L. Grimes, "Time and Space in Blake's Major Prophecies," Blake's Sublime Allegory: Essays on 'The Four Zoas,' 'Milton,' 'Jerusalem' (Madison, Wisconsin and London) 1973), p. 64.

³⁹ See Grimes, pp. 64-65.

⁴⁰ See Paradise Lost, Book X, 511-517.

⁴¹ 3:7-19. This event is illuminated on Plate 4 of The Song of Los.

⁴² A Descriptive Catalogue, E533.

⁴³ The Structure of Scientific Revolutions (2nd enlarged edn. Chicago and London, 1970), p. 4.

⁴⁴ See The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, Pl. 12, E38.

⁴⁵ In his annotations to Watson's An Apology for the Bible, Blake attacks "Penal Laws" in general and "the laws of the Jews" in particular.

All Penal Laws court Transgression & therefore are cruelty & Murder

The laws of the Jews were (both ceremonial & real) the basest & most oppressive of human codes. & being like all other codes given under pretence of divine command were what Christ pronounced them The Abomination that maketh desolate. i.e. State Religion which is the Source of all Cruelty" (E607).

That God does & always did converse with honest Men Paine never denies. he only denies that God conversd with Murderers & Revengers such as the Jews were. & of course he holds that the Jews conversed with their own [self will] /State Religion/ which they calld God & so were liars as Christ says (E604).

⁴⁶ With regard to the illumination on Plate 4, Erdman observes that "the bird flying above 'Rousseau' and the matching banner on 'Voltaire' confirm the deduction that these Alpine figures are pillars of fire if not light, in the 'European darkness' (7:26)." The Illuminated Blake, p. 177.

⁴⁷ "The Guardian Prince of Albion burns in his nightly tent" (America, 'A Prophecy,' 3:1. The Song of Los, 4:21).

⁴⁸ Bloom, Commentary, E819.

⁴⁹ Bloom, Commentary, E819.

⁵⁰ My reading is at odds with Erdman's views as expressed in Prophet Against Empire, pp. 314-315. Erdman regards Rousseau and Voltaire in an unequivocally positive light and Orc's "raging in European darkness" as an expression of Blake's renewed enthusiasm for revolution. Whether this include the French Revolution Erdman does

I do not share Stevenson's confidence that 'Asia' "ends with the enthusiasm of 1793 rather than the speculations of Urizen (dated 1794 on titlepage)." The conclusions arrived at in this chapter support my decision to deal with Urizen first, rather than follow Stevenson's "conjecture that both parts were written before Urizen." (Stevenson, p. 241.)

Beer's interpretation of Orc's activities is closer to my own. "What might have been a renewed marriage between Spirit and Earth is represented instead as a great orgy between the Nameless Shadowy Female (here personifying the Grave), and Orc, the destructive energy unleashed in the revolution. The Grave no longer receives men when their bodies are ripe for death (an analogue of normal intercourse) but participates in a great orgy of lust, as revolution brings a release of destructive cosmic energy." (Beer, Blake's Humanism, p. 138.)

⁵¹ See Auerbach, Mimesis, pp. 74-75.

⁵² Grimes, "Time and Space," p. 69. Grimes distinguishes 'eschatological' from 'apocalyptic.' "'Apocalyptic' is a particular kind of eschatology, a type which insists on the absence of the divine from the present while Satan is in control and which expects the total destruction of the world as a prelude to redemption. Both words refer to end-time, but 'apocalyptic' is a specific view of the nature of that time, whereas 'eschatology' is a more general term. A distinction is sometimes made between prophetic eschatology and apocalyptic eschatology. The former employs proclamation, diatribe, and historical narrative, whereas the latter tends to be more visionary and ecstatic. Blake is stylistically closer to apocalyptic eschatology, but he would never accept the dualism necessary for apocalyptic. Hence, it seems appropriate simply to speak of Blakean eschatology and to recognize that his is a third species of eschatology, neither wholly prophetic nor wholly apocalyptic." (p. 67.)

⁵³ See Grimes, pp. 67 ff.

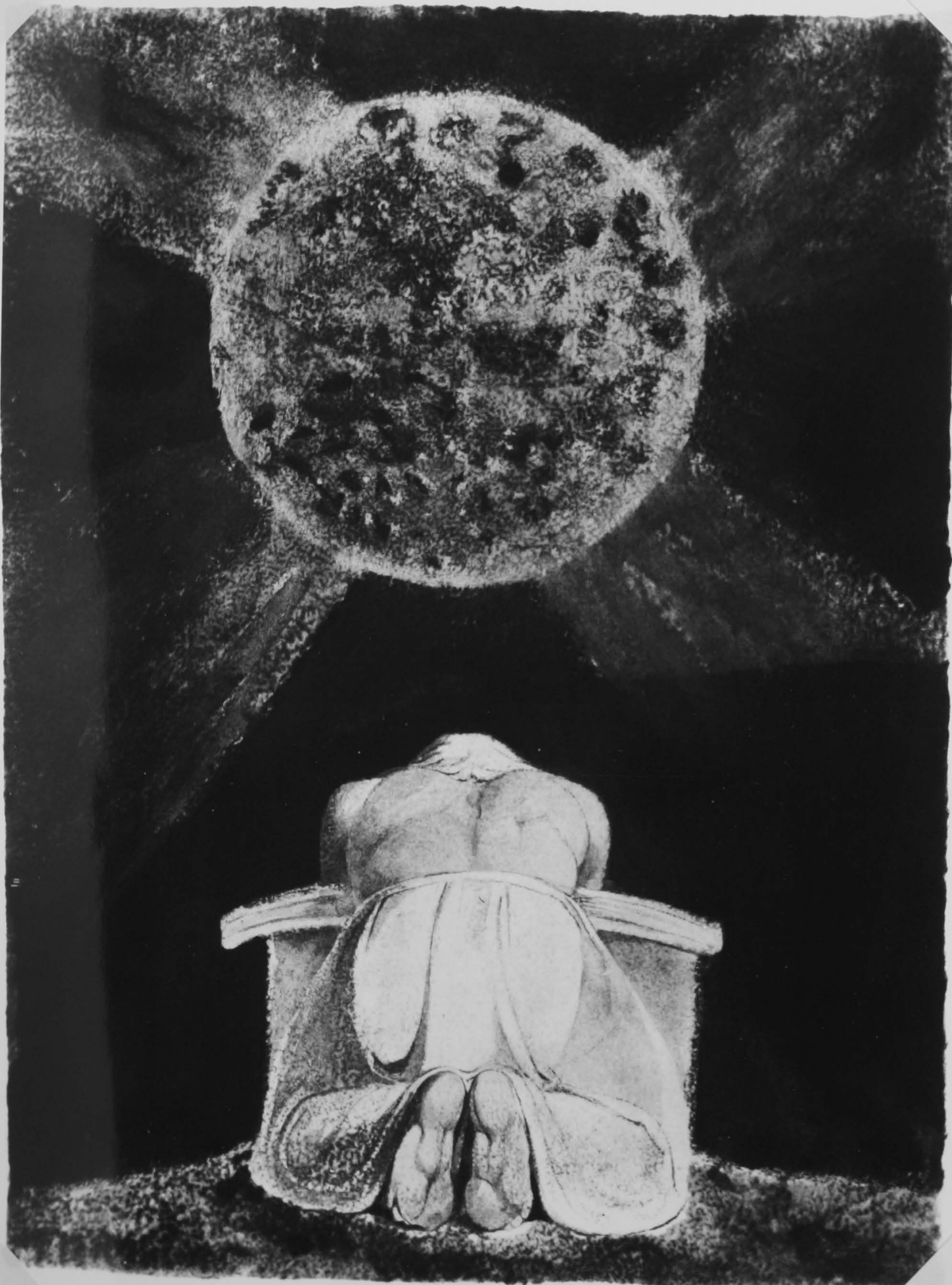
⁵⁴ 'Notes Toward A Supreme Fiction,' The Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens (New York, 1955), p. 383.

⁵⁵ Edward J. Rose, "Los, Pilgrim of Eternity," Blake's Sublime Allegory, p. 86.

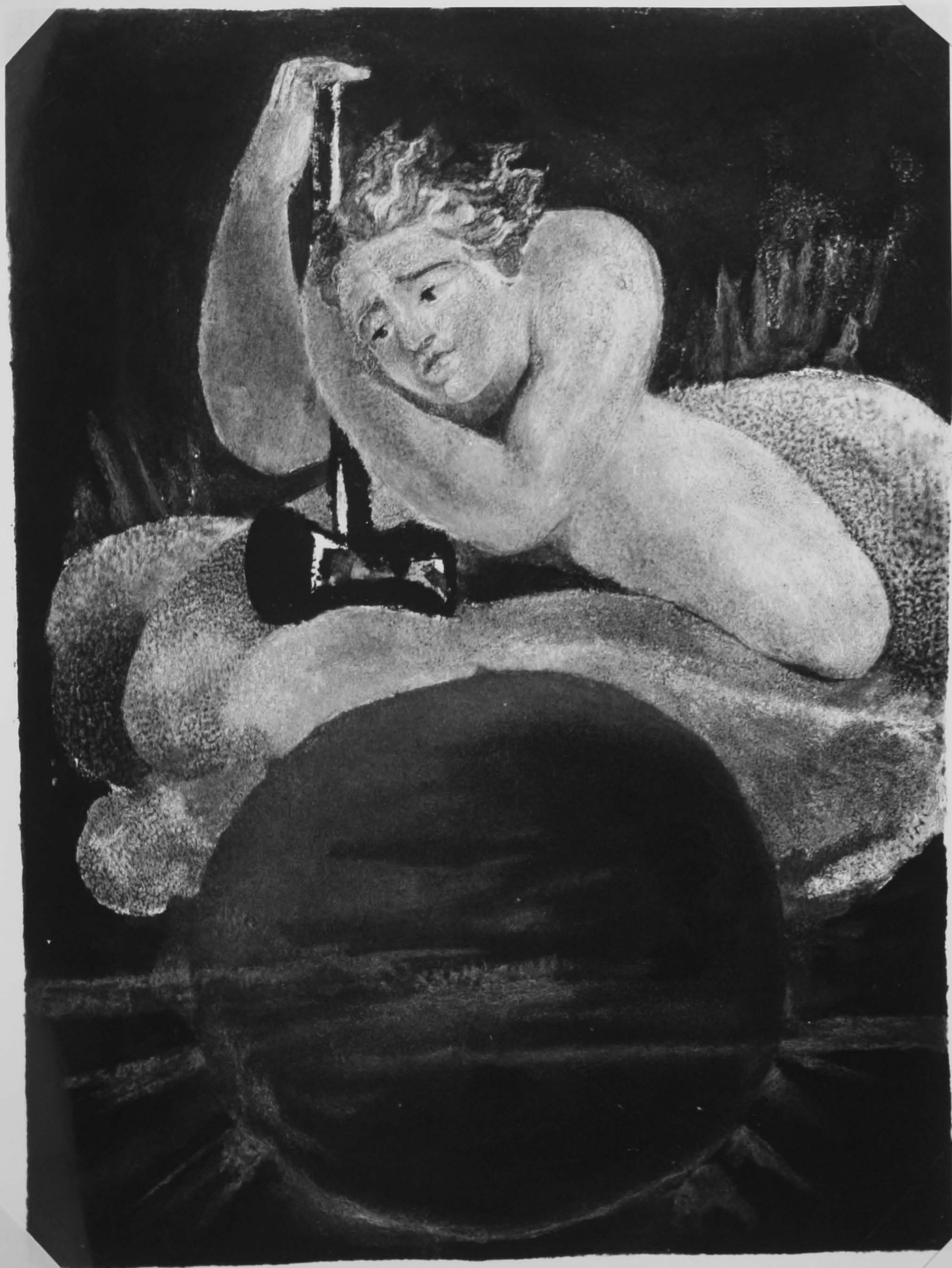
⁵⁶ According to Erdman, "the visible orb . . . may represent the material sun, or history, the corporeal war which Los is forging into vision." (The Illuminated Blake, p. 181.)

⁵⁷ Erdman, The Illuminated Blake, p. 181. "When we look back, having finished the Song we see that the writing on the sun is the text of 'Africa,' the first part, the history of mankind under philosophies of tyranny." (Erdman, The Illuminated Blake, p. 174.)

⁵⁸ Erdman, The Illuminated Blake, p. 181.



The Song of Los, Frontispiece.



The Song of Los, Plate 11.

VALA OR THE FOUR ZOAS

1. Methodological Considerations

The only extant manuscript of Vala or The Four Zoas, in the British Museum, consists of 132 pages on seventy large sheets, two small sheets and one fragment.¹ When discovered by Ellis and Yeats, the seventy-three leaves were loose and out of order.² As a result of this external disorder and the textual confusion in parts of the poem the organisation of some of the leaves is conjectural and varies in different editions.

The much-revised title-page indicates that the unfinished manuscript of The Four Zoas incorporates an earlier version of the poem called Vala or The Death and Judgement of the Ancient Man.³ Bentley believes that "by 1797 Vala was complete enough for Blake to make a fair copy of it, probably about 2,200 lines, but he never attempted to etch or publish it." During the next ten years "Vala grew to 4,000 lines and changed into The Four Zoas."⁴ Erdman, too, speculates that "the '1797' in the title may mark the beginning of a first fair copy."⁵

Margoliouth attempted to reconstruct the original text of Vala by selecting Blake's "fair copy of each Night before erasures, deletions, additions, and changes of order," excepting Nights I, VIII and the first part of Night IX.⁶ However, as pointed out by Erdman, the hypothetical result is "misleading if taken as a really early state of the text or as constituting a uniform layer, so to speak" (E739), because so far textual scholars have neither been able to establish reliably such an original uniform layer, nor has it been possible to provide a precise and consistent chronology of growth for the poem as a whole.

Blake's use of different types of paper, variations in his handwriting and manner of insertion, and the stitch-marks suggest the possibility that "a complete Vala in copperplate hand was produced but lay unsold and open to revision which gradually reduced it to a working ms."⁷ Portions of this manuscript manifestly progressed through several drafting stages. While most of the pages are only fair cryptic copies, others "still exhibit the palimpsest of their growth" and fragments of different drafts.⁸ There is one important point on which Bentley and Erdman agree: a second and third addition on one page may have no chronological relation with a second and third addition on another page.⁹ Indeed, as Erdman points out, "successive layers of copperplate, modified copperplate, and usual hand" do not necessarily "represent successive and datable stages

in the growth of the manuscript" because the accompanying drawings "vary in finish throughout" (E738). Furthermore, "on certain copperplate pages a distinctly late style appears in the script, marked by the 'g' which Blake adopted after Nov. 1802."¹⁰

Both Bentley and Erdman stress the extreme complexities of the manuscript. According to Erdman they "continue to defy analysis and all assertions about meaningful physical groupings or chronologically definable layers of composition or inscription must be understood to rest on partial and ambiguous evidence" (E739). Bentley generally concedes that "most of the textual additions are only distinguishable from each other by style and symbolism."¹¹ More specifically, Erdman suggests that "the text with its overtones of biography and symbols of history may remain our most rewarding if still most treacherous resource."¹² Even if a critical reader is not primarily concerned with the numerous textual layers and their precise dates of composition, the inherent inconsistencies of the 'narrative' and the vicissitudes of the symbolism make it very difficult for him to treat the manuscript as a coherent poetic whole.

The poem The Four Zoas is arranged in nine Nights. There are two seventh Nights.¹³ Bentley suggests that the poem may have been "originally organized in 'Books' as a continuation of Urizen."¹⁴ In fact, Nights IV and V which

contain a good deal of material familiar from The /First/ Book of Urizen, were originally called "the Fourth Book" (page 56) and "Book The Fifth" (page 57).¹⁵

There is a critical school which attributes the extensive revisions of the poem as a whole, and of Nights I, VIII and IX in particular, to "Blake's criticism of his earlier faith."¹⁶ This self-criticism is supposedly directed at three central aspects of Blake's persistent concern with mankind's conceptions of reality: the historical, the cognitive, and the apocalyptic.

Although David V. Erdman has proved that The Four Zoas is related to the historical reality of Blake's day, some of his early conclusions have failed to withstand the test of time. He must be given credit, therefore, for being prepared to abandon an untenable position. In both the first and the second editions of Blake: Prophet Against Empire he argues: "In The French Revolution and America and Europe /Blake/ had dealt with recent events. In The Four Zoas he seems to have allowed his tune to be called by events unfolding as he wrote."¹⁷ These confused historical events, the aftermath of the French Revolution, are presumed to have disrupted the poem's chronology.¹⁸ In the second edition of his book Erdman adds a cautionary footnote to this confident assertion, which considerably modifies his position on the subject.

We cannot be sure; an alternative explanation would be that as Blake reworked and expanded and rearranged this and that part of his manuscript, under the compulsion of the mental and allegorical travels and reverses he was creating, he disregarded chronological sequence when he drew upon current and recent memorable events for the quasi-military conflicts and negotiations of his tale.¹⁹

This new insight is in accord with our findings concerning Blake's eclectic use of literary and philosophical 'sources,' as demonstrated in the previous chapters of this thesis. Like Urizen, although on a much wider scale of poetic symbolism and within the context of a less coherent narrative framework, The Four Zoas is the imaginative displacement of social, political and intellectual reality. Or, in Morton D. Paley's phrase, "on one level . . . Blake's meaning applies to the mind of Europe at a particular point in its history; and as in the Lambeth books, there are parallel cosmic, political, and psychological meanings" as well as aesthetic and ontological ones, one may add.²⁰

Erdman takes us one crucial step further in our critical assessment of the complexities of The Four Zoas by observing that

it has been commonly noted that The Four Zoas holds evidence of considerable revision of values. We must not mistake Blake's description of historical changes, however, for a "criticism of his own earlier faith." When Blake reports deteriorative changes in Orc-Luvah he is criticizing not "the French Revolution" but the Bonapartism that followed and in a sense negated it.²¹

Erdman refers to Sloss and Wallis who "suggest hesitantly that the role of Luvah in Jerusalem contains an uncertain allusion to France and the French Revolution, which may embody Blake's criticism of his own earlier faith."²²

Hirsch, in essence, also subscribes to this hypothesis, although his emphasis concerning Blake's supposedly autobiographical intentions differs from Erdman's original view.²³ Hirsch, too, proposes that the confused state of the manuscript of The Four Zoas reflects "Blake's characteristic procedure when he changed his views." This procedure "had been to correct his past errors by altering the text in which they were embedded."²⁴ Especially To Tirzah, the last poem added to the Songs, "was a poem that not only repudiated the naturalism of 'Experience' but marked a return (though Blake's beliefs were never to be exactly as they had been) to the Christian pieties of 'Innocence.'"²⁵ To support his hypothesis Hirsch refers to Blake's numerous extant letters of the period 1800-05, which reflect "Blake's monumental [spiritual] struggle."²⁶ Most important in this context, however, were the revisions undergone by The Four Zoas. Allegedly "these revisions, like all the others in Blake's works, were undertaken in order to convert 'incorrect' earlier ideas into 'correct' new ones."²⁷ According to Hirsch the various textual layers specifically reflect changes in Blake's evaluation of the natural world. "This disvaluation of the natural world had been foreshadowed in 1795 in Blake's manifesto of his disillusionment in the Revolution--The Book of Ahania."²⁸

Contrary to Hirsch's view, during the period discussed in this thesis (1789-1804) there is no evidence in Blake's poetry that he rejected the natural world outright. This is consistent with his refusal to conceive of the relationship between mind and body in dualistic terms. On the other hand, of course, Blake consistently denounces 'natural' man, in particular the seventeenth-century and eighteenth-century rationalist, the advocate of abstract despotic law and believer in 'natural' religion. He fights against the dualistic tendencies underlying Urizen's attitude toward man and nature, which transform his human victims into 'natural' men, slaves to their distorted perceptions of a purely material reality mistakenly conceived as external. Tirzah is the cruelly possessive maternal embodiment of such a misconception and Vala is its youthful, seductive, but equally cruel and delusive aspect. Blake's attitude toward natural energy and desire as embodied by Orc or Fuzon did not change because he came to consider them evil (he never rejected sexual love) but because he realised the perverse ways in which Orc's potentially rejuvenating force can be limited by being tied down to the natural world and thus corrupted by Urizen's materialist-determinist conception of reality. Blake can neither be said to be rejecting revolution as such, nor to be correcting an erroneous stance. He specifies dramatically, in the light of historical events, the dangers awaiting the revolutionary and, more generally, 'natural' man.

For the time being, we shall critically follow Hirsch's line of argument in order to highlight, with one particular example, the kind of pitfall awaiting the unwary enquirer. On the basis of the original title of The Four Zoas Hirsch makes conjectures about "the kind of poem [Blake] planned to write in 1797." In this context, Hirsch considers "the changes in Blake's name for Nature from 'Eno' to 'Vala'" as being suggestive of "a change in Blake's evaluation of the natural world." Allegedly, "Eno had been, in The Book of Los, a homely and rather friendly Ossianic matriarch. Now she is a delusive female."²⁹ However, neither text nor the illumination on the frontispiece of The Book of Los present Eno in the manner described by Hirsch. Nor has Eno, in The Four Zoas, been transformed into the delusive female Vala, as examination of the manuscript will show.³⁰ The introductory lines of The Book of Los refer to her as

Eno aged Mother,
.
.
.
Sitting beneath the eternal Oak
Trembled and shook the stedfast Earth
And thus her speech broke forth. (3:1-6)

Eno's "speech" is The Book of Los. There is some resemblance between these lines and the subtitle of The Four Zoas as transcribed by Bentley: "The Song of the Aged Mother which shook the heavens with wrath . . . The heavens shall quake. the earth was moved & shudderd."³¹ The earlier, partly erased, version is even more interesting.³²

This is the Dirge (Song) of Eno (Enitharmon) which
shook the heavens with wrath
And thus beginneth the Book of Vala (E739).

Both Eno of the earlier version and "the Aged Mother" of the most recent layer are quite distinct characters from Vala; and, as is the case with The Book of Los, her "Song" or "Dirge" is identical at least with portions of what originally appears to have been conceived as a poem entitled "the Book of Vala." However, the image of Vala presented throughout The Four Zoas does not fully comprise Blake's own complex view of nature at any time during his career. Assuming that "Vala is both a veil and a vale, a covering of expanded perceptions and a vale of tears," as Hirsch characterises her, the poem clearly suggests that there are also other and more positive aspects to nature which are associated with other poetic female characters.³³ Indeed, the whole complex question whether The Four Zoas incorporates changes in Blake's evaluation of the natural world at all can only be substantiated and answered after a thorough investigation of the relevant parts of the whole poem. Such an investigation must take into account Hirsch's hypothetical claim that originally "the poem was not to be an affirmation of Blake's earlier faith in the natural order but, like The Book of Los, was to affirm man's power to find fulfilment in Vala by transforming her within his own imaginative vision."³⁴ The attentive reader will find it difficult to detect such an affirmation of man's power in The Book of Los. In this poem an ideal

condition, when men lived in harmony with each other and with nature, is presented as having prevailed in the distant past only, in

Times remote!
When Love & Joy were adoration:
And none impure were deem'd. (3:7-9)

When covetousness, envy, wrath, wantonness and unbridled desire break loose, Los can do no more than try and consolidate this chaotic confusion. He succeeds in restoring some degree of order by providing Urizen with a human body. He binds him down "to the glowing illusion" (5:47) of the sun, the material reflection of creative intellectual energy. Thus, the universal 'natural' man is created,

a Form
Was completed, a Human Illusion
In darkness and deep clouds involvd. (5:55-57)

If The Book of Los can be said to foreshadow a positive aspect of Blake's disillusionment with the natural world at all, it does so in a way similar to Urizen. Los, the agent of imaginative perception, laboriously effects a consolidation of universal chaos--which is a reflection of a confused state of mind--by putting man's rational powers in charge of his energies, his passions and desires. In the poems immediately preceding The Four Zoas (Urizen, Ahania, The Book of Los and The Song of Los), there is no indication of man's imaginative perceptions independently

creating "a paradise within, that would be happier far than the violent and vital natural paradise that Blake had celebrated in The Marriage, America and the Rossetti Manuscript," as Hirsch believes with regard to The Book of Los.³⁵ However, The Four Zoas incorporates the essential features of The Book of Los and develops these in the manner described by Hirsch.

By associating The Mental Traveller and The Four Zoas, Hirsch gives another, and perhaps more valuable, lead toward an adequate appreciation of some of the complexities of the long epic poem.³⁶ If one shifts the emphasis of Hirsch's argument concerning The Mental Traveller, both poems may first of all be said to be, in very different ways, depictions of spiritual journeys; and only secondly poetic displacements of Blake's spiritual biography. There is merit in correlating Blake's conception of the spiritual history of mankind, as for instance adumbrated in The Song of Los and in The Four Zoas, with Blake's own spiritual history, as deduced from explicit statements of his beliefs such as There is No Natural Religion, All Religions are One, his letters and annotations; or from implicit expressions in his poetry. Nevertheless, The Four Zoas is more than "an account of Blake's spiritual history universalized to represent the tragic spiritual history of mankind," as Hirsch believes.³⁷ Rather, I propose to read the poem as adumbrating the tragic spiritual history of mankind, and

as a complex epic phenomenology of mind and human circumstance, portions of which necessarily reflect aspects of Blake's or, for that matter, any man's spiritual history. Evolving on ahistorical lines this phenomenology comprises pre-historical and supra-historical mythology and history in the guise of mythology, thus combining the ailinear structural patterns organising Urizen and The Song of Los.

Contrasting or even contradictory conceptions of reality, of ethics, of the past and the future, as expressed by different characters in different parts of the poem, must not be reduced to representing Blake's own and supposedly changing views. Nor will the critic do justice to the poem, be it ever so complex and seemingly incoherent, or to the poet's supposed 'intention,' if he isolates one particular aspect or one specific philosophic problem and employs its diverse manifestations in the poem primarily for the purpose of identifying and dating textual strata. This discussion will proceed on the assumption that any contradictions, whether attributable to the poet's changing views on a particular subject or whether simply representing different points of view advocated by different poetic characters in dramatic juxtaposition, are integral portions of the poem's narrative structure. Whether Blake himself at any time explicitly advocated any of the views expressed by the protagonists is of considerable interest. So is the dating of textual layers. Both these aspects of critical enquiry are, however, less relevant to this

discussion of The Four Zoas than the total pattern emerging in the course of fallen Man's quest for unity, and the culmination of the poem in a final apocalyptic vision of the Last Judgment.

Nights I, VIII and IX were repeatedly revised. The two final Nights underwent the most drastic changes both from a textual point of view and in comparison with attitudes expressed in the earlier 'Prophecies.' According to Bentley's hypothesis, about 1803-05 "Blake was overwhelmed with a renewed vision, a renovated Christianity, and a new purpose in his work. 'Whenever any Individual Rejects Error & Embraces Truth, a Last Judgment passes upon that Individual.' (VLJ, K613/E551) Blake's personal Last Judgment necessitated drastic changes in his poem. Though he may not at first have contemplated inserting Christian overtones into Vala, he would certainly have wanted to revise its concluding tendencies."³⁸ Having done so with regard to Nights VIII and IX he presumably turned to the earlier Nights. And while "the pages of Blake's copperplate hand in Nights I-III are covered with additions of a Christian tenor," as Bentley observes, "he made no changes of this kind, however, in the body of the next five Nights." Whether it is really "curious that the middle Nights were never brought into conformity with the Christianity of the Nights at either end of Vala" remains to be seen.³⁹ In all probability, names and locations drawn

from the Old Testament, and others originating in ancient British mythology and history were added even later, contributing yet further dimensions to the poem's already confusing complexity.⁴⁰ While it is debatable whether many of these changes and additions were made without apparent consistency, as Bentley believes, their striking effect on the poem as a whole is not in question. The Christian allusions and the Christian spirit which especially pervade Night VIII, invest the poem with a new sense of direction, widen its ethical scope and deepen its meta-physical significance.

Northrop Frye possibly overstates his case in declaring as "Blake's real theme, the fall of Albion and his recovery of Jerusalem in the apocalypse."⁴¹ Yet, even if the revisions of Nights I-VII should be "lamentably incomplete," as Bentley complains, it is far from "perverse to find the 'real theme' in characters and actions which formed no part of at least two or three drafts of the poem."⁴² Largely conjectural archetypes (especially Nights I and IX) or even a non-existent archetype (Night VIII) are hardly more authentic with regard to the poem's theme or more relevant for its interpretation than the only extant version revised, though incompletely, by the poet himself. Blake's attempt to superimpose a Christian perspective upon what, originally, may or may not have been a non-Christian conception of reality, of human relationships, of the course of history and the purpose of life, deserves close scrutiny. It must not be dismissed as a mistake on purely formal or generally

aesthetic grounds, especially since it is, as Bentley himself concedes, "most important for the insight it gives into the growth of Blake's mind and myth."⁴³

In the necessary process of establishing the chronology of textual layers it is easily forgotten that this manuscript was not conceived as an editorial puzzle, but as poetry. While proceeding from an awareness of its substantial textual complexities, investigation of the evolving symbolism of The Four Zoas must have priority for the purpose of interpretation.

2. Central Themes

The thematic and structural complexities of the poem are anticipated by its revised title (The Four Zoas / The torments of Love & Jealousy in / The Death and Judgement / of Albion the Ancient Man) and by the poet's invocation of his private muse. He invites a Daughter of Beulah, an agent of inspired natural vision, to "Sing" Urthona's and, by implication, the Ancient Man's

fall into Division & his Resurrection to Unity
His fall into the Generation of Decay & Death & his
Regeneration by the Resurrection from the dead
(4:4-5).

Man's emotional degradation and suffering, mentioned in the title, is only one aspect of his fall "into Division." It is correlative with "his fall into Generation of Decay & Death" which signifies here, as it does in Urizen, the lowest level of human consciousness, the nadir of the fall of the macrocosmic human mind conceived as an anthropomorphic universe, the self-abandonment of the human mind to the generative powers of natural corruption. Man's misdirected emotions play a major part in his "Death & Judgement." They are at the root of many of the protagonists' divisive actions, and motivate their quests for reunification with their separated counterparts. The poem ends with the reversal of the Fall, with resurrection and regeneration, culminating in an apocalypse which significantly differs from the ones brought about by revolutionary energy in The French Revolution, America and Europe.⁴⁴

The invocation quoted above is a good example of the imaginative comprehensiveness and scope of Blake's vision and of the wealth of associations which it accommodates. Line 3, for instance, may be associated with ancient myths like those of the Syrian Thammuz, the Egyptian Osiris, the Greek Orpheus, the Kabbalistic Adam Kadmon, and similar pre-Christian cults. While lines 4 and 5 are generally reminiscent of the Platonic myth of the descending soul and of Gnostic doctrine, with "Regeneration" suggesting the pattern of the natural cycle, "Resurrection from the dead" alludes to the eschatological mystery central to

Christian doctrine. It transcends, ontologically and ethically, the cyclic patterns of natural life and any cyclic or linear conceptions of history. This impression is confirmed by the manner in which the Ancient Man's constitution preceding his "Death" is described on the previous page.

Four Mighty Ones are in every Man:
a Perfect Unity
Cannot Exist. but from the Universal
Brotherhood of Eden
The Universal Man. To Whom be
Glory Evermore Amen (3:4-6).

Every individual man incorporates "Four Mighty Ones." So does the Universal, Ancient or Eternal Man, Albion. He is the animated, anthropomorphic aggregate and projection of universal unity and harmony founded on Christian ethics. These ethics are associated with Eden and thus with life 'before' the Fall, in a temporal and logical sense. Life in Eden will be shown to transcend empirical forms of life from a psychological, an ethical and, ultimately, from an ontological point of view. A further dimension is added in the following lines:

[What] are the Natures of those Living Creatures the
Heavenly Father only
[Knoweth] no Individual [Knoweth nor] Can know in all
Eternity (3:7-8).45

Blake's marginal references to John 1:14 and especially to 17:21 stress the presence of a mystical element in this unorthodox identification of the one and the many on the basis of Christian ethics.⁴⁶

Notwithstanding the twists and turns of the dramatic activities associated with man's fallen condition, once Blake had decided on introducing an overtly Christian element into his poem, it had to end with an eschatological vision. Far from being a fanciful invention devoid of historical relevance, the poem interprets the history of mankind after the Fall not as an aimless quest, but invests it with a spiritual 'telos,' an apocalypse brought about by powers that utilise and transcend the forces of natural regeneration. Although the body of the Universal Man, who is originally identical with the "Universal Brotherhood of Eden," disintegrates into a number of subsidiary divisions--physical, sexual, psychological, intellectual, ethnic, cultural, religious, political and otherwise--these often hostile fragments destroy or, if only by force of adversity, organise and maintain the lives of individuals and communities. Reconciliation of these fragments and their reintegration within the totality of the Universal Man can only be brought about through inspired 'prophetic' activity in the Blakean sense. In the context of The Four Zoas, and even more so in Jerusalem, this activity assumes both a didactic and a revelatory character.

Pages 3 and 4 of The Four Zoas anticipate what Nights VIII and IX will confirm. The long epic poem is not primarily distinguished from the earlier Lambeth books by its greater structural complexity, or by an element of obscurely adopted Christian metaphysics, or by its final redemption of the violent forces of purely 'natural' revolution. The essential novelty about this poem is its explicit advocacy of the ethics of love and forgiveness. These are credited with the power of bringing about truly spiritual regeneration and rebirth.

3. Urthona's Fall from Eden

Our discussion of Urizen proceeded from the hypothesis that the poem incorporates the tension generated by Blake's and Locke's opposed points of view. Theme, structure and symbolism reflect this opposition. With emphasis being placed on cognitive and ontological aspects, it was established that Blake's conception of Eternity renders redundant the metaphysics of our empirical world of time and space, and of established orthodox religions. There is no external 'objective' universe on which man's passive sense perceptions depend, nor a remote deity who rules by reward and punishment. Instead, mind is autonomous and active, and of its own volition instantaneously fulfils its desires. Sensory perception is a function of the mind.

Early in The Four Zoas yet another attempt is made at adumbrating aspects of the "ultimate reality of the ideal." The reality of Eden is at once human, natural, aesthetic and ethical. Harmony, even identity between mind, body and the natural universe are explicitly postulated. Inevitably, the emphasis is not so much on cognitive aspects as on the metaphysics and the ethics of original poetic creativity. Ideal being in Eden is specifically associated with Urthona who is the unfallen form of Los. His sympathetic relationship with his environment chronologically precedes and morally and ontologically transcends man's common experience of "flawed reality" after the mythical Fall, whether it is conceived as a quasi-Platonic universe as in Night II, or based on Cartesian and Newtonian principles as in Night VI.

Poetic symbolism cannot recreate absolute being 'before' the Fall, when the creative artist was united with his medium of vision. Although the language, imagery and temporal concepts at the poet's disposal are derived from our "flawed reality," Blake nevertheless accumulates images traditionally associated with natural beauty, harmony and continuity in his effort of presenting a qualitatively unfamiliar world.

Los was the fourth immortal starry one, & in the
Earth
Of a bright Universe Empery attended day & night
Days & nights of revolving joy, Urthona was his
name

In Eden; in the Auricular Nerves of Human life
Which is the Earth of Eden, he his Emanations
propagated
Fairies of Albion afterwards Gods of the Heathen
(3:9-4:3).

Although knowledge of the "Natures of those Living Creatures" who constitute the totality of the Universal Man is said to be forever concealed from 'individuals,' some insight into Urthona's character can be gleaned from the manner in which his activities in Eden are described. His identity as "the fourth immortal starry one" tenuously associates him with "the form of the fourth [who] is like the Son of God" in Nebuchadnezzar's "fiery furnace."⁴⁷ Supposing Blake's conscious debt to the Book of Daniel in this specific instance, it must be emphasised that the miracle related in the supposed biblical 'source' has been transformed into a poetic paradox. Although in The Four Zoas Urthona/Los is constantly associated with furnaces, he is not identical with Daniel's "Son of God."

In contrast with Genesis, no absolute beginning is mentioned in this poem. The animated uncorrupted "bright Universe" which Urthona inhabits is left without a cosmogony. It has, however, its own cosmology and even anatomy, physiology, psychology and ethics. Life in Eden, of which

Urthona is the spiritual agent, may be described as a poetic displacement of 'entelechy,' the term being used here in its widest possible meaning as an inherent, energetic and forming principle. No special reference to Aristotle's, or a modern, philosophy of the organic is intended.

"Days & nights of revolving joy" alternate in pleasant exchange "in those mild fields of happy Eternity" where Urthona and his emanation Enitharmon "in undivided Essence walkd about / Imbodied." In Night VII(a) the Spectre of Urthona further reminisces that before the Fall Enitharmon was his "garden of delight" and he "the spirit in the garden." Totally unselfish and in complete harmony they "dwelt in one anothers joy revolving / Days of Eternity with Tharmas mild & Luvah sweet melodious" (84:4-8).⁴⁸ Eternity provides the cyclic form and circumference for such happiness. At the same time the harmony of the sexes, and between man and nature is a constitutive aspect of Eternity. It is complemented by a near-mystical union of Urthona and Enitharmon with Tharmas, Luvah and with Urizen: "They in us & we in them alternate Livd / Drinking the joys of Universal Manhood." (84:10-11)⁴⁹

On page 5 the different phases of an ideal relationship between the sexes are correlated with the seasonal cycle.

In Eden Females sleep the winter in soft silken veils
Woven by their own hands to hide them in the darkness
grave
But Males immortal live renewed by female deaths. in
soft
Delight they die & they revive in spring with music
& songs (5:1-4).

This is the description of a world which transcends the antinomies of innocence and experience. In Eden death and sleep are equated and invested with an ethical quality. The female's death necessarily precedes her revival. Thus poetic language achieves in this passage the impression of continuity through an ideal synthesis of the cyclic rhythms to which vegetable and human life are subject. Cyclic renewal is both the natural and the spiritual form of the protagonists' physical and emotional relationship in Eden. Females are delighted to sacrifice themselves and voluntarily enter their graves in order to sustain the immortality of the males. By doing so they prepare themselves for their own revival in spring. Akin to Paracelsus' philosophy of the organic, and to vitalism, this ideal world is neither of a purely physical nor psychological, immanent nor transcendent nature. Its reality which excludes any kind of dualism is emphatically poetic and comprehensive.

Because nothing is finite in Eden, the cyclic pattern is emblematic both of life perpetually renewed by death and of immortality. Forming its own imaginative circumference, the Edenic life-cycle is complete within itself. It incorporates potential and fulfilment, possibility and

realisation; and it chronologically precedes and logically transcends the notion of cyclic motion being the spatial projection of the linear flux of time.⁵⁰ The indivisible concurrence of natural cycles with the phases of sexual and emotional relationships in Eden creates the impression of a human organism thriving on the paradox that life can only be sustained by loving self-sacrifice. This ethical maxim is the activating principle and spiritual form which permeates and governs the ideal reality of Eden. The assimilative qualities of poetic language are used in an attempt to visualise the metaphysics and ethics of one aspect of Eternity, now manifestly lost. Its imaginative reality may be taken to envisage the type of a new Eden beyond the gulf of history.

The reader's empirical knowledge of the material world, the human anatomy, physiology and mode of sense perception are drawn upon and suspended to produce the complex poetic symbol of an anthropomorphic cosmos.⁵¹ This provides the reader with a tentative notion of Blake's metaphysics of inspired creativity. Originally, Urthona's creative activities took place

in the Auricular Nerves of Human life
Which is the Earth of Eden.

The transcendent totality of spiritual being, human physiology and Edenic matter are all comprehended in the

supra-sensual 'place' or origin of imaginative creativity, which pertains to the "bright Universe." Urthona, whose name is a pun on "earth-owner," operates within this very special "Earth," the matrix of human consciousness.⁵²

Besides its significance in the cosmology of this "Universe" and in the topography of Eden, this very special "Earth" also constitutes the fourth element of "Human life," the others being fire, air and water. In the course of the poem these elements are associated with the four points of the compass and with Man's constitutive members, or Zoas.⁵³

The "Auricular Nerves of Human life" are only tentatively associated with the familiar faculty of hearing. They have little in common with ears as physical sense organs or with the passive mode of restricted sense perception afforded by this faculty in its degenerate condition. In Eden the "Auricular Nervers" are active agents both of inspired perception and of imaginative procreation or propagation of Urthona's "Emanations . . . / Fairies of Albion afterwards Gods of the Heathen." Apparently, here as elsewhere, Blake partly adopts an essential feature of prophetic experience to his essentially secular purpose and transforms it into a complex emblem of the poetic imagination at work. Commenting on the prophetic potential, John Donne draws attention to St. Paul's prophetic ecstasy which he considers as being associated with the oral rather than the visual medium. It is "not expressed in a 'Vidit,'

but an 'Audivit;' it is not said that he 'saw,' but that he heard unspeakable things . . . the eare is the Holy Ghosts first doore . . . and therefore to hearing does the Apostle apply faith."⁵⁴

At least in the present context, there is no mention of an external or transcendent source of inspiration on which Blake's secularised vision might depend. In Eden Los/Urthona is both subject and object of inspired vision. Like the "ancient Poets" of Blake's succinct account in The Marriage of Heaven and Hell (Plate 11), Urthona practises the cult of the imagination. In its unadulterated form it enables man not only to have immediate, intuitive and sympathetic spiritual intercourse with his animated environment which is at once natural and human, but to create and fill with life his own spiritual family. He is the Eternal blacksmith and creator of definite forms. Assisted by his sons he produces agricultural tools from an amorphous "mass of iron" (22:16). These tools are first and foremost real "spades & coulthers" (22:17), designed and produced to break up and cultivate the spiritual soil of Eden. This activity may be taken to symbolise the inspired activities by poets among their as yet uncorrupted fellow men.⁵⁵ Unfortunately, instead of persevering with their creative activities, Urthona's sons resist their "Poetic Genius." They abandon the labours of love for the "wars of Eden," thus joining the unprecedented conflict involving Urizen and Luvah as the main participants.⁵⁶

It is symptomatic of the Universal Man's Fall that Urthona's creative powers, too, should be severely impaired. He permits his offspring, "Fairies of Albion," to degenerate into heathen deities. This is tantamount to his losing possession of the "Earth of Eden." Alienated from his imaginative creations, the Man/Urthona idolises what will eventually become self-willed projections of his deluded phantasies. This loss of visionary power is primarily conceived as a poetic event, not as an historical allegory. Nevertheless it is representative and capable of accurately reflecting historical developments and their social, psychological, aesthetic, ethical and ontological implications as conceived by Blake. Generally speaking, the lines on which this discussion is focussed (3:9-4:3) allude to a process of de-mythologisation and abstraction which has its historical correspondence in the evolution of abstract religion and in the decline of inspired art. Its depiction is specific, its purport representative and comprehensive. In this context, as elsewhere, the poem does not allegorise supposedly 'objective' history. Rather the opposite applies. Specific historical events and developments, together with their impact on individuals and groups of people, prove the truth or faultiness of the poet's unique dramatised vision.

After the Fall which here, as in Urizen, signifies the descent to a lower level of consciousness, the "Emanations" propagated by Urthona will be exposed to the

dynamics of time and, therefore, of change. The process of degeneration apparently suffered by these "Fairies of Albion" is truly a decline of the Universal Man's faculty of vision. It is both a subjective (psychological and perceptual) phenomenon and an objective (philosophical and historical) development corresponding with similar processes previously discussed in connection with The Song of Los and The Marriage of Heaven and Hell. The temporal pronoun "afterwards" (4:3) relates to the modes of being prevailing before and in consequence of the Man's Fall and of Urthona's personal transformation. In the first place lines 2 and 3 on page 4, therefore, allude to the decline of inspired poetry, or myth, from its origin in the Man's creative imagination--previously identified with the "Poetic Genius"--to the primitive level of idolatrous worship of supposedly natural or supernatural deities; and finally to the abstract level of 'enlightened' theology or 'deism' which conceives of God as a rationally deducible entity. In Blake's view, as expressed in his marginalia to Francis Bacon's Essays Moral, Economical and Political, Bacon's philosophy is a product of this protracted historical process in which the progressive corruption of the human mind manifests itself. However, it is not so much the gulf of history as a lack of inspiration that separates sophisticated believers in a remote supreme deity from inspired poets and from primitive practitioners of nature cults.

As a case in point, Bacon scoffingly dismisses "the religion of the heathen" because it "consisted rather in rites and ceremonies, than in any constant [that is rational] belief: for you may imagine what kind of faith theirs was, when the chief doctors and fathers of their church were the poets." Blake: "Prophets" (E611). In Urizen, The Four Zoas and elsewhere in Blake's poetry, Urizen's ice, snow and the rock on which his iron laws are founded symbolise what Bacon admiringly calls "constant belief." It is categorically opposed to the imaginative freedom enjoyed by heathen poets in the past and by inspired non-conformist poets of any age. On the one hand Bacon's 'enlightened' attitude is symptomatic of a specific phase in the intellectual and cultural history of mankind. On the other hand it reflects that stage in the decline of the fallen human consciousness, be it individual or collective, when man's actions are determined by his faculty of reason and his sentiment of self-love, rather than by imagination and altruism. According to Locke, reason and self-love combined produce morality, since reason discerns the general principles of ethics, or Natural Law, and self-love leads man to obey these principles. Apparently the differences between life in Blake's Eden and living in a world as conceived by Bacon and Locke are ontological and ethical.

As we have seen, in All Religions are One Blake already insists that a timeless visionary propensity called the

"universal Poetic Genius exists . . . which is every where call'd the Spirit of Prophecy."⁵⁷ In The Four Zoas this conception of the "true Man," who is the unifying spiritual human form, as a metaphysical and as a temporal origin, finds its symbolic embodiment in the Universal Man, Albion. He is the anthropomorphic androgynous aggregate of human life before the Fall. In Eternity he incorporates the creative spiritual power of Urthona/Los who paradoxically, in large sections of the poem represents the fallen Man more authentically than any of the remaining three faculties or Zoas. Urthona, who invests Eden with his living creations or "Emanations," is the Eternal archetype of those "ancient Poets" mentioned in The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, and indeed of every artist who later in A Descriptive Catalogue is said to be "an inhabitant of that happy country," Urthona's visionary domain Eden. The Four Zoas, in contrast, records its temporary loss and gradual recovery by Los.

Whatever happens to the Universal Man also affects his parts, and vice versa. Thus, when "the manhood" is divided against himself, as retrospectively reported by the Spectre of Urthona in Night VII(a) (84:13), each of his four members, or Zoas, suffers the same fate. However, unlike Urizen and Luvah, Urthona is not consciously instrumental in the Man's Fall. Nevertheless he is fatally affected by the strife between Urizen and Luvah, which is one

dramatised version of the Man's self-division.⁵⁸ Urthona's own Fall is yet another complementary aspect of this cosmic tragedy.

He dropd his hammer. dividing from his aking bosom
fled
A portion of his life shrieking upon the wind she fled
And Tharmas took her in pitying Then Enion in jealous
fear
Murderd her & hid her in her bosom embalming her for
fear
She should arise again to life Embalmd in Enions
bosom
Enitharmon remains a corse such thing was never known
In Eden that one died a death never to be revivd
Urthona stood in terror (22:20-27).

Unable to continue his creative work, Urthona is separated from Enitharmon, the integral female portion of his life in Eden. Edenic harmony and happiness have thus come to an end for them, though not necessarily for the enigmatic Sons of Eden.

Originally the multiple manifestations of life in Eden were governed by the universal principle of love, and the cycle was the form and emblem of this unifying and motivating power. Once the cycle of the Eternal ritual of love is broken, separation and alienation prevail. The ensuing changes affect the protagonists both individually and in their mutual relationships. Universal selfless love gives way to possessiveness, jealousy, hatred or, less extremely, to pity. Sexual, moral and perceptual dualism replaces the former spiritual identity between subject and object,

male and female, the observer and the observed. Indeed, duality is the central motif associated with the Fall. It affects many of the poem's patterns of action, much of its imagery and even its complex narrative structure.

Tharmas' pity for the desolate Enitharmon provokes Enion's jealous fear. Mistrust between the sexes leads to secrecy. The former lovers enter a new phase of consciousness, which is tantamount to their acquiring a novel mode of being. This ontological phenomenon is visualised in spatial terms as a geographical change in the protagonists' respective places of residence, and as a descent to their new level of existence. Enitharmon, in her identity as Urthona's "garden of delight," vanishes. "Murdered" by the jealous Enion she is hidden, for the time being, in the dark depths of Enion's primordial cosmic "bosom" of suspicion and emotional confusion. By becoming an individual separate from Urthona/Los, Enitharmon has not only acquired an independent will, but she has also forfeited the certainty afforded by the purposeful complementary succession of waking and sleeping in harmony with the seasonal cycle, of life in and for Urthona, and death from self. By Eternal standards her newly-found self-centred isolation constitutes 'death.' It signifies the breaking up of the altruistic union of the male and the female, the alienation of the poetic spirit from his medium of inspiration, and even the partial loss of the visionary

propensity. Eden now pertains to an unattainable past. In relation with Enitharmon's concealment in the dark chaotic depths of Enion's cosmic bosom of uncertainty, Eden is literally situated in a higher region or on a higher plane, thus signifying a superior level of consciousness and exalted form of being.

In Eden Urthona is the embodiment of the unrestrained creative impulse. Deserted by both his sons and the female "portion of his life," who is his medium and embodiment of vision, his former personality or rather his spiritual being, disintegrates.

his spectre fled
To Enion & his body fell. Tharmas beheld him fall
Endlong a raging serpent rolling round the holy tent
The sons of war astonished at the Glittring monster
drove
Him far into the world of Tharmas into a cavern'd rock
(22:27-31).⁵⁹

The "spectre" joins Enion in her world of despair over the loss of her Eternal happiness. Reborn as Los and Enitharmon, it will invest Enion's life in the abyss with the moderate feeling of hope afforded by the world of physical generation.

The falling "body" of Urthona assumes the ambiguous appearance of a "raging serpent." This transformation from a spiritual entity into the archetypal symbol of sexuality,

materialism, and regeneration is reminiscent of Europe, where it is said that "Thought chang'd the infinite to a serpent" (10:16). There is also a tenuous association with the constellation 'Serpens' or 'Dragon.'⁶⁰ Our previous discussions of the binding of the "eternal mind" in Urizen, of Los's fall in The Book of Los, and of various illuminations can be of help in revealing some of the complex and ambiguous implications of this event.

The serpent body forms coils round the "holy tent," also described as "the wing like tent of the Universe" (74:3), where the Man sleeps. These coils merely imitate the form of the ideal cycles in Eden. Outside Eden cyclic revolutions indicate finitude. Encircling "the holy tent," the serpent "body" becomes an "image of infinite / Shut up in finite revolutions," petrifying the Man's senses "against the infinite."⁶¹ The serpent may be considered as a vision of fear moving "geometrically downward in a vortex that tapers to nothing, to no return."⁶² However, by combining regular motion in space with temporal form, the revolving serpent also provides the Man's fallen existence with a measure of stability.

The serpent is also a traditional symbol of self-renewal. Urthona's "body" is said to be falling "endlong" rather than headlong, as one might have expected. This description recalls the illuminations on Plate 5 of America

and on Plate 9 of Europe. Urthona's body, too, incorporates energy and desire, if only in their unfulfilled fallen forms. Nevertheless, one may conjecture that the serpent's head points toward the higher regions from where Urthona originates. To the limited understanding of the dehumanised "sons of war" the remnant of spiritual energy appears only as a threatening monster. They drive it far into Tharmas' chaotic world of physical appearances, where the "body" of Urthona becomes the symbol of temporal process as conceived by 'natural' man.⁶³

4. Tharmas and Enion

Blake adopts the Renaissance view of the world of nature as an organism as opposed to the idea of the world as a mechanism. But Blake does not perceive mere correspondence between the human microcosm, the geocosm and the macrocosm; his symbolism suggests identity between man, his natural environment and the universe. The anthropomorphic universe as perceived by the poet comprises "the analogy between the processes of the natural world as studied by natural scientists and the vicissitudes of human affairs as studied by historians," and satirically reveals their common inadequacies.⁶⁴

In "Eternal times" each of the four Zoas, who in their aggregate compose the Eternal or Universal Man Albion, controls his own quarter of the universe; "the Seat of Urizen is in the South / Urthona in the North Luvah in East Tharmas in West" (74:28-29). These four geographical quarters constitute the whole of the universe in a sense transcending the purely spatial dimensions. Correspondingly, the four Zoas compose the Universal Man in other than a purely physical sense. Their own being and the reality of their environment are explicitly psychological, as Los explains:

in the Brain of Man we live, & in his circling
Nerves.
Tho' this bright world of all our joy is in the Human
Brain.
Where Urizen & all his Hosts hang their immortal lamps
(11:15-17).

The Fall results in a confusion and transformation of the Zoas' originally infinite regions of residence into secluded quasi-Platonic caverns. Generally, the changes wrought by the Fall are presented by a fusion of cosmic, physiological and psychological symbolism, underlined by images suggesting light and darkness:

In the west the Cave of Urizen
For Urizen fell as the Midday sun falls down into the
West
North stood Urthonas stedfast throne a World of Solid
darkness
Shut up in stifling obstruction rooted in dumb despair
The East was Void. (74:15-19)

Like Urthona, "Tharmas Parent power, darkning in the West" (4:6) is a victim of the conflict primarily involving Urizen and Luvah, which will be discussed in a later chapter. The "Mighty Father" (15:12) and mild shepherd becomes the "rough demon of the waters" (48:14) when his physical and psychological living conditions change. Together with his emanation Enion he once constituted the androgynous body and energetic form of the Universal Man.⁶⁵ Their unified being transcended the dualistic conceptions which characterise the fallen world. Associated with the tongue, Tharmas embodies the Man's communicative faculty which degenerates into disorganised sensual perceptions of an apparently chaotic phenomenal world, and into frustrated desire.⁶⁶ In this context, Bloom suggests that "as parent power, Tharmas embodied human potential, the capacity to transform desire into actuality;" and Enion, the earth mother, is "the total form or image of that capacity."⁶⁷ The specific effects of the Fall on Tharmas and Enion are related in anatomical and in psychological terms. "Dashed in pieces from his precipitant fall" (44:20)--a fate incidentally to be shared by Enion (45:3-4)--Tharmas has become an indefinite "shadow of smoke" (44:14) who unsuccessfully struggles "to utter the voice of Man . . . to take the features of Man. . . . / To take the limbs of Man" (44:18-19). In despair he laments his fate:

Fury in my limbs. destruction in my bones & marrow
My skull riven into filaments. my eyes into sea jellies
Floating upon the tide wander bubbling & bubbling
Uttering my lamentations & begetting little monsters
(44:23-26).

Identified with repulsive self-generating sea organisms, the embodiment of Man's communicative powers in Eternity has become the voice of death. Apparently Tharmas, whose all-inclusiveness Percival relates to "the tenth sephira of the 'Kabbalah,' in which all the others are united," has lost control over the minute particulars of life, which, in their totality, compose the body of the Universal Man.⁶⁸ While in Night VIII Enion imparts her painfully acquired knowledge that "Man looks out in tree & herb & fish & bird & beast" (110/First:6), Tharmas, at this point in the poem, is merely capable of observing his own physical and emotional disintegration into a world teeming with dissociated, hostile births. Henceforth, the post-diluvian world perceived by man's fallen senses, the apparently chaotic world of time and space, will be Tharmas' domain.

In our discussion of The Song of Los the fate suffered by the biblical patriarchs was identified with specific phases through which the human consciousness passes. In The Four Zoas Blake creates new mythopoeic paradigms for the same phenomenon. The visible transformation of Tharmas' once pleasantly ordered world into depressing confusion is

correlative with his change of personality. The elemental uproar reflects his regression to the level of a perturbed oceanic consciousness which no longer perceives unity in diversity, but merely duality and sexual division in incoherent multiplicity.⁶⁹

The loving intimacy which determines the relationship between the Zoas and their emanations in Eden has given way to jealous tension between the assertive male and the wilful female portions. Both are equally at fault. Regretfully, Tharmas refers to Enion as

a portion of my Life
That in Eternal fields in comfort wanderd with my
flocks
At noon & laid her head upon my wearied bosom at
night
She is divided (51:20-23).

His "sweetest bliss" in Eden has turned elusive and "cunning" (45:1-2) and Tharmas protests that he is falling victim to her delusive charms:

thou art thyself a root growing in hell
Tho thus heavenly beautiful to draw me to destruction
(4:39-40).

Enion, on her part, jealously resents the fact that Tharmas offers shelter to other emanations whose total spiritual form is Jerusalem, from their fallen male counterparts.⁷⁰ For better or worse, they hide in his world of elemental

and emotional confusion. It is uncertain whether they can survive in that form when

All Love is lost Terror succeeds & Hatred instead
of Love
And stern demands of Right & Duty instead of Liberty.
(4:18-19)

Enion is terrified by Tharmas' transformation as he once was to her "the loveliest son of heaven" (4:20). Like Thel, she is afraid of becoming extinct and of becoming a mere

Shadow in Oblivion
Unless some way can be found that I may look upon
thee & live
Hide me some Shadowy semblance. secret whispering
in my Ear
In secret of soft wings. in mazes of delusive beauty
(4:22-25).

Tharmas, in turn, implores Enion not to act the part of the jealous and inquisitive female, an attitude quite contrary to their loving intimacy in Eden.

Why wilt thou Examine every little Fibre of my soul
Spreading them out before the Sun like Stalks of
flax to dry (4:29-30).

Conscious that the Edenic ritual of love is about to be perverted, Tharmas denounces Enion's misguided effort at analysing his spiritual anatomy. He stresses the unpremeditated and unreflected immediacy of innocence and the intensely private nature of spontaneous happiness.

The infant joy is beautiful but its anatomy
Horrible Ghast & Deadly nought shalt thou find in it
But Death Despair & Everlasting brooding Melancholy

Thou wilt go mad with horror if thou dost Examine thus
Every moment of my secret hours (4:31-35).

The female's jealous inquisitiveness is implicitly correlated with the methods of scientific analysis and enquiry into the origins of material existence. Inevitably a distinction is established between the non-comprehending subject and the elusive object of enquiry.

Tharmas now conceives of his own past activities in terms of moral dualism. He admits that he has sinned and that his "Emanations are become harlots" (4:36). Because of his self-doubt, he fails to assimilate isolated natural phenomena to the total vision of his elusive emanation. He no longer acts as the organising principle or "Parent power." Nevertheless, though alienated from his complementary female portion, he still identifies the changing appearances and generative powers pervading nature with Enion's elusive personality. However, his expectation of her spontaneous return through a natural epiphany is periodically disappointed:

Sometimes I think thou art a flower expanding
Sometimes I think thou art fruit breaking from its bud
In dreadful dolor & pain (4:41-43).

In his retarded state of consciousness he conceives of the vegetable world as unable to transcend its natural condition. He believes that it is only capable of painful physical generation, related in terms of intense human distress and suffering. Ultimately the fault lies with Tharmas' own imaginative failure to transform the phenomena of the generative world into living spiritual human form, thriving on love and mutual understanding.⁷¹ Tharmas' self-doubt indicates his confusion.

Sometimes I think . . .
. . . I am like an atom
A Nothing left in darkness yet I am an identity
I wish & feel & weep & groan Ah terrible terrible
(4:42-45).

This lament places the extensive identification throughout the poem of elemental turmoil with Tharmas' confused state of mind, in a wider philosophic context. It has been demonstrated in connection with Urizen how Blake refutes the unperceived yet allegedly non-mental reality of Locke's 'idea' of 'substance.' Similarly Blake rejects the allegedly non-mental reality of the atom as the unperceived unit of which matter is compounded, thus refuting the premises of whole schools of philosophical thought ranging from Democritus to Epicurus, Descartes, Bacon, and Newton.⁷² Incidentally, Newton's universe is constituted by atoms and by the void. Associated with Tharmas and Enion, respectively, both speculative philosophic

concepts are satirically transformed into poetic metaphors. Tharmas insists that he is not a fictitious particle, the smallest unit of abstraction and thus the symbolic nucleus of generalisation, but a living being endowed with feelings and desires. He therefore implores Enion to trust her own unpremeditated feelings and perceptions instead of doubting what she sees and assuming that more can be found out by probing analysis.

The relationship between Tharmas and Enion after the Fall, and eventually man's attitude toward nature, is determined by "Doubt which is Self contradiction," as Blake insists in The Gates of Paradise (E265). In their world this is the only certainty.⁷³ Tharmas and Enion become mere shadows of their former being; and Eternal reality fades away to faint memories.

In correspondence with the protagonists' changed personalities the intimate relationship of man's emotional and spiritual life with the natural cycle also changes. Paradisal sympathy between male and female, and between man and nature is replaced by strife. As woman is no longer an integral portion of her lover, he expels her into a hostile environment. Tharmas exclaims angrily:

Dashd down I send thee into distant darkness
Far as my strength can hurl thee wander there &
 laugh & play
Among the frozen arrows they will tear thy tender
 flesh
Fall off afar from Tharmas come not too near my strong
 fury
Scream & fall off & laugh at Tharmas lovely summer
 beauty
Till winter rends thee into Shivers as thou hast
 rended me (45:3-8).

Seasonal changes are now viewed with deep pessimism. Both summer and winter have equally adverse effects on human life. They correspond with specific mental attitudes which determine the relationship between male and female. "Summer beauty" is transitory, deceitful and seductive; and "winter" signifies the nadir of human relationships, the time of separation, of revenge and common suffering.

The momentous realisation that they no longer constitute an "undivided essence" overwhelms Tharmas and Enion like a deluge. Although Urizen and Luvah are primarily responsible for this catastrophe, Tharmas and Enion suffer the same kind of fall as for instance Urizen and Ahania.

A crash ran thro the immense The bounds of Destiny
 were broken
The bounds of Destiny crashd direful & the swelling
 Sea
Burst from its bonds in whirlpools fierce roaring
 with Human voice (43:27-29).

Destiny breaks loose like the Polar Serpent in the Ovidian myth. Urthona's fall is one aspect of this cataclysmic

event. As yet undifferentiated in its numerous aspects, Destiny is the inescapable drowning mass of experience, the primeval deluge of man's unmitigated awareness of his existential misery. The absolute lack of vision and hope leads to despair and eventually a death-wish in Tharmas.⁷⁴ The recurrent use of the motif of the flood in different parts of the poem and in connection with different characters suggests that they suffer the same fate. The epic is thus provided with an element of logical, dramatic and structural coherence which is not provided by the chronology of the narrative.

When the primeval flood of Destiny breaks its bounds, a symbolic identification is achieved between the mythic deluge in Genesis and a psychological phenomenon. No distinction is made between the natural macrocosm and the human microcosm. The anarchic forces of cosmic chaos and its psychological equivalent, despair, do not rage entirely unchecked. Like the biblical flood they precede a new order and new rituals. As Urthona's assumption of the serpent body and his circling round the Man's tent indicates, both temporal and spatial form are imposed on the universal confusion. Entelechy, as the activating and sustaining principle and spiritual form of the Eternal ritual of love in Eden has vanished; the 'Circle of Perfection,' the emblem of this ideal reality, is broken. Self-assertion and hatred determine the future relationships amongst "the

Living." Enforced forms of restraint maintain the continuity of life on the lowest possible level of existential expectation.

Cast out by Tharmas, Enion's alienation from her male counterpart is expressed in terms of spatial separation and physical incapacity. "Blind & age bent" like Tiriel, Enion

Plungd into the cold billows living a life in midst
of waters
In terrors she witherd away to Entuthon Benithon
A world of deep darkness where all things in horrors
are rooted (45:11-14).

Spatial remoteness from Eden is associated with spiritual and emotional deprivation. Entuthon Benithon, in particular, is the region in Blake's cosmology of the mind where desires remain unfulfilled, and where there is no hope and no consolation. Although these nightmarish surroundings, "cold waves of despair" (45:15), are dominated by Tharmas he is unable to perceive more than Enion's "Deformd . . . lineaments of ungratified Desire" (48:1). Despite his longing for her, he is so emotionally confused that he drives her away. Enion implores him in vain not to destroy her entirely but to "let / A little shadow. but a little showery form of Enion / Be near [her] loved Terror." (45:17-19) Driven out and pursued by Tharmas, her surviving form is correlated with the water cycle. She is compelled to

wander like a cloud into the deep
Where never yet Existence came, there losing all
my life
I back return weaker & weaker, consume me not away
In thy great wrath. (45:21-24)

Far from being the imaginative form of spiritual and emotional regeneration and replenishment of life in Eden, the water cycle with which Enion compares her existence becomes the finite form of life's gradual exhaustion. She is now in danger of vanishing altogether. Aware that she cannot subsist without her lover and afraid of evanescence, she implores Tharmas

tho I have sinned. tho I have rebelld
Make me not like the things forgotten as they had
not been
Make not the thing that loveth thee. a tear wiped
away (45:24-26).

These words have their symbolic equivalent in Tharmas' futile insistence, previously discussed, that he is not an atom but an identity. Enion's request is equally ineffective as Tharmas' repentance comes too late to save her now. He lost his Eternal identity when merging with the sea, which in this context symbolises both the world of amorphous matter and the confused consciousness on which the conception of such a world is based. Tharmas fails to focus his "watry eyes" (46:3) on Enion's "fading lineaments" (45:28). Being an "Image of faint waters" (45:30), she reflects Tharmas' own loss of vision. Her "piteous face

Evanish/es like a rainy cloud" (45:32). She is "Substanceless. voiceless . . . vanishd. nothing but tears!" (46:2) The elemental forces, "winds & waters of woe," (46:4) storm and thunder are manifestations of Tharmas' consuming rage. No more remains of Enion but "a voice eternal wailing in the Elements" (46:7). Pessimism reaches its climax in Tharmas' final exclamation that "Love and Hope are ended" (46:5). Yet, life does continue in patterns which imitate, and sometimes parody, the ideal forms of life in Eden.

In Eden Females sleep the winter in soft silken veils
Woven by their own hands to hide them in the darksom
grave
But Males immortal live renewd by female deaths.
(5:1-3)

Instead of reviving and being reunited with Tharmas, Enion hides from his searching eyes. She perfidiously dissects her lover's spiritual anatomy and creates from his spiritual being a spectral identity for Tharmas "in her shining loom / Of Vegetation" (6:1-2). Nevertheless, becoming one with the vegetable world saves him from complete dissolution.

In torment he sunk down & flowd among her filmy Woof
His Spectre issuing from his feet in flames of fire
In gnawing pain drawn out by her lovd fingers every nerve
She counted. every vein & lacteal threading them among
Her woof of terror. Terrified & drinking tears of woe
Shuddring she wove--nine days & nights Sleepless her
food was tears
Wondring she saw her woof begin to animate. & not
As Garments woven subservient to her hands but having
a will
Of its own perverse & wayward
(5:14-22).

Enion, unlike the Lord in Genesis, completes her work of weaving the illusions of the external vegetative universe within the symbolic period of nine days and nights.

But on the tenth trembling morn the Circle of Destiny
Complete
Round rolld the Sea Englobing in a watry Globe self
balancd
A Frowning Continent appeard Where Enion in the Desart
Terrified in her own Creation viewing her woven shadow
Sat in a dread intoxication of Repentance & Contrition
(5:24-28).

Enion vindictively weaves on her "loom of Vegetation" the self-willed "filmy Woof" or veil of animated nature which holds Tharmas' Spectre captivated. This phenomenon is elaborated on page 6 of The Four Zoas in extravagant pseudo-alchemical terms. Within Blake's canon of symbolic presentation, it is related with the drawing on page 26 of Bentley's facsimile. Having been drawn from Tharmas in Enion's "shining loom / Of Vegetation," the Spectre

soon in masculine strength augmenting he
Reard up a form of gold & stood upon the glittering
rock
A shadowy human form winged & in his depths
The dazlings as of gems shone clear, rapturous in
fury
Glorying in his own eyes Exalted in terrific Pride
(6:4-8).

The description of Tharmas' Spectre as "A shadowy human form winged" suggests both the fallen yet unrepentant Lucifer in Paradise Lost as well as the winged dragon of primal matter.

When the Spectre possesses Enion--an erotic version of being woven into her net of vegetation--they are transformed into a monster:

Opening his rifted rocks mingling together they join
in burning anguish
Mingling his horrible darkness with her tender limbs
then high she soard
Shrieking above the ocean: a bright wonder that nature
shudderd at
Half Woman & half beast all his darkly waving colours
mix
With her fair crystal clearness in her lips & cheeks
his metals rose
In blushes like the morning & his rocky features
softning
A wonder lovely in the heavens or wandring on the
earth
With female voice warbling upon the hollow vales
Beauty all blushing with desire a self enjoying wonder
For Enion brooded groaning loud the rough seas vegetate.
Till with fierce pain she brought forth on the rocks
her sorrow & woe
Behold two little Infants wept upon the desolate wind.
(7:1-8:2)⁷⁵

This spectral transformation of Tharmas and Enion thematically and symbolically corresponds with Vala's perfidious alliance with Urizen against Luvah who languishes in the furnaces of affliction.⁷⁶ Nanavutty's claim that page 26 "lends itself to alchemical analysis without which it is not fully comprehensible," equally applies to the text on pages 6 and 7. Nanavutty states that the dragon woman on page 26 "is Vala or Nature, the veil which hides the Eternal from Man . . . She is also the 'Materia Prima' of the alchemists."⁷⁷ John Read's alchemical explanations

quoted by Nanavutty, are relevant to the text of pages 6 and 7.

In alchemy, the dragon, or serpent, is often used as a generative or sexual symbol. Sometimes male and female serpents or dragons are pictured as devouring or destroying each other, thereby giving rise to a glorified dragon, typifying the Philosopher's Stone, or transmutation; the same symbol may also denote putrefaction.⁷⁸

In Gnostic thinking matter is wholly evil. In alchemy, matter denotes on the one hand corruption and putrefaction. On the other hand, it is the symbol of nature, and the cycle of death and regeneration is its corollary. Its symbol is the serpent 'Ouroboros' with its tail in its mouth. With regard to the numerous transformations undergone by the characters associated with the natural world in The Four Zoas, it is noteworthy that the poet and the alchemist should have similar objectives: the "imagined reversible transformation of matter which it was held that the alchemist should strive to imitate."

Nature herself becomes the alembic of "fair crystal clearness" in which all the complex richness of life is generated, though the Spectre, embodying the cruel and vindictive side of the physical universe, poisons all.⁷⁹

Intriguingly, Blake's dragon woman in the drawing on page 26 is giving birth to a child. This may refer to the text where Enion gives birth to Los and Enitharmon. It certainly

is in keeping with alchemical theory where such a birth may signify both the birth of the Philosopher's Stone, or merely the self-engenderings of nature. Enion may be identified with the maternal regenerative and therefore positive aspect of nature. The negative, that is seductive and poisonous aspect, is to be identified with Vala. She is an illusion, "a veil drawn over the face of the Spirit."⁸⁰ Or, in Damon's words: "the generative instinct [Enion] thought to hide her sins under a 'veil' of modesty; but in doing so she only uncovers the sins of the Body."⁸¹ At the same time, however, Los and Enitharmon, the controlling agents of time and space, are born. They have a different vision of reality from the one commanded by their parents.

One conception of nature creates or generates another. Enion's Spectre is her own woven shadow. She contemplates as in a mirror the objectified reflection of her consciousness which corresponds with her conception of natural life. This essentially psychological phenomenon is rendered visible in the text. Enion is "Terrified in her own Creation viewing her woven shadow." The spectral woman, on the other hand, is "Beauty all blushing with desire a self enjoying wonder." This phenomenon of self-reflection or projection is illustrated by the drawing on page 26 where the narcissistic "winged dragon . . . holds out a pair of delicate, fan-shaped, webbed hands before her face as if admiring her winsome features in a mirror. Her arms

are braided . . . with 'cords of twisted self-conceit.'⁸²
Her behaviour is similar to that of Urizen who once again will be shown to mirror himself in his own creation which is no more than a reflection of his consciousness. His woven net of religion is as much a piece of introspective self-projection limiting his own spiritual scope and that of others, as Enion's woof of nature.

In discussing Urizen we identified the image of the globe with material spheres whose gravitation ensures the relative stability of the Newtonian universe. We also described the globe as a most effective symbol of empirical methods of contemplating the universe, and of specific conceptions of the world as manifest for instance in Newtonian cosmology; and, indeed of the observer's state of consciousness. In the present context the scope of reference of the image is considerably broadened. A "watry globe" emerges from an apparently boundless cosmic sea, a "Frowning Continent" with Enion languishing in the barrenness of a "desart." Enitharmon's 'creative' effort which is, like Urizen's, an essentially reductive activity, is thus related by a remarkable fusion of cosmogonic, perceptual and psychological terms. Even the topography of the material geocosm or macrocosm negatively reflects the dualistic principles which will henceforth affect human

relationships. The surface of the globe is divided between the contending forces of barren land or desert which is Enion's habitat, and the volatile sea which is Tharnas' domain.⁸³ Their primeval elemental confrontation metaphorically captures the archetypal struggle of the sexes. In keeping with Blake's method of visualisation, previously explored in Urizen, this globe is the objective material projection into spatial form of the fallen Man's newly acquired state of consciousness. It is the objective centre of an as yet amorphous universe, and the stage on which the epic drama will be enacted. It is also a basis from which attempts at improving the human condition will be made. The ambiguous temporal form of these efforts is symbolised by the "Circle of Destiny."

The transition from infinite spiritual freedom to limitation in space and physical generation, a modified version of which has already been encountered in Urizen, is summarised on the frontispiece of Jerusalem:

There is a Void, outside of Existence, which if
 enterd into
Englobes itself & becomes a Womb, such was Albions
 Couch
A pleasant Shadow of Repose calld Albions lovely Land

His Sublime & Pathos become Two Rocks fixd in the
 Earth
His Reason, his Spectrous Power, covers them above
 (1:1-5).

In Urizen, The Four Zoas and Jerusalem Blake depicts in spatial terms the transition from a higher to an inferior state of consciousness. Ontological issues are expressed in cosmological, geographical, physiological and perceptual terms. "Existence," here presented in a quasi-spatial manner, signifies life in Eternity, the "reality of the ideal." The "void," which is as much an illusion as Newton's conception of the atom, is the negation of Eternity. Both are described as existing simultaneously, as discrete regions in space. Significantly the "Void, outside of Existence" is unformed and, indeed, non-existent until entered. When the human mind no longer 'contains' the universe, it is 'englobed' by the projected illusion of an external reality, limited within the dimensions of time and space. The cataclysmic character of this cosmic event which affects all four Zoas is anticipated in Urizen and especially the cancelled Plate b of America.

In that dread night when Urizen call'd the stars
 round his feet;
Then burst the center from its orb, and found a
 place beneath;
And Earth conglob'd, in narrow room, roll'd round
 its sulphur Sun.⁸⁴

The "Circle of Destiny" is a somewhat obscure imaginative concept, explicitly mentioned only in Night I of The Four Zoas. If the globe is the material projection into spatial form of Enion's newly acquired consciousness, the "Circle of Destiny" correspondingly symbolises a determinist conception of the succession of events in time. This "Circle" replaces the entelechic cycle of harmony prevailing in Eden, and therefore the ancient 'Circle of Perfection.' Harper believes that Blake's meaning can be unravelled with the aid of the Neo-Platonic metaphysics of time which were being popularised by Thomas Taylor toward the end of the eighteenth century and early in the nineteenth century. Harper suggests that Blake's "Circle of Destiny" was inspired by Taylor's "circle of generation," as both phrases apparently "express an almost identical concept."⁸⁵ Furthermore, Harper attributes numerological significance to Enion's completion of the "Circle of Destiny" in ten days, and associates it with Proclus' description of "the decad as 'the number of the world'" and with the ancient philosopher's declaration "that it was 'connote with the demiurgic cause.'⁸⁶

Woven by Enion, the "Circle of Destiny" imposes a degree of order on the anarchic forces released by Man's fall. And Tharmas, rather less self-confident than Urizen in the frontispiece of Europe,

bending from his Clouds he stooped his innocent
head
And stretching out his holy hand in the vast Deep
sublime
Turn'd round the circle of Destiny with tears & bitter
sighs
And said. Return O Wanderer when the Day of Clouds
is oer (5:9-12).

Having "sunk down into the sea" (5:13) of time and space, of emotional and spiritual uncertainty, Tharmas sets the "Circle" in motion and maintains its momentum throughout the poem by his continuous attempts at recovering Enion on his seemingly unending quest. The "Circle of Destiny" thus symbolically encompasses the antinomies of love and hatred, doubt and repentance, attraction and repulsion which henceforth will define the relationship between Tharmas and Enion. The "Circle" also symbolises continuity through repetition in the world of time and space, dominated by Los and Enitharmon. It is the ambivalent form underlying the processes of 'natural' life both on the organic and the intellectual levels. Life within the "Circle" offers cause for despair and for hope.⁸⁷

For "Enion blind & age-bent" (17:1), the "Days & Nights of revolving joy" in Eden are past. She is seen lamenting this loss

At distance Far in Night repell'd. in direful hunger
craving
Summers & Winters round revolving in the frightful
deep. (16:21-22)

Seasonal recurrence in the fallen natural world of which she is the maternal agent, is now exclusively conceived in terms of self-perpetuating suffering. For instance, defenceless birds who once in innocent "thoughtless joy / Gave songs of gratitude to waving corn fields round their nest" (17:6-7), now suffer hardship in "the snowy waste" (17:5). The procreative instincts of lion and wolf, associated with the fertility of summer, are perverted.

Deluded by summers heat they sport in enormous love
And cast their young out to the hungry wilds &
sandy deserts (17:9-10).

Doomed to a life of deprivation, procreation and finally to death, they contribute toward maintaining the "Circle's" relentless motion. Although Enion's questions remain unanswered they accurately describe the natural condition of the world and its organising patterns after the Fall. The need for self-preservation compels the spider to kill the fly, and the bird to kill the spider. (18:4-7) For the same reason man has to slaughter the sheep. (18:1-3) Animal preys on animal, and man preys on both animal and man. Unable to perceive what constructive purpose this cruel ritual might serve, Enion laments

round the golden Feast
Eternity ground and was troubled at the image of
Eternal Death
Without the body of Man an Exudation from his
sickning limbs (18:8-10).

Although purely natural modes and patterns of living are a poor reflection of Man's "Eternal Individuality" (18:14), the "Circle of Destiny" is not an entirely negative phenomenon, but has to be associated with the protective intervention by "the Eternal Saviour" (18:13).

In Urizen there is no indication of the existence of a transcendent Deity, nor of any source of inspiration uninvolved in the epic conflict. The leading protagonists and the Eternals appear to be acting entirely on their own behalf. However, in The Four Zoas there is an unfallen Divine power at work, superior to the fallen faculties of the human mind and its impaired perceptions of the world. The Lamb of God mercifully creates the conception of the natural world as a benevolent environment and resting place from Eternity. It is

Namd Beulah a Soft Moony Universe feminine lovely
Pure mild & Gentle given in Mercy to those who sleep
Eternally. Created by the Lamb of God around
On all sides within & without the Universal Man
The Daughters of Beulah follow sleepers in all their
Dreams
Creating Spaces lest they fall into Eternal Death
The Circle of Destiny complete they gave to it a
Space
And namd the Space Ulro & brooded over it in care
& love (5:30-37).

This passage probably had no equivalent in the earlier erased stratum of the text on page 5. It qualifies the actions of Tharmas and Enion in the light of the dramatic developments taking place especially in Night IX.⁸⁸ The Daughters of Beulah are benevolent natural agents of Divine Providence. They retain their faith in a world given over to the chaos of the senses and emotions, or otherwise ruled by cold rationality or superstition. The Daughters of Beulah create the ambiguous mental "Space" of Ulro. Like Eden and Beulah, Ulro is at once a psychological, ontological and ethical concept. In the context of the poem's imaginative cosmology of the human mind, Ulro is a real, if indefinite, space and a specific place. To identify it with "this material world," is to oversimplify the complexity of Blake's symbolism.⁸⁹ The "Space" of Ulro corresponds with Urizen's world in Urizen, both being described as a "void" and a "vacuum." In Urizen, for example, the demiurge withdraws into "self," "an ocean of voidness unfathomable," where he contemplates his desires as in a mirror. The hermaphroditic monster composed of the Spectres of Tharmas and Enion is just such a "self-contemplating shadow." Elsewhere in The Four Zoas Ulro is called "the dread Sleep" (113/First:16). Hatred and war are "the unreal forms of Ulros night" (28:2). The dreams of Ulro are "dark delusive," and the human victims are drawn into Ulro "by the lovely shadow" (85:21) of Vala.

Despite all its negative features, the "Space" Ulro is a providential illusion, woven by the benevolent Daughters of Beulah to arrest the fall of the human mind and protect it from total disintegration. Ulro is the lowest level of self-awareness to which human consciousness is permitted to fall after having been seduced by the attractive appearances of the natural world. In Ulro, man conceives of his relationship with the natural world and with other human beings in dualistic terms. He sees himself and his environment exposed to the rigours of the generative cycle and to the inscrutable forces of fate. In Ulro man is enslaved by his own fallacies. Although perverse by Eternal standards, this conception of reality can ultimately prove remedial, as the events of Night IX prove.

The "weaving of spatial illusions by the Daughters of Beulah is in accordance with the Blakean psychology," as Percival points out. By weaving man's spiritual body these "feminine powers" also weave the natural body. Yet, while it is true that "form is a matter of intellect," and space is correlative with spiritual limitations, the Daughters of Beulah do not primarily "weave in response to intellectual compulsion," but in faithful response to the Divine will. Percival believes that in this instance Blake is indebted to Swedenborg "who named love as the space maker." Percival also draws attention to Swedenborg's correlation of affection and perception. "To the Angels,

then, there is 'an appearance of space and time in accordance with their state of affection and thought therefrom.'"⁹⁰ No doubt, the Swedenborgian relation of space and time to affection and perception does not only prevail in Beulah but also, though negatively, in Ulro. Although Beulah and Ulro symbolise contrasting conceptions of reality, they are equally valid expressions of Blake's subjective idealism.⁹¹ The creation of the illusory "Space" of Ulro by the Daughters of Beulah exemplifies Blake's definition of creation as "God descending according to the weakness of man."⁹²

Bloom denies "the influence of Swedenborg on Blake's 'spaces'" and claims that "Blake's is an original description of a relation between feelings and outer appearances, very much akin to a phenomenological approach."⁹³ However, if in this context one can speak of a "phenomenological approach" at all, this description must apply to The Four Zoas as a whole. The poem is the imaginative displacement of a phenomenology of the human mind and of its empirical manifestations. At the same time, the poem is more than descriptive psychology poeticised. Indeed, the dramatic movement from the Man's fall to his resurrection first suggests a, certainly unconscious, inversion of, and later analogy with, Kant's metaphysical description of the development of human consciousness.⁹⁴ In The Four Zoas, the Man falls from a state of absolute knowledge, love and happiness to the level of spiritual and emotional turmoil.

In response to Los's inspired artistic activity and with Divine support he reascends from sensual naivety and intensely painful self-consciousness, from religious superstition, 'natural' science, 'natural' philosophy, and 'natural' religion, to an imaginative appreciation of reality and a resurrection of the spirit. The poem thus provides a dramatised analysis of the negative and positive effects of rational thought, memory and irrational prejudice on the Universal Man whose consciousness strives to be reunited with the scattered phenomena that make up his Eternal identity.

Tharmas and Enion are dreamers in Ulro. Only the hope for reunification preserves them from Eternal Death. The ambiguous temporal 'form' of their hope is symbolised by the "Circle of Destiny."⁹⁵ The "Circle of Destiny" as the symbol of a secular fatalistic view of history prevailing in Ulro is transcended by the teleological Christian conception of history, as adopted by Blake in the final Nights of The Four Zoas, and in additions to the early Nights. Its probably late introduction, which does not necessarily indicate a change in Blake's personal outlook, must not distract from the dramatic tension generated by these contrasting views of history.

5. The Fall of Man

In Urizen, living in the flames of inspired energetic activity, with its complementary potential for joy and pain, was described by Urizen as death in life.⁹⁶ He turned his back on Eternity because his selfish desire for unqualified happiness, exclusive of pain, for absolute fixity and uniformity determined his will to deliberate and perverted action. His self-contemplation resulted in the projection of his warped ideal as an objective reality perceived by shrunken senses.

In The Four Zoas, the Universal Man's Fall is presented on typologically analogous lines. However, emphasis is now placed on the ethical and metaphysical as well as the psychological and epistemological aspects of this universal catastrophe. Eternal life thrives on love and voluntary self-sacrifice; and imaginative perception is contingent upon a Divine source of inspiration.⁹⁷ When the Man is "Rent from Eternal Brotherhood" (41:9) he paradoxically turns "his Eyes outward to Self. losing the Divine Vision" (23:2). He withdraws into self-containment, and his body is submerged in Tharmas' watery chaos of dissociated phenomena, diffuse physical sensations and frustrated desire. His "exteriors are become indefinite open to pain / In a fierce hungry void." (22:40-41) The symbolism of these lines suggests the disintegration of Man's physical and

spiritual being and Man's alienation from his spiritual creations which have now become data of experience on which he continues to depend. His spiritual disintegration, which is an ethical and a social, as well as a psychological phenomenon, is placed within a wider metaphysical framework by also being couched in biblical symbolism. "Jerusalem his Emanation is become a ruin / Her little ones are slain on the top of every street / And she herself le(d) captive & scatterd into the indefinite" (19:1-3).⁹⁸ Man's Fall results in a dualistic conception of reality and of morals. This dualism comes into being when Man turns away "from a state of being in which a distinction between the two does not exist."⁹⁹ As he turns "outward to Self," the two discrete yet contingent aspects of fallen reality are born: a world founded on egotistic introspection and an external world which is the natural and historical environment for fallen mankind.

There are a number of complementary scenes in The Four Zoas depicting the phenomenon of the Fall as it simultaneously affects the Universal Man and his faculties. The distinction between the Man and the Zoas who act as independent protagonists throughout the poem, is, of course, a dramatic device. Whatever they do--or fail to do--affects the Man, and vice versa. The Universal Man abandons the loving unity with all his faculties first in favour of Luvah and Vala, then in favour of Urizen. His exclusive

reliance on his affective faculty, later on his rational faculty, signifies the submission of his consciousness to the tyranny first of the one, then the other. Conversely, the Man's dreams or visions and his sufferings reflect the pain his individual faculties inflict upon each other through their respective activities.

In Night VII(a) the Shadow of Enitharmon and the Spectre of Urthona retrospectively relate the ultimate cause of Man's Fall--his turning "outward to Self." According to their version he was seduced by Luvah's emanation Vala who embodies the veil of nature. Taking a rest from the activities of Eden,

Among the Flowers of Beulah walkd the Eternal Man &
Saw
Vala the lilly of the desart. melting in high noon
Upon her bosom in sweet bliss he fainted
(83:7-9).¹⁰⁰

As a result of Man's revelling

in delight among the Flowers
Vala was pregnant & brought forth Urizen Prince of
Light
First born of Generation. Then behold a wonder to the
Eyes
Of the now fallen Man a double form Vala appeared.
A Male
And female shuddring pale the Fallen Man recoild
From the Enormity & calld them Luvah & Vala. turning
down
The vales to find his way back into Heaven but found
none
For his frail eyes were faded & his ears heavy & dull
(83:11-18).

According to the Shadow's report, as a result of his being seduced by Vala Man falls into the confinement of natural existence. The union between the Man and Vala produces the hermaphroditic monstrosity of spectral nature which has already been encountered in connection with Tharmas and Enion. Surprisingly Vala gives birth to Urizen. Although this event is nowhere else elaborated in the poem, it is not necessarily inconsistent with the 'logic' of the story as a whole. The Shadow of Enitharmon accounts for Urizen's change of personality in terms of natural generation, the only mode of change with which she is familiar. Unlike Urthona/Los, Urizen retains his Eternal name. He grows up in the peaceful surroundings of Beulah, ignorant "Of sweet Eternity," and he conspires with Luvah "in darksom night / To bind the father & enslave the brethren" (83:23-24). Beulah is said to have fallen as a result of their conspiracy.¹⁰¹ At the same time Los and Enitharmon were born from Enion, finding themselves

enslav'd to vegetative forms
According to the Will of Luvah who assum'd the Place
Of the Eternal Man & smote him. (83:30-32)

The Spectre of Urthona qualifies this report. He places the blame on the Man's inability to control his passions which subsequently enslave him:

The manhood was divided for the gentle passions
making way
Thro the infinite labyrinths of the heart & thro
the nostrils issuing
In odorous stupefaction stood before the Eyes of
Man
A female bright. (84:13-16)

In Enitharmon's "Song of Death" which is also "a Song of
Vala," the Man is referred to as already fallen when he
takes his repose.¹⁰²

Urizen sleeps in the porch
Luvah and Vala woke & flew up from the Human Heart
Into the Brain; from thence upon the pillow Vala
slumber'd. (10:10-12)

Ahania's report seems to establish simultaneity between
Urizen's abandoning his Eternal duty in the brain, and
the Man's Fall: When Urizen, the "Prince of Light"
"slept in the porch . . . the Ancient Man was smitten"
(39:14) by Luvah, the "prince of Love" (12:14), also
identified as "that Son of Man, that shadowy Spirit of
the Fallen One" (41:2). Because the intellect is neglect-
ing his controlling function, the Man is seduced by the
objectified projection of his desires:

And Vala walkd with him in dreams of soft deluding
slumber
He looked up and saw thee Prince of Light thy splendor
faded
. . .
Above him rose a Shadow from his wearied intellect
Of living gold, pure, perfect, holy; . . .
A sweet entrancing self delusion, a watry vision of Man
Soft exulting in existence all the Man absorbing
Man fell upon his face prostrate before the watry
shadow (39:16-40:7).

This "watry vision" or "Shadow" of Man, which takes the place of the "Divine Vision," is the hermaphroditic apparition of Vala and Luvah, once "Spirits of Pity & Love" (42:6); later to be identified with Satan.

In Night IX an apparently later version of the Fall is elaborated. It stresses its ethical and ontological implications. Self-centred Man curtails his spiritual powers and descends into the sleep of nature:

Man is a Worm wearied with joy he seeks the caves of
sleep
Among the Flowers of Beulah in his Selfish cold repose
Forsaking Brotherhood & Universal love in selfish clay
Folding the pure wings of his mind seeking the places
dark
Abstracted from the roots of Science then inclosed
around (133:11-15).

Though differing in detail all these accounts complement each other. They suggest that the Man's Fall has a psychological cause--presented in terms of perceptual dualism--and results in a universal dissociation of reason and affection, or of thought and feeling, to use the well-worn phrase. Striving "to gain dominion over the mighty Albion" (41:13), Luvah temporarily usurps Urizen's function of directing the Man's will to act. As a result he is tormented by "Love & Jealousy."

Paley points out that "the conceit of the mind as a council or kingdom whose proper order may be subverted by

an alliance between the senses and the emotions is frequently encountered in Renaissance and seventeenth-century literature."¹⁰³ In Paradise Lost for example the effects of the Fall on Adam and Eve are described in terms suggesting that the hierarchy of the psyche has been disturbed.

They sat them down to weep, nor only tears
Rained at their eyes, but high winds worse within
Began to rise, high passions, anger, hate,
Mistrust, suspicion, discord, and shook sore
Their inward state of mind, calm region once
And full of peace, now tossed and turbulent:
For understanding ruled not, and the will
Heard not her lore, both in subjection now
To sensual appetite, who from beneath
Usurping over sovereign reason claimed
Superior sway.¹⁰⁴

The hierarchy of the psyche is disrupted by irrational passion. "The emotions and the senses rebel against reason, inflame the imagination, and seize control of the will."¹⁰⁵

The passages quoted from The Four Zoas incorporate elements of Renaissance faculty psychology. However, faculty psychology is not "the vehicle of the myth," nor is "the genre of the poem . . . a 'psychomachia,'" as Paley believes.¹⁰⁶ Blake's 'myth' is broader than either of these categories and incorporates elements of both. For instance, Paley explains that both Spenser and Blake "use the conventions of the 'psychomachia' to define the mind's division against itself. Where Blake goes beyond

Spenser is in making the poem more of a projection of the mind's processes and less of a moralized allegory."¹⁰⁷ In Urizen's conspiracy with Luvah, Erdman sees a reminder "that the whole drama of history is taking place inside man's skull. Here the British Isles are the head, continental Europe the body."¹⁰⁸

Man is the victim of his own possessive "Love [seeking] for dominion" (41:12). Luvah is the irrational agent of the Man's desire, and Vala the object of his "entrancing self delusion" (40:5). Man proceeds to worship the hermaphroditic projection or "watry vision" of his own phantasies. Frosch summarises this failure: "Through this act of self-abasement before a part of himself, Albion sets the precedent for all social conventions--religious, political, and moral--in which primacy is centralized in a figure, or figurehead, which is non-human and abstract but greater than man."¹⁰⁹ The Man's imaginative and intellectual scope is being limited as he idolises a portion of himself. He mistakenly assumes that his own existence and happiness depend on the benevolence of his idol. In the previous chapters, attention has been drawn to the deification of "Mental forms."¹¹⁰ as discussed by Blake in The Marriage of Heaven and Hell and in his Annotations to Watson. The present account employs, in the guise of dramatic action, the identical principle of projection which is both a psychological and a perceptual

phenomenon. The reification of what are truly "Mental forms" in Urizen's world, and the deification of the Man's passions are complementary failures resulting from the Man's self-division and self-deception.¹¹¹

In words reminiscent of Psalm 143:2,7, the Man denigrates himself before his idol to whom he attributes the power of ultimate judgement.

O I am nothing & to nothing must return again
If thou withdraw thy breath, behold I am oblivion
(4-:17-18).

In deluded humility Man believes his existence to be transitory. Although he soon turns "his back on Vala" (41:4), having realised his error, he cannot return to Eternity. Obscure "futuraity" takes the place of the certainty and clarity of "Divine Vision."

I can no longer hide
The dismal vision of mine Eyes, O love & life & light!
Prophetic dreads urge me to speak. futuraity is
before me
Like a dark lamp. Eternal death haunts all my
expectation
Rent from Eternal Brotherhood we die & are no more
(41:5-9).

The Man's pessimistic outlook differs sharply from Enitharmon's triumphant appraisal of the identical vision which he associates with Urizen's descent from Eternity.

The Human Nature shall no more remain nor Human acts
Form the rebellious Spirits of Heaven. but War &
Princedom & Victory & Blood (11:23-24).

Los, too, forsees "the swords & spears of futurity" (11:14).
Urizen will be "God from Eternity to Eternity" (12:23), and
the self-centred materialistic Spectre will be "the Man
[and] the rest [that is the imagination and the emotions]
is only delusion & fancy" (12:29). Once the Man has
expelled Luvah from his presence he can see no alternative
but to rely on Urizen's mode of intellection. It obscures
Man's immediate view of the wholeness of Eternal reality,
and it suggests the continuity of human suffering.

Instead of forgiving them, the Man expels Luvah and
Vala from his presence. He condemns Luvah, and thereby
himself, to "die the Death of Man for Vala the sweet
wanderer" (42:1). This "Death" is tantamount to a life of
frustrated desire and jealousy. Luvah becomes the subject
of such desire, and Vala its elusive object.

I will turn the volutions of your Ears outward;
 & bend your Nostrils
Downward; & your fluxile Eyes englob'd, roll round
 in fear
Your withring Lips & Tongue shrink up into a narrow
 circle
Till into narrow forms you creep. Go take your fiery
 way
And learn what 'tis to absorb the Man you Spirits of
 Pity & Love (42:2-6).

Henceforth Man's affective portion will depend on impressions gleaned from an external world by physical sense organs. His capacity for communication will be impaired, and a lasting fulfilment of his desires will be rendered impossible. Dominated by jealousy, fear and rage, Luvah and Vala have abandoned the emotional centre of the universal body, "the Human Heart where Paradise & its joys abounded" (42:11), for the desert of the natural world. "The vast form of Nature like a Serpent play'd before them" (42:13). Serpentine nature, symbolising matter, mortality and natural regeneration, separates Luvah from Vala.

Vala shrunk in like the dark sea that leaves its
slimy banks
And from her bosom Luvah fell far as the east & west
And the vast form of Nature like a Serpent roll'd
between. (42:15-17) ¹¹²

Luvah falls into the spatially and temporally indefinite "beneath the grave into non Entity / Where [he] strives scorned by Vala age after age wandering" (43:19-20). ¹¹³

6. The World of Urizen

The Man hands over power to Urizen who takes possession of a universe which is the aggregate both of the Man's own vision of "sickning Spheres" (23:3) and of Enion's misery.

Faced with the raving Spectre of Tharmas, Enion consciously experiences the fatal consequences of love "changd to deadly hate." In a deleted passage she identifies her emotional suffering and Tharmas' confused state of mind with the phenomenal world.

I see the (remembrance) Shadow of the dead within my
 (eyes) Soul wandering
In darkness & solitude forming Seas of (Trouble)
 Doubt & rocks of . . . Repentance
Already are my Eyes reverted. all that I behold
Within my Soul has lost its splendor & a brooding
 Fear
Shadows me oer & drives me outward to a world of woe
So waild she trembling before her own Created
 Phantasm (E740-741).

From his exalted station "in the Human Brain" the terrified Urizen "beheld the body of Man pale, cold, the horrors of death / Beneath his feet shot thro' him" (23:11-12). Standing on "the verge of Non Existence" (24:4), with "the draught of Voidness [threatening] to draw Existence in" (24:1), Urizen faces the indefinite projections of the Man's fallen consciousness. Enion inhabits this "Abyss" of seemingly unlimited spatial expansion and temporal duration ("futurity," 23:15), which is invested with the dangerously attractive properties of Newtonian space. Luvah describes this projection of mental confusion as "our Primeval Chaos . . . of Love & Hate" where Urizen himself "who was Faith & Certainty is changd to Doubt" (27:12-15). As any kind of uncertainty is anathema to Urizen, he proceeds to impose his personal notion of order

on the universal confusion. His 'creation' of an orderly universe is syncretised with the cosmogonies in Genesis, Paradise Lost, Timaeus, and Ovid's Metamorphoses. In a manner reminiscent of the Creator in Genesis and especially in Paradise Lost, Blake's "great Work master" commands the bands of Heaven to "Divide . . . influence by influence" (24:5-6). He has decreed to

Build . . . a Bower for heavens darling in the grizzly
deep
. . . the Mundane Shell around the Rock of Albion
(24:7-8).

In order to prevent any unpredictable changes that might cause Urizen's downfall, he suppresses and renders subservient to his own schemes the Man's passionate energies.

Luvah was cast into the Furnaces of affliction &
sealed
And Vala fed in cruel delight, the furnaces with
fire
Stern Urizen beheld urg'd by necessity to keep
The evil day afar, & if perchance with iron power
He might avert his own despair; (25:40-44).

Paradoxically, Urizen's activities are both repressive and constructive. They are said to have been prompted by "necessity," an obscure concept detested by Blake. In the present context, this enigmatic force is more than a mechanical necessity. Rather, it is reminiscent of Plato's

"ananké" that which had to be, what "the Craftsman had forced upon him."¹¹⁴ Plato's Demiurge, who is pure intelligence, is faced with the hand-forcing fact that matter exists which he, by necessity, casts into geometric shapes. According to Timaeus, "the creation of this world is the combined work of necessity and mind. Mind, the ruling power, persuaded necessity to bring the greater part of created things to perfection; and thus and after this manner in the beginning, through necessity made subject to reason, this universe was created."¹¹⁵

Commenting on Paradise Lost (Book III, 708-715), Fowler observes that "Uriel's excited reminiscence of creation is couched in traditional Christian-Platonic terms. According to this system, creation was not from the void, but from primal matter, whose initial chaos was ordered by the separation out of the four elements in interlocking layers."¹¹⁶ Urizen does not create 'ex nihilo,' either. Indeed, the chaos confronting him is coeval with his own being. It is composed of the Man's fallen faculties or Zoas, who are also associated with the four ancient elements. Urizen follows the urge of "necessity" and shapes this chaos of mind and matter in accordance with his impaired intelligence. He proceeds to order it by means of division, reduction and abstraction. Under his direction, the "Bands of Heaven" prepare the appropriate instruments: anvil, loom, plough and harrow, the warrior's harness and the geometer's

"golden compasses, the quadrant," and the builder's "rule & balance." "They erected the furnaces, they formed the anvils of gold beaten in mills / Where winter beats incessant" (24:9-14). Urizen's lions and leopards, "Sublime distinct their lineaments divine of human beauty" (25:2), tend the anvils and fires. "The tygers of wrath call the horses of instruction from their mangers" (25:3) and prepare them for battle. These animals, subservient to Urizen, are "human forms distinct," men who perversely apply their creative powers in order to petrify "all the Human Imagination into rock & sand" (25:6).

"When Luvah age after age was quite melted with woe" (28:3) in Urizen's furnaces, "the fluid, the molten metal" of imaginative and loving human energy is allowed to solidify "in channels / Cut by the plow of ages held in Urizens strong hand" and perversely dragged by "the Bulls of Luvah" (28:8-10). Then, "the Lions of Urizen . . . forge . . . the bright masses," forming "many a pyramid" (28:25-26). "Thrown down thund'ring into the deeps of Non Entity" (28:27), into the mental limbo conceived as an empty cosmic space, "each his (center) finds; suspended there they stand" (28:29) as stars. The "Sons of Urizen" establish spatial finitude, geometrical order and mechanical balance by measuring "out in orderd spaces" and by dividing "With compasses . . . the deep" (28:31-32). In Eternity, "the strong scales . . . / That Luvah rent from the faint

Heart of the Fallen Man" (28:32-29:1) provided his emotional equilibrium. They are now re-erected as constellations to provide the necessary cosmic balance.¹¹⁷ "The wing like tent of the Universe beautiful surrounding all / Or drawn up or let down at the will of the immortal man" (74:3-4) is in the process of being transformed into an 'objective' universe of remote stars, perceived by shrunken senses.

Based on weight, measure and number, and designed in angular geometric form, the finite world envisaged in the "plan" unfolded by Blake's "Architect divine," reflects the essential structure of Urizen's intelligence.

The wondrous scaffold reard all round the infinite
Quadrangular the building rose the heavens squared by
a line
Trigons & cubes divide the elements in finite bonds
(30:9-11).¹¹⁸

Blake deviates from the Platonic model by conceiving of the structure of the universe as "Quadrangular" and not spherical, as Plato does. Nevertheless, Urizen's "Mundane Shell" resembles the world's body as conceived by Plato in the Timaeus in many other details. It is hardly coincidental that spherical images like "globe" and "orb" should have been replaced by angular ones like "pyramid" and "cube" (28:26; 29:2; 33:4). Geometric images proliferate in the added lines 30:10-11 and in the long added passage 33:19-36.¹¹⁹ Plato, in the Timaeus, describes the world's body or matter,

as being made up of the four 'elements.' The particles of earth, for instance, are cubes. Fire, in its purity, consists of pyramids. Both cubes and pyramids consist of triangles which, therefore, are the ultimate constituents of matter;¹²⁰ and the obvious properties of matter are associated with the shapes of these solids. As in Urizen's world "Trigons & cubes divide the elements in finite bonds," there can be no doubt that Blake in this instance has adopted Plato's imaginative notion of matter as consisting of triangles, assembled into four distinct three-dimensional solids.¹²¹ Spiritual energy is thus transformed into rigid geometric form. Inertia, now, is the essential property of earth, Urthona's animated domain in Eden. The cold and distant light of the stars is all that is left of Luvah's fiery passion.

In correspondence with the regular spatial forms of the Platonic elements, Urizen's "stars of heaven" (33:16) are "numberd . . . / According to their various powers. Subordinate to Urizen / And to his sons in their degrees & to his beauteous daughters," they travel

in silent majesty along their orderd ways
In right lined paths outmeasurd by proportions of
number weight
And measure. mathematic motion wondrous. along the
deep
In fiery pyramid. or Cube. or unornamented pillar
Of fire far shining. travelling along even to its
destind end
Then falling down. a terrible space recovring in
winter dire

Its wasted strength. it back returns upon a nether
course
Till fired with ardour fresh recruited in its humble
season
It rises up on high all summer till its wearied course
Turns into autumn. such the period of many worlds
Others triangular right angled course maintain. others
obtuse
Acute Scalene, in simple paths. but others move
In intricate ways biquadrate. Trapeziums Rhombs
Rhomboids
Parallelograms. triple & quadruple. polygonic
In their amazing hard subdued course in the vast deep
(33:19-36).

Plato complains that, apart from the sun and the moon,

Mankind . . . have not remarked the periods of the
other stars, and they have no name for them, and
do not measure them against one another by the help
of number, and hence they can scarcely be said to
know that their wanderings, being of vast number
and admirable for their variety, make up time.¹²²

Like Plato's Demiurge, Urizen imposes upon the movements
of the stars intricate mathematical orderliness which,
nevertheless, does not amount to anything but cyclic
monotony. Both structure and motion of the universe as
conceived by Urizen conform with the structure of his
intelligence. His simplistic solution of the ancient
problem of the quadrature of the circle, alluded to on
page 30, line 10 ("the heavens squared by a line"), draws
attention to the grave metaphysical implications of his
reductive activities.

On principle Blake shares Plato's idealist stance, while he opposes Bacon's rationalism. However, the pointed exaggeration of geometric features in Urizen's construction of the "Mundane Shell" suggests a parody of Platonic cosmology, physics and metaphysics. Timaeus explains that the living universe created by the Demiurge was "the created image of the eternal gods."¹²³ Eternity was the model, his creation the copy.

Now the nature of the ideal being was everlasting, but to bestow this attribute in its fullness upon a creature was impossible. Wherefore he resolved to have a moving image of eternity, and when he set in order the heaven, he made this image eternal but moving according to number, while eternity itself rests in unity; and this image we call time.¹²⁴

In contrast, Urizen reduces Eternal form which is spiritual and sustained by love, to rational order. Far from being copies of spiritual being which Urizen has rejected, the regular spatial properties of his stars are mere projections of the structure of Urizen's intellect. However, this does not make them less real to Urizen and his sons. In the satiric poetic context Urizen thus acts in accordance with the Platonic doctrine "that rational considerations have effect in determining how things are in the natural world."¹²⁵ The beautiful illusion of Urizen's walled-in universe, his "wondrous work," does indeed "flow forth like visible out of the invisible" (33:10).

Blake's reference to Urizen as "the great Work master" coincides with Bacon's appellation of the Divine creator.¹²⁶ Blake vigorously disagrees with Bacon's rationalist premises to a theory of knowledge. But he draws on Bacon's rejection of Plato's conception of the world as hopelessly idealistic, in order to satirically attack Bacon's own position. Bacon claims

That the spirit of man, being of an equal and uniform substance, doth usually suppose and feign in nature a greater equality and uniformity than is in truth. Hence it cometh, that the mathematicians cannot satisfy themselves except they reduce the motions of the celestial bodies to perfect circles, rejecting spiral lines, and labouring to be discharged of eccentrics. Hence it cometh, that whereas there are many things in nature as it were 'monodica, sui juris;' yet the cogitations of man do feign unto them relatives, parallels, and conjugates, whereas no such thing is; as they have feigned an element of fire, to keep square with earth, water, and air, and the like: nay, it is not credible, till it be opened, what a number of fictions and fancies the similitude of human actions and arts, . . . have brought into natural philosophy . . . For if that great Workmaster had been of a human disposition, he would have cast the stars into some pleasant and beautiful works and orders, like the frets in the roofs of houses; whereas one can scarce find a posture in square, or triangle, or straight line, amongst such an infinite number; so differing a harmony there is between the spirit of man and the spirit of nature.¹²⁷

Blake disagrees with Bacon's conjecture "that the spirit of man, [is] of an equal and uniform substance." This only appears to be the case if Urizen is in supreme charge of the human mind. Blake tacitly agrees with Bacon in as far as Urizen's cogitations do indeed "suppose and feign in nature a greater equality and uniformity than there is in

truth." Rational considerations can, for better or worse, determine the appearances and motions of natural phenomena. However, while Bacon regards "things in nature" as 'monodica, sui juris,' distinct from the human mind and its operations, Blake's subjective idealism does not admit such duality. Nor does he distinguish between Divine and human nature.

Urizen embodies fallen man's flawed conception of the Divine. Observing the operations of the rational faculty in themselves, men conjecture reason to be the prime attribute of the Creator, and the force ordering his creation. Consequently--despite its imaginative details--the "plan" conceived by the "architect divine" merely reveals what is rationally intelligible. It does not provide an efficient and lasting solution to the human dilemma after the Fall. The mysteries of life are reduced to the level of mathematical problems and their rational solutions.

For a period enforced harmony prevails in Urizen's magnificent world between the human intellect and nature, or rather the fallen remnants of Eternal life. Though faced with the empirical facts of moving constellations and with social, political and economic reality, Urizen's victims are hampered by their irrational faith in reason as the supreme authority. They conjecture underlying orderly

mechanisms, operating throughout history, as added passages suggest, with which natural and social phenomena are, rightly or wrongly, supposed to comply.

In an interpolated passage, Blake to some extent decodes the activities associated with the building of Urizen's "Mundane Shell," as it affects the man of vision on the one hand and Urizen's victims on the other. To "the Children of Man" (28:11) who have retained some measure of vision the earth appears infinite. To them earth, water, and air are translucent media of inspiration. They still behave toward their fellow men like "brethren" (28:14) not like beasts. Urizen's victims, however, the political and moral conformists of any age, are blind to the visionary alternatives. The laws of science, deduced from, among other things, the observation of the movements of the stars, are the mills which crush the human imagination into rock and sand.

Despite all its angular splendours, the "Mundane Shell" is a prison of many compartments.

many a window many a door
And many a division let in & out into the vast unknown
(Cubed) in (window square) immoveable, within its walls
& cielings
The heavens were closd and spirits mournd their bondage
night and day
And the Divine Vision appeard in Luvahs robes of blood
(32:10-14).

As the added reference to "the Divine Vision" indicates, this prison of mind and body also serves a protective function. Blake draws on ancient sources when conceiving of "the stars of heaven" as being "created like a golden chain / To bind the Body of Man to heaven from falling into the Abyss" (33:16-17).¹²⁸ The Timaeus associates the movement of the stars with time.

When each of the stars which were necessary to the creation of time had come to its proper orbit, and they had become living creatures having bodies fastened by vital chains, and learnt their appointed task . . . they revolved, some in a larger and some in a lesser orbit. (38e-39a)

However, the metaphysical significance of the Blakean conceit, like the related statement that "Time is the mercy of Eternity,"¹²⁹ cannot satisfactorily be explained "in the light of Neo-Platonic doctrines," as Harper in a more general context claims.¹³⁰ Instead, as the added lines 33:10-15 clearly indicate, Urizen's effort of building the "Mundane Shell" is an achievement, though a constraining one, sanctioned by Divine Providence.

On page 25, Blake has added twenty-eight lines (6-33) to the original text in copperplate hand. They elaborate the complementary effects Urizen's activities have on Luvah, on the "Human Imagination," and on the Man. The cosmic, social and spiritual fabric which constitutes the Man's universal form, disintegrates. He is deserted by

the sun, the moon and the stars, a feature associated with Urizen's rebellion; and "all Peoples and Nations of the Earth / Fled with the noise of Slaughter" (25:11-12). Jerusalem is destroyed.

References to diverse geographical localities, to biblical characters and others from Celtic mythology provide the fictitious events of the poem with supra-temporal relevance. Blake habitually associates "Druid Temples" (25:8) with human sacrifice, and with a specific phase in human history and the development of the human consciousness. In his own time he sees human sacrifice being offered in Britain both in a physical and spiritual sense. "Tyburns brook" (25:7) refers to the London site of the gallows and public executions, which suggests human sacrifice in compliance with an inhumane penal law. The "River of Oxford" (25:7), on the other hand, symbolises the sacrifice of the human imagination in favour of memory, and the acquisition of knowledge by investigating the past. The ruins of Jerusalem are associated with Lambeth, and thus with the Church of England in particular, with fear, suffering, division, war and murder, all committed in the name of State, Church and God. Jerusalem, who is both the emanation of Albion and a spiritual city, is being fragmented and exiled even in the historical present.

When the Man's children, who are identified with the Sons of Israel, flee from his "Loins" (25:11), "they become Nations far remote in a little & dark Land" (25:24).

Reuben slept on Penmaenmawr & Levi slept on Snowdon
Their eyes their ears nostrils & tongues roll outward
they behold
What is within now seen without (25:21-23).

Here, as in Jerusalem, Blake associates the Welsh mountains with the ancient bardic tradition. The perceptions of the biblical patriarchs and, by implication, of the Welsh bards are being inverted and they lose their visionary powers. In The Song of Los Adam and Noah suffer the same fate.¹³¹ Possibly, Reuben and Levi have failed to maintain the patriarchal tradition of vision and have retained "only earthbound intuitions."¹³² The ancient bards, like the "ancient Poets" in The Marriage of Heaven and Hell (Plate 11), probably

animated all sensible objects with Gods or Geniuses, calling them by the names and adorning them with the properties of woods, rivers, mountains, lakes, cities, nations, and whatever their enlarged & numerous senses could perceive.

Reuben and Levi and their kind take advantage of the "system" thus formed, and enslave "the vulgar by attempting to realize or abstract the mental deities from their objects; thus begins Priesthood."¹³³ The Daughters of Albion,

Gwendolen, Ragan, Sabrina and a number of other female characters from Welsh mythology and folklore, are such "mental deities" who, in turn, bind "Jerusalems Children in the dungeons of Babylon" (25:29-31). They lure them into idolising nature.

7. The Struggles of Los

Urizen pronounces himself "God from Eternity to Eternity" (12:8) and declares

Lo I am God the terrible destroyer & not the Saviour
Why should the Divine Vision compell the sons of
Eden
to forego each his own delight to war against his
Spectre
The Spectre is the Man the rest is only delusion &
fancy (12:26-29)¹³⁴

Urizen's revealing declaration of his 'spectral' doctrine is unequivocally directed against Christian ethics, against altruism, love and self-denial as the highest forms of self-fulfilment. The advocacy and imposition of 'Self' has already proved fatal to the unity of life in Eternity, as it seeks to establish a perverse uniformity of aspirations in accordance with egotistic desires. The result is confrontation and strife. The conflict between Urizen and the as yet immature Los, the "vehicular form of Urthona" in the fallen world, conforms to this pattern. Urizen

perfidiously offers Los power over Luvah, "the prince of Love the murderer" (12:14), and over his "starry hosts" (12:16), provided Los is prepared to obey Urizen's "awful Law" (12:17). Urizen thus tempts Los, as Satan tried tempting Jesus in the wilderness, by offering what is not his to give, and by demanding Los's submission in return. Jesus triumphantly rebuffed the tempter. Los, too, rejects Urizen's offer, but only because he wants all power for himself.

One must be master. try thy Arts I also will try mine
For I percieve Thou hast Abundance which I claim as
mine (12:20-21).

Urizen and Los are contending for the same prize: the sole possession of the world and domination over the Man. In other words, they claim the exclusive validity of their respective conceptions of an ideal world. In accordance with Blake's doctrine of "contraries" without which "there is no progression," the conflict involving Urizen and Los serves a genuinely dialectical purpose. The poet progressively formulates an increasingly mature theory of knowledge, of ethics and of metaphysics as the poem evolves. In nine deleted marginal lines, probably of a comparatively late date, Los reveals the ultimate purpose of this conflict in terms borrowed from the Christian doctrine of Salvation:

Refusing to behold the Divine image which all behold
And live thereby. he is sunk down into a deadly sleep
But we immortal in our own strength survive by stern
debate
Till we have drawn the Lamb of God into a mortal form
And that he must be born is certain.¹³⁵

These lines were probably deleted by Blake because they do not conform with Los's character in this phase of his development, and are therefore logically and dramatically out of place. Nevertheless, they indicate that the confrontation involving Urizen, Los and Luvah does not exhaust itself in repetitive aimless strife. Unknown to the protagonists, especially to Los, their universal conflict is endowed with the character of transcendent finality.

Urizen, however, misinterprets Los's reasons for rejecting his generous offer. By suspecting Los to be "a visionary of Jesus the soft delusion of Eternity" (12:25), he mistakenly identifies the as yet immaturely wilful Los with the character into whom he will gradually develop in the course of the poem. Stevenson correctly observes that "by the time Blake had written Night VIII, this is what Los had become, because Los developed and changed radically as Blake worked at the poem."¹³⁶ However, this "description of Los as 'a visionary of Jesus' is confusing" only from the point of view of the poem's narrative chronology.¹³⁷

From a dramatic point of view, and within the framework of the poem's internal structure, it is purposeful as it achieves an ironic effect. Eventually, of course, Urizen's

suspicion will be borne out by events. The mature Los will act throughout history on behalf of both mankind and God. He will be instrumental in preparing mankind for their salvation through the self-sacrifice of the Lamb of God, and in bringing about the Last Judgment.

Far from consciously being "a visionary of Jesus," and quite unaware of the presence of the Divine Vision in Luvah's "robes of blood," Los derives malicious pleasure from "all the sorrow of Luvah & the labour of Urizen" (32:4). In order to satisfy their perverse desires Los and Enitharmon descend

To plant divisions in the Soul of Urizen & Ahanias
To conduct the Voice of Enion to Ahanias midnight
pillow (34:3-4).

Urizen and Ahanias re-enact the familiar ritual of separation, as previously suffered by Tharmas and Enion, as well as Luvah and Vala. "Two wills they had two intellects & not as in times of old" (30:48). In other words, Urizen is alienated from his creation and loses all pleasure in his achievement: "To him his Labour was but Sorrow & his Kingdom was Repentance" (30:50). Correspondingly, Ahanias can no longer share Urizen's complacent sleep, but is

drawn thro unbounded space
Onto the margin of Non Entity the bright Female came
There she beheld the Spectrous form of Enion in the
Void
And never from that moment could she rest upon her
pillow (36:16-19).

Los and Enitharmon are instrumental in destroying Urizen and Ahanias's luxurious existence of self-gratification by making them aware of the simultaneous reality of the world of natural harmony governed by Los and Enitharmon, and of the world of Enion's misery, most effectively revealed on pages 35-36. While Ahanias reacts with compassion, Urizen is only concerned about his personal pride and welfare as he realises the inescapability of the kind of emotional and intellectual experience he had hoped to preclude by building the "Mundane Shell."

Urizen saw & envied & his imagination was filled
Repining he contemplated the past in his bright
sphere
Terrified with his heart & spirit at the visions
of futurity
That his dread fancy form'd before him in the
unform'd void (34:5-8).

Possibly, Urizen's envy is aroused by the fact that Los and Enitharmon have retained in the natural environment their Eternal capacity for

Contracting or expanding their all flexible senses
At will to murmur in the flowers small as the honey
bee
At will to stretch across the heavens & step from
star to star
Or standing on the Earth erect, or on the stormy
waves
Driving the storms before them or delighting in
sunny beams
While round their heads the Elemental Gods kept
harmony (34:10-15).

Los and Enitharmon control time and space and instantaneously fulfil their sensual desires.¹³⁸ With them the will still determines perception, and not vice versa, as Locke believes. Urizen, in all his isolated splendour of cosmic and intellectual beauty, is incapable of such immediate and deliberate sensual enjoyment. He simply cannot help looking "upon futurity [thus] darkning present joy" (37:10). Instead his imagination, or more accurately, his fancy, is aroused to reflective activity on the one hand, and to perversely visionary activity on the other. The "bright sphere" in which he contemplates the past and perceives the future in the as yet "unformd void" thus serves both as a mirror of his past achievements and as a crystal ball which affords him terrifying "visions of futurity," projections of the inevitable consequences of his past activities. Urizen's "bright sphere" is a metaphor for his intellect and for its symbol the sun, as well as for the whole of his creation which is after all a reflection of his intellect. Thus, the process of rational intellection and ratiocination is both spatialised and temporalised. On account of the malicious agency of Los and Enitharmon, Urizen's "dread fancy" identifies the imaginary "unformd void" of spatial expansion, which is outside his control, with the abstract and therefore equally fictitious temporal dimension of "futurity." Although both phenomena are projections of his own limited consciousness, they transcend his powers of comprehension and therefore terrify him.

Ahania reminds Urizen that he is by no means the autonomous and omnipotent God he claims to be, but that the "Eternal One" has set him "leader of his hosts" (38:15).¹³⁹ She even unsuccessfully encourages him to "Leave all futurity to him Resume thy fields of Light" (39:1).¹⁴⁰ However, because Urizen has lost control over "the immortal steeds of light" (39:3), he is compelled to reign by deceit, repression and violence, "Till the Divine Vision & Fruition is quite obliterated." (39:7) Hence, "unlike those sweet fields of bliss / Where liberty was justice & eternal science was mercy" (39:10-11), the "dens" framed by Urizen's corrupt "wisdom" (39:9) are intentionally designed to exclude uncertainty and mutability, but also harmony based on mental understanding and love. Built as a memorial to Urizen's rarified monolithic vision, as a lasting alternative to life in Eternity, and as a protective environment against both Eternity and the unknown, the cosmic structure erected by Urizen proves ineffective.

Like Enitharmon's "song of Vala," Ahania's exhortations are counterproductive.¹⁴¹ Urizen compares her with Vala and misinterprets her timely warning as feminine imposition. He accuses her, who is merely the reflection of his own frailty, of the archetypal female offence of being a passive, seductive, yet independent and assertive will.

Shall the feminine indolent bliss. the indulgent
self of weariness
The passive idle sleep the enormous night & darkness
of Death
Set herself up to give her laws to the active
masculine virtue
Thou little diminutive portion that darst be a
counterpart
Thy passivity thy laws of obedience & insincerity
Are my abhorrence. (43:6-11)

By casting out Ahania, Urizen deprives himself of his "concentrating vision" and condemns himself to a 'spectral' existence. As a result of Ahania's Fall, "The bounds of Destiny [are] broken," and Urizen's realm of artificial intellectual order and stability is swept away by the "seas of Doubt," previously associated with Tharmas. Urizen himself falls into the natural world of generative existence, "Into Caverns of the Grave & place of Human Seed" (44:3). As conceived by Tharmas, and now by Urizen, this is a world of physical death, decay and seemingly endless corruption. Their spiritual corollary is doubt, despair, and hope. Doubt, which is variously associated by Blake with the elemental phenomena of the sea and with tempests, is also connected with the faculty of reason.¹⁴² According to Bacon's doctrine, doubt is the mental attitude that must necessarily precede rational enquiry and, thus, the acquisition of verifiable knowledge. According to Blake, doubt and uncertainty signify the destruction of the unity of spiritual and physical existence, of the perceiver and the object perceived. The collapse of the world created by Urizen merely reflects his own spiritual catastrophe.

Los and Enitharmon "Emerge / In strength & brightness from the Abyss" (47:2-3) of the Man's unbounded formless consciousness. They rise "above the heaving deluge" (47:4) of time and space, of chaotic elemental phenomena, of dissociated sensations and confused emotions and suffering that swept away Urizen's imaginary world of enforced glory. The stimulating appearance of Los and Enitharmon fills Tharmas with painful feelings of love, pity and yearning for Enion, his separated emanation.¹⁴³ He is tired of purposeless rage and suffering, tired of his futile "deathless" wandering in the purgatory of memory, "seeking oblivion / In torrents of despair in vain." (47:12-13) Urizen erected the magnificent and clearly defined structure of his bright universe in order to protect himself from the dynamics of Eternal life, and from the dreaded possibilities of the future. Tharmas, in contrast, yearns for the past and for his lost love. He therefore orders Los to construct a natural replica of Eternal life from the four elements within the dimensions of time and space, in the hope that he may temporarily enjoy some peace of mind.

Go forth Rebuild this Universe beneath my indignant
power

A Universe of Death & Decay. Let Enitharmons hands
Weave soft delusive forms of Man above my watry world
Renew these ruind souls of Men thro Earth Sea Air &
Fire

To waste in endless corruption. renew thou I will
destroy

Perhaps Enion may resume some little semblance
To ease my pangs of heart & to restore some peace
to Tharmas (48:4-10).

Los and Enitharmon are to be the constructive agents who will literally provide the "ruined souls of Men" with physical bodies subject to decay; on a different level of meaning they may be taken to provide fallen mankind with the protective conception of life as being restricted within a spatial and temporal environment, subject to the organic cycle of birth, death and regeneration.

Los at first rejects Tharmas' demand by perversely claiming godhood for Urizen and, in Urizen's absence, for himself. (48:15-18) Los thus asserts the supremacy of mental powers, that is of reason and imagination, even in their fallen condition, over the phenomenal world and its human corollary, the Man's body and its functions. However, Los fails in his attempt "to dictate a containing [mental] reality to watery Tharmas."¹⁴⁴ Tharmas, on the other hand, irrationally asserts and enforces the supremacy of his own will ("my will shall be my Law" 49:3), of the chaotic phenomenal world and of physical sensation, over Man's intellectual and imaginative powers ("Urthona is My Son" 51:14), his affections ("Luvah hidden in the Elemental forms of Life & Death" 51:13), and thus over the "Eternal form" of the Man, "Dreamer of furious Oceans" (51:18-19), of time, space and matter. By abducting and raping Enitharmon, Tharmas inflicts upon Los the pain of separation and the longing to be reunited with his emanation. If Los wants to recover her he will have to do so within the

confines of an external and material reality dominated by Tharmas.

Significantly, the basis for Los's future activities--an as yet unformed material world--is provided by Urthona's Hephaistos-like "Dark Spectre who upon the Shores / With dislocated Limbs had falln . . . / A Shadow blue obscure & dismal. like a statue of lead" (49:11-13). This frightening "Spectre of Urthona" is first introduced as an active figure on pages 49-51, where the reader learns a few details about his fall from Eternity and about the task Tharmas sets him. However, the Spectre's fallen personality is only gradually revealed in Nights VI-IX of The Four Zoas, and in much greater detail in Jerusalem.¹⁴⁵

In our discussion of Urthona's Fall, among other things, a protective and consolidating function in time and space, was attributed to the serpentine Spectre of Urthona, circling round the tent of Man. In the present context the Spectre reminds Tharmas that after the Fall it was he who "protected thy ghastly corse / From Vultures of the deep" (50:25-26). When Tharmas orders him to "bear Enitharmon back to the Eternal Prophet" and to "Build her a bower in the midst of all my dashing waves" (49:18-19), the Spectre obeys and performs the task in a manner which reveals his materialistic inclinations:

Groaning the terror rose & drave his solid rocks
before
Upon the tide till underneath the feet of Los a
World
Dark dreadful rose & Enitharmon lay at Los's feet
(51:7-9).

This symbolism suggests that Los, somewhat prematurely addressed as the Eternal Prophet, is provided by his alter-ego with the firm though frightening foundation of a dead material world, or rather with a materialistic but as yet determinate conception of the world. Its qualities of stability, barrenness and durability reflect the Spectre's negative outlook on life. Tharmas regards it as a suitably protective environment for Los and Enitharmon, and as the appropriate medium in which Urizen can be confined. Henceforth it will be the task of Los "to bind the fallen King / Lest he should rise again from death in all his dreary power" (51:3-4). Tharmas believes that the combined efforts of Los and the Spectre in binding Urizen and the specific consciousness embodied by him to the contingencies of an external world of time and space, of a physical body and of sense perception will give Tharmas a better chance to pursue his selfish ends unobstructed by Urizen's powers of abstraction.¹⁴⁶

Tharmas forces Los and the Spectre of Urthona to rebuild Urizen's furnaces which were destroyed by Urizen's Fall. Terrified, Los obeys. He is filled with hatred for Urizen, and with mixed feelings of pity and cruel delight over Enitharmon's suffering. Before their destruction Urizen's "furnaces of affliction," the world dominated and formed by Urizen's consciousness, served to melt down Luvah's "passionate energy."¹⁴⁷ "All the human Imagination" was petrified into rock and sand and subsequently beaten into abstract shapes devoid of living human form. When Urizen lost faith in his achievement, his world collapsed and Urizen withdrew into inarticulate mental activity. Now, his furnaces are being rebuilt in an effort to bind "the contemplative terror" (52:27) and the objectified chaos of his mental abstractions within the limits of temporal, spatial and anatomical form. The Man's perceptions are rendered dependent on Tharmas' chaotic world of dissociated sensations. Henceforth, external reality, constituted by matter and motion and perceived by man's passive and inflexible senses, will provide the stability and continuity which Urizen's ideal world of purely intellectual forms failed to sustain.

In his consolidating and restricting "Labour of Ages in the Darkness & the war of Tharmas" (52:17), Los combines the characteristics of the blacksmith and the demiurge with those of the rationalist and the man of imagination.

He creates "many a planet" (52:19), objects both of visual beauty and of abstract calculation. Their cyclic motion in space circumscribes the spatial and temporal confinement Los imposes upon Urizen and, in the process, upon himself.

Round him Los rolld furious
His thunderous wheels from furnaces to furnace.
tending diligent
The contemplative terror. frightend in his scornful
sphere
Frightend with cold infectious madness. in his hand
the thundering
Hammer of Urthona. forming under his heavy hand the
hours

The days & years. in chains of iron round the limbs
of Urizen
Linkd hour to hour & day to night & night to day &
year to year
In periods of pulsative furor. mills he formd & works
Of many wheels resistless in the power of dark
Urthona (52:25-53:4).

As in Urizen, Los creates temporal demarcations, definite periods, dehumanised rhythms and mechanical relations of time which he imposes on Urizen's phantasies of "brooding contemplation" (52:24). Once again the Lockean concept of a constant and regular succession of ideas in time is combined with the notion that thought conforms with orderly cyclic patterns. Together they produce the familiar spatial-temporal metaphor of

The Eternal Mind bounded began to roll eddies of
wrath ceaseless
Round & round & the sulphureous foam surging thick
Settled a Lake bright & shining clear. White as the
snow

Forgetfulness dumbness necessity in chains of the
mind lockd up
In fetters of ice shrinking. disorganizd rent from
Eternity (54:1-5).

With the help of temporal, spatial and physical form, Urizen, who in his fallen condition "is capable only of discursive reason,"¹⁴⁸ is subsequently bound within a finite, measurable and anthropomorphic universe. Margoliouth sums up these complex developments: "Los, the unrestrained non-moral Imagination, makes use of the horrible ghost of the creativeness of God, of which there is something in every man, to compel the Intellect to a particular 'Weltanschauung,' that of temporal succession and of the limited human form."¹⁴⁹ The "chains of the mind" or "chains of intellect" that bind the "cold / Prince of Light" (57:15-16) are both cause and consequence of the materialist-determinist conception of reality to which Urizen will henceforth be committed. Interpreted in a wider context, Los establishes a chronological framework for the Man's fallen consciousness, an imaginary scaffolding for the history of ideas and the history of science, by chaining all manner of tyranny "down to dates and places."¹⁵⁰

The activities of Los and the Spectre of Urthona force Urizen into the straight-jacket of timebound systems of logic and of metaphysics which, according to Paley "are functions of the Spectre of Urthona."¹⁵¹ The Spectre of

Urthona embodies an essentially negative 'weltanschauung.' Motivated by irrational fear, he maintains throughout history the cyclic motions of abstract thought and, correspondingly, the motions of the universe. While preventing further disintegration, cyclic motion by itself only consolidates. It cannot reunify the human mind and restore it to its former glory. The intellectual, cosmic and industrial "mills," thus created, are being maintained by philosophers and scientists like Bacon, Locke, Newton, Rousseau and Voltaire. In their aggregate they are Urizen in the power of "dark Urthona."¹⁵² With rationalism, religious dogma and existential fatalism, the "chains of the mind" serve both a negative and a positive purpose. By Eternal standards any restraints imposed on the human will are unacceptable. Yet, against the background of the chaos ensuing Urizen's Fall, the malicious activities of Los and the Spectre of Urthona have to be viewed in a more positive light. Indeed, the inserted passages 55:10-15 and 56:1-15, with their references to the supernatural "Council of God" and the Saviour, stress the providential quality which, unknown to the protagonists, invests their cruel yet consolidating activities.

No sooner has Los completed binding Urizen "in a deadly sleep" (55/Second/19) when his eyes are opened to the appalling results:

terrific at the shapes
Enslav'd humanity put on he became what he beheld
He became what he was doing he was himself transform'd
(55/Second/21-23)

This ingenious conceit, possibly derived from the Neo-Platonic notion of metamorphosis, serves to satirically invert the idealist doctrine of 'esse est percipi.' The observer is absorbed by the object perceived.¹⁵³ Through the agency of man's shrunken senses the objects of contemplation will soon perversely determine the will to act. Besides its overtly epistemological significance, Los's transformation has far-reaching ontological implications.

Los has contrived to enclose himself within Urizen's "scornful sphere," and the imaginative limitation of his achievement is thus critically revealed. Unaware of his moral obligations as the "Eternal Prophet," Los is motivated by nothing but self-interest and hatred. He is therefore incapable of intellectually, imaginatively and morally transcending the Urizenic consciousness he sets out to subdue. Instead, he has merely been instrumental in providing it with temporal, spatial, and anatomical form, and in the act of doing so he is himself being absorbed within the boundaries of a Urizenic conception

of reality with its corollary of metaphysical obscurantism, epistemological positivism, moral dogma, and of political, social, religious and artistic conformism. Such a transition from spiritual liberty to slavery is a painful process. Los experiences in a representative manner the mental conflict associated with this transition which all creative men throughout history have had to endure to some degree. Los is no longer in control of his movements. "The fall of the mortal poet's imagination, the darkening of creative vision in this world" is about to be completed, as "Los begins a terrible dance of transformation that will submit the poetic genius of man to the organic rigors of history."¹⁵⁴

Infected Mad he danced on his mountains high & dark
as heaven
Now fixed into one steadfast bulk his features stonify
Beside the anvil cold he danced with the hammer of
Urthona (57:1-4).

Previously, Los and Enitharmon were in complete harmony with each other and with their environment. Los controlled the times and seasons, and Enitharmon was in charge of spaces. Their senses were flexible and responsive, and their common will determined the expansion or contraction of the senses. Now, a universal process of alienation, shrinking and decay takes place, affecting man's faculties and nature alike. As their senses shrink and harden--a process which corresponds with Urizen's "bones of solidness

[freezing] over all his nerves of joy" (54:14), and with his being englobed within anatomical form--Los and Enitharmon become imprisoned by their own limited perceptions of a finite external reality. They

Shrunk into fixed space stood trembling on a Rocky
cliff
Yet mighty bulk & majesty & beauty remaind but
unexpansive
As far as highest Zenith from the lowest Nadir. so
far shrunk
Los from the furnaces a Space immense & left the
cold
Prince of Light bound in chains of intellect among
the furnaces (57:12-16).

These physiological and perceptual restrictions prompt Los and Enitharmon to adopt a pessimistic view of life in the natural world. Visions of "Eternal Death" (58:2) overshadow potentially soothing natural beauty and harmony. For the first time the cycles of birth, decay and death, of vegetation and generation are consciously and painfully experienced by Los and Enitharmon, who previously scorned their mother Enion when she suffered the very same experience.

The wheels of turning darkness
Began in solemn revolutions. Earth convulsd with
rending pangs
Rockd to & fro & cried sore at the groans of
Enitharmon (58:7-9).

The monotonous Rhythms of cosmic, seasonal and vegetative cycles become synonymous with the suffering inherent in all forms and aspects of 'natural' life, be they organic, sexual, intellectual, cultural, or political.

The passage added at the bottom of page 55 (first portion) and the partly revised page 56 introduce a perspective 'sub specie aeternitatis' which reveals the providential character inherent in Los's activities.¹⁵⁵ It is suggested that in cruelly binding Urizen in seven ages, Los has unwittingly been acting as an agent of Divine Salvation, and for the good of the whole of mankind. Indeed, since Albion turned his back on the "Divine Vision" and became "the corse of Death" (56:17), a supernatural agency called the "Council of God"--which, incidentally, is identified with the "Divine Vision" (55/First:13) and with Jesus, the "Lord. Saviour" (56:1), but not with God himself--has been "watching over the Body / Of Man clothd in Luvahs robes of blood" (55/First:10-11). While "the Corse of Albion lay on the Rock" which is a compound of matter and reason engulfed by "the sea of Time & Space," there appeared to be no purpose and no end to the progressive disintegration of his Eternal form into "a mass of undifferentiated organic life" symbolising the corruption of mankind,¹⁵⁶

as a Polypus
That vegetates beneath the Sea the limbs of Man
vegetated
In monstrous forms of Death a Human Polypus of Death¹⁵⁷
(56:14-16).

Jesus, "The Saviour mild & gentle" (56:17) reveals that ultimately faith may bring about Albion's resurrection. ("If ye will Believe your Brother shall rise again" [56:18].) But first he prepares the foundations for Albion's recovery by establishing the ahistorical mental concepts, Satan and Adam. They will arrest the progress of mental and physical disintegration throughout fallen history:

he found the Limit of Opacity & namd it Satan
In Albions bosom for in every human bosom these
limits stand
And next he found the Limit of Contraction & namd it
Adam
While yet those beings were not born nor knew of good
or Evil (56:19-22).

Satan is the limit beyond which the Divine light cannot be obscured. As the sworn enemy of imagination, he is the fallacious principle of abstract reasoning as well as the principle of selfishness; natural law and moral law being the respective corollaries of these principles.¹⁵⁸ Being dependent on sense perception, Adam conceives of reality as external and material. Both Satan and Adam are "States" of consciousness into which individuals or whole societies may enter. The problem is if and when they may leave again. If the human mind was to regress beyond the Satanic limit, his awareness of his own individuality and his corresponding conception of reality would dissolve in the vacuum of self-destructive nihilism. Beyond the Adamic limit, man's sense perceptions of external reality would

contract to the point where mind and the senses become indistinguishable from each other and from their material environment.

Once these limits have been established, the cyclic patterns of time and Los's activities in time assume the character of transcendent finality which has previously been absent. "The Starry Wheels," cosmic vehicles of monotonous duration, "felt the divine hand. Limit / Was put to Eternal Death" (56:23-24). Temporal and spatial form now circumscribe mental operations rather than being conducive toward the mind's progressive dissolution. Indeed, when in the seventh age Los completes the binding of Urizen within the temporal and spatial dimensions, the turning point in the decline of man's spiritual powers has been reached.

Up to this point the added and the revised passages on pages 55 and 56 can be dramatically and logically reconciled with the preceding and the subsequent scenes. However this is not the case with the following lines:

Los felt the Limit & saw
The Finger of God touch the Seventh furnace in
terror
And Los beheld the hand of God over his furnaces
Beneath the Deeps in dismal Darkness beneath
immensity (56:24-27).

These lines cannot be reconciled with the stage Los's consciousness has reached in Nights IV and V, where, at the most, he can be described as the unconscious agent of Divine Providence.

As Los and Enitharmon have "shrunk into fixed space," their impaired powers of sense perception lead them to conceive of reality as a spatial and temporal environment.¹⁵⁹ However, evanescent natural beauty and harmony are inadequate substitutes for their lost unity and happiness. Their frustrated aspirations, appropriately expressed in sexual terms, produce the "terrible Child" (58:17) Orc. He is the spirit of revolt; the temporal, natural form of Luvah, once the "King of Love," now reborn as "the King of rage & death" (58:22). With his appearance, the ancient conflict between Urizen and Luvah will eventually be revived.¹⁶⁰

Under Enitharmon's maternal care the "fiery boy" grows up in a natural environment where his sensual desires are instantaneously fulfilled. Yet, the "Enormous Demons" (58:21) anticipate future developments as they ominously call upon Vala, the teasingly elusive "lovely form / That drew the body of Man from heaven into this dark Abyss" (59:1-2), to release her black arrows of possessive desire.

which can be formed and illuminated by imaginative activity.¹⁶² Discussing the ambiguous nature of Golgon-ooza in Night V, Paley believes that Los "is in danger of becoming like the senile Har of Tiriel, an embodiment of escapist art who sings 'in the great cage.'¹⁶³ This interpretation is supported by the subsequent events. As in the corresponding scenes in Urizen, Orc grows up and "Los beheld the ruddy boy / Embracing his bright mother & beheld malignant fires / In his young eyes discerning plain that Orc plotted his death" (60:7-9). Because Los lives in the Spectre's world of apprehension and distrust, he can only see the negative aspects inherent in energy, not its apocalyptic potential. His jealousy is aroused and he feels personally threatened. As in Urizen, repressed emotions, tensions and prejudice gradually form "the chain of Jealousy" (60:22). This "chain" is as much a psychological and temporal, as an aesthetic, social and political phenomenon.

Los and Enitharmon take Orc to the "iron mountains top" (60:26) where Los, assisted by the "Spectre dark," "naild him down binding around his limbs / The accursed chain" (60:27-29). Finally, the Spectre is given "sternest charge over the howling fiend" (61:9) whose flames of perverse incestuous desire for his mother Enitharmon ("Concenterd into Love of Parent Storgous Appetite Craving" [61:10]) are left to war "with the waves of Tharmas & Snows

of Urizen" (61:4).¹⁶⁴ Orc is deprived of any transcendent vision to guide him. His conflict with Tharmas' chaotic world of material appearances and temporal duration, and with Urizen's world of abstract reasoning will henceforth be conducted only for the purpose of self-gratification.

The birth and binding of Orc in The Four Zoas, like the corresponding scenes in Urizen, may be read as a dramatic account in its own right. It may, however, also be interpreted as allegory with interrelated psychological, aesthetic and, contrary to Frye's opinion, historical and political meanings.¹⁶⁵ Interpreted as the poetic transposition of psychological processes, Orc's birth symbolises the release of energetic forces in response to the mind's imaginative appraisal of reality. In other words, the visionary artist, Los, conceives a revolutionary idea, Orc. However, as soon as he detects the first signs of this idea affecting and thereby further alienating his private vision of reality--embodied by his emanation Enitharmon--Los dissociates himself from the revolutionary impulse and sacrifices it time and again to the powers of orthodoxy and conformism, here personified by the Spectre. Rather than commit himself to revolution, the artist comes to a temporary arrangement with the powers of the day and subjects his art to self-censorship. He retires into the ivory tower of ephemeral aestheticism. Abandoned by Los's imaginative guidance and paternal care, the revolutionary

energy of Orc is deprived of its apocalyptic potential. He retains only the "pulsative furor" (53:3) of Los's activity, but not his forming and consolidating capacity. He will soon manifest himself in the human psyche as well as throughout human history as an amoral, brutally physical and destructive force.

Thus, The Four Zoas resolves one of the central ambiguities pervading the shorter 'prophecies,' especially highlighted in the 'Preludium' of America. The natural apocalypse proclaimed by Orc in the 'Preludium' is anticipated, if not historically realised, by the revolutionary events of 1776. However, the Angel's contrary assertion, also in the 'Preludium,' and to some extent confirmed in The Song of Los, that Orc's revolutionary energy is a purely immanent force contingent on time and space and, indeed, "part of the bound circle of history," is poetically substantiated in Nights V, VII(a) and (b) and VIII of The Four Zoas.¹⁶⁶ It has its historical counterpart in "the failure of the French Republic to preserve political liberty at home and its aggressive, expansionist military policy abroad."¹⁶⁷

Although confined to the 'rock' of abstract law, man's instinctual desires and energies continue to derive spiritual sustenance from the "Eternal worlds," and physical satisfaction from the natural world. The "spirits

of life" (61:13-14) "bring the thrilling joys of sense to quell his ceaseless rage." (61:17) Orc's expansive eyes are not passive receptacles of sense impressions, but active "lights of his large soul" (61:18).

Contracted they behold the secrets of the infinite
mountains
The veins of gold & silver & the hidden things of
Vala
Whatever grows from its pure bud or breathes a
fragrant soul
Expanded they behold the terrors of the Sun & Moon
The Elemental Planets & the orbs of eccentric fire
(61:19-23).

Orc instantaneously perceives and experiences the sensuous beauties concealed within Vala's veil of natural appearances. Free from moral or rational restraints he delights in both the beauty and the terror of the natural and spiritual worlds. The various parts of Orc's body are likened to peaceful and cruel aspects of natural and social life alike, comprising the fury of wild beasts of prey, the cosmic harmony of the stars, a pastoral vision of rural life, of harvest, vintage, and war. Orc incorporates the energetic powers associated with the seasonal climax of generative life--be it natural or human, macrocosmic or microcosmic, mental or physical--and of the forces that give life as well as of those that rejoice in taking it.¹⁶⁸

When, overcome by parental love, Los and Enitharmon repent their rash action and return to release Orc, it is too late.

when they came to the dark rock & to the spectrous
cave
Lo the young limbs had stricken root into the rock &
strong
Fibres had from the Chain of Jealousy inwove themselves
In a swift vegetation round the rock & round the Cave
And over the immortal limbs of the terrible fiery boy
(62:21-25).

The "bloody chain of nights & days" (60:19) which ties Orc to 'spectral' reality, has become one with Orc. Perversely, it has been transformed into "a living Chain / Sustained by the Demons life." (63:3-4) His fettered being is now an integral aspect of the rhythmic pattern of suppression and contributes to its continuance. Henceforth, in the fallen world, where mental failures and conflicts are reflected by social and political phenomena, the forces of energetic desire and of 'spectral' repression will be inseparably linked. Just as "the psyche now contains its own principle of repression," so the French Revolution, and any violent revolution for that matter, incorporates repressive tendencies.¹⁶⁹ Because of this perverse alliance an apocalyptic transformation of man's fortunes in response to his 'natural' drives becomes impossible. The events of Night V thus anticipate the consequences dramatised in Nights VII(a) and (b). Orc will be corrupted and pressed into the service of Urizen. Together they will re-enact the original betrayal of Albion by Urizen and Luvah.

8. Urizen's Journey (Night VI)

In Urizen, Urizen is oblivious of the existence of Eternity when he becomes conscious of the external natural world. Physical sensations of hunger and smell (Locke's 'secondary qualities' being tentatively associated with Orc) induce him to explore "his dens around"; henceforth his understanding will be entirely founded on sensation and reflection. In The Four Zoas the situation is somewhat different. Although confined "in the deep dens of Urthona" (63:23), Urizen recollects his former happiness in Eternity and deplores his hubris that has led to the Fall. Although Urizen seems penitent, and his intentions benevolent, his actions in Night VI prove that he has not changed.¹⁷⁰

Finally he declares:

I will arise Explore these dens & find that deep
pulsation
That shakes my caverns with strong shudders.
perhaps this is the night
Of Prophecy & Luvah hath burst his way from
Enitharmon
When Thought is closd in Caves. Then love shall
shew its root in deepest Hell (65:9-12).

By attempting to trace the source of this rhythmic pulsation--Frye identifies it with the "throbbing heart and lungs of the fallen Albion"¹⁷¹--Urizen hopes to witness the rebirth of Luvah in his identity as the transforming principle of love into the natural world where the rational faculty is enclosed. Apparently, Urizen does not

yet realise that Luvah, reborn as Orc, no longer embodies love but purely natural energy. Orc has no notion of Eternity, but lives in "Hell" which, in Blake's definition, "is the being shut up in the possession of corporeal desires which shortly weary the man."¹⁷² Orc, therefore, cannot possibly be a truly revolutionary force in the apocalyptic sense.

Urizen's exploration of his "dens" in Night VI is not purely a "journey through the caves of the Fallen Mind, analagous to the flight of Satan through Chaos in Book II of Paradise Lost," as suggested by Paley, but also a journey through a fallen world perceived by a non-comprehending yet assertive intellect.¹⁷³ Urizen embodies the fallen "intelligence, the mental attitude of a Bacon or a Locke, [which] is attempting to account for all the phenomena in the fallen world on the basis of that attitude."¹⁷⁴ In the process of so doing he assimilates these phenomena to his fallen intelligence and corrupts them. First Urizen encounters his daughters, "three terrific women at the verge of the bright flood" (67:5). The oldest woman, "sitting in . . . clouds" (67:8), fills an urn with water only to pour it "forth in sighs & care" (67:10). The second woman, whom Urizen addresses as "mistress of these mighty waters" (67:15) is a "terrible woman clad in blue, whose strong attractive power / Draws all into a fountain at the rock of [her] attraction"

(67:13-14). The "youngest Woman clad in shining green" (67:17) divides the current into four "dreadful rivers" (67:19). When Urizen, as man's rational faculty, drinks from these waters which Damon identifies with "the river of Matter," he fails to quench his thirst for knowledge.¹⁷⁵ Urizen's daughters repel their father because they serve Tharmas who dominates the phenomenal world, symbolised by the sea of time and space. Bloom somewhat generally identifies these obscure daughters as symbolic appearances representing "human nature within the limits of Urizen's world and, more directly, the fallen body."¹⁷⁶ According to Damon's physiological interpretation the three daughters represent "the division of Man into the Loins, Heart and Head," and he goes on to relate their respective activities to the perverted functions of these symbolic organs in the fallen world. As their activities are associated with different aspects of the water cycle, their monotonous repetitiveness is rendered apparent. The loins generate "the self-renewing cycle of sexuality" underlying any form of natural life.¹⁷⁷ The natural heart, as the seat of man's appetites, is possessive. And the head or vegetated mind divides the unregulated "current" of the sea of time and space, once the life-blood of Albion's body, into four distinct rivers (a parody on the four rivers of Paradise), symbolising reality as perceived by four senses.

When Urizen's daughters recognise their father's identity, "They [shrink] into their channels. dry the rocky strand beneath his feet / Hiding themselves in rocky forms from the Eyes of Urizen" (68:3-4). The female agents of natural life withdraw and in so doing petrify. "At the sight of Reason, the three shrink to the limit of Death (rocky forms), while the Water of Matter, or (in this world) of Life, dries up immediately."¹⁷⁸ In the manner of Tiriel, Urizen curses his offspring. Henceforth, both his sons and daughters will be victims and agents of their father's curse, slaves in mind and body. In place of "fatherly care & sweet instruction" they will receive

Chains of dark ignorance & cords of twisted self
conceit
And whips of stern repentance & food of stubborn
obstinacy
That they may curse Tharmas their God & Los his
adopted son
That they may curse & worship the obscure Demon of
destruction
That they may worship terrors & obey the violent
(68:22-26).

The obscurities of this unedifying scene are somewhat illuminated by the overtly epistemological implications of Urizen's subsequent encounter with Tharmas.

Urizen's curse renders rigid the "watry world" of Tharmas (68:28), "A dreary waste of solid waters" (69:2). In other words, the rational mind imposes its repressive

authority on the animated world.¹⁷⁹ In so doing Urizen asserts his supremacy over the elusive Tharmas, the disorganised "Body of man". By himself Tharmas cannot fulfil his perverse death wish and destroy this "Body" completely. It continues to surge forth in the lowest forms of animal life, "in fish & monsters of the deeps" in whose "monstrous forms" he lives "in Eternal woe" (69:12-13). On the other hand, Urizen cannot satisfy his own intellectual desires without taking recourse to the physical world. In order to ensure that "the Eternal Man no more renew beneath [their] power" (69:17), Tharmas proposes to withhold Urizen's "food" (69:16)--the food of reason being sense perception--provided Urizen agrees to withhold his intellectual "light" (69:15) from Tharmas, as it might otherwise obstruct his process of disintegration.¹⁸⁰ Urizen rejects Tharmas's proposal and continues his quest for knowledge, "Making a path toward the dark world of Urthona" (69:29). He does not aim to revive Albion by attempting to reassemble the total spiritual form of human knowledge. He merely strives for an understanding of the workings of the natural world in all its aspects, within his own terms of reference, in order that he may dominate it. In the manner appropriate to the archetypal empiricist, Urizen illuminates with his "Globe of fire . . . his dismal journey thro the pathless world of death" (70/First:1-2). Thus guided by the 'natural' light of uninspired reason, he ruefully records "in books

of iron & brass" his experiences and his encounters with "The enormous wonders of the Abysses once his brightest joy" (70/First:3-4). These "terrors" who were once "his children & the children of Luvah" suffer from Urizen's curse and have been transformed into "ruind spirits" (70/First:5-6) in Urizen's "ruind world" (70/First:45). Their sufferings "mingle together to create a world for Los," who "in cruel delight . . . brooded on the darkness" (69:33-70/First:1). The parody of the creative Spirit of God in Genesis is obvious.

In the South which in "Eternal times [had been] the Seat of Urizen" (74:28), Urizen encounters a nightmare world of physical and mental agony, a universe of suffering, "aberrations of the mind, manifesting themselves in the distorted forms of nature."¹⁸¹ Their fate is the consequence of Urizen's curse. Isolated from the universal human form, individual man merely encompasses his private universe of misery, unrelieved by hope.

They wander Moping in their heart a Sun a Dreary moon
A Universe of fiery constellations in their brain
An Earth of wintry woe beneath their feet & round
 their loins
Waters or winds or clouds or brooding lightnings
 & pestilential plagues (70/First:8-11).

Individual man is a parody of the macrocosmic Man who contains the universe in his head, heart, loins and limbs, and whose gaze was once directed toward the Divine Vision.

Like the fallen Man, the victims of Urizen and Luvah cannot transcend the narrow confines of their self-centred physical appetites. These, in turn, are contingent on the limited perceptions of the victims. As is their satisfaction. Once again, the perceptual fallacy underlying the empiricist theory of knowledge is expressed in physiological terms. Yet, ultimately a psychological and ethical failing is at the root of this problem.

Beyond the bounds of their own self their senses
cannot penetrate
As the tree knows not what is outside of its leaves
& bark
And yet it drinks the summer joy & fears the winter
sorrow
So in the regions of the grave none knows his dark
compeer
Tho he partakes of his dire woes & mutual returns
the pang (70/First:12-16).

It is 'natural' for plants to live in isolation from each other, but nevertheless in harmony with their environment. Passively accepting their fate, they vegetate and die, thus contributing towards the cyclic continuity and the unity of natural life. Correspondingly, "in the regions of the grave," 'natural' man is isolated from his fellow men by an exclusive self-interest. Men are perversely united only by the suffering they continually inflict on each other. While in the natural sphere ethical strictures do not apply, they must apply in a human context. The corrupt children of Urizen and Luvah, therefore, are

"dishumanizd men," "ruind spirits" who adopt the animal forms of corrupted spiritual energy, "of tygers & of Lions," of "serpents & . . . worms," and "scaled monsters . . . hissing in eternal pain" (70/First):31-36). Their elemental bodies, whether constituted of fire or of water, and their shapes are assimilated to Urizen's consciousness,

Some (as) columns of fire or of water sometimes
stretchd out in height
Sometimes in length sometimes englobing wandering
in vain seeking for ease (70/First):37-38).

With "every one wrapd up / In his own sorrow" (70/First):42-43), and with their organs of perception, their eyes, ears and nostrils closed and unresponsive, Urizen's attempts at communicating with them fail.¹⁸² The psychological and moral condition of being self-closed and inward-looking is once more correlated with physical incapacity. Nature, too, has lost its animated innocence. Rocks, mountains and clouds are

now not Vocal as in Climes of Happy Eternity
Where the lamb replies to the infant voice & the
lion to the man of years
Giving them sweet instructions Where the Cloud
the River & the Field
Talk with the husbandman & shepherd. (71/First):5-8)

The relationship thus established between man and man, and man and nature has deteriorated to a level of alienation and even hostility which Hobbes considers to be the 'natural'

state. Like Tiriel, and like Los after binding Orc, Urizen repents too late. The mental fetters imposed on his children and their destructive fury thus provoked, have become integral parts of their fallen being. Urizen himself falls victim to his own curse, as he can no longer "calm the Elements because himself was Subject" (71/Second:13). As Urizen's pursuit of Tharmas proves, the fallen Mind is now dependent on the faculty of sense perception and on the phenomena of the external material world.

The following lines continue to fuse cosmic, geographical and physiological symbolism in order to adumbrate Urizen's journey through a dehumanised universe. Having failed to communicate with the corrupted inhabitants of his own former quarter in the South, once the seat of Man's inspired intellect in Eternity, Urizen

approachd the East
Void pathless beaten with iron sleet & eternal hail
& rain
No form was there no living thing & yet his way lay
thro
This dismal world. (71/Second:15-18)

Deserted by Luvah, the region of the Heart is devoid of love. This absence of an ethically motivating force and unifying form is symbolised by an empty space. Urizen enters this quasi-Newtonian void with a deliberate satanic rault, and his quest turns into a fall: ¹⁸³

"Death" merely signifies a temporary rest, not the absolute termination of existence. On waking up, Urizen cannot continue where he left off, but has to start all over again. In a sense, oblivion is a beneficial regenerative force as it puts a stop to the mind's otherwise progressive self-destruction. Urizen's consciousness is now subject to the limits imposed on natural life and on the 'vegetated' mind by time and matter. While the cycles of natural life warrant continuity and stability, they prevent true spiritual progress. However, at this stage Urizen's efforts of escaping and transcending these cycles are futile as his mode of enquiry prevents him from acquiring 'understanding' in Blake's sense of the term.

The regenerative yet uniform and repetitive character of cyclic patterns qualifies the process of acquiring experience and of compiling 'knowledge.' The poetic text, now, explicitly combines the two distinct motifs, already pictorially fused in the title-page (Plate 1) of Urizen, of Urizen travelling through life (illustrated by his reading with his feet the Book of Nature) and his writing his Books of Experience. Despite his repeated 'deaths' and 'resurrections,'

still his books he bore in his strong hands & his
iron pen
For when he died they lay beside his grave & when he
rose
He siezd them with a gloomy smile for wrapd in his
death clothes

He hid them when he slept in death when he revived
the clothes
Were rotted by the winds the books remained still
unconsumed
Still to be written & interleaved with brass & iron
& gold
Time after time for such a journey none but iron pens
Can write And adamant leaves receive nor can the
man who goes

The journey obstinate refuse to write time after time
(71/Second:35-72:1)¹⁸⁵

The "bosom of slime" which arrests Urizen's fall ensures the continuity of his existence at the level of vegetable life. Correspondingly, the recording of experience in the Books of "Remembrance" is proof of the continuity of the fallen mind. Urizen's rotting "death clothes" signify historically determined yet outworn creeds and beliefs, scientific or metaphysical. Although transitory, they are manifestations of the continuity of the Urizenic consciousness which produced them. When Urizen revives, his Books serve him as authoritative guides. He resumes his journey with the same premises that led to his death in the first instance; and by keeping his records up to date he does nothing to change his apparently inevitable fate. While the direction and destination of his quest are obscure, "the Divine hand" (72:2) providentially leads him on his seemingly endless journey through his once beautiful world, now ruined.

For infinite the distance & obscurd by Combustions
dire
By rocky masses frowning in the abysses revolving
erratic
Round Lakes of fire in the dark deep the ruins of
Urizens world
Oft would he sit in a dark rift & regulate his books
Or sleep such sleep as spirits eternal wearied in
his dark
Tearful & sorrowful state. then rise look out &
ponder
His dismal voyage eyeing the next sphere tho far
remote
Then darting into the Abyss of night his venturous
limbs
Thro lightnings thunders earthquakes & concussions
fires & floods
Stemming his downward fall labouring up against
futurity
Creating many a Vortex fixing many a Science in the
deep
And thence throwing his venturous limbs into the
Vast unknown
Swift Swift from Chaos to chaos from void to void
a road immense

For when he came to where a Vortex ceasd to operate
Nor down nor up remaind then if he turnd & lookd back
From whence he came twas upward all. & if he turnd
and viewd
The unpassd void upward was still his mighty wandring
The midst between an Equilibrium grey of air serene
Where he might live in peace & where his life might
meet repose (72:3-21).

The "Abyss of night" through which Urizen progresses,
develops the concept of "the abyss of the five senses"
in The Marriage of Heaven and Hell (Plate 6). Urizen
moves from sphere to sphere, "creating many a Vortex
fixing many a Science in the deep." These spatial and
abstract concepts have basically the same symbolic signif-
icance as Urizen's "death clothes." Although Urizen is
unable to escape from the immensity of absolute space and
infinite duration, he doggedly perseveres in labouring

As he realises that he cannot "leave this world of Cumbrous wheels / Circle oer Circle" (72:22-23) by his own volition, he decides to make a stand and turn an unsatisfactory situation to his advantage. Once again Blake satirically adopts the doctrine of a deiform nature, when Urizen laments the state of his "poor ruind world:

once like me thou wast all glorious
And now like me partaking desolate thy masters lot
(72:35-37).

In The Four Zoas, as in Urizen, Los was seen to be establishing periods or relations of time, thus providing monotonous duration with repetitive and therefore recognisable demarcations. Correspondingly, Urizen forms mechanical instruments

to measure out the immense & fix
The whole into another world better suited to obey
His will where none should dare oppose his will
himself being King
Of All & all futurity be bound in his vast chain
(73:17-20).

Here, as in Urizen, Urizen reduces reality to his personal level of comprehension; by so doing he predetermines the nature and direction of all future actions and renders predictable their results. Urizen's "chain" which was previously identified with Locke's "chain of consequences" or the chain of cause and effect, is a suitable symbol of

"the Newtonian world of necessity . . . that is, the Urizenic spatialized absorption of Orc's organic energy," most appropriately visualised by Descartes' world of revolving vortices.¹⁸⁸ There is a tentative connection between this "chain" and Urizen's "spine" writhing in the Abyss when Los binds the Demiurge. In The Book of Los this spine is "Like a serpent! Like an iron chain" (5:16 E93). According to Ault "the whirling of Urizen's backbone associates him with the Cartesian vortices, and the chain form associates him with Newtonian attraction, which was often characterized as a 'chain' . . . Newton's system is also implied . . . by the existence of a void in which the chain is whirling."¹⁸⁹ Whatever the supposed origins of the images of the vortex and the chain, in this particular context they combine the consciousness of temporal continuity and of being imprisoned within the temporal dimension with the notion of causal or mechanical continuity, to form a complex system of repressive authority. Urizen's desire for power is the moving force behind these developments. The specific properties both of vortex and chain are also symbolic correlatives of his intellectual limitation. According to Blake "there can be no Good-Will. Will is always Evil it is pernicious to others or selfish."¹⁹⁰ Nevertheless, Urizen proceeds on his journey "By Providence divine conducted not bent from his own will / Lest death Eternal should be the result for the Will cannot be violated" (74:31-32). Hence, there is a providential

quality inherent in their constricting activities, of which Urizen and Los are unaware. These activities are invested with an element of finality, also to be found in Locke's system: "Without some such fixed parts or periods, the order of things would be lost to our finite understandings, in the boundless invariable oceans of duration and expansion, which comprehend in them all finite beings, and in their extent belong only to the deity." This deity is Urizen. The events of Nights VIII and IX prove that the uninspired activities of Urizen and Los in Nights IV-VI also constitute necessary phases in the Divine plan of Salvation. While pursuing his self-centred designs, Urizen unconsciously acts in accordance with Divine "Understanding;" God being "the Influx from that understanding into the Will . . . Understanding or Thought is not natural to Man it is acquired by means of Suffering & Distress i.e. Experience."¹⁹¹ Urizen is undergoing the painful process of gaining such experience.

Eventually, "the Sciences were fixd & the Vortexes began to operate / On all the sons of men" (73:21-22). The vortices draw human minds into their eddies. As Urizen is unable to escape from and transcend their attractive power, he pretends that they constitute all that is necessary for man to know about the nature of reality. By imposing this doctrine he gains "a New Dominion over all his sons & Daughters / & over the Sons

& daughters of Luvah in the horrible Abyss" (73:24-25). Henceforth, deluded mankind, "every human soul terrified," will be forced to accept "the turning wheels of heaven" as objective limits of perception and expansion, as paradigms of absolute order and irresistible necessity. Like Har and Heva in The Song of Los, under Urizen's influence men shrink "away inward withring away" (73:23) from the external universe of objects perceived by shrunken senses. They fail to realise that only their "outward forms [are] in the Abyss," and that "every one open within into Eternity at will" (74:1-2). Clearly, Eternity and Urizen's world of vortices are not successive in time. They are discrete or discontinuous levels of reality, in accordance with Man's unfallen or fallen consciousness. Before the Fall, Man's perceptions are a function of his will; consequently his senses contain and control the universe.

The eyelids expansive as morning & the Ears
As a golden ascent winding round to the heavens of
heavens
• • •
And the wing like tent of the Universe beautiful
surrounding all
Or drawn up or let down at the will of the immortal
man (73:37-74:4).

However, once Man's perceptions and, therefore, his will have become functions of his self-centred rational mind, the pliable "wing like tent of the Universe" is replaced by Urizen's rigid woof or web of abstract science and religious hypocrisy. The human spirit finds himself inprisoned by powerful natural and supernatural forces

and submits to the moral, epistemological and ontological limitations they impose on him. The past, manifesting itself through the repressive forms of traditional values, of moral and metaphysical doctrines and empiricism, determines the present and anticipates the future course of events. Urizen is both promulgator and embodiment of all forms of repressive orthodoxy.

Clothed in aged venerableness obstinately resolv'd
Travelling thro darkness & wherever he travel'd a
dire Web
Follow'd behind him as the Web of a Spider dusky &
cold
Shivering across from Vortex to Vortex drawn out
from his mantle of years
A living Mantle adjoind to his life & growing from
his Soul (73:30-34).¹⁹²

The East and Man's Heart are complementary symbols. Deserted by Luvah, the East is void. Correspondingly, the Heart is no longer the seat of love, and science is no longer identical with mercy.¹⁹³ The centre of Man's affections has been transformed into an abyss of space, nature, or vacant human consciousness; and it is studied, charted and compartmentalised by abstract science, as distinct from "Con or Innate Science."¹⁹⁴

In Urizen, the thirty divided cities or disintegrated centres of the previously united human community are implicitly identified with Urizen's heart which Los had formed into a globe, suspended in the abyss. Urizen's

web of sorrows divides the "dungeon-like heaven" into numerous religious creeds as well as philosophical and political convictions, thus turning man against man. In The Four Zoas, Urizen's vortices, which in their aggregate constitute his web, have the same effect. Like the unfortunate inhabitants of Urizen's cities, the individuals and societies caught in a vortex, live without "Con-Science." Spiritually and emotionally isolated from their fellow men, they form their personal vortices, or self-contained and self-centred worlds. Instead of opening such mental centres, Urizen combines these aberrations into a cohesive system symbolised by the web. While the phenomenal aspects of reality are projections of mental form, this web is an abstraction of both. Its primarily cosmological associations in Night VI will be considerably developed in connection with Vala, Rahab and Tirzah.

Conducted by Divine Providence, Urizen arrives in the "Abhorred world of Dark Urthona" (74:30), located in the North. (In Urizen, the Eternals allocated to Urizen a place in the North, a "world of solid obstruction.") This "Shadow" or "Spectre" of Urthona is a vast iron-clad figure, reminiscent of Spenser's giant Talus.¹⁹⁵ He is in league with Tharmas. The Spectre is supported by "fifty two armies," whom Damon identifies with "the armies of Time"--fifty-two being the number of weeks. These "armies" are being led by "Four sons of Urizen," possibly symbolising the four ancient elements, as they do in

9. Night VII(a)

There are two Nights VII (a and b). Critical opinion is divided as to their respective dates of composition and their relative chronology. Margoliouth and Bentley reject the orthodox hypothesis that VII(a) was written to replace VII(b).¹⁹⁷ Erdman disagrees and takes issue with Bentley's inconsistent line of reasoning.¹⁹⁸ While finding Erdman's account more convincing than the accounts provided by Margoliouth and Bentley, I am only marginally concerned with the vexing problem of dating. However, the question concerning the relative chronology of the two Nights has some bearing on my own argument. According to Margoliouth, "the contents of the two Nights are totally different and . . . the narrative at the end of VII [VII(a)] continues without a break at the beginning of VII 'bis.'"¹⁹⁹ Margoliouth refers, of course, to the text of VII(a) before the last two leaves (pp. 85:26-90:67) were added. Erdman points out that "the added ending does not at all fit either the original or the re-arranged beginning of VIIb but leads rather to VIII;" and he wonders whether "this too suggest[s] that VIIb was being replaced."²⁰⁰ As Blake "retained both sets of pages of the MS and did not draw lines across the page--his method of cancelling large parts of Night I"--he does not appear to have rejected either Night VII(a) or (b).²⁰¹ Indeed, as each Night continues the 'narrative' of Night VI, Blake may well have considered

the two Nights VII as being not merely consecutive but complementary. The different accounts of Orc's fate are cases in point.

The "Cavernd Universe of flaming fire" (77:6) where Orc is being held captive corresponds with Urizen's "furnaces of affliction" in Night II, where Luvah's passionate energy was molten down to run "in channels" of repressive convention and public morality, cut by Urizen's "plow of ages." Eternal energy was cast into geometric shapes and forced into self-generating cycles. In Night VII(a) this motif is developed when Urizen encounters Orc, the fallen form of Luvah in time and space.

In Night III (p. 42) Luvah and Vala were separated by "the vast form of Nature [which] like a Serpent roll'd between," and Vala became an elusive and tormenting object of Luvah's desire. This motif is developed in Nights VII(a) and VII(b). In VII(b) Orc encounters Vala, "the nameless shadowy Vortex," "in the Caverns of the Grave & Places of human seed" (91/Second:2,1), which is the generative world tyrannised by Urizen. Vala attempts in vain to soothe Orc's wrath. He is aware that she is "Urizens harlot / And the Harlot of Los & the deluded harlot of the Kings of Earth" (91/Second:14-15). Deprived of vision, driven by mindless jealousy and incapable of forgiveness, Orc proceeds to rend Vala who perversely

"joyd in all the Conflict Gratified & drinking tears of woe" (93:23). Her fallen existence is sustained by the blood of the victims of war. Unwittingly, Orc is playing into the hands of Urizen, as his transformation reveals "his human form consumed in his own fires" (93:21) and is scattered abroad like the lacerated body of Osiris.

Erdman postulates a historical parallel with the fate of the French Revolution as it degenerated into the Napoleonic wars.²⁰²

No more remaind of Orc but the Serpent round the
tree of Mystery
The form of Orc was gone he reard his serpent bulk
among
The stars of Urizen in Power rending the form of life
Into a formless indefinite & strewing her on the
Abyss (93:24-27).

In Night VII(a) essentially the same events are related. A wider perspective is chosen and the emphasis is placed on the roles played by Urizen, Los and Enitharmon.

Life in "the Caves of Orc" (VII(a); 77:5) is a travesty of life in Eternity, "Where liberty was justice & eternal science was mercy" (39:11). These Eternal equations are perverted, as "the adamantine scales of justice / [are consumed] in the raging lamps of mercy" (77:10-11). Drawn by the bulls of Luvah, "The plow of ages & the golden harrow," potentially apocalyptic instruments, "wade through fields / Of goary blood the immortal

seed is nourishd for the slaughter" (77:14-15). Far from preparing the universe for the Last Judgment, of which none of the protagonists at this point has any notion, the activities taking place inside the walls of Orc's prison apparently serve the sole purpose of continually renewing death. The increasingly violent force of Orc's attempts to reach Enitharmon is simultaneously associated with the heart beat and with the formation of Los's chain of jealousy which is holding down Orc.²⁰³

Prompted by envy and fear of Orc's energetic nature, Urizen time and again ("Age after Age" 78:4), attempts to cool his flames with "snows" and "storms" (78:3). However, he fails to stifle Orc's violent appetites by taking recourse to civil or natural law and moral dogma, written down in "his book of iron" whose "dreadful letters" he traces (78:2). In time Urizen's repressive efforts produce the Tree of Mystery. Its labyrinthine roots spring from the rock of Urizen's abstract reasoning and branch into the escapist "heaven of Los." From there, "they pipe formd bending down / Take root again" (78:6-7). Urizen manages to extricate himself from this entanglement by the tree, together with his books. Only the "book of iron," his inflexible and dogmatic codes of conduct regulating life in the shadow of this tree, stays behind. From the outside Urizen can record and manipulate the tree's growth, whereas under the shadow of the tree all manner of religious superstition prospers.

Urizen is puzzled to find that Orc's pulsative energy apparently is not replenished by an external source. His wrath is self-generating without spending itself. ("Whence these fierce fires but from thyself" 78:18) Nor does it appear to achieve anything but to intensify Orc's own suffering. ("Bound here to waste in pain / Thy vital substance in these fires that issue new & new" 78:20-21.) In an attempt to find out more about Orc, Urizen asks suggestive questions which incidentally reveal his own limited understanding. First, he suggests that Orc's wrath is sustained by his frustrated desire brought on by remote "visions of sweet bliss far other than this burning clime" (78:35). At the time of Orc's binding by Los this assumption would have been correct. But not now. The second possibility contemplated by Urizen--"Or is thy joy founded on torment which others bear for thee" (78:41)--is closer to the truth. It anticipates the kind of character into which Orc will eventually develop under the influence of Urizen and Vala. Urizen imputes Orc with perverted notions of pleasure which invert the Christian message of Salvation and constitute a cynical contrast to Christ's self-sacrifice. However, while being "nailed to the burning rock" (79:1), Orc is neither a conscious type nor a detractor of Jesus. While Luvah's original rebellion was perversely directed against the "bondage of the human form," "that human delusion," Orc insists that his fury is merely caused by, and directed against, the repression

of his self-centred appetites. Because his aspirations are so limited, he is an ideal victim for Urizen whose despised instructions will eventually transform Orc into an anti-type of Christ.

Orc scornfully contrasts his own enforced state of frustration with Urizen's self-imposed imprisonment within the icy rock of his artificial intellectual system. The worlds supposedly operating in accordance with Urizen's speculations continually collapse under their own weight, as it were.²⁰⁴ Yet, undaunted by these repeated failures Urizen, "fixd obdurate brooding" (79:10), perseveres writing his books for the sole purpose of tracing "the wonders of Futurity in horrible fear of the future" (79:16). It still is Urizen's aim to establish the kind of stable system--intellectual, political and religious--that will either preclude change altogether; or, if there is to be change, with Orc as its energetic agent, it must be controlled and rendered predictable. Hence, Orc must not simply be suppressed, but rendered subservient to Urizen's reactionary purposes. To this end Urizen advises the scornful Orc:

Read my books explore my Constellations
Enquire of my Sons & they shall teach thee how to War
Enquire of my Daughters who accursd in the dark depths
Knead bread of Sorrow by my stern command for I am
God
Of all this dreadful ruin (79:20-24).

As well as expounding the abstract laws established by Urizen as determining the cyclic motions performed by the constellations, Urizen's books lay down in a rational manner how wars ought to be conducted and, equally sinister, the insidious moral codes and social doctrines by which mankind can most effectively be enslaved. Urizen's daughters prepare the corrupting conditions in which his policies can best be implemented. Following his instructions as laid down in his "book of iron," they "knead the bread of sorrow" on which Orc feeds.²⁰⁵ In addition to the confinement within the narrow circumference of 'natural' perceptions and desires, fallen mankind is being exposed to the corrupt ethics of "Moral Duty" (80:3). Hunger, poverty and physical hardship are artificially produced with the sole purpose of subjecting the helpless human victims to the tyranny of their cynical 'benefactors.' Urizen adopts William Pitt's prescriptions for dealing with "the poorer classes," when he recommends:²⁰⁶

Compell the poor to live upon a Crust of bread by
soft mild arts
Smile when they frown frown when they smile & when
a man looks pale
With labour & abstinence say he looks healthy & happy
And when his children sicken let them die there are
enough
Born even too many & our earth will be overrun
Without these arts If you would make the poor live
with temper
With pomp give every crust of bread you give with
gracious cunning
. . .
. . . till we can
Reduce all to our will as spaniels are taught with art
(80:9-21).

This satirical exposition of Malthusian principles and the thinking behind much of eighteenth-century social benevolence illuminates the meaning and purpose of bringing "the shadow of Enitharmon beneath [Urizen's] wondrous tree" (80:5).²⁰⁷ Deprived of his concentrating vision, the embodiment of his inspiration, "Los may Evaporate . . . & be no more" (80:6). Henceforth, man's aspirations will be those of the uninspired and, therefore, frustrated "Spectre of Urthona," to whom Enitharmon represents no more than the attractive yet elusive female principle and object of his desires. Urizen envisages that ^{under} his auspices Enitharmon will perpetually produce Orcish life. Even while the child is still inside Enitharmon's womb, the binding or repressive conditioning begins, "the heart & brain are formed" (80:22). Far from dissociating himself from his violent offspring, Los will be filled "with ambitious fury that his race shall all devour" (80:26). Both he and his offspring will only have 'natural' desires, and their respective displays of energy will be without metaphysical finality.

Although Orc is painfully aware of Urizen's "Cold hypocrisy" (80:27), his "divided Spirit" (80:29) is unable to withstand Urizen's deceitful power. The central theme of Tiriel is now reiterated.

Like a worm I rise in peace unbound
From wrath Now When I rage my fetters bind me more
. . . A Worm compell'd. Am I a worm
Is it in strong deceit that man is born. In strong
deceit
Thou dost restrain my fury that the worm may fold
the tree (80:29-34).

Submission to Urizen's hypocrisy, be it religious or social, turns man into a worm peacefully enfolding Urizen's Tree of dualist knowledge. The worm-like men who willingly suffer such oppression, feed on the bread of sorrow prepared by Urizen's daughters. Paradoxically, resistance to Urizen's tyranny has the same effect as willing submission. It leads to a tightening of Orc's chains, as any threat of revolt provokes further repressive measures. Orc reveals his Eternal identity as Luvah and reminds Urizen that the original Fall came about when Luvah stole Urizen's "light & it became fire / Consuming." (80:39-40) Now, it seems, Urizen's vision of a desirable future, when "the Human Nature shall be no more," is about to be fulfilled. Orc is gradually transformed into a furious serpent, despising both love and reason.²⁰⁸ In a parody of the Last Supper, the ritual of Holy Communion and of the mystery of Transsubstantiation, the serpent Orc acts as the satanic Antichrist. He literally transforms "the heavenly wine" into the blood of the unfortunate victims of war.

Receiving as a poisoned Cup Receives the heavenly wine
And turning affection into fury & thought into
abstraction
A Self consuming dark devourer rising into the
heavens (80:46-48).

Urizen has learned from his "wandering Experiments in the
horrible Abyss" (81:1) that a three-dimensional conception
of the universe is the best prison for mind and body:

He knew that weakness stretches out in breadth &
length he knew
That wisdom reaches high & deep & therefore he made
Orc
In Serpent form compelled stretch out & up the
mysterious tree
He suffered him to Climb that he might draw all human
forms
Into submission to his will nor knew the dread result
(81:2-6).

Urizen has realised that Orc's irrational fury can be
manipulated and pressed into his own service. Violence
and war serve to defend a repressive system. Ultimately,
Orc will fight Orc and only Urizen will gain from this
perverse conflict. Orc, therefore, is "a Self consuming
dark devourer," both a symbol of perpetual renewal and of
disappointed promise. Paley points out that "according
to Boehme, wrath consumes itself--and the repentant Urizen
of Night IX will say 'Let Luvah rage in the dark deep even
to Consummation' . . . Orc is now a manifestation of the
will-to-power, manifested in history as Napoleon, in the
psyche as the Satanic selfhood."²⁰⁹ Having assumed the
appearance of the biblical seducer--his posture parodies

that of the crucified Christ--he has become the 'natural' symbol of martyrdom and of hero-worship in a historical context. Urizen's continual sacrifice of Orc does not point beyond the fallen condition, but serves to perpetuate it. The equivocal rebel of the minor Prophecies is now revealed as a purely natural force unable to bring about any kind of apocalypse, natural or supernatural. This, of course, does not preclude the possibility of his corruption being a necessary if only a passing phase in European history, the history of human consciousness in general, and that of the poet in particular. If recognised as error it can be transcended and thus lead on to the notion, and possibly the realisation, of a supernatural apocalypse.

While one has to agree with Bloom's contention that "political revolution is just that, revolution," his definition of Orc's state of corruption as "the revolving of another cycle of revolt aging into repression" is reminiscent of Frye's questionable findings concerning the so-called Orc-cycle in The Four Zoas. In The Four Zoas Orc does indeed degenerate "into Urizen's religion, the French Revolution passing into the despotism of Napoleon."²¹⁰ Yet, Orc does not grow old nor does he lose his identity. His energies and appetites merely become functions of Urizen's will. Until then he will be integrated in Urizen's strategy of deceit which renders violent historical change

not only predictable, but controls it. Urizen can even provoke violence, allegedly in the service of 'progress,' because he has mastered the mechanics and, to some degree, the metaphysics of change in science, religion and politics. Despite, perhaps even because of, revolutions the 'status quo' remains undisturbed. Hypocrisy, manipulation, deceit and violence are the effective expedients by which Urizen maintains the dubious "Godlike State / That [allegedly] lies beyond the bounds of Science in the Grey obscure" (80:41-42). Although Orc scoffs at Urizen's deceit, he is not equipped to destroy it.

Neither Urizen nor the reader can be clear at this point in the poem about the long-term implications of Urizen's attempt at manipulating the historical process. However, the references to Divine Providence in Night VI and elsewhere, indicate that Urizen is by no means "the Sole author / Of all his wandering Experiments in the horrible Abyss" (80:51-81:1). His successful corruption of Orc has implications for the future course of events, the patterns of historical process in general, and the modifications of human consciousness in particular, that are beyond Urizen's scope of comprehension.²¹¹

Los's search for a comprehensively satisfying permanent form of experience in the natural world is continually frustrated as Enitharmon, the self-willed object of his ungratified desires, continues to elude him. Although Enitharmon is only a shadow of her Eternal identity, an "image of death upon [Los's] witherd valleys" (81:13), within the world of revolving cycles she is also the reproductive female principle perpetuating the motion of the universal cycle, as depicted in the drawing at the bottom of page 82. Mediated by the natural world she is a fleeting vision which vanishes as soon as it is perceived. There is no lasting union between the perceiver and the perceived as reality and ideality no longer coincide. Los is puzzled by the physical and emotional elusiveness of his vision whose mode of existence he fails to understand.²¹² Nevertheless, Enitharmon reminds Los of his lost happiness. And because he has once "seen the day" (82:8) when he lived in harmony with her and with nature, calling "the beasts & birds to their delights" (82:5), Los now feels the "stingings of desire [and] longings after life" (82:9). Yet, instead of finding rest and fulfilment and instead of releasing them from their "vegetative forms" (83:30) and putting them to constructive use, he "must war with secret monsters of the animating worlds" (82:7) and suppress these embodiments of natural energy. At this stage in his development he lacks the determination to reform the fallen world in accordance with his fleeting notions of an ideal reality.

The Spectre of Urthona, on the other hand, is quite happy to perceive "the Shadow of Enitharmon / Beneath the Tree of Mystery" (82:23) with its poisonous fruit "of Plagues hidden in shining globes . . . on the living tree" (82:22). He has reconciled himself to the painful facts of life in the fallen world and uses them for his own selfish ends. Unlike the Shadow of Enitharmon, the Spectre recollects life in Eternity where he and Enitharmon "in undivided Essence walkd about." While strongly deploring their present depraved condition, the Spectre nevertheless believes that the "delightful Tree" (84:1) of Mystery, associated with religious superstition serving as a cloak for the pharisaic Urizen, with Orc's violence and Vala's deceit, does, for the time being, fulfil a useful protective if not providential function. It is supposedly

given us for a Shelter from the tempests of Void
& Solid
Till once again the morn of ages shall renew upon us
(84:2-3).

The Spectre thus rejects the materialist-determinist conception of reality in favour of a vague hope founded on superstition.

The subsequent scenes make the point that matters have to get worse before any improvement is possible. Error must become manifest before it can be overcome. The

Spectre of Urthona takes advantage of Enitharmon's fear of Orc, and promises that his union with her will not produce another Orc. Instead Enitharmon's "next joy . . . shall be in sweet delusion / And its birth in fainting & sleep & Sweet delusions of Vala" (82:35-36). While Enitharmon's Shadow has no illusions about the Spectre's intentions, she cannot escape. However, the mention of Vala's name brings back painful memories of the Man's Fall. The Shadow recollects that the Man was seduced in Beulah, the threefold natural paradise of brain, heart and loins; and she now demands of the Spectre to "find a way to punish Vala in the fiery South / To bring her down subjected to the rage of her fierce boy" (83:33-34). Motivated by a desire for revenge, she hopes (though in vain) for the destruction of the seductive yet perfidious and corrupting female aspect of the natural world by Orc, whose energies have degenerated into purely destructive physical violence. However, when Orc, intoxicated by the fumes of the Tree of Mystery, eventually tears Vala apart she shrieks with perverse delight since, paradoxically, this is the only way the depraved appetites of the "female will" can be satisfied.²¹³

Unlike Urizen, who merely hopes to consolidate his position, the Spectre craves for a return to prelapsarian bliss. But he mistakenly believes that Orc can permanently destroy Vala. Addressing the Shadow of Enitharmon, he declares:

I view futurity in thee I will bring down soft Vala
To the embraces of this terror & I will destroy
That body I created then shall we unite again in bliss
(84:33-35).

The Spectre is unaware that he is playing into the hands of Urizen and Vala. Ironically, both the Spectre and Urizen hope to achieve their respective goals by the identical expedient. The Spectre can only envisage apocalyptic change coming about through destructive violence, because he is a prisoner of his own impaired conception of reality, confined within the dimensions of time and space-- he is "a Spectre wandering / The deeps of Los the Slave of that Creation I created / I labour night & day for Los" (84:30-32). Like the Shadow of Enitharmon, he fails to realise that the rending of Vala by Orc will not destroy the illusions of 'natural' life, but that it will merely perpetuate and intensify suffering and distress.

Hirsch points out that "the Spectre of Urthona, who in the epic is sometimes identified with Los, sometimes with Urthona, represents the intermediate Blake of 1797-1800, the Blake of threefold vision and the celebrant of Beulah."²¹⁴ Hirsch believes that "from Blake's standpoint after about 1800, this prophet of the natural apocalypse represented not simply the fallen spirit of prophecy whose god was Tharmas, but also an entirely different Blake, a spectrous self so totally discrete from the 'true' Blake as to require a discrete name."²¹⁵ To support his view

Hirsch quotes from the Notebook: "My Spectre around me night & day / Like a Wild beast guards my way" (E467). While Hirsch's identification of the Spectre of Urthona, "the prophet of the natural apocalypse," with "the intermediate Blake of 1797-1800," is an interesting supposition, the supporting evidence cited by Hirsch (pp. 140-143) does not warrant such a specific conclusion. Instead, the Notebook poem quoted above suggests that the Spectre is always present and dangerous and has to be kept at bay by the visionary poet, Blake/Los. In the context of page 84 of The Four Zoas the Spectre may be identified with a conformist artist who resents his lot. His union with the Shadow of Enitharmon is the conscious attempt at revealing the natural world in its deceitful appearance as Vala on the one hand, and as Enitharmon, the artist's true emanation or vision, on the other. According to Frye, the union of the Spectre of Urthona and the Shadow of Enitharmon "produces the fallen perspective of life, the combining of its two great categories time and space into a single abstract form, on which is founded a progression of tyranny leading to Antichrist."²¹⁶ Unfortunately, he is not a truly creative power, but a mind obsessively concerned with the passage of time. He craves for the future because he hopes for a renewal of paradisaical happiness, and he devours the present in order to attain this final objective. The Spectre is aware that in her present state Enitharmon is no more than a "lovely Delusion," and that

he himself is "Deformd . . . a ravening devouring lust continually / Craving" (84:37-39). Nevertheless, despite his deformity he is "as the Spectre of the Living" (84:40), because he aspires toward a return to Eternity and permanent spiritual harmony with his emanation. He also knows that only the annihilation of the "spectres of the Dead" will reopen and make passable "the Gates of Eternal life" (84:40-41).²¹⁷

Giving birth to Vala, "this wonder horrible a Cloud" (85:17), causes "the Gates of Enitharmons heart" (85:13) to burst open, never to be closed again. The Shadow of Enitharmon is now separated from her assertive, possessive portion or "female will." In a demonic parody of events commonly associated with the Last Judgment, the dead do not rise from their graves but

burst forth from the bottoms of their tombs
In male forms without female counterparts or
Emanations
Cruel and ravening with Enmity & Hatred & War
In dreams of Ulro dark delusive drawn by the lovely
shadow (85:18-21).

As they have no transcendent concentrating vision, no love for anyone but themselves, these satanic "dead" fight without real purpose. War rages for war's sake. Their mindless conflict in the shadow of the Tree of Mystery is conducted for the sake of an illusion which reduces men to the level of blood-thirsty animals who pass judgement

on themselves. Thus Orc is delivered into the power of Vala. The fact that the Tree of Mystery is enrooted both in Ulro and "in the world of Los," a "double rooted Labyrinth" (85:25), indicates the failure of the potentially enlightening rational powers and of the imagination.

Night VII(a) (85:26) continues where the "Seventh Night" formerly ended.²¹⁸ Throughout VII(b) Los and Enitharmon remain unregenerated, whereas considerable changes of attitude on the parts of the Spectre, the Shadow and Los mark the new end of Night VII(a) and connect it with Night VIII. There are, no doubt, numerous obscurities, lack of narrative continuity and even self-contradictory repetitions. Most important, it is not clear why the Spectre of Urthona and Los are suddenly transformed from egotistic beings into labourers for the Apocalypse. Of course, 'sub specie aeternitatis' this is what they have unwittingly been since the Fall. Whether, as Hirsch believes, this change also indicates a change of heart on Blake's part at the time when he added the new final passages to Night VII(a) cannot be ascertained from the poem.

It is quite possible that the regeneration theme was superimposed on Vala, as Paley claims, and that it may have caused a rupture in the organic development of that

conjectural archetype.²¹⁹ However, the regeneration theme is integrated into the extant text. It helps to determine the poem's structure and blends in with what has been termed its narrative strategy. For instance, the retrospective reports by Enitharmon and the Spectre (pp. 83-84) of Albion's and Urthona's Fall, and of Urthona's division into the Spectre and Los obtain dramatic and thematic significance mainly because they are followed by scenes intimating the reversal of Urthona's Fall. The Spectre demands that Los should "Unbar the Gates of Memory" (85:37) and recognise him as his divided "real Self . . . the Slave of Every passion / Of [Los's] fierce Soul . . . buried beneath / The ruins of the Universe." (85:35-40) Anamnesis of the Eternal 'past' will provide Los and the Spectre with a transcendent vision which can only be realised by actively reforming the fallen world from inside, as it were. Emphasis is placed on the psychological and ethical implications of this reconciliation which is the first significant step toward Apocalypse. Due to Enitharmon's mediation, Los feels pity for the Spectre:

the Spectre enterd Los's bosom Every sigh & groan
Of Enitharmon bore Urthonas Spectre on its wings
Obdurate Los felt Pity Enitharmon told the tale
Of Urthona. Los embracd the Spectre first as a brother
Then as another Self; astonishd humanizing & in tears
In Self abasement Giving up his Domineering lust
(85:26-31).

Annihilation of 'self' and reconciliation with his time-bound will are the necessary preliminary measures man has

to take if he ever wants to regain the Divine Vision. More immediately, Los cannot embrace Enitharmon until he is united with his Spectre, "Consummating by pains & labours / That mortal body & by Self annihilation back returning / To Life Eternal" (85:33-35). In contrast with the physical and spiritual repression and cruel destruction committed by Vala and Orc under the shadow of the Tree of Mystery, an act of spiritual purgation is to be performed. From an ontological point of view, the consciousness of the 'natural' man, who is "buried beneath the ruins of the universe," can conceive of a new reality only by being liberated from its self-imposed fetters. From an ethical point of view the will to survive at all cost and to dominate others must be overcome in favour of co-operation and mutual trust. If these preconditions are met the "flawed reality" which was consolidated by Los, and which is being maintained by the Spectre and tyrannised by Urizen, will give way to the idealist's dream:

another better world will be
Opend within your heart & loins & wondrous brain
Threefold as it was in Eternity & this the fourth
Universe
Will be Renewd by the three & consummated in Mental²²⁰
fires (85:43-46).

Rather than attempt to reposses by force or intoxication the divided and externalised elusive emanation, the Spectre proposes an imaginative and sympathetic sublimation and

gratification of emotional, sexual and intellectual desires. He acknowledges that "the fourth Universe," the external material world of time and space, cannot be truly renewed by the destructive fires of Orc; revolutionary wars cannot bring about the Apocalypse. Genuine renewal, the transformation of the world into a visionary Eden, can only be accomplished by spiritualising 'reality.' To this end the dualist conceptions of subject and object, reality and ideality, which are constitutive aspects of man's fallen state will be abolished in this "better world" which is to emanate from the human microcosm existing "within . . . heart & loins & wondrous brain." The association of these parts of the human physiology with Urthona, Luvah and Urizen, respectively, and with the complementary aspects of the Fall has already been discussed.

So far, Los has been unaware of any responsibility toward anyone or anything apart from himself. He jealously guarded Enitharmon because he did not want to render his private vision useful to mankind. Because of this lack of altruistic motivation he lost her. The Spectre of Urthona now provides Los, the potentially inspired poet, with a sense of his position and responsibility within the historical process. Of this process which continues whether Los likes it or not, the Spectre is painfully aware. Unification with Los will hopefully enable both of them to liberate themselves from the limitations imposed on

the human consciousness by a given historical situation.²²¹
Should Los, or one of his incarnations in time, refuse,
another visionary poet-prophet will take his place and
guide the Spectre.

Another body will be prepared
For thou art but a form & organ of life & of thyself
Art nothing being Created Continually by Mercy &
Love divine (85:47-86:3).

The Spectre knows that Los is the agent of Divine Providence.
There is no explanation of how he acquired this particular
knowledge. Los's creative powers are not subject to the
laws of causality. Nevertheless, they require to be
motivated and directed. The Spectre's memory of his own
integrity and happiness in Eden, in contrast with his
intensely painful experience of fallen existence, makes
Los conscious that the flawed conception of reality for
which he is partly responsible is by no means the ultimate.
The limitations it imposes on the human consciousness are
man-made. They can therefore be overcome and man can form
a new reality founded on new principles. Convinced by the
Spectre's words, Los rejects the 'enlightened' notion that
man's indignation, though justified, should be "controllable /
By Reasons power" (86:6-7). He furthermore rejects the
Lockean notion or 'complex idea' of 'substance,' that
unknown, abstract 'substratum' wherein 'simple ideas' of
external material reality allegedly subsist and from which
they derive. Los feels

a World within
Opening its gates & in it all the real substances
Of which these in the outward World are shadows
which pass away (86:7-9).

Los now understands that he can only be reunited with his emanation if his motivation is altruistic. But when he sets out to "teach / Peace to the Soul of dark revenge & repentance to Cruelty" (86:11-12), Enitharmon behaves like Vala. She "trembling fled & hid beneath Urizen's tree" (87:1). Objective reality and the poet's visionary ideal are still far apart because neither the natural world nor his vision are yet ready for instant renewal. The end of time and space is not yet at hand.

It must be stressed that Los is inspired by the supernatural power of "Divine Mercy" (87:3), not by some vague innate idea, Platonic or otherwise, or by a 'natural' muse. This being so, one has to take note of Frye's warning that "it is here that Blake is to be sharply distinguished, if not from all mystics, at least from that quality in mysticism which may and often does make the mystical merely the subtlest of all attempts to get along without a redeeming power in time."²²² The Spectre "beheld the Center opened by Divine Mercy inspired" (87:3). As a direct result of his mingling with Los he gains a view of the essential being of things. This novel perspective transcends the dualism of good and evil, of subjective and objective, and the relativity associated with Urizen's

vortices. However, metaphorically speaking, the material universe is not yet annihilated. Los is given

Tasks . . . to destroy
That body he created but in vain for Los performd
Wonders of labour
They Builded Golgonooza . . .
. . . in the nether heavens for beneath
Was opend new heavens & a new Earth beneath & within
(87:4-9). 223

Apparently the Spectre expects the man of imagination to bring about the immediate destruction of the temporal spatial universe. Los, however, finds that building Golgonooza, the city of art and aesthetic form of threefold vision--as distinguished from Beulah, its threefold natural counterpart--is merely the half-way house. It is

Threefold within the brain within the heart within
the loins
A Threefold Atmosphere Sublime continuous from
Urthonas /fourfold/ world
But yet having a Limit Twofold named Satan & Adam
(87:10-12).

In Urthona's fourfold world the material and temporal conception of reality is consumed in mental flames, whereas the world of mysterious particular 'substances' which constitute the satanic "Limit of Translucence" (87:13) is only known by its 'accidents.' The transition from Urthona's fourfold world to Los's threefold vision of a humanised earth suggests different degrees of visionary intensity rather than succession in time. Correspondingly

the limits of Satan and Adam constitute the lower level of vision which Los has to transcend. Nevertheless, the reversal of the Fall initiated by the merging of Los and the Spectre, the process of regaining access from Golgonooza to Eden takes place in time.²²⁴

Enitharmon's behaviour in the shadow of the Tree of Mystery, is reminiscent of Milton's Eve. The gathering of the "ruddy fruit" (87:16) has three complementary effects on her. First, she becomes conscious of having sinned which entails an awareness of moral dualism. Secondly, if viewed in the light of Romans, 5:11-12, her insistence that only "a ransom" (87:18) can save her "from Eternal death" proves that she has a perverted notion of redemption. Thirdly, with her eyes opened she perceives life with very much the same revulsion as Enion did before her. 'Natural' existence is made up of endless cycles, sustained by the flames of ungratified desire.

Life lives upon Death & by devouring appetite
All things subsist on one another thenceforth in
Despair
I spend my glowing time (87:19-21).

She lacks the kind of innocent yet informed faith in Divine Providence and Mercy, as displayed by Matron Clay in The Book of Thel and by the Daughters of Beulah, and therefore

fails to accept with humility the painful realities of fallen existence.²²⁵ To her the self-perpetuating generative cycles now assume an infernal quality. It is consistent with her conception of existence as purely 'natural' that she should choose a sacrificial victim as ransom for her own salvation from "Eternal death" (87:18). Although she has a very hazy notion of precisely what she wants to achieve, and certainly no notion of altruistic self-sacrifice as performed by Christ, she nevertheless demands that Los must

bear this Self conviction [and] . . . Eat . . .
also of
The fruit & give [her] proof of life Eternal
(87:22-23).

Otherwise she will die. Los is expected to justify his newly-acquired faith by subjecting himself to the repressive rigours of moral dualism and of natural determinism. Having eaten the fruit, Los is overwhelmed by despair, the gravest sin against the Holy Spirit. However, the Spectre saves the creative imagination from destruction.

Urthonas spectre in part mingling with him comforted
him
Being a medium between him & Enitharmon But This Union
Was not to be Effected without Cares & Sorrows &
Troubles
Of six thousand Years of self denial and of bitter
Contrition (87:26-29).

The time-bound consciousness mediates between the imaginative faculty and its object of vision or, in other words, time becomes a function of imaginative creativity, and vice versa. Together they work for the reunification of all forms of life in the harmony of Eden. The Spectre's hope for a recovery of lost happiness thus provides natural existence with a purpose. Combined with Los's imaginative powers an assimilative, perhaps even a cumulative form will be created in the course of six thousand years of artistic and prophetic history. When the material universe is consumed in "mental flames" this form will finally be revealed. The same sentiment is expressed in The Marriage of Heaven and Hell (Plate 14):

The ancient tradition that the world will be consumed in fire at the end of six thousand years is true. as I have heard from Hell.

For the cherub with his flaming sword is hereby commanded to leave his guard at tree of life, and when he does, the whole creation will be consumed, and appear infinite. and holy whereas it now appears finite & corrupt.

This will come to pass by an improvement of sensual enjoyment.

But first the notion that man has a body distinct from his soul, is to be expunged . . .

If the doors of perception were cleansed every thing would appear to man as it is, infinite.

Perceptual improvement which will finally lead to lasting regeneration, is founded on the ethical maxim of "self-denial and of bitter Contrition." This painful temporal

process lasts the symbolic period of six thousand years. This is the message Los tries to convey to Enitharmon whom he beholds "like a shadow withering / As on the outside of Existence" (87:42-43). The separation of the emanation from her lover, previously depicted both in sexual and in perceptual terms as a fallacious externalising objectification or projection, has to be reversed. It is in keeping with Blake's idealism that any change in the nature of 'reality' can only be achieved if Locke's Urizenic epistemology is discarded. In the poetic context the ontological implications of such a change are visualised as a movement from the outside to the inside of "Existence," from a materialist-determinist conception of being to one which fuses the tenets of subjectivism with the comforts provided by Christian metaphysics. Los therefore appeals to Enitharmon:

Turn inwardly thine Eyes & there behold the Lamb
of God
Clothed in Luvahs robes of blood descending to
redeem (87:44-45).

If Enitharmon follows Los's appeal she will acquire an understanding of the true significance of self-sacrifice as performed by Jesus in time ultimately to end all time. In Christian spirit Los repents his "former life" (87:52) and forgives Enitharmon for the "ancient injuries" (87:48) she has inflicted on him. However, Enitharmon has not yet comprehended the essence of the Christian message and

believes that "the Lamb of God" is Luvah reborn not to redeem but to punish with

Eternal Death fit punishment for such
Hideous offenders Uttermost extinction in eternal
pain
An ever dying life of stifling & obstruction shut out
Of existence to be a sign & terror to all who behold
Lest any should in futurity do as we have done in
heaven (87:55-59).

She attributes to Christ the motivation of the avenging God of the Old Testament, who is the prototype of Tiriel and Urizen. The Spectre of Urthona suggests to his counterpart Los that they create "bodies" for "the Spectres of the Dead" (87:30).

Let us Create them Coun(terparts)
For without a Created Body the Spectre is Eternal
Death (87:38-39).

These Spectres have no purpose in life transcending their appetites and immediate needs for physical subsistence. Los is to create for them imaginative forms, visions with which they can identify, and spiritual places of rest.²²⁶

The mode of artistic creation and the motivation prompting it are presented as a subtle parody of Urizen's manner of creation. Truly visionary activity throughout human history is an ethical achievement as it requires self-denial by the artist. The aesthetic product, for

instance poetry, is its lastingly valid manifestation which can provide and maintain many "a centering vision" (87:31) in time for "the Spectres of the Dead." The artist willingly spends his powers and, figuratively speaking, sacrifices his life. He is motivated by the unselfish

desire
. . . to fabricate embodied semblances in which
the dead
May live before us in our palaces & in our gardens
of labour
Which now open within the Center we behold spread
abroad
To form a world of Sacrifice of brothers & sons &
daughters (90:8-12).

Like Urizen's worlds of objectified abstractions, symbolised for instance by his vortices, the world conceived by the visionary poet is a mental creation. However, while Urizen's 'system' is essentially dualistic and designed to alienate man from his environment and render him a prisoner both in mind and in body, Los's artistic creations invert the process of organic perception, which terminates in reflection and abstraction, by opening up a new visionary world of which Urizen's world of weight and measure is merely a shadow. The visionary universe of Los, symbolically "spread abroad," incorporates its own mental space and extension founded on the humanising force of Christian ethics, not on some mysterious 'substance.' Urizen corrupts Orc's energy because of his fear of 'futurity.'

Los's activities, in contrast, are now motivated by his wish to comfort the raging Orc. Los creates a poetic body of vision, like The Four Zoas, which is more than a temporary refuge for the reader's mind. It is designed to further the regeneration of man.

Depending on their degree of intensity, Los's freshly kindled spiritual fires help create different forms of vision. Enitharmon declares

If mild they burn in just proportion & in secret
night
And silence build their day in shadow of soft clouds
& dews
Then I can sigh forth on the winds of Golgonooza
piteous forms
That vanish again into my bosom (90:18-21).

The dreamy respite afforded by these mild 'pathetic' forms of art, be they lyrical poetry or its equivalents in painting and music, is of a transitional nature. Greater impact can be expected if Los "in sweet moderated fury" chooses to

fabricate forms sublime
Such as the piteous spectres may assimilate themselves
into (90:22-23).

The Four Zoas, for example, is a body of sublime vision bearing its own message of redemption and regeneration. Through their actions the fictitious protagonists reveal

themselves as exemplary models of human conduct with whom the reader, himself possibly a "piteous spectre," may identify. As all characters in the poem are embodiments of different aspects of the human psyche, the reader is encouraged to find the causes and solutions of his problems within himself. The poem's "forms sublime" thus provide 'natural' man with a potentially regenerative vision. Conversely, Enitharmon declares that Los's, that is the inspired poet's, creativity will redeem him and his emanation because the potentially regenerated "piteous spectres . . . shall be ransoms for our Souls that we may live" (90:23-24). This sharply contrasts with the notion of life as living upon death, previously advocated by Enitharmon on page 87. As Los is Divinely inspired, he is no longer concerned with binding down Orc. Instead he sublimates 'natural' energy.

Los his hands divine inspired began
To modulate his fires studious the loud roaring
flames
He vanquishd with the strength of Art bending their
iron points
And drawing them forth delighted upon the winds of
Golgonooza
From out the ranks of Urizens war & from the fiery lake
Of Orc bending down as the binder of the Sheaves
follows
The reaper in both arms embracing the furious raging
flames (90:25-31).

Any act of inspired artistic creation absorbs potentially destructive energy and transforms it into controlled dramatic visionary form. As Los's efforts are associated

with harvesting, they convey a sense of apocalyptic finality. The 'Ancient of Days' depicted on the frontispiece of Europe, Urizen's creation of the "Mundane Shell," his satanic vault into the void, the repressive binding of energy into cosmic motion by Los, and the corruption of energy into war by Urizen, are all parodied by Los creating a visionary world of form and outline.

planting his right foot firm
Upon the Iron crag of Urizen thence springing up aloft
Into the heavens of Enitharmon in a mighty circle

And first he drew a line upon the walls of shining
heaven
And Enitharmon tincturd it with beams of blushing love
It remaind permanent a lovely form inspird divinely
human
Dividing into just proportions Los unwearied labourd
The immortal lines upon the heavens (90:32-39).

The order of being to which Los's visionary world pertains transcends Urizen's powers of comprehension. Its duration neither depends on measurable cyclic motion nor on the Aristotelian numbers of time; nor is it extended in measurable space. Nevertheless, the visionary space created by Los has permanent and definite spiritual form which Los does not proceed to divide into mathematical proportion, but "into just proportions." Ethics and aesthetics are thus inseparably fused. Viewing these "divinely human" and, therefore "immortal works / Of Los," the "spectrous dead" assimilate "to those forms Embodied & Lovely / In youth & beauty in the arms of Enitharmon

mild reposing" (90:41-43). However, this is not the same as purifying and consuming the whole universe in "mental flames."

Los does not repeat the Man's mistake of summarily rejecting Urizen and Orc/Luvah. Instead his

immortal spirit drew Urizen(s) Shadow away
From out the ranks of war separating him in sunder
Leaving his Spectrous form which could not be drawn
away (90:58-60).²²⁸

Urizen's non-spectral portion becomes Rintrah, and Urizen's eldest son Thiriel becomes Palambron.²²⁹ Both characters will play important parts in Milton. The "powers of Every Warrior" (90:63) are thus being divided into constructive humanised and destructive spectral portions, existing simultaneously. Correspondingly, the worlds of Golgonooza and Ulro are mutually exclusive or discrete conceptions of reality reflecting distinct states of consciousness. Los acknowledges the simultaneous existence of a 'reality,' an illusion, other than his own ideal. He does not ignore or shut it out by retiring into the ivory tower of Golgonooza as he did in Night V, but attempts to redeem its miserable inhabitants. Los has even come to love "his Enemy Urizen now / In his hands" (90:64-65) as an "infant innocence" (90:45). This vision of innocence does not indicate naivety or escapist inclinations. It is a sign of true 'understanding' obtained from painful experience which

has not been reduced to an abstract substratum of knowledge. Overcoming jealousy and selfishness Los refuses to sacrifice Urizen, as he had sacrificed Orc. Enitharmon, too, gives up "self protection" and, like Los is prepared "to meet Eternal death [rather] than to destroy / The offspring of their Care & Pity" (90:51-53). Both Orc and the Spectre of Urthona are comforted and

Tharmas most rejoiced in hope of Enions return
For he beheld new Female forms born forth upon the
air
Who wove soft silken veils of covering in sweet
rapturd trance
Mortal & not as Enitharmon without a covering veil
(90:54-57).

Artistic creation in the world of time and space is contingent on the union of the poet with his elusive vision, the object of desire. Their co-operation and the proliferation of "new female forms" as evanescent semblances of Eternal form awakens hope for a final return to Eden.

10. Night VIII

Night VIII is composed on the principle of juxtaposition. The regenerative activities of the transformed Los and Enitharmon and the corrupting activities of their demonic opponents, Urizen and Vala, are contrasted by being presented on analogous lines--a scheme which enables the reader to witness the battle for man's mind and body from different points of view. These shifts of perspective are partly responsible for the confusion among editors as regards the relative chronology of several pages or parts of them in this Night.

The unfallen inhabitants of "Great Eternity" constitute the obscure supernatural agency of "the Council of God." They meet "as one Man Even Jesus . . . / Upon the Limit of Contraction to create the fallen Man" (99:1-3). This merciful act compares favourably with the Eternals' self-protective act, in Urizen, of drawing up the net of religion and of erecting the tent of science. The fallen Man, whose perceptions are purely sensual and rational, is "stretchd like a Corse upon the oozy Rock" of sterile materialism, "Washd with the tides" of the seemingly infinite ocean of time and space, "Pale overgrown with weeds / That movd with horrible dreams hovring high over his head" (99:4-6). When the Man wakes up he is protected by "Two winged immortal shapes . . . Their wings joind in the Zenith over head . . .

The parody of Urizen's exploration of the labyrinthine dens of dark Urthona, the abyss of external material reality, is apparent. Correspondingly, the Daughters of Beulah are granted a vision of "the Saviour Even Jesus" (100/First:10), which is a comic parody of Urizen's perspective inside one of his vortices:

Looking down to Eternal Death
They saw the Saviour beyond the Pit of death &
destruction
For whether they lookd upward they saw the Divine
Vision
Or whether they lookd downward still they saw the
Divine Vision
Surrounding them on all sides beyond sin & death &
hell (100/First:12-16).

Golgonooza is illuminated by "the Divine Countenance" (100/First:7) whose omnipresence transcends empirical conceptions of time and space, life and death, and moral dualism. Man, whose original failure to retain the Divine Vision is of archetypal and, therefore, of timeless significance, is the collective form of fallen humanity, of "the dead in Beulah" whom

nothing could restrain . . . from descending
Unto Ulros night tempted by the Shadowy females sweet
Delusive cruelty they descend away from the Daughters
of Beulah
And Enter Urizens temple (99:19-22).²³⁰

Once the idealising conception of life in a pastoral natural environment is accepted as a permanent abode

instead of being recognised as a mere temporary resting place from the spiritual battles of Eternity, man is soon left with nothing to look forward to but the bare physical facts, the misery of mortal existence, and with the despair resulting from this impoverished conception of reality. However, in Night VIII the central theme of The Book of Thel is developed, as throughout this Night the providential inevitability and even the redemptive necessity of the descent into mortal life and the meaningful experience of fallen existence is stressed. Los and Enitharmon act as the agents of Divine Providence. On their way to Ulro the "dead in Beulah

descend thro the Gate of Pity
The broken heart Gate of Enitharmon She sighs them
forth upon the wind
Of Golgonooza Los stood recieving them
. . .
From out the War of Urizen & Tharmas recieving them
Into his hands. Then Enitharmon erected Looms in
Lubans Gate
And calld the Looms Cathedron (99:23-100/First:3).

Enitharmon provides these "Spectres" with woven "Bodies of Vegetation" (100/First:3-4) which "Opend within their hearts & in their loins & in their brain / To Beulah" (100/First:20-21). They are literally being provided by Enitharmon with the protective clothing of physical bodies, and with the subjective vision of a personalised world of which all of man's faculties equally partake. Henceforth their perceptions will no longer be purely sensual and

exclusively directed at the external universe of dissociated phenomena (Tharmas' world), nor will they be purely intellectual and directed at Urizen's illusory 'reality' of mental abstractions and metaphysical deceit. Their capacity for vision, which is as much a perceptual as an imaginative and ethical quality, depends on the number of faculties involved, and is Divinely ordained

some were woven single & some two fold & some
three fold
In Head or Heart or Reins according to the fittest
order
Of most merciful pity & compassion to the Spectrous
dead (100/First:23-25).

Once the human spectres have been physically, emotionally and spiritually prepared, "they plunge into the river of space for a period till / The dread Sleep of Ulro is past." (113/First:15-16) Damon believes that "thus the Spectres cross from the state of pure Reason [Moab] into the Holy Land of the Human Form."²³¹ There is definitely a biblical analogy with the Jews crossing the River Jordan into Canaan, the Promised Land. However, in the poem the emphasis is not on the actual c r o s s i n g of the River Arnon, "the river of space," but on the purifying, baptismal effect which makes this painful experience so indispensable.

Inspired by the Holy Spirit and protected within the "Walls of Golgonooza" Los contemplates "Enormous Works" of inspired art, designed to counteract the satanic "work

of death" in Ulro (101/Second̄:40,39,38). Through Los's inspiring agency, symbolised by the rhythmic "force / Attractive of his hammers" (101/Second̄:43), the spectral terrors are induced to desist from violent self-assertion which in its most extreme form constitutes war, and from conceiving of the external world as the only reality. They now "can enter to Enitharmon" (101/Second̄:41) and thereby obtain a humanising vision of natural existence.²³² The redemptive work of Los and Enitharmon also has missionary qualities. Once the "Spectrous dead" discover that they have aspirations which were not induced by physical sensations and rational reflection, they become active workers at Los's furnaces of imaginative creation, and at Enitharmon's looms where spiritual form is provided with tangible 'bodies,' whether poems or paintings or practical acts of human kindness. Enitharmon employs

the daughters in her looms & Los employd the Sons
In Golgonoozas Furnaces among the Anvils of time &
space
Thus forming a Vast family wondrous in beauty & love
And they appeared a Universal female form created
From those who were dead in Ulro from the Spectres of
the dead (103:35-39).

Previously, Enitharmon was associated with the cyclic motions of the stars and thus with "the conception of life as a wheel of fate under the control of a female power."²³³ Now, this motif of the unproductive cycles of vegetative life gives way to that of the "loom," an instrument of

assimilation, not dissociation, with which protective garments, imaginative paradigms, can be created. These are to be contrasted with Vala's mysterious veil of nature which interposes itself between man and spiritual reality.²³⁴ Creative time and space have nothing to do with the abstract entities of monotonous duration and absolute extension. The artist-blacksmith creates his own visionary time and space. These provide the indispensable base on which he progressively beats the amorphous dehumanised energies--Luvah hidden in the elemental forms of life and death--into spiritual human form.²³⁵ Visionary time and space are not simply 'given' preconditions but actual functions of such inspired creativity in the fallen world. The process of creation involving Los, Enitharmon and their family comprises the history of art and culture in its totality, and is invested with an element of eschatological finality. Considered as a community, these inspired dedicated workers form "a Vast family wondrous in beauty & love" (103:37). Their collective spiritual form constitutes Jerusalem, "A Universal female form created / From those who were dead in Ulro from the Spectres of the dead" (103:38-39). The 'logos' of their inspired activities throughout history is the "Lamb of God within Jerusalem's Veil / The divine Vision seen within the inmost deep recess / Of fair Jerusalem's bosom in a gently beaming fire" (104/First: 2-4).

The "Sons of Eden" (104/First:5), faithful inspired observers of the working of Divine Providence and devout believers in the Christian Dispensation, provide a revealing commentary on the metaphysics and ethics underlying the historical process which they conceive as teleological. They advocate an essentially theistic position by declaring that "the holy Lamb of God / . . . now beginneth to put off the dark Satanic body / Now we behold redemption" (104/First:6-8). Salvation takes place in time. Jesus gradually reveals himself within the human community; and although man has to work for his own salvation, he cannot succeed without Divine assistance:

we know that life Eternal
Depends alone upon the Universal hand & not in us
Is sought but death In individual weakness sorrow
& pain (104/First:8-10).

The isolated individual, in contrast, is only concerned for his own well-being. His consciousness extends only as far as his limited perceptions permit. He is, therefore, terrified of anything outside his powers of comprehension and becomes an easy prey to superstition and the rule of abstract law which oppresses rather than protects. In its most extreme form the 'principium individuationis,' as embodied by Urizen, negates the subjective idealism motivating the visionary poet-prophet.

The Divine work of Salvation is not a unique historical event. It is continuously taking place in Beulah. The Sons of Eden, "in Eternity looking down into Beulah" (104/Second:18), envisage its fulfilment through Christ:

Assume the dark Satanic body in the Virgins womb
O Lamb divin(e) it cannot thee annoy O pitying one
Thy pity is from the foundation of the World &
thy Redemption
Begun Already in Eternity (104/Second:13-16).

They urge the Lamb of God to offer his mortal body as a sacrifice, not in order to appease an angry deity, but in order to teach fallen man by example that he truly lives in the spirit. The Lamb of God "awakes the sleepers in Ulro" (113/First:36) and encourages them to follow him by putting off their fear of death, and by renouncing their spectral 'selfhood.' By this act the spiritual body of brotherly love and forgiveness will be revealed.

While Los and Enitharmon prepare the human spectres spiritually and emotionally for their allotted period in the "river of space," the demonic forces in this world prepare to undo their redemptive works:

Satan Og & Sihon
Build Mills of resistless wheels to unwind the soft
threads & reveal
Naked of their clothing the poor spectres before the
accusing heavens
While Rahab & Tirzah far different mantles prepare
webs of torture
Mantles of despair girdles of bitter compunction
shoes of indolence
Veils of ignorance covering from head to feet with
a cold web (113/First:16-21).

This "river of space" fills "the Lake of Udan Adan" which is "a Lake not of Waters but of Spaces." It is "formed from the tears & sighs & death sweat of the Victims / Of Urizens laws." (113/First:23-28) The image of the "river of space" symbolically combines the concept of abstract expansion with motion from which the abstract concept of time is derived. The image also suggests the human suffering which such a conception of reality causes. Like the flow of water, the momentum generated by repressed passions and desires drives Satan's "Mills," the cosmic, religious, industrial, educational and intellectual negations of the anvils of Los and the looms of Enitharmon.²³⁶ Like water, human suffering "irrigate/s/ the roots of the tree of Mystery" (113/First:28). Its "allegoric fruit," the awareness of moral duality, is both cause and consequence of man's misery and spiritual corruption.

Satan, together with Og and Sihon, who are giant projections of man's own anxieties, proceeds to deprive his human victims of their spiritual 'clothing.'²³⁷ As a result, man feels naked and sinful "before the accusing heavens" of his own making. Rahab and Tirzah her daughter, prepare new garments for their human victims.²³⁸ Despair prevents man from acting against what he has come to consider his fate. The "Veils of ignorance" henceforth conceal from him the true, man-made, causes of his misery. Like Adam,

Noah and Abraham in The Song of Los, Satan is not an
'Individual' but a mental 'State.'

There is a State named Satan learn distinct to know
O Rahab
The Difference between States & Individuals of those
States
The State named Satan never can be redeemed in all
Eternity
But when Luvah in Orc became a Serpent he des(c)ended
into
That State called Satan (115:23-27).

Satan is the negation of love and forgiveness, "Being
multitudes of tyrant Men in union blasphemous / Against
the divine image." (104/Second:30) Blake combines his
doctrine of 'States' with what might be described as a
telescopic perspective. The reader is invited to move
closer, as it were, and gain insights into the details
of Blake's vision; or to move away and survey its larger
spiritual form. In connection with The Song of Los the
biblical patriarchs were described as animated projections
of specific spiritual dispositions pertaining to the
"Nations." Satan is a negative mental state affecting
individuals and groups of people at any point in history.
Close association with biblical personages and locations
provide this phenomenon in The Four Zoas with a definite
moral and quasi-historical background.

Satan is identical with the "Synagogue of Satan"
summoned by Urizen "To Judge the Lamb of God to Death as a
murderer & robber" (105:6). This Synagogue is composed of

Twelve rocky unshapd forms . . . of torture & woe
Such seemd the Synagogue to distant view amidst
them beamd
A False Feminine Counterpart Lovely of Delusive
Beauty
Dividing & Uniting at will in the Cruelties of
Holiness (105:9-12).

This specific manifestation of "Vala drawn down into a Vegetated body" (105:13) is the illusion named Rahab. She is created by the "Synagogue of Satan" from the mysterious "Fruit of Urizen's tree / By devilish arts . . . / Perpetually vegetating in detestable births / Of Female forms beautiful thro poisons hidden in secret" (105:20-23). Although compounded of many subdivisions at any point in time, "When viewd remote She is One" (105:16). Rahab is a temptress on whose forehead is "her name written in blood Mystery" (105:15). In her collective form she is "Mystery Babylon the Great the Mother of Harlots" (106/First): 6) and may be identified with State Religion, whether Jewish, English or Roman Catholic.²⁴⁰ As in Milton, she embodies militant "Moral Virtue," "A Female hidden in a Male, Religion hidden in War."²⁴¹ Produced by Urizen's Moral Laws and metaphysics she is a seductive illusion, "hidden within / The bosom of Satan The false Female as in an ark & veil / Which christ must rend & her reveal" (105:24-26). As often as she vegetates, Christ's renewed self-sacrifice provokes her to reveal her true cruel nature.

In their aggregate, Rahab's daughters are called Tirzah, the 'natural' rival of the spiritual city Jerusalem. In the 'Song of Songs' 6:4, Tirzah is the rival of Jerusalem as a religious and a political capital, as well as in beauty.²⁴² Human victims are tormented in her name after their perceptions have been bound to the material world and their conceptions of life restricted to mortal existence.²⁴³ Motivated by possessive desire for the "poor human form" (105:31) she imposes restrictions on his faculties of sense perception because "Unless [her] beloved is bound upon the Stems of Vegetation" (105:53) she cannot survive. Moral and Natural Law have thus combined to repress and kill the human imagination. Time and again the Lamb of God is crucified by the churches of this world. Their worship is mockery. Jesus died to liberate man from mystery and 'natural' existence. Rahab and Tirzah, however, sacrifice him in order to perpetuate Mystery Religion and Natural Religion. They kill the offender against the allegedly Divine codes of conduct in order to deify the dead victim.

Los's level of maturity is not consistent throughout Night VIII. On page 104 (Second Portion) he has apparently acquired a deep understanding of the significance of Christ's self-sacrifice. Yet, on page 106 (First Portion) his reaction to Christ's death reveals what might be termed a historicist view. First, however, Los reassures Enitharmon with a report of his vision:

Pitying the Lamb of God Descended thro Jerusalems
gates

To put off Mystery time after time & as a Man
Is born on Earth so was he born of Fair Jerusalem
In mysterys woven mantle & in the Robes of Luvah

He stood in fair Jerusalem to awake up into Eden
The fallen Man but first to Give his vegetated body
To be cut off & separated that the Spiritual body
may be Reveald (104/Second7:32-38).

The Lamb of God continually performs his work of Salvation by putting off Rahab's "mantles" of repressive religious practice based on Urizen's false metaphysics. The historical aspect of this spiritual achievement is adumbrated by Jesus' descent "thro the twelve portions of Luvah / Bearing his sorrows & rec(iev)ing all his cruel wounds" (105:55-56). The spiritual history of mankind, which is symbolically equated with the twelve tribes of Israel, is thus presented as the means toward the fulfilment of the Divine Plan of Salvation.

On page 106 (First Portion) the motif of Christ's crucifixion is metaphorically adapted. The Lamb of God is condemned to death, nailed to the Tree of Mystery and then mockingly worshipped by the twelve daughters of Rahab, Rahab being their collective form, mystery religion. Jerusalem, who is the collective spiritual form of redeemed mankind, mistakenly equates the death of the physical "Body" (106/First7:7) of Jesus with complete extinction ("Eternal Death," 106/First7:8) and thus with the failure

of redemption. At this point Jerusalem does not realise the significance of Jesus' self-sacrifice by which the immortal spiritual body of love is to be revealed and man reborn. Instead, Jerusalem fatalistically idolises death, the one absolute certainty in any man's life, the "God of All from whom we rise to whom we all return" (106/First:11). She proposes the building of "A Sepulcher" (106/First:10), a shrine where death can be worshipped. Los, who at this point is equally misguided, acts like Joseph of Arimathea, taking²⁴⁴

the Body from the Cross Jerusalem weeping over
They bore it to the Sepulcher which Los had hewn in
the rock
Of Eternity for himself he hewed it despairing of
Life Eternal (106/First:14-16).

"Jerusalem wept over the Sepulcher two thousand Years" (110/First:33). Both Jerusalem and Los regard Jesus' death as final, as a unique historical event pertaining to the past. The "Nations of the Earth will worship at the Sepulcher" (106/First:12) because they are oblivious of Jesus' resurrection and, indeed, of their own capacity for emulating him in spirit. However, as his own grave is occupied by the dead historical 'person' Jesus, Los ironically has no choice but to continue working toward the Apocalypse. Jesus has descended into mortality in order to abnegate it. Los, the visionary artist performs this Divinely ordained task in order "to awake up into

Eden" (104/Second):36) the sleepers in Ulro. His labours of building "Jerusalem . . . Over the Sepulcher & over the Crucified body" (117:1-2), take the symbolic period of two thousand years, connecting Christ's physical death with his epiphany in the Apocalypse.

Because Urizen cannot comprehend the deeper implications of Jesus' self-sacrifice, he feels threatened. "Terrified he stood tho well he knew that Orc / Was Luvah But he now beheld a new Luvah." (101/First):2-3) He decides to destroy "the Lamb of God & the World of Los" (101/First):6) by using violence and dissimulation. Orc, who by now has degenerated into a visionless monster, the blind principle of destruction permeating human history after the Fall, is to be his instrument. The conception of history as a continuous process of human repression and self-destruction is captured in the vision of

Orc a Serpent form augmenting times on times
In the fierce battle & he saw the Lamb of God & the
World of Los
Surrounded by his dark machines for Orc augmented swift
In fury a Serpent wondrous among the Constellations of
Urizen (101/First):5-8).

Meanwhile

The Eternal Man sleeps in the Earth nor feels
the vigorous sun
Nor silent moon nor all the hosts of heaven move
in his body
His fiery halls are dark & round his limbs the
Serpent Orc
Fold without fold encompasses him (108:23-26).

As he feeds on the pestilential "fruit of the mysterious tree" (101/First:16) Orc is affected by the deceit and suffering which are the corollary of 'natural' existence. His corruption has reached the point where he prostitutes himself to fighting Urizen's battles. Urizen's preparations for war are expressed in images suggesting the industrial production of war machinery.²⁴⁵ Both industrial mass production and war, like Urizen's rationalism and his metaphysics, enslave and misdirect human energy and are inimical to the realisation of the artist's dream of an ideal world.²⁴⁶ Urizen, in "dark dissimulation," conspires with Orc and

with the Synagogue of Satan in dark Sanhedrim
To undermine the World of Los & tear bright Enitharmon
To the four winds hopeless of future.

(100/Second:32-101/Second:
30)

The enormity of the consequences of his perfidious actions
takes even Urizen by surprise

Terrified & astonishd Urizen beheld the battle take
a form
Which he intended not a Shadowy hermaphrodite black
& opake
The Soldiers named it Satan but he was yet unformd & vast
Hermaphroditic it at length became hiding the Male
Within as in a Tabernacle Abominable Deadly
(101/Second:33-37).

This vision of Satan manifesting himself in history to destroy man, is the demonic contrary to the Lamb of God standing "in fair Jerusalem to awake up into Eden / The fallen Man." Far from achieving stability, Urizen has obtained a totally negative view of reality, a vision of the future

teeming with Endless destruction never to be
repell'd
Desperate remorse swallows the present in a
quenchless rage (101/Second:31-32).

There is a complementary scene on page 116 which demonstrates how Urizen is absorbed by the "State" called Satan. So far, he has succeeded in manipulating life in the shadow of the "Tree of Mystery" from the outside, as it were. He has been in charge without being exposed to its violence and superstitions. Now, Rahab confronts Urizen, and "the Prince of Light beheld / Reveald before the face of heaven his secret holiness" (116:5-6). Rahab is Urizen's own "web of dece(1)tful Religion," the beautiful delusion which causes spiritual "Darkness & sorrow" (106/Second: 17-18) to envelop mortal man. Urizen's responsibility for the growth of institutionalised superstition in the forms of religious creeds, a major theme of the final Plates of Urizen, is now elaborated.

The Man forfeited life in Eternity when he abandoned the "Divine Vision" to embrace the superficial beauties of the external world embodied by Vala. Similarly, due

to his sentimental involvement with Rahab, Urizen's own intellectual powers are paralysed. "Forgetful of his own Laws pitying he began to Embrace / The Shadowy Female" (106/Second:23-24). Unable to distinguish between mental reality and objectified self-deception, his own faculties of sense perception are symbolically externalised and his spiritual "human form" (106/Second:31) is transformed into the fierce and uncommunicative satanic dragon, symbolising the combination of barren naturalism with violently self-assertive morality. He is enraged because his ambitions to impose his delusions about reality are continually frustrated. Institutionalised moral virtue or Natural Religion is no substitute for Christ's doctrine of love.²⁴⁷

The unfortunate "mortals who explore his books" (106/Second:33) of false wisdom founded on memory and who, in a sense, are Urizen, are also filled with his "deep repentance for the loss of that fair form of Man" (106/Second:38). Although they have vague notions of an ideal world in the past, they can see no way out of the vicious circle of violent repression and counterviolence. Satan-Urizen merely awakens the desert of this world to a life of fear, not of apocalyptic rejoicing. He "now . . . finds in vain

That not of his own power he bore the human form
erect
Nor of his own will gave his Laws in times of
Everlasting
For now fierce Orc in wrath & fury rises into the
heavens

. . .
And Urizen repentant forgets his wisdom in the abyss
In forms of priesthood in the dark delusion of
repentance
Repining in his heart & spirit that Orc reignd over
all
And that his wisdom servd but to augment the indefinite
lust (107:12-20).

Nevertheless, through the appearance of the satanic serpent
"living Death" manifests itself in a tangible temporal
form. By binding her victims to the delusions of Vala,
"the nameless shadow," the natural world unwittingly acts
in the service of Divine Providence: "All mortal things
made permanent that they may be put off / Time after time
by the Divine Lamb who died for all / And all in him died.
& he put off all mortality" (107:36-38).²⁴⁸

Blake invokes the authority of John's Revelation for
his own visionary interpretation of ecclesiastic history,
and the mutual involvement of Church and State and their
effects on the human community. For instance, redeemed
'Christians,' who in their aggregate form Jerusalem, fail
to realise Christ's ethics of love in their every-day
lives. Instead, they become intolerant propagators of
religious dogma, as in Blake's view the Jews did before
them, and thus do not truly worship Christ but a cruel
blood-thirsty idol.

Rahab triumphs over all she took Jerusalem
Captive A Willing Captive by delusive arts impell'd
To worship Urizens Dragon form to offer her own
Children
Upon the bloody Altar. (111:1-4)

However, Mystery Religion--the Roman Catholic Church being in Blake's view the worst abomination--completely ignores and, indeed, aggravates the existential problems of mankind as voiced by Ahaniah. Nor is it, from a doctrinal point of view, equipped to deal with Enion's view of natural and historical process as being potentially humanising. In order to corrupt such dangerously subversive notions Rahab hypocritically decides to burn "her Harlot Robes" (111:13) of supernatural mystery in the enlightening fires of rationalism. From the ashes rises a new religion founded on reason and dedicated to the worship of the mysteries of nature.

The Synagogue of Satan therefore uniting against
Mystery
Satan divided against Satan resolv'd . . .
To burn Mystery with fire & form another from her
ashes
. . .
The Ashes of Mystery began to animate they call'd it
Deism
And Natural Religion as of old so now anew began
Babylon again in Infancy Call'd Natural Religion
(111:18-24).

Although the cycle of institutionalised spiritual corruption continues revolving, it is ultimately a vehicle of Divine Providence "For God put it into their heart to fulfill all

his will" (111:21). Deism, according to Blake, is a recurrent manifestation of intellectual error at different times and places in history. When manifesting itself within a specific culture at a specific historical juncture, its satanic nature may be recognised. In Blake's view this was the case in eighteenth-century England when the State Church was spiritually infiltrated by Deism. In fact, the suffering caused by Satan in his diverse forms is an essential aspect of the Last Judgment which is taking place even now.²⁴⁹ The cyclic pattern circumscribed by spiritual error throughout history is the Limit of Opacity, the limit of the Fall upon which Redemption and the Last Judgment are taking place. History after Christ's death is apocalyptic. Man judges himself.

Ahania, who "Saw not as yet the Divine vision," laments the appalling cruelty and apparent pointlessness of natural existence, in "the Caverns of the Grave" (108:7-8). Addressing the inhabitants of these "Caverns," the "sons of the Murderd one" (108:19), she reminds them of their "ancient days" when they lived in Eden as One Man. She is horrified by what is left of him, "the dark body of corruptible death" (108:20-21). Ahania's reproach is directed at 'natural' man who passively accepts the worst man and nature can offer: violence, disease, and

religious hypocrisy ("marry for a Wife / The ancient Leprosy that the King & Priest may still feast on your decay" 108:13-14). She deplores the fact that the grave should be worshipped, and the fertile field despised. Yet, Ahania herself cannot offer any solution to man's problems.

Enion, by now grown wise, answers from the very depths of "the Caverns of the Grave." She, too, was once horrified at finding "the Earthworm," the emblem of organic decay, but also of fertility and organic growth, embedded in her "bosom" (109:17-18). But then, like one of the wise virgins in Matthew 25:6, she was woken up from her sleep in the night of nature by "A voice . . . a midnight cry upon the mountains / Awake the bridegroom cometh" (109:20-21). And now, although she is continually dying "a death / Of bitter hope" and consuming "in these raging waters" (109:26-27) of time and space, she is sustained by an informed hope, if not faith. Not only has she learned to regard the vegetative cycle as necessary for the continuity of natural life. She even elevates the "watry Grave" above the "Corn field" (109:23) because she invests physical death with transcendent finality.

hope drowns all my torment
For I am now surrounded by a shadowy vortex drawing
The Spectre quite away from Enion that I die a death
Of bitter hope altho I consume in these raging waters
(109:24-27).

Enion no longer believes that natural life is continuously drawn toward death for no other purpose than to gorge the grave and thus perpetuate the natural cycle. Her hope rests on the assumption that the attractive "vortex"-- that is the conception of life as being constituted by an unending succession of vegetative cycles--gradually separates man's 'spectral' or time-bound consciousness from his spiritual being.

The furrowd field replies to the grave . . .
Behold the time approaches fast that thou shalt be
as a thing
Forgotten when one speaks of thee he will not be
believed
When the man gently fades away in his immortality
When the mortal disappears in improved knowledge
cast away
The former things so shall the Mortal gently fade away
And so become invisible to those who still remain
(109:28-34).

The "furrowd field" predicts a future time when the notion of life as being no more than organic and finite--a notion which in itself constitutes living in "the Caverns of the Grave"--shall be obsolete. Meantime the temporal process is considered as serving the acquisition of 'understanding,' as distinct from the positivistic 'knowledge' accumulated by Urizen. Eventually, the "mortal" will be transcended by a spiritualised conception of reality.

11. Night IX Being The Last Judgment

Night IX, "Being The Last Judgment" (E371), continues where page 106 (First Portion) ends.²⁵⁰

And Los & Enitharmon builded Jerusalem weeping
Over the Sepulcher & over the Crucified body
Which to their Phantom Eyes appear'd still in the
Sepulcher (117:1-3).

They are unaware of the providential nature of their efforts through which they work their own salvation and that of mankind in this world.

But Jesus stood beside them in the Spirit Separating
Their Spirit from their body. (117:4-5)

At this point Los and Enitharmon are still possessed by fear of corporeal death which they equate with "Non Existence" (117:5). It comes therefore as a considerable surprise when Los suddenly begins tearing down the structure of the external universe and the framework of political tyrannies.

Los his vegetable hands
Outstretchd his right hand branching out in fibrous
Strength
Siez'd the Sun. His left hand like dark roots coverd
the Moon
And tore them down cracking the heavens across from
immense to immense
Then fell the fires of Eternity with loud & shrill

Sound of Loud Trumpet thundering along from heaven
to heaven
A mighty sound articulate Awake ye dead & come
To Judgment from the four winds Awake & Come away
(117:6-13).²⁵¹

Los's unexpected outburst is reminiscent of Samson's deliberate destruction of the house of the Philistines.²⁵² In view of Los's fear of death his action appears equally brave and suicidal. The realism of this brief account must not be taken as an indication that Blake confuses the effects of mental activity with those produced by physical exertion. Blake, through Los, does not expect to destroy the natural world as such, nor does he reject all forms of social organisation. Los merely brings down the repressive structures which Urizen has imposed on the world. However, Los's survival proves that the notion of duality inherent in Urizen's theory of knowledge, his ethics and metaphysics is false. In a sudden burst of visionary rage, Los destroys the very "heavens" which Urizen had hoped to fold round himself "like a Garment" (95/Second:20). This imaginative achievement is a comic parody of Rahab and Tirzah cutting off Luvah's robes of blood, thereby inadvertently revealing Christ's spiritual body.

According to Paley, both St. John's Revelation and the Last Judgment in Night IX envision "the destruction of history, [and] both of these apocalypses present

eschatological doctrines different from those of the Prophets and of the Lambeth books. The distinction is between a Prophetic view of history promising a this-worldly fulfillment to God's design, and an apocalyptic view promising an other-worldly fulfillment."²⁵³ Paley appears to suggest that by getting rid of Urizen's brand of dualism, Blake introduces a dualistic doctrine of his own. However, in Night IX, Blake does not distinguish between 'this' and any 'other' world. 'This' world dominated by Urizen can be transformed by removing the trappings of Urizen's delusions. Prophetic and apocalyptic views of history are fused, as the rest of Night IX will bear out. The poet-prophet Los acts in time when destroying Urizen's world-picture. He succeeds and mankind enters a new phase of consciousness which, figuratively speaking, is tantamount to entering another world.

Although Blake employs the symbolism of Revelation to adumbrate his own vision of the artist's ultimate task in history, he by no means "saw history as outside human control," as Paley and Erdman believe.²⁵⁴ One suspects that "all this apparent activity" appears to Erdman like "the preordained choreography of a cosmic puppet show" because he fails to discover a convincing historical parallel.²⁵⁵ The fact that Los is guided and protected by Divine Providence does not automatically deprive him of his independent will. Erdman claims that "the revisions

of The Four Zoas made in this spirit seem virtually to remove the central theme of struggle from the plan of the epic. They suggest that no kind of social or psychological revolution is necessary but submission, albeit submission must be to 'the Divine Vision.'²⁵⁶ Erdman fails to acknowledge that submission to "Divine Vision," as conceived by Blake, is an active ethical achievement capable of generating a powerful social dynamic, rather than tentatively removing it.²⁵⁷ True, "the collapse of tyranny" does not follow "a mere questioning of its validity, symbolized by the prophet's reaching up to pull down sun and moon."²⁵⁸ It collapses because the visionary poet has revealed it as false, and mankind follows his example and proceeds to remove it physically. Blake did not despair of the revolutionary millenium but identified it with his own times. However, while he no longer considered revolutionary violence, embodied by Orc, apocalyptic in itself, he still regarded it as a necessary aspect of the Last Judgment.

Initiated by Los's unexpected action, the Last Judgment manifests itself as yet another deluge. However, this time it is not the sea of time and space overwhelming the shrunken senses, but a destructive storm of fire and torrents of blood, a chaotic overturning of all the estab-

lished features of the material universe, of the State, even of death. This cataclysm is the poetic transposition of historical events such as the French Revolution and the Napoleonic or any other wars, placed in an eschatological context. The scorching "fires of Eternity" (117:10) are also "flames of mental fire" in which the awakened "trembling millions" bathe "their limbs in the bright visions of Eternity" (118:18-19). The rigid order imposed upon the material universe by natural science, and on human society by royal and religious tyrannies is removed. Now is the time and place in Blake's poetic canon when the information he received "from Hell," as Blake asserts in The Marriage of Heaven and Hell (Plate 14), is proved to be the truth. The "ancient tradition that the world will be consumed in fire at the end of six thousand years" is about to be fulfilled.

Apart from being an obvious reference to Revelation, 6:14, the "Folding like scrolls of the Enormous volume of Heaven & Earth" (117:14) may indeed be read as "one of Blake's great vitalizings of a conceptual allegory,"²⁵⁹ it signifies the end of the Newtonian universe and thus of 'objective' time and space, and of the distant heavens of religious mystery and hypocrisy. Throughout the 'prophetic' books and especially in The Four Zoas, both these aspects of a presumed 'reality' have been associated with Urizen. Therefore it is fitting that both should be consumed by

mental flames, together with Urizen's recorded experiences and his instructions on how to experience and evaluate the objective projections of his phantasies.

The books of Urizen unroll with dreadful noise the
folding Serpent
Of Orc began to Consume in fierce raving fire
(118:8-9).

The "volume of Heaven & Earth" (117:14) and Urizen's books are now destroyed by the flames of Orc which, in this context, have a purging function. This is an obvious inversion of the activity displayed by Los during the binding of Urizen, of the rolling of Urizen's planets in passive cooling motion which is correlative with the process of shrinking and petrification of Urizen's senses into fixed and limited sense organs. Los's original consolidating activity manifested itself in the cyclic patterns in space and time to which the material universe and organic life adhere. In contrast,

the folding Serpent
Of Orc began to Consume in fierce raving fire his
fierce flames
Issud on all sides gathring strength in animating
volumes
Roaming abroad on all the winds raging intense
reddening
Into resistless pillars of fire rolling round &
round gathering
Strength from the Earths consumd & heavens & all
hidden abysses
Wherever the Eagle has Explord or Lion or Tyger trod
(118:8-14).

(119:19-20). With these flames beginning to "Enter the Holy City" (119:17), humanity, "the trembling millions" who have been cleansed in the purgatory of existential suffering,

From the clotted gore & from the hollow den
Start forth . . . into flames of mental fire
Bathing their Limbs in the bright visions of Eternity
(119:21-23).

They liberate themselves from bodily perceptions in favour of a timeless and entirely spiritual vision of life.

The Man who has all along been aware of the "war within [his] members" (119:32), surveys "the consuming Universe" (119:31). He knows that "the Man of future times [can] become as in days of old" (120:5) only by reuniting with his divided faculties; first of all with Urizen. He therefore urges the "Prince of Light"

Come forth from slumbers of thy cold abstraction
come forth
Arise to Eternal births shake off thy cold repose
Schoolmaster of souls great opposer of change arise
That the Eternal worlds may see thy face in peace
& joy
That thou dread form of Certainty maist sit in town
& village
While little children play around thy feet in gentle
awe
Fearing thy frown loving thy smile O Urizen Prince
of light (120:19-25).

The Eternal Man wrathfully commands the satanic "dragon of the Deeps" to "let Urizen arise" from spiritual deformity to resume "those beautiful proportions / Of life & person" (120:28-31) which distinguished him in Eternity. Perverted reason in all its forms must cease to stand in the way of the imagination and the free expression of energetic impulses. Otherwise, these constructive propensities will be corrupted. Should Urizen disist from feeding Orc's rage by repressive measures, his destructive energy would consume itself and "subside in peace" (120:33).

For war is energy Enslavd but thy religion
The first author of this war & the distracting
of honest minds
Into confused perturbation & strife & honour & pride
Is a deceit so detestable that I will cast thee out
If thou repentest not (120:42-46).

The symbolism of these lines once again unequivocally suggests that the ultimate cause of all manner of strife, whether private or public, is mental. It is an indication of the Man's impaired understanding of his present situation that he should threaten to cast out Urizen together "With Mystery the Harlot & with Satan for Ever & Ever" (120:47). Such an act would perpetuate 'ad infinitum' the Man's fallen condition and that of his divided portions. Urizen would continue wandering in "the indefinite" of mental abstractions "Where nothing lives," returning "weary / Weeping at the threshold of Existence." His "self destroying

beast formd Science ̄would̄ be ̄his̄ eternal lot"
(120:36-40). For Satan, who is "Error[.] can never be
redeemd in all Eternity;" whereas "Sin," committed in
this state of error, "Even Rahab is redeemd in blood &
fury & jealousy" (120:48-49).²⁶¹

Urizen is beginning to understand that human misery
is self-inflicted and that he is mainly to blame. He
"wept in the dark deep anxious his Scaly form / To reassume
the human" (121:1-2). The transformation from dragon, the
symbol of satanic error, to human form is correlative with
the abnegation of "self destroying beast formd Science"
(120:40) in favour of the "Eternal Science" of love.
Urizen repents and recapitulates his offence against the
spirit.

O that I had never drank the wine nor eat the bread
Of dark mortality nor cast my view into futurity nor
turnd
My back darkning the present clouding with a cloud
And building arches high & cities turrets & towers
& domes
Whose smoke destroyd the pleasant garden & whose
running Kennels
Chokd the bright rivers burdning with my Ships the
angry deep (121:3-8).

He denounces the notion of progress, associated with science
and technology, for obscuring spiritual reality which is
always present. Industrialisation and the growth of trade
merely widen the scale of, and intensify, human suffering.²⁶²

The "pleasant garden" which once was Eden or, indeed, pastoral England, has been obliterated for those who physically and mentally labour in the "dark Satanic Mills" of industry, empirical philosophy and science, and religious superstition. Urizen admits that his pursuits of pleasure and knowledge, of certainty and stability, had to fail because of his mistaken notion of what constitutes true happiness and understanding.

Thro Chaos seeking for delight & in spaces remote
Seeking the Eternal which is always present to the
wise
Seeking for pleasure which unsought falls round the
infants path (121:9-11).

There is no end to and, therefore, no ultimate satisfaction in piecing together the chaotic data of experience in order to discover an abstract principle of organisation. The total form of reality is not empirical but imaginative. Happiness does not result from an extended educational process. It is instantaneous and springs, for instance, from the child's unreflected emotional appreciation of his environment. Urizen accepts that his divisive endeavours cannot gratify his desire for rationally controlled stability and certainty. He therefore takes the decisive step toward his own regeneration and that of the Man by declaring:

Then Go O dark futurity I will cast thee forth from
these
Heavens of my brain nor will I look upon futurity more
I cast futurity away & turn my back upon that void
Which I have made for lo futurity is in this moment
(121:19-22).

Urizen acknowledges for the first time in The Four Zoas that "futurity" is a fictitious mental concept which merely serves to perpetuate the past by suspending the fulfilment of man's desires.²⁶³ According to Grimes, "the last line is particularly significant because it captures Blake's eschatology. The term 'futurity' does not refer to a time which is yet to come, as it does in each of the three preceding lines. The future, which once dangled like corn in front of a hungry donkey, becomes that which shapes this very moment. The eschatological future is none other than a present pregnant with imaginative possibility. Hence, Blake subtly warns his reader not to identify vision with speculation about the future."²⁶⁴

Because Urizen senses that the present is invested with apocalyptic finality, he ceases to curb Orc, condones Tharmas' rage, and even approves of Los's rending down the conceptual and metaphysical barriers to vision which were erected by Urizen and tolerated by Los. ("Rend down this fabric as a wall ruind & family extinct," 121:25.) Urizen thus shakes "his aged mantles off / Into the fires." Cleansed of the error of satanic selfhood and rejuvenated, the embodiment of the human intellect "glorious bright Exulting in his joy / He sounding rose into the heavens in naked majesty / In radiant Youth." (121:29-32) The joy of unadulterated intellectual experience induces Ahania to reappear. However, the time for permanent reunification

between Urizen and his emanation has not yet come. Like Persephone, Ahania rises and dies again. Yet her death is not final. The daughters of Urizen, who were previously held responsible for causing human suffering, now guard Ahania's "Smiling corpse" (121:38). This episode has to be placed within the wide context of the Universal Man's regeneration which is a gradual process. Bloom explains this aspect of apocalypse from a psychological point of view. "The mind's pleasure in its own powers must wait upon the mind's reintegration with the human faculties of affection, instinct, imagination."²⁶⁵

The apocalypse, conceived as spiritual regeneration, is poetically adumbrated on the following pages of The Four Zoas. It is inspired by, and emulates, the self-renewing vision of the Lamb of God in Jerusalem's bosom.²⁶⁶ Unaffected by physical death, the spiritual presence of the Lamb of God is instrumental in awakening the Eternal Man "from death's dark vale" (122:3). The cyclic patterns of natural regeneration provide the temporal basis for spiritual regeneration.

The times revolve the time is coming when all these
delights
Shall be renewed & all these Elements that now consume
Shall reflourish. (122:4-6)

The regenerative natural paradigm will gradually give way to "a Self renewing Vision" (122:7) of Eden. In winter Ahania will sleep and Urizen will prepare his fields for Ahania's revival in spring. The immortal male and the regenerate and obedient female shall thus "live the life of Eternity" (122:15). These immanent developments are part of a vision of Divine Salvation, resembling that of John in Revelation, 21:1-2.

the Lamb of God Creates himself a bride & wife
That we his Children evermore may live in Jerusalem
Which now descendeth out of heaven a City yet a
Woman
Mother of myriads redeemed & born in her spiritual
palaces
By a New Spiritual birth Regenerated from Death
(122:16-20).

Although Urizen is no longer dependent on sense perceptions of the external world ("our eyes are in the heavens," 122:25), he has not yet entirely reconciled his revised capacity for vision with his long held erroneous conception of 'reality' which requires the principles of limitation and relativity to prevail against chaos. ("What Chain encompasses in what Lock is the river of light confined / That issues forth in the morning by measure & the evening by carefulness / Where shall we take our stand to view the infinite & unbounded / Or where the human feet" 122:22-25.) Subsequent events solve this problem for him as, in accordance with Urizen's reformed consciousness, the cosmic and social universe bursts the chains previously posed on it by Urizen.

rivn link from link the Lurstring Universe explodes
All things reversd flew from their centers rattling
bones
To bones Join, shaking convulsd the shivering clay
breathes
Each speck of dust to the Earths center nestles
round & round
In pangs of Eternal Birth in torment & awe & fear
All spirits deceasd let loose from reptile prisons
come in shoals
Wild furies from the tygers brain & from the lions
Eyes
. . .
Many a woful company & many on clouds & waters
Fathers & friends Mothers & Infants Kings & Warriors
Priests & chaind Captives met together in a horrible
fear
And every one of the dead appears as he had livd
before (122:26-41).

In a scene reminiscent of the ambiguous end of The Song of
Los, the "dead" in body and spirit rise. Human spirits
liberate themselves from their perversions. The "children
of six thousand years / Who died in infancy" (123:7-8)
now take revenge on their murderers. This scene suggests
that the desire for revenge must not be repressed but be
given vent and thus purged before the final harvest may
begin.

Beholding the enigmatic "Vision of God" (124:1), the
"Falln Man" (123:40) and Urizen rise in spirit from "the
Rock" (124:1) of materialism and abstract reasoning and
attempt to walk

thro the flames
To meet the Lord coming to Judgment but the flames
repelld them
Still to the Rock in vain they strove to Enter the
Consummation
Together for the Redeemd Man could not enter the
Consummation (124:2-5).

Bloom surmises that "this is one of the deliberate crises in Blake's vision, and must have some reference to the lessons learned from an age of political revolution."²⁶⁷ Destruction of all manner of tyranny can be called apocalyptic only if accompanied by strenuous constructive effort inspired by love and involving all the faculties of Man. Subsequent scenes depict the effective reversal of the events which led to the Fall, as retrospectively described especially in Night VII(b). The sons of Urizen are said to have abandoned

the plow & harrow the loom
The hammer & the Chisel & the rule & compasses
They forgd the sword the chariot of war the battle ax
• • •
And all the arts of life they changd into the arts
of death (92:17-21).

Now, the sons of Urizen clean "the Plow . . . From rust of ages" (124:6-7); and liberate the human intellect from orthodox ways of thinking. "They beat the iron engines of destruction into wedges" (124:19) which the sons of Urthona forge into spade, mattock, axe and "The heavy roller to break the clods to pass over the nations" (124:22) thus preparing the human 'soil' for cultivation. It is significant that man's intellectual and imaginative powers should co-operate in this gigantic effort of cultivating the universe in preparation for the apocalyptic harvest. Urizen once again takes charge of the "Eternal horses" (124:23) and drives

the Plow of ages over Cities
And all their Villages . . .
Over the graves & caverns of the dead Over the
Planets
And over the void Spaces over Sun & moon & star
& constellation (124:26-29).

Urizen ploughs under the known universe, that is the conception of its order which he previously imposed on it. By an act of immense mental effort he overturns complete civilisations, their social and economic structures as well as the past experiences and traditions on which they are founded. The reader witnesses the eroding and levelling of ages of error.

Liberated from their transient "States" or bodies of error "the Seed of Men / The trembling souls of All the Dead stood before Urizen" (124:30-31). He proceeds to sow "the wide Universal field . . . with immortal souls" (125:2-4). A new universal order is about to be established. It has no place for kings and princes. They are "Driven on the unproducing sands & on the hardend rocks" (125:11) where they cannot thrive.²⁶⁸ When "the seed is harrowd in" Orc's now beneficial "Mental fires . . . heat the black mould & cause / The human harvest to begin" (125:17-20). Intellect, imagination and energy combine to further the organic growth of mankind to spiritual maturity.

Ahania responds to Urizen's cultivating efforts. In her appearance his spiritual achievement becomes manifest.

The whole animated universe delights in their reunification. Yet still the Eternal Man who "sat down upon the Couches of Beulah . . . [cannot] put off his new risen body / In mental flames" (125:36-38). "His body was redeemed to be permanent thro the Mercy Divine" (125:39) because it seems mankind has to save itself through an inspired vision of natural existence.

The events associated with the apocalyptic harvest may well symbolise historical events, as suggested by Erdman. Despite its utopian character, this apocalyptic vision of history--possibly of the French Revolution and its aftermath--will not attain actuality in a distant future. It may be interpreted as an optimistic review and revaluation of present-day events against the visionary background of universal apocalypse taking place here and now.

When all the tyrants of the world have been removed and no more "fuel of fire" remains, Orc "consumd himself in Mental flames" (126:1-2). As a result Luvah and Vala reappear. The "Regenerate Man" (126:3) forgives them and hands them over to Urizen. They are instructed to return to their "place of seed not in the brain or heart" (126:8). The passionate instincts have to be obedient servants to

the Man. They must not attempt to dominate the intellect or the imagination. Because "If Gods," that is the Man's faculties embodied by the four Zoas, "combine against Man Setting their Dominion above / The Human form Divine" they must inevitably fall from "their high Station / In the Eternal heavens of Human Imagination" (126:9-11). Throughout the poem the Man's faculties have suffered the purifying experience of fallen existence, thereby unwittingly preparing themselves for their reintegration within the "infinite & Eternal of the Human form" (126:17).

Luvah and Vala re-enter Vala's garden. Now, under the guidance of the reformed Urizen, the true character of the natural world is revealed. It is a mirror of the human psyche, no more no less, reflecting its aspirations and fears.

in the shadows of Valas Garden
. . . the impressions of Despair & Hope for ever
vegetate
In flowers in fruits in fishes birds & beasts &
clouds & waters
The land of doubts & shadows sweet delusions unformd
hopes (126:19-22).

Luvah and Vala enter a state of consciousness which precludes any awareness of the apocalyptic events taking place around them.

They saw no more the terrible confusion of the
wracking universe
They heard not saw not felt not all the terrible
confusion
For in their orb'd senses within closed up they
wander'd at will (126:23-25).

Although they still cannot expand or contract their senses at will, their limited sense perceptions are no longer abstracted under Urizen's influence. Their vision of the natural world is highly idealised and subjective. Although it excludes equally true aspects of reality, it is not 'unreal.' Previously, this ambivalent state of consciousness led to the Man's Fall in Beulah. Now, the beneficial qualities of Beulah are emphasised. The couches of Beulah, on which the Man once rested from the spiritual "Wars of Eternal Life" (20:13) are also places of repose "from the terrible wide universal harvest" (126:27). The naive, dreamlike vision of natural life provides a temporary retreat from the extremes of spiritual warfare in Eternity, on the one hand, and physical warfare and the annihilation of the imagination in Ulro, on the other.

With "their ancient golden age renew'd" (126:29), Luvah appeals to Vala to "Rise from the dews of death for the Eternal Man is Risen" (126:32). Luvah's call which awakens "the Soul from its grassy bed" (126:37), is the renewed and, this time, successful utterance of the Bard's "calling the lapsed Soul" in "Introduction" in Songs of Experience. Under Luvah's guidance "the Soul" (Vala, Earth,

Thel) is being reconciled with the natural order. The "pure Soul that seeketh for her maker" (127:34) has to realise that the "nourishing sun" (127:11) and the organic life dependent on his cycle, are no less than reflections of a supernatural order. Unlike Thel, Vala accepts that she is nought "but as a flower" (127:16) and that there is no need for her to "sigh for immortality" (127:17). The sun is not her maker, merely raising her to fall. Nor is Vala the sun's "phantom" (127:21), wandering without hope. Though partaking of the life of nature and its cyclic patterns, Vala's being pertains to a supernatural order, as the regenerate Luvah affirms.

Rise sluggish Soul why sitst thou here why dost thou
sit & weep
Yon Sun shall wax old & decay but thou shalt ever
flourish
The fruit shall ripen & fall down & the flowers
consume away
But thou shalt still survive (127:24-27).

Vala has once more become "the sinless Soul" and the "immortal Spirit growing in lower Paradise" (128:28,30). She may not know where the "comforting voice" (127:28) is coming from, or how to transcend her condition of natural bliss. But neither does she reject or misuse her privileged position.

In these scenes of overtly Platonising pastoralism, Luvah combines the roles of the Bard of "Introduction" with that of a 'natural' type of Jesus. Vala is his

faithful servant who fervently wishes to "behold his face & follow his pure feet" (127:32). She even refers to him as her "Lord" and as "the voice of God that calld [her] from the silent dew" (129:34,33).

Once Vala has abnegated her narcissism, her eyes are "opend to the world of waters" (129:16). The phenomenal world has become transparent to her. So have its miseries. Her powerful influence is such that everything she perceives is assimilated to her idealising vision of the natural world as a paradise. Accordingly, Tharmas calms his waves, but cannot instantaneously be reunited with Enion. First, both Tharmas and Enion, the universal body of Man and the total form of its perceptions, have to be regenerated. They assume the appearances of children, which indicates that they have re-entered the state of innocence.

Thus in Eternal Childhood straying among Valas flocks
In infant sorrow & joy alternate Enion & Tharmas
playd (131:16-17).

In the dream land of Vala's Platonic garden, they are mere "shadows" (131:19) of their Eternal forms. However, this is only a transitory phase.

The "sleeping spirits" (131:24) of mankind are compared with a vast cornfield in autumn, ready to be harvested. Crying "Times are Ended" (131:31), Urizen gives the signal

for the harvest to start.²⁶⁹ The "Prince of Light" now lives up to his Eternal vocation and together with his sons and daughters pours his light "To exhale the spirits of Luvah & Vala thro the atmosphere . . . In all their ancient innocence" (131:33-35). Love and affection are being spread all over the universe. The primordial deluge recedes, and Tharmas' seas of doubt are calmed. The "Spirits of Men beneath / Cried out to be delivered" from satanic 'selfhood' and the errors of 'natural' existence. Like Father Time, or perhaps more like one of the Angels in Revelation, 14:14-20, "Urizen arose & took his Sickle in his hand . . . & began to reap & all his joyful sons / Reaped the wide Universe & bound in Sheaves a wondrous harvest" (132:2-7). Enion rises in the middle of this turbulence and announces that the winter of time is over and that she will "cast off [her] death clothes & Embrace Tharmas again" (132:22-23). The clouds have dispersed and with them have vanished those infernal "Dreams of Death the human form dissolving companied / By beasts & worms & creeping things & darkness & despair" (132:18-19). As the whole universe is being humanised, "the rising Enion is the special joy attendant upon the resurrection of the body, in Blake's sense of the body as being all of the soul the sense can perceive."²⁷⁰ The spring in the relationship between Tharmas and Enion is correlative with the waking up of nature to a new life and "joys of existence" (132:28). Tharmas has obtained the goal of his quest:

Joy thrilld thro all the Furious Form of Tharmas
humanizing
Mild he Embracd her whom he sought he raised her
thro the heavens
Sounding his trumpet to awake the dead on high he
soard
Oer the ruind worlds the smoking tomb of the Eternal
Prophet (132:36-39).

Tharmas' affectionate reunification with Enion is tantamount to the resumption of the human form by the chaotic and hostile phenomenal world.

When the human corn has been cut, Urizen operates the flail and Tharmas "the Winnowing fan" (134:2), tossing "the Nations like Chaff into the seas of Tharmas" (134:4). As Bloom points out, it is essential to realise that "the perspective here is that of Eternity; from our fallen and temporal perspective enormous wars and calamities of nature are raging."²⁷¹ The seas of Tharmas which symbolise among other things the confusion permeating the lives of individuals and the histories of nations, are now conceived as being endowed with purging qualities. In the course of the apocalyptic harvest, the agents of oppression, primarily "Mystery . . . she that made the nations drunk with the cup of Religion," and the "Kings & Councillors & Giant Warriors" (134:5-7) are being relegated to the dark "Caves" (134:10) and "the graves" (134:16) of 'natural' existence where they belong. These ambiguous lines appear to suggest that the overthrow of Rahab primarily requires an imaginative effort, not a violent physical one.²⁷² Once error

is recognised it can be dismissed. The liberation of slaves is equated with the liberation of individual man's "inchaind soul shut up in [spiritual] darkness" (134:20) of rationalism and superstition. Once man is released from his mental chains, the "dungeon doors" (134:22) of his fallen senses are opened and "Mystery" ceases to exist. The slave returns to his "sweet native land," with his youthful innocence renewed. (134:35-36)

The conceit of Luvah operating the universal wine presses which are identical with "the golden wheels circling upon the pavement of heaven" (135:31), suggests a perspective which transcends the temporal, though nevertheless imaginative, perspective chosen by Blake in his diverse portrayals of Orc. Man's passionate self-immolation in his daily life and in the large-scale wars of history, is no longer considered purely as a manifestation of imaginative energy naturalised or even corrupted, but as one aspect of the Last Judgment which mankind passes upon itself. History is a process of purgation and education. The Last Judgment is taking place here and now, but it is not the result of violent revolution. Nevertheless, Orc, as the embodiment of natural energy, is by no means being discredited. Luvah who, in his temporal role as Orc, became the victim of his own passions, has been purged through suffering. Mankind has to live through the same

experience. Therefore, the notion of apocalypse, as expounded in Night IX, is teleological in a sense transcending the notion of immanent historical finality.

The wine presses of Luvah liberate man from his 'spectral' portion. As "the Clusters / Of human families" (135:36-37) fall into the caverns of the natural world, they re-enact the primordial Fall of Urizen and his myriads.

They plunge into the Elements the Elements cast them
forth
Or else consume their shadowy semblance Yet they
obstinate
Tho pained to distraction Cry O let us Exist for
This dreadful Non Existence is worse than pains of
Eternal Birth (136:9-12).

Cast into the purgatory of natural existence, the human spirits desperately aspire to be relieved of their mortal bodies. Yet, when

Forsaken of their Elements they vanish & are no more
No more but a desire of Being a distracted ravening
desire
Desiring like the hungry worm & like the gaping grave
(136:6-8).

Although, to them, rational certainties, absolute laws and rigid social structures have lost their credibility, these have not yet been replaced by a definite and constructive vision. Nevertheless, though emotionally exhausted and

filled with anguish, mankind prefers the "pains of Eternal Birth," which had prompted Urizen to desert Eternity, to "this dreadful Non Existence." When the human spirits have been purged of their 'natural' perceptions, the gradually maturing

Human Wine stood wondering in all their delightful
Expanses
The Elements subside the heavens roll'd on with vocal
harmony (137:32-33).

While continuing their cyclic motions these animate heavens are no longer the mechanical clockwork to which Urizen had degraded them. Correspondingly, the once raging and hostile sea is transformed into a humanised vocal body, serving the regenerated Man.

The "stormy seas" (138:5) of Tharmas, "Thunders Earthquakes Fires Water floods" (138:7), all of these being elusive objects of Urizen's enquiries, drive "Dark Urthona's" "dire mills" (138:9) of reflection.

Nature in darkness groans
And Men are bound to sullen contemplations in the
night
Restless they turn on beds of sorrow. in their inmost
brain
Feeling the crushing Wheels they rise they write the
bitter words
Of Stern Philosophy & knead the bread of knowledge
with tears & groans (138:11-15).

Paradoxically, the natural equivalents of Urizen's state of mind, "frost" and "aged Snow" (138:9,10) build the "Ovens of Urthona" (138:11) in which he bakes "the Bread of Ages" (138:17) or "bread of knowledge"--as distinct from the "Bread of sweet Thought."²⁷³ On this "bread" man subsists while Urthona is asleep "in Winter in the night of Time" (138:19). Strangely, in this context the process of regeneration is not completed, as the "bread of knowledge" is not transformed into the "Bread of sweet Thought" as one might have expected. Nevertheless, in a sudden change of perspective, the natural world as a whole is presented as regenerated.

In Night VII(b), after Luvah has been crucified, he is "laid . . . in a sepulcher / To die a death of Six thousand years bound round with desolation / The sun was black & the moon rolled a useless globe thro heaven" (92:14-16). In Night IX, sun and moon, the four Zoas and their emanations, the Man and nature enter into a new harmony.

The Sun has left his blackness & has found a fresher
morning
And the mild moon rejoices in the clear & cloudless
night
And Man walks forth from midst of the fires the evil
is all consumed (138:20-22).

As may be expected this change of circumstance is correlative with the Man's improved vision.

His eyes behold the Angelic spheres arising night
& day
The stars consumed like a lamp blown out & in their
stead behold
The Expanding Eyes of Man behold the depths of
wondrous worlds (138:23-25).

With the regenerated Man, visionary perception is once
again a function of the will. His perspective is subjective
as well as universal and comprehensive.

One Earth one sea beneath nor Erring Globes wander
but Stars
Of fire rise up nightly from the Ocean & one Sun
Each morning like a New born Man issues with songs
& Joy (138:26-28).

The rising of the morning sun is compared with the rising
of "a New born Man" and associated with the happy revival
of the visionary forms of man and nature to inspired
activity. Both have entered a new spring. Tharmas is
once again the mighty shepherd, and Urthona the Eternal
blacksmith, "no longer now / Divided from Enitharmon no
longer the Spectre Los" (139:4-5). Los, the vehicular
form of Urthona, "the Spectre of Prophecy" and "the delusive
Phantom" (139:6) has departed. From "the ruinous walls"
of the material universe the regenerated Urthona rises

In all his ancient strength to form the golden
armour of science
For intellectual War The war of swords departed now
The dark Religions are departed & sweet Science
reigns (139:8-10).

Urizen and Urthona are no longer opponents but partners in the intellectual battles of Eternity. No mention is made at this vital stage in the poem of God or Jesus.

The apocalypse, as conceived in these lines, is a visionary phenomenon. It is the expression of the artist's absolute faith in the power of inspired art to regenerate and humanise all aspects of life.

FOOTNOTES

¹ Hereafter, the poem will be cited as The Four Zoas. For a detailed account and analysis of the manuscript, with reproductions of all the pages, see G. E. Bentley, Jr., ed. William Blake: Vala or The Four Zoas. A Facsimile of the Manuscript, a Transcript of the Poem and a Study of its Growth and Significance. (Oxford, 1963). Hereafter cited as Bentley. A concise description of the manuscript is provided by Erdman, pp. 737-739. See also Erdman's textual notes, E739-764. For Erdman's critical review of Bentley's edition and discussion of the poem see "The Binding (et cetera) of Vala," The Library, 19 (1964/1968/), 112-129. For comparison see also D. J. Sloss and J. P. R. Wallis, eds. The Prophetic Writings of William Blake (Oxford, 1926), I, 136-143. Hereafter cited as Sloss and Wallis. H. M. Margoliouth, ed. William Blake's 'Vala: Blake's Numbered Text (Oxford, 1956), pp. XI-XXVII. Hereafter cited as Margoliouth. Stevenson, pp. 287-467.

² See Ellis and Yeats, II, 300.

³ A Dream of Nine Nights. See the first page of the facsimile and page 1 of Bentley's transcript. The Four Zoas is obviously a late pencil addition, intended to replace Vala on the title-page. Bentley draws attention to the first "datable mention" of Zoas in Blake's letter to Ozias Humphrey, 18 January 1808. See Bentley, p. 156; also Erdman, p. 738, for commentary.

⁴ Bentley, p. 188.

⁵ E737. On the poem's dates of composition see Margoliouth, pp. XXIII-XXV; Bentley, pp. 157-166. See also Bentley, "The Date of Blake's Vala or The Four Zoas," MLN, 71 (1956), 487-491; and "The Failure of Blake's Four Zoas," Texas Studies in English, 37 (1958), 102-113.

⁶ Margoliouth, p. XI.

⁷ E737. Bentley provides the most detailed description of the manuscript (pp. 193-196), an account of the composition and growth of Vala (pp. 157-166), and of the internal order of The Four Zoas (pp. 197-201). In his review of Bentley's edition, Erdman severely criticises Bentley's inconsistent method of employing external evidence especially in his attempt to establish the chronology of Nights VII(a) and VII(b).

⁸ Erdman, "The Binding (et cetera) of Vala," 112.

⁹Bentley, p. 169; E739. Bentley (pp. 169-170) takes issue with Erdman's somewhat naive method of dating the various textual layers in the 1954-edition of Blake: Prophet Against Empire, pp. 270-271. While granting the possible validity of Bentley's assumption that the original copperplate writing on all pages represents a single draft, Erdman, by now more knowledgeable, in turn complains about Bentley's transcript obscuring "the evidence by treating the erased copperplate layer as nonexistent (when he cannot read it) and the first added layer as original." (E739)

¹⁰E738. For further discussions of this problem see E744, E745, and especially David V. Erdman, "Dating Blake's Script: the 'g' hypothesis," Blake Newsletter, Vol. 3, No. 1 (Summer, 1969), 8-13.

¹¹Bentley, p. 169.

¹²"The Binding (et cetera) of Vala," 126.

¹³The problem of their relative chronology will be considered later.

¹⁴Bentley, p. 177.

¹⁵In an erased stratum on page 3 the poem is named "the Book of Vala." See Bentley, p. 3, and Erdman, p. 737. Erdman points out that page 95, Night VII(b) is also called "Book." He thus uses Bentley's own argument, concerning the relatively early date of composition of Nights IV and V, to disprove Bentley's theory about Night VII(a) being composed before VII(b). See "The Binding (et cetera) of Vala," 122-123.

¹⁶Sloss and Wallis, II, 198.

¹⁷Erdman, Blake: Prophet Against Empire, p. 294.

¹⁸Erdman's early hypothetical identification of textual layers reads as follows: "the early, middle, and late portions of this composite manuscript correspond to three distinct historical phases and, as it happens, to three distinct phases in Blake's personal history. When William and Catherine Blake moved from Lambeth in September 1800 to live near their new patron William Hayley beside the sea at Felpham, I believe that a first draft of The Four Zoas had been substantially completed. The four portions of the present manuscript that correspond (except for scattered later insertions) to this first draft are: Nights I, II, III, IV; Night V to Urizen's repentance (about line 190); Night VIIb (early version); Night IX (beginning with line 90). This Lambeth draft, written while England and France were at war, comprises the bulk of the manuscript . . . A second or peacetime layer consists

of revisions and additions made at Felpham after the autumn of 1801, when preliminaries of the Peace of Amiens were announced, and before the renewal of war in the spring of 1803. Blake sprinkled the manuscript with emendations replacing stern prophetic wrath with exuberant Christian forgiveness and rewrote the conclusion of Night V, all of Night VI (incorporating or discarding the early draft), and all of Night VIIa (but keeping both drafts) as well as the first eighty-nine lines of Night IX.

"The latest portion of the manuscript, including the only extant draft of Night VIII, was quite evidently written after and against the mad renewal of war, for Blake considered the rupture of the Peace of Amiens a cosmic betrayal . . ." (Blake: Prophet Against Empire, pp. 295-296.) The consensus is that Night VIII was composed circa 1804.

¹⁹ Erdman, Blake: Prophet Against Empire, p. 294. In his Notes on The Four Zoas, Erdman warns his readers "against falling back on the all too hypothetical chronological groupings of Nights and parts of Nights presented in Erdman, pp. 270-271 [the 1954-edition of Blake: Prophet Against Empire] on the basis of secondhand evidence and an ignorance of the complexities of the manuscript. Nevertheless certain salient historical allusions or sources remain, despite uncertainty as to how long after the event Blake wrote." (E738) In his review of Bentley's edition of the manuscript Erdman had already revoked his former untenable hypothesis: "Some of the historical allusions I conjectured will not stand, but many evidently will: what may not is the generalization that Blake was here writing (as he had not in earlier and more patently historical 'prophecies') of events even as they unfolded." ("The Binding (et cetera) of Vala," 113.)

²⁰ Paley, Energy and the Imagination, p. 96.

²¹ Erdman, Blake: Prophet Against Empire, p. 313.

²² Erdman, Blake: Prophet Against Empire, p. 313.
Sloss and Wallis, II, 198.

²³ Hirsch (p. 108) heavily depends on Sloss and Wallis, I, 136-143; on Margoliouth, pp. XI-XXVII and on Erdman's hypothetical division of the composition of the poem into three stages.

²⁴ Hirsch, p. 106. For instance, rather than regarding the Songs of Experience as qualifying and complementing those of Innocence, Hirsch argues that in 1794 Blake had employed the procedure described above "when he corrected 'Innocence' by adding 'Experience,' and again in 1795 when he added four lines of bitter disillusionment to America."

²⁵Hirsch, p. 107. According to Hirsch, "the figure Tirzah represents the physical, natural aspect of the world and man." This identification requires to be qualified. Tirzah, "Mother of my Mortal part," is the personified conception of nature as repudiated by Tiriel in his final speech.

²⁶Hirsch, p. 108.

²⁷Hirsch, p. 108.

²⁸Hirsch, p. 109.

²⁹Hirsch, p. 109.

³⁰Although Hirsch's book was published one year after Bentley's facsimile edition of the manuscript of The Four Zoas (1964 and 1963, respectively), he is apparently unaware of the exact words of the, partly erased, lines in copperplate hand on page 3. See Bentley's attempt at restoring these lines, and Erdman's more accurate effort at restoring the different layers of the palimpsest, E739.

³¹Bentley, p. 3.

³²I quote from Erdman because, unlike Bentley, he has succeeded in restoring these revisions. Round brackets indicate earlier layers.

³³Hirsch, p. 109.

³⁴Hirsch, p. 110.

³⁵Hirsch, p. 110.

³⁶See Hirsch, pp. 121-124.

³⁷Hirsch, p. 121.

³⁸Bentley, p. 163.

³⁹Bentley, p. 165. Bentley continues: "At some comparatively late date, probably about the time of Night VIII, Blake seems to have noticed this omission in the central portion of Vala. Partially to remedy this defect he added a long section of about 160 lines at the end of Night VIIa. Later still, probably after Night VIII was written, he added a passage of thirty-three lines, which developed the concept of 'The Council of God,' at the end of Night IV (pages 55 and 56). About this time he seems to have added the long section (pages 21-22) about the 'Council of God' to the end of Night I, and the conclusion to Night I (page 19) in which he adumbrated the account of the election of 'the Seven Eyes of God' who refused to

die for Man, which he later expanded on page 115 in Night VIII." While acknowledging Bentley's "partly successful attempts . . . to draw chronological evidence from such things as 'additions of a Christian tenor' in the chapter headed 'Symbolic Names,'" Erdman complains of the unsatisfactory applications of this evidence, especially with regard to the priority of Nights VII(a) and (b). See Erdman, "The Binding (et cetera) of Vala," 120.

⁴⁰ Compare Bentley, pp. 171-175.

⁴¹ Frye, p. 270.

⁴² Bentley, p. 168. Bentley also attacks Blackstone's comment, "throughout the poem The Four Zoas we see Christ as light shining in darkness," because "Christ appears only in added passages, and Jesus is found first in Night VIIb, and is invisible in Nights II-VIIa in any form or allusion." (Bernard Blackstone, English Blake (Cambridge, 1949), p. 373.)

⁴³ Bentley, p. 191. While criticising Bentley mainly in matters concerning material textual evidence, Erdman's refutation complements my own argument: "Difficulties of the manuscript are throughout regarded as failings of the poet . . . it is . . . a view that fosters complacency toward textual problems." ("The Binding (et cetera) of Vala," 122.) Nevertheless, Bentley's opinion concerning the extensive late additions, particularly those dealing with 'the Council of God,' cannot be dismissed outright: "In this way [Blake] tried to gather the new and the old threads of his Prophecy, and to strengthen the whole with new patches. Unfortunately it was too late for such mending." (Bentley, p. 166.)

⁴⁴ With specific reference to Erdman's findings, Paley states that "by 1797 the deliverance of the world by revolutionary energy seemed a remote prospect." (Paley, Energy and the Imagination, p. 90.) This agrees with our own conclusions concerning Orc and Fuzon in The Song of Los and Ahania, respectively.

⁴⁵ According to Erdman, lines 4-11 on page 3 were written over nine erased lines. However, even in Bentley's facsimile lines 7-8 differ noticeably from the preceding and succeeding lines as they are very faint and virtually illegible. Although Bentley says that these two lines "are written in a stanza break," neither he nor Erdman explain whether they are the surviving remnants of an earlier stratum or later additions. (Bentley, p. 3.)

⁴⁶ John, 1:14: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us . . . full of grace and truth." John, 17:21: "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."

⁴⁷ Daniel, 3:25-26. See Blake's literal use of the biblical phrase in A Descriptive Catalogue of 1809, where he also summarises essential features of the Fall as poetically elaborated in The Four Zoas.

The Strong man represents the human sublime. The Beautiful man represents the human pathetic, which was in the wars of Eden divided into male and female. The Ugly man represents the human reason. There were [sic] originally one man, who was four-fold; he was self-divided, and his real humanity slain on the stems of generation, and the form of the fourth was like the Son of God. How he became divided is a subject of great sublimity and pathos. The Artist has written it under inspiration, and will, if God please, publish it; it is voluminous, and contains the ancient history of Britain, and the world of Satan and of Adam. (E533)

Northrop Frye (p. 272) identifies the Ugly man with Urizen, the Beautiful man with Orc [Luvah] whose female counterpart is Vala, the Strong man with the new character Tharmas, whose female counterpart is Enion, and the divine fourth with Los.

⁴⁸ Compare the description of Paradisal harmony in Paradise Lost, Book IV, 639-659. See also Raphael's description of Eternity in Book V, 629-630:

For we have also our evening and our morn,
We ours for change delectable, not need

Northrop Frye (p. 277) explains, "in eternity one chooses the kind of time that accords with a creative mood."

⁴⁹ In The Four Zoas Eternity and Eden are not clearly differentiated. According to Damon, "Eden partakes of Eternity, but differs from it in that it also partakes of this world. It has seasons; the males labor at their agriculture during the winter, as in the Holy Lands. There is marriage; the Emanations labor at their looms, and join their consorts at the evening feasts. Their social life would be impossible in the Mystical Ecstasy." (Damon, A Blake Dictionary, p. 114.)

⁵⁰ See George Mills Harper, The Neoplatonism of William Blake (Chapel Hill, 1961), pp. 124-126. Among other literary sources, Harper refers to the cosmological myth of Plato's Timaeus from where "in Western symbolism the concept of the perfection of the circle perhaps originated." Harper draws attention to Plato's conception of unity in variety: "and causing circle to revolve in a circle, [the creator] established the world one singular, solitary nature." Harper quotes from Thomas Taylor,

The Cratylus, Phaedo, Parmenides and Timaeus of Plato (London, 1793), p. 462. Hence the circle reflects and symbolises the eternal ideal. Remarking on the circle's perfection, Harper draws attention to its endlessness. "The endless round in space parallels or symbolizes the infinity of eternity." He gives the Neoplatonists credit for popularising the philosophic implications of this symbolic commonplace, and he declares that "the micro-cosmic symbol of the circle as a representation of the universe is an organic part of Neoplatonic doctrine."

⁵¹ Blake does not poetically revive a universe of correspondences but one of identities. He implicitly refutes Bacon by introducing "fictions and idols" into natural philosophy by "the reduction of the operations of nature to the similitude of human actions . . . the fancy that nature acts as man does." (Francis Bacon, De Augmentis Scientiarum in The Philosophical Works of Francis Bacon, ed. John M. Robertson (London, 1905), p. 517.) In Urizen and, on an even wider scale, in The Four Zoas (and of course in Milton and Jerusalem) Blake, like English Renaissance poets, interprets cosmology, human anatomy and history in terms of the circle or its variations--the spiral or the vortex. The perfect spheres of the planets, the globe, the human skull, the heart, a globe of "life blood." All these images reproduce, imitate or mimic the symbol of Divine Perfection, "from which man for so long deduced his ethics, his aesthetics, and his metaphysics," and which "was broken during the seventeenth century" as a result of the scientific revolution. (Marjorie Hope Nicolson, The Breaking of the Circle: Studies in the Effect of the "New Science" upon Seventeenth-Century Poetry /rev. edn. New York and London, 1962/, p. 7.) For an adequate understanding of Blake's poetry it is necessary to come to think as Renaissance poets did "before 'The Death of a World,' before the animate macrocosm and living microcosm disappeared, and their places were taken by a mechanical clock and men with mechanical hearts." (Nicolson, p. 10.)

⁵² According to Paley, Urthona "is at once the unfallen Adam, the alchemical 'prima materia,' and man in possession of the earth." (Paley, Energy and the Imagination, pp. 64-65.) The name 'Urthona' may well be intended to combine the German particle 'ur,'--signifying 'original,' 'archetypal,' 'ancient' or 'primitive'--with the noun 'Thon,' which means 'earth' or 'clay.' See Pierce, "Etymology as Explanation in Blake," 397. This derivation reveals him as Blake's Adamic man, the name 'Adam' meaning in Hebrew 'red earth.'

Eden, in its unconventional and specifically Blakean meaning, is mentioned in The Four Zoas only in late passages of Night I (8 times), once in Night IV and six times in Night VIII which, as is generally agreed, is the latest

Night. By way of synecdoche, 'coulters' suggest 'plough.' Plato condescendingly compares the process of writing with tillage. (Plato, Phaedrus, 276 CD.) Plato's intelligent husbandman who is reminiscent of Urizen, will "sow and write in the garden of letters as an amusement, storing up memories for himself against the time when he shall reach forgetful old age." (Curtius, p. 304.) Curtius' further elaborations of this theme in terms of the history of ideas are of considerable interest as regards the contrasting empiricist and idealist points of view advocated by Locke and Blake, respectively: "Related to the metaphor of writing is Plato's comparison of the soul to a wax tablet, upon which things imprint themselves as with a seal ring (Theatetus 191 C). Aristotle (De anima, III, 4, 430 a 1) says that the state of the mind before it applies itself to an object of cognition is 'like that of a tablet upon which nothing has yet been written.' The commentator Alexander of Aphrodisias paraphrases the passage by: 'reason, resembling an unwritten tablet.' Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas substitute 'tabula rasa.'" (Curtius, p. 305.)

Curtius further points out that in Isidore the comparison between writing and tilling is metaphorically elaborated. 'Ploughshare' (vomer) is used in place of 'stylus' or iron pen. In Curtius' words, "Isidore knows too that the 'Ancients' made their lines as the ploughman his furrows (Etymologiae, VI, 14, 71), that they wrote "furrowwise." (Curtius, p. 313.) The Greek 'boustróphedon' means "turning like oxen in ploughing, writing from left to right and from right to left alternately." (Curtius, p. 313.) This became a standard mode of expression with medieval poets. Note the modified image of Luvah's bulls pulling the plough of ages. Although we do not know whether Blake was in any way conscious of this tradition, he, too, uses in numerous instances the plough and ploughing to symbolise the process of writing and engraving both in a positive and a negative sense.

Obviously, the production of "spades" and "coulters" by the sons of Los/Urthona in Eden has positive connotations. And the "Plow" of Los in Milton (8:20), is "an instrument / Of Harvest" and therefore of the Apocalypse, which will "Pass over the Nations." (6:12-13)

Throughout The Four Zoas, however, the plough is associated with Urizen, and its connotations are mainly negative. Only in Night IX, when the Universal Man has been redeemed, does Urizen grasp the plough which his sons have cleaned from the "rust of ages" (124:6-7). He proceeds to drive it over the cities and the universe, thus preparing the world for the apocalyptic harvest. This corresponds with the activities of Los in Milton, rather than with Urizen's previous use of the plough in The Four Zoas.

⁵³For an elaboration of these identifications, see Damon, p. 145. Frye provides the most extensive table of associations relating to the Zoas. See Frye, pp. 277-278. Both Damon and Frye draw extensively on Milton and Jerusalem. A number of their identifications cannot be verified in The Four Zoas.

⁵⁴The Sermons of John Donne, ed. E. M. Simpson and G. R. Potter. Sermon No. 9, VIII, 228.

⁵⁵Correspondingly, Los's ploughing in Milton is an apocalyptic activity. (6:12-13)

⁵⁶Compare the analogous scene involving the sons of Urizen in Night VII(b); 92:17-33.

⁵⁷Despite the phases of decline previously associated with the mythic personages of Adam, Noah and Abraham, this propensity survives in Eden, as Blake asserts in his Descriptive Catalogue:

Adam was a Druid, and Noah; also Abraham was called to succeed the Druidical age, which began to turn allegoric and mental signification into corporeal command, whereby human sacrifice would have depopulated the earth. All these things are written in Eden. The artist is an inhabitant of that happy country; and if every thing goes on as it has begun, the world of vegetation and generation may expect to be opened again to Heaven, through Eden, as it was in the beginning. (E533)

In The Four Zoas Eden pertains to a higher ontological order than in A Descriptive Catalogue. See, for instance, Night I; 21:1-7 where Eden is invested with a distinctly mystical quality by its association with the Council of God and Jesus Christ.

⁵⁸A different, though complementary, version is related by the Spectre of Urthona in Night VII(a).

One dread morn of goary blood
The manhood was divided for the gentle passions
making way
Thro the infinite labyrinths of the heart & thro
the nostrils issuing
In odourous stupefaction stood before the Eyes of Man
A female bright. (84:12-16)

This scene will later be discussed in some detail.

⁵⁹The prototypes of the Fall in ancient literature are, of course, Hesiod's description of the fall of the Titans in Theogony, and Homer's variations of Hephaistos' fall from Olympus. See Iliad 18, 394 ff. and 1, 590 ff. Damon, however, argues that this Spectre is Los (Poetry) who "flees to the Generative Instinct for Inspiration; and at once becomes a Serpent (Materialistic)." (Damon, p. 370.) This scene is too ambiguous to render the one or the other reading a certainty. I am inclined to identify this "spectre" with the archetype of Los and Enitharmon in Enion's world, and the "body" with the Spectre of Urthona. Apparently, a division of the fallen mind ("his spectre") and the fallen "body" takes place.

⁶⁰See Ovid, Metamorphoses, II, 172-175; III, 31-49.

⁶¹Europe, 10:21-22; 15.

⁶²Erdman, The Illuminated Blake, p. 143.

⁶³According to Damon's more specific interpretation, "the people of this world, drive Poetry downward, far into the world of the Body, into the 'caverned Rock' of the material skull." (Damon, p. 370.)

⁶⁴R. G. Collingwood, The Idea of Nature (London, 1965), p. 9.

⁶⁵In Percival's phrase, Tharmas "is the body's energy, for the outer and apparent body is personified by the feminine Enion." Milton O. Percival, William Blake's Circle of Destiny (New York, 1938), p. 42. Hereafter cited as Percival.

⁶⁶In Jerusalem, 63:5, Tharmas is identified as "the Angel of the Tongue," and in Milton, 27:45-46, several intriguing identifications are made. Their implications ought to become more transparent in the course of this discussion: "Ulro, Seat of Satan, / Which is the False Tongue beneath Beulah: it is the Sense of Touch."

⁶⁷Commentary, E865.

⁶⁸Percival, p. 42.

⁶⁹Bloom points out that "a hint for the symbolism of this flood was provided for Blake by Isaiah 59:19-60:5, but the general pattern is given by the chaos in which Genesis begins." (Commentary, E865.)

⁷⁰The first reading--"I have hidden thee Enion in Jealous Despair"--was deleted by Blake and replaced with "Jerusalem in Silent Contrition" (E740). Note Bloom's instructive warning (E865-866): "While one must be wary of overly explicit or reductive allegorizings of the Zoas and their actions, the pattern of meaning here is instructive toward a reader's control of the poem's total meaning. As the faculties of integral man divide against him, and against one another, the residual components of their healthier state flee to the refuge of Tharmas, for he is the guardian of the unsundered Innocence they seek to repossess."

⁷¹Damon (p. 366) comments: "Sometimes the Senses perceive the act of generation as a purpose (flower) and sometimes as an end in itself (fruit)."

⁷²"A great majority of Englishmen are fond of The Indefinite which they Measure by Newton's Doctrine of the Fluxions of an Atom, A Thing that does not Exist." (Letter to George Cumberland, 12 April 1827. Letters, p. 162.) "Bacon is only Epicurus over again." (Annotations to Reynolds, Discourse II, E634.) Frye (p. 17) points out that "Newton's corpuscular theory of light belongs to the same method of thought."

⁷³Their attitudes are also summed up in Auguries of Innocence, 107-108 (E483): "He who Doubts from what he sees / Will neer Believe;" and Bacon's "first princip(le) is Unbelief" (Annotations to Reynolds, E637).

⁷⁴See 47:15-23.

⁷⁵Erdman's version of line 7:3 is confusing, whereas Keynes's reading clarifies the issue and supports my argument. He accepts that "Shrieking," "that" and "shudderd at" were deleted but not replaced in the manuscript, whereas Erdman prints the line before deletions were introduced. (Keynes, p. 269; E742.) In line 4 "serpent" was deleted and replaced by "beast."

⁷⁶For descriptions of the sketches on page 26 (page 13V of the folio) see Damon, p. 399; Bentley, p. 27; Margoliouth, p. 107; and especially Pilloo Nanavutty, "'Materia Prima' in a Page of Blake's Vala," William Blake: Essays for S. Foster Damon, ed. Alvin H. Rosenfeld (Providence, 1969), pp. 293-302. The descriptions by Nanavutty and Margoliouth differ in important points.

⁷⁷"'Materia Prima,'" p. 294, 295.

⁷⁸From John Read, Prelude to Chemistry, p. 107 as quoted by Nanavutty, "'Materia Prima,'" p. 295.

⁷⁹Nanavutty, "'Materia Prima,'" p. 296.

⁸⁰Nanavutty, p. 301.

⁸¹Damon, p. 366.

⁸²Nanavutty, p. 294.

⁸³"As this spectre [of Tharmas] and Enion's shadowy self fall together, they assume the status held by their probable prototypes, the sea god Thaumás (whose name means 'a wonder') and the shore goddess Eione, in Hesiod's Theogony. Thaumás is another Old Man of the Sea, father of Iris, the rainbow who betokens an end to flood. As goddess of the shore, the watery waste of Newtonian nature, Blake's Enion weaves chaotic Tharmás into the cycle." (Bloom, Commentary, E866.) According to Harper, "Blake here refers to a common Neo-Platonic symbol of the material world, the sea, which was explained many times by Taylor and became one of Blake's favorites. The poetic description of one plate of the Gates of Paradise is ample proof of the association in Blake's mind of time and the ocean as material symbols: 'In Times Ocean falling drown'd.'" (George Mills Harper, "The Neo-Platonic Concept of Time in Blake's Prophetic Books," PMLA, 69 (1954), 149.)

⁸⁴America, Plate b: 5-7; E57. See E724.

⁸⁵Harper, "Time in Blake's Prophetic Books," 149.

⁸⁶Harper further explains: "Embracing the first nine numbers, it represented all possible numerical combinations; including the zero, indicating a return to its starting point, it symbolized the circle." According to Proclus, as quoted by Harper, "the decad is mundane, . . . the universal recipient, ancient and venerable, placing bound about all things." (Thomas Taylor, trans. The Commentaries of Proclus on the Timaeus of Plato (London, 1820; 1st edn. 1810), II, 419. Harper, 149-150.) These dates of publication are, of course, too late for Blake to have derived his notion of the mundane implications of the decad and the circle from this particular source. The symbolism employed in depicting Urizen's building of the "Mundane Shell" nevertheless strongly suggests Blake's familiarity with Plato's Timaeus. The number symbolism of nine and ten, which recurs in connection with Los and Enitharmon, is discussed by Harper in "Symbolic Meaning in Blake's 'Nine Years,'" MLN, 72 (1957), 18-19. Bloom suggests that Enion's "nine days & nights" of weaving may constitute "the nine nightmares that together form the poem." (Commentary, E866.)

⁸⁷An elaborated version of this complex symbolism, especially as regards the ambiguities of Beulah and its proximity to Ulro, can be found in Jerusalem, 69:15-31.

⁸⁸In his invocation Blake addresses a Daughter of Beulah in the same spirit. According to Bloom, she "is not a Classical daughter of Memory, but a Hebraic daughter of Divine Inspiration. Beulah is the 'new name' spoken by God in Isaiah 62:2-4, and applied to Zion as the land that 'shall be married' by its Lord." (Commentary, E865.)

⁸⁹Damon, A Blake Dictionary, p. 416.

⁹⁰Percival, pp. 83-84.

⁹¹This notion is succinctly expressed in Milton, 29:5-7:

And every Space that a Man views around his dwelling-
place:

Standing on his own roof, or in his garden on a mount
Of twenty-five cubits in height, such space is his
Universe.

⁹²Annotations to Lavater's Aphorisms on Man (London, 1789), E589.

⁹³Commentary, E866.

⁹⁴Kant employs the term 'phenomenology' in Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaft, but not in his three Critiques.

⁹⁵Bloom argues that "in the crisis of Man's fall, Beulah becomes Ulro, a development shown in condensed form in 'The Crystal Cabinet.' Terrified at the Circle of Destiny, with its remorseless movement toward the negative unity of death, Blake's Muses create Ulro as a space where the Circle can be confined. . . . the Daughters give death a vegetative form, and so perpetuate what they seek to avoid." (Commentary, E866.) This is only partly true.

⁹⁶See Urizen, 4:10-13.

⁹⁷The relevant passages in Night I are in harmony with the Christian spirit permeating Nights IX and even more so with Night VIII; they were probably inserted when the final two Nights were composed in their present form. Pages 19-22, which contain a good deal of late material, were bound out of order. See Erdman, p. 747.

⁹⁸The children of Albion and Jerusalem are symbolised by Reuben and Levi who represent the tribes of Israel. They enact the Man's Fall both in their biblical and in a British context.

Reuben slept on Penmaenmawr & Levi slept on Snowdon
Their eyes their ears nostrils & tongues roll outward
they behold
What is within now seen without they are raw to the
hungry wind
They become Nations far remote in a little & dark
Land (25:21-24).

The symbolism of externalisation is combined with material from biblical and Celtic mythology and related to the reality of Blake's day. "The political theme of England's casting out of liberty is contextualized by a comprehensive imagery of separation, exile, and 'scattering abroad.' Externalization is usually figured as a separation from within the body: for example, Albion's Affections leave him through his loins, appearing 'withoutside' (Jerusalem, 19:17); and his sons are ripped loose from him in an agony of physical severance (J 15:21-24). So, also, the eyes, ears, nostrils, and tongue 'roll outward,' and 'behold / What is within now seen without' (The Four Zoas, 25:22-24). Behind Blake's motif stands Ezekiel's great theme of the Babylonian exile." (20:23; 34:12) (Thomas R. Frosch, The Awakening of Albion: the Renovation of the Body in the Poetry of William Blake (New York & London, 1974), p. 60.) In connection with The Four Zoas, 22:32-37 and 19:1-5, see Erdman, Blake: Prophet Against Empire, pp. 313-314, for the historical allusions and the possible dating of this added passage.

⁹⁹Frosch, The Awakening of Albion, p. 61.

¹⁰⁰Stevenson (p. 380) points out that "this is not the Beulah of Milton pl. 30.1 and the late additions to The Four Zoas . . . but the less distinctive place of iv 88-9--a simpler and earlier use of Bunyan's Beulah, a 'holiday' land just outside heaven."

¹⁰¹See also the complementary report by the "Ambassadors from Beulah," 21:8-22:15.

¹⁰²This is not due to an oversight on Blake's part since "Eternal" of the first reading was deleted and replaced by "Fallen." See Erdman, p. 745; Bentley, p. 12.

¹⁰³Paley, Energy and the Imagination, p. 93.

¹⁰⁴Paradise Lost, Book IX, 1121-1131.

¹⁰⁵Paley, Energy and the Imagination, p. 93. Other parallels can be found in Julius Caesar, II. 1. 66-69, and in Bacon. According to Blackstone, Bacon "shows us three faculties in the human mind (not four, as with Blake), and these faculties are personified and represented as at war with one another. It is almost a picture of the Four Zoas,

with Tharmas (the Instincts) left out." Blackstone calls attention to the concept in Bacon of a confederacy contracted between two faculties, Reason and Imagination, against a third, the Affections. With reference to The Advancement of Learning, II, 18, 4, he elaborates: "It is precisely this division of the whole Man, this setting of one faculty against another, and the attempted domination by one of all the rest, that Blake is opposing in the whole of his work. Bacon's psychology depends on this division: there is no conception of faculties acting harmoniously together--instead we have coercion or persuasion, exactly as if the human totality were (as indeed Bacon consistently imagines it) a state or kingdom in which the reason is sole ruler and the affections errant subjects . . ." (English Blake, p. 252.)

¹⁰⁶ Paley, Energy and the Imagination, p. 94.

¹⁰⁷ Paley, p. 96.

¹⁰⁸ Blake: Prophet Against Empire, p. 311.

¹⁰⁹ The Awakening of Albion, p. 64.

¹¹⁰ Milton, 30:20.

¹¹¹ Bloom summarises: "As another account of the Fall, it presents a brilliant and clear image of how an idea of the Holy was conceived, an idea that raised the mistaken Urizen to a spurious divinity and now condemns him to ruin." (Commentary, E871.)

¹¹² Bloom argues that this line "gives a complete image of the fall of nature into the serpent of time and space, and the further transformation of the serpent into the blocking or Covering Cherub, separating the emotional life from its full gratification." (Commentary, E871.)

¹¹³ Vala calls Luvah "the Tempter" (43:21). There is a satanic quality about Luvah as he has smitten the Man, leaving "the dark Body of Albion . . . prostrate upon the crystal pavement / Coverd with boils from head to foot." (41:15-16) Albion suffers the fate of Job, Luvah-Satan being a projection of his own consciousness. This scene is reminiscent of Blake's design "Satan Smiting Job with Sore Boils."

¹¹⁴ I. M. Crombie, "Introduction to Tinaeus and Critias," The Dialogues of Plato, trans. Benjamin Jowett, ed. R. M. Hare and D. A. Russell (London, 1970), III, 212. Hereafter cited as Tinaeus.

- 115 Timaeus, 48a.
- 116 The Poems of John Milton, p. 605. See also Plato, Timaeus, 30a and 32b-c; Ovid, Metamorphoses, 1.
- 117 Percival (pp. 155-156) draws attention to the astrological symbolism, associated with Libra and Leo, which probably underlies these configurations. "At Libra the heavens are balanced, and day and night are equal, which means that the Mundane Shell is at its greatest moment." Percival also provides an extensive account of Urizen's "Mundane Shell." (See pp. 59-68.)
- 118 For a related scene, see Paradise Lost, Book III, 696-735.
- 119 See Bentley, pp. 29-33; E748-749.
- 120 See Timaeus, 53-58; and Crombie, "Introduction to Timaeus," pp. 204-205.
- 121 Plato assigns to earth the cubical form; to fire, the pyramid; to air, the octahedron; to water, the icosahedron. Timaeus, 53-55.
- 122 Timaeus, 39c-d.
- 123 Timaeus, 37c.
- 124 Timaeus, 37d.
- 125 Crombie's phrase, "Introduction to Timaeus," p. 201.
- 126 See The Advancement of Learning, II, xiv, 9. Also Paradise Lost, Book III, 696. Blackstone discusses Blake's rejection of Bacon's doctrines in some detail. With regard to 33:16-36, Blackstone believes "every line . . . to have been written in refutation of Bacon's thesis. . . . Mathematical forms are commonly one of the evil things for Blake: here he uses them as a stick to beat Bacon." (English Blake, p. 221.) Blackstone does not relate this conclusion to the poetic context of The Four Zoas. After all, it is Urizen, the supreme rationalist, who builds the "Mundane Shell" in a manner rejected by Bacon. See English Blake, pp. 217-222.
- 127 The Advancement of Learning, II, xiv, 9.
- 128 For the symbol of the chain, see Paradise Lost, Book II, 1051; Percival, p. 61; Harper, The Neo-Platonism of William Blake (Chapel Hill, 1961), p. 242-243.
- 129 Milton, 24:72.

130. "Time in Blake's Prophetic Books," 142.
- 131 See Jerusalem, 15:1-29, especially 24-29, where Reuben, Noah and Abraham represent different phases in the spiritual history of mankind. Other relevant passages in Jerusalem, 30:43-54, 32:1-13.
- 132 Stevenson, p. 317. He points out that "Reuben was disinherited as 'unstable as water' (Genesis xlix 4) for his incest; Levi was the father of the tribe of priests."
- 133 The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, Plate 11, E37.
- 134 Lines 25-28 are pencil additions, written over several erased lines at the top of the page; line 29 is written down the right margin. See Bentley, p. 14; E746.
- 135 For full passage, see Erdman, Textual Notes, E745.
- 136 Stevenson, p. 309.
- 137 Stevenson, p. 309.
- 138 See 9:27-28.
- 139 See 37:10, deleted line: "Thou sitst in harmony for God hath set thee over all." (Bentley, p. 38; E750.)
- 140 This is an added line, preceded by two deleted lines which read: "Raise then thy radiant eyes to him raise thy obedient hands / And comforts shall descend from heaven into thy darkning clouds." (Bentley, p. 39; E750.) It is remarkable that the references to a merciful God should have been deleted. Identification of the "Eternal One" (38:15) with Albion thus becomes virtually inevitable.
- 141 Night VII(a), p. 83; see also 9:34-11:18.
- 142 See section 4, Enion and Tharmas.
- 143 See 47:6-8.
- 144 Paley's phrase, Energy and the Imagination, p. 100.
- 145 See Jerusalem, Plates 6-10 for an extensive version of Los's confrontation with the Spectre of Urthona. As the Spectre is only concerned for himself, he fails to comprehend Los's concern for Albion. Los characterises him revealingly as his own "Pride & Self-righteousness" (Jerusalem, 8:30). Unlike Los, he is a hypocritical believer in chastity and in duality generally. Bloom points out that together Los and the Spectre of Urthona "make up

the ego of fallen man, Los as the active and the Spectre as the passive component . . . Each man's Spectre of Urthona is that part in him that begins by fearing old age, poverty, sickness, loneliness, and then expands to an omni-present anxiety, a nameless dread of death-in-life, of time as an oppressive burden daily increasing in weight . . . The Spectre is irresolute and dependent, colored dismally blue in a parody of the color of imagination, shod and armored in iron as befits a self-crippled and time-obsessed will. He is a cripple . . . but his strength within any artist is a subtle and persistent reality." (Commentary, E872-873.) Bloom also draws attention to other prototypes of the Spectre of Urthona in Romantic literature. Bloom's description of the Spectre's character is, of course, syncretic and, with regard to Night IV of The Four Zoas, conjectural. For an extensive analysis of the Spectre's personality, see Frye, pp. 292-299. According to Margoliouth, "the Spectre represents the natural, workaday man, who is in his proper place as servant to spiritual man but is not to be trusted with independence. . . . he is not the real thing." Margoliouth further points out that "the dream element is very strong in the emergence of the Spectre in Night IV. Blake there accepted what his imagination gave him. It must be read primarily as a dream-fantasy. As so often with Blake, 'meaning' is developed later." (Margoliouth, p. 117.) It must also be remembered that "the spectre . . . is a creature arising out of the disintegration of a personality," and that "Urthona's spectre henceforth exists as a being separate from Los." (Stevenson, p. 341.) And Bloom explains that "the labor of Los cannot become apocalyptic until he and the Spectre of Urthona cease to be separate from one another." (Commentary, E872.)

¹⁴⁶ According to Paley, Tharmas mistakenly hopes "that by limiting the claims of Reason he can save some portion of the lost bliss of the undivided self. Instead, the result threatens to deliver the mind to a stream of undifferentiated sensation, without meaning or value." (Energy and the Imagination, pp. 100-101.)

¹⁴⁷ Bloom's phrase, Commentary, E870.

¹⁴⁸ Paley, Energy and the Imagination, pp. 111-112.

¹⁴⁹ Margoliouth, p. 120.

¹⁵⁰ Erdman, Blake: Prophet Against Empire, p. 307.

¹⁵¹ Energy and the Imagination, p. 112.

152. In Jerusalem, Albion's Spectre who "is the Great Selfhood / Satan" (29/33:17-18) combines in his personality the characteristics of fallen Urizen--pure intellect degenerated to reason--and of the Spectre of Urthona's insecure, timebound, materialist consciousness.

But the Spectre . . . rose over Albion
Saying, I am God O Sons of Men! I am your Rational
Power!

Am I not Bacon & Newton & Locke who teach Humility
to Man!

Who teach Doubt & Experiment & my two Wings Voltaire:
Rousseau.

. . .
Vain foolish Man! wilt thou believe without Experiment?
And build a World of Phantasy upon my Great Abyss!
A World of Shapes in craving lust & devouring appetite
(Jerusalem, 54:15-24).

See also Jerusalem, 29/33:1-16, where the Spectre of Albion is described as "his Spectrous / Chaos [which] before his face appeared: an Unformed Memory," replacing "the Divine Vision." According to Paley, "Albion's Spectre embodies both Cartesian rationalism and the in-some-ways opposed associationist psychology." (Energy and the Imagination, p. 254.) This Spectre boasts: "And shall Albions Cities remain when I pass over them / With my deluge of forgotten remembrances over the tablet" (15-16). This "tablet" is the ancient metaphor for the human mind. When the Spectre with his "deluge of forgotten remembrances" passes "over the tablet," it wipes out all notions of Eternity, or innate ideas, and the mind becomes the notorious 'tabula rasa' of the empiricists. Furthermore, the mind is temporarily swamped with memories which are arbitrarily accumulated and lost "in fortuitous concourse" (29/33:8). Paley (p. 254) points out that the adjective "fortuitous" is specifically "employed by both Cudworth and Berkeley against just such views as this of the 'Spectrous Chaos.'" Cudworth unwittingly describes the world dominated by Tharmas and inhabited by the Spectre: "To suppose . . . that all things come to pass fortuitously, by the unguided motion of matter, and without the direction of any mind, [is] a thing altogether as irrational as impious . . . That the mechanic Theists make God but an idle spectator of the fortuitous motions of matter . . ." (As quoted by Paley from Cudworth, True Intellectual Systems, IV. 412, 491-2.) Cudworth describes the world dominated by Tharmas and handed over to the Spectre. The empiricist's world, Berkeley believes, is as much a fallacy as "the whole system of Atheism." Neither can "exist without a mind," human or divine. Not even "a rock, a desert, a chaos, or confused jumble of atoms . . . can exist independent of a mind . . ." (As quoted by Paley from Berkeley, 'Three Dialogues Between Hylas and Philonous,' Works (London, 1820),

i. 161.) What applies to the external world, also applies to the mind. The chaotic condition of the former is merely a reflection of the latter. 'Sub specie aeternitatis' both the motions taking place in the external world and the operations of the mind appear chaotic as they are separated from any perceptible Divine purpose. From the Spectre's degraded point of view, however, and in the context of the fallen world, material stability, temporal continuity and chronology, and orderly mental operations (like the linear succession of ideas in the human mind and memory, which is the mind's retentive quality) are desirable achievements.

¹⁵³Plato's Republic III is indicated by Paley as the ultimate source of this conceit. (Energy and the Imagination, p. 101.) Percival (p. 319) refers to Plotinus: "Souls, while they contemplate diverse objects, are and become that which they contemplate." This conceit is also employed by Shelley in Prometheus Unbound and Prince Athanase, and by Paine in Rights of Man.

¹⁵⁴Bloom, Blake's Apocalypse, p. 231.

¹⁵⁵For textual details, see Erdman, p. 752, and Bentley, p. 55.

¹⁵⁶Bloom's description, Commentary, E873.

¹⁵⁷Stevenson (pp. 348-349) provides a somewhat technical discussion of the possible biological origins of this image.

¹⁵⁸Adam, the victim of Satan's dualistic 'weltanschauung' "is only The Natural Man & not the Soul or Imagination." (The Laocöon, E271.) Adam's name means "red earth." See Damon, Dictionary, p. 7. The respective positions of Satan and Adam in Blake's imaginative conception of world history will be discussed in connection with Night VIII of The Four Zoas.

¹⁵⁹Bloom, Commentary, E874: Los "is in danger of becoming a Deist imagination, wholly absorbed into a vegetative or generative context."

¹⁶⁰As in Europe and America, a parody of Milton's Nativity Ode is suggested.

¹⁶¹Milton, 24:50.

¹⁶²According to Stevenson (p. 349), "Blake uses the Cartesian scheme of the universe" with its three fundamental elements--the light-giving (the sun), the translucent (the ether) and the opaque (the earth)--"for his own ends." Bloom points out that "Luban is sometimes an alternate name

for Mount Ararat, where Noah's ark came to rest; this is appropriate for a gate of salvation." (Commentary, E874.) This observation establishes a connection with our discussion, in connection with The Song of Los, of Adam resting in Eden and Noah on Ararat and with the ontological implications of this symbolism. The symbolic concepts of Golgonooza, Luban and Udan Adan are further developed in Nights VII(a) and VIII and will be discussed in their appropriate contexts. See VII(a), 83:1-15; VIII, 99:23-100:25; 113:1-37; Milton, 24:48-50; and Plates 26-28. Jerusalem, Plates 12-14. In Night VIII the identity of Golgonooza as the city of art which prepares mankind for the rebuilding of Jerusalem, becomes unequivocal. The passage on page 60 of The Four Zoas is probably the earliest expression of this motif. Stevenson (p. 354) believes that "here is the germ of the idea, no more, but it is significant as an example of the manner in which Blake's images grew as he saw them more and more profoundly." I do not share this view, but suspect that the concept of Golgonooza is not fully developed in Night V for dramatic reasons, and not because Blake did not see enough when composing Night V. At this stage Los is unaware of the full implications of his activities. Having correlated the development of Blake's understanding with the development of his poetic imagery, Stevenson puts in question his own theory by wondering whether lines 3-4 on page 60 of the manuscript are later than the rest. Incidentally, neither Bentley nor Erdman comment on this possibility. Bentley's reproduction shows no change in handwriting.

¹⁶³ Paley, Energy and the Imagination, pp. 104-105.

¹⁶⁴ According to Damon (p. 375), 'storgous' is "an adjective derived by Blake from 'storge,' meaning Parental Love, used by Blake in preference to the more violent word, 'incestuous.'" Bloom points out that "Blake later uses that word, Storge, as another name for the river Arnon, which one must cross on the passage from the natural to the imaginative body. Storgous appetite is therefore the possessive paternal love manifested in some of the Songs of Innocence, and must be left behind if the poet is to free himself from the context of nature." (Commentary, E874.) One may conclude that Los is right in isolating Orc, although he does so for the wrong reasons.

¹⁶⁵ See Frye, p. 220. For a contrasting view, see Erdman, Blake: Prophet Against Empire, pp. 307-308.

¹⁶⁶ Paley's phrase (Energy and the Imagination, p. 104) is poetically substantiated in Nights V, VII(a) and (b) and VIII of The Four Zoas.

167 Paley, Energy and the Imagination, p. 104; see Erdman, Prophet Against Empire, pp. 284-288.

168 See 62:1-8.

169 Paley, Energy and the Imagination, p. 108.

170 According to Erdman, "he is quite mad . . . [and] still committed to a war policy. Tiriel is come again." (Blake: Prophet Against Empire, p. 371.)

171 Frye, p. 221.

172 Annotations to Lavater, E579.

173 Paley, Energy and the Imagination, p. 109.

174 Frye, p. 220.

175 Damon, p. 377.

176 Commentary, E875. Bloom's identification is obviously derived from Damon's physiological explanation; see pages 376-377. Damon also draws attention to literary parallels in Paradise Lost and in the Divine Comedy. Bloom also associates the daughters with the three maidens in The Golden Net. Possibly, Blake had Plato's three Destinies in mind who "sit on the Circles of Platos Heavens weaving the Thread of Mortal life." (Description of Illustrations to Milton's L'Allegro and Il Penseroso, E666.) Erdman discovers a "similarity to the weird sisters in Macbeth [which] suggests the theme of inordinate ambition." Their unkind treatment of Urizen "suggests the ingratitude of Lear's daughters. . . . Allegorically these women are the arts of Britain." (Blake: Prophet Against Empire, pp. 371-372.)

177 Bloom, Commentary, E875.

178 Damon, p. 377.

179 See Damon, p. 373.

180 Following Damon's example (p. 377), Paley provides a lucid interpretation both on psychological and epistemological lines: "the 'food' of Reason is perception; without Tharnas's stream of sensation, Reason will be 'starvd upon the void' . . . while perception unilluminated by intellect is merely a chaos without relationship or meaning." (Energy and the Imagination, pp. 109-110.)

181 Bloom, Commentary, E875.

¹⁸²Erdman emphasises the complementary historical, social and industrial aspects of these scenes. Blake: Prophet Against Empire, pp. 372-374.

¹⁸³See Paradise Lost, Book II, 934.

¹⁸⁴This, incidentally, appears to be the first mention of Divine power as a theist concept in The Four Zoas, which does not occur in an added passage.

¹⁸⁵The ambivalent drawing on page 71 depicts a frightened young man on a bed, who is being roused from sleep by a threatening patriarchal figure. (The young man is identified by Grant as "the alarmed poet." John E. Grant, "Visions in Vala: A Consideration of Some Pictures in the Manuscript," Blake's Sublime Allegory: Essays on 'The Four Zoas' 'Milton' 'Jerusalem', ed. Stuart Curran and Joseph Anthony Wittreich, Jr. (Madison, Wisconsin & London, 1973), p. 176.) The large bell in the old man's left hand and the spear in his concealed right hand associate him with Death. The hour glass in the background ominously suggests that time has run out for the young man. The open book on the table indicates that he is being summoned to the fatal labour of recording his experiences at the end of which death awaits him. Alternatively, one may conclude that he already has recorded his experiences and is now summoned by Death. Possibly both figures in this drawing depict Urizen. The young man is being overshadowed by the aged figure into which he will eventually be transformed.

¹⁸⁶Blake's use of the image 'vortex' has attracted a good deal of attention. See, for instance, J. Bronowski, William Blake and the Age of Revolution (London, 1972), pp. 138-139, 201. Bloom, Commentary, E875. Frye, pp. 350-351. Nurmi, "Negative Sources in Blake," 307-312. The most recent and elaborate study of this image has been undertaken by Donald D. Ault, Visionary Physics: Blake's Response to Newton (Chicago & London, 1974), pp. 141-160. Both Nurmi and Ault relate Blake's vortex to the reference point of the Cartesian vortices, and thus to the cosmological implications of the image. Frye, Bronowski and Ault also draw attention to the perceptual implications of the 'vortex'-image by associating it with Newton's optical theory. This aspect is particularly apparent in Milton, 15:19-35. Frye interprets the image as an appropriate means toward visualising the externalising Lockean mode of perception, and the conception of reality as external and objective, on which such a theory of perception is founded. Blake's repeated use of the image in The Four Zoas, but especially in Milton, justifies such an interpretation, emphasising the ontological, perceptual and psychological implications. There is also the strong

possibility of the Cartesian precedent. The manner in which Urizen creates and leaves behind his vortices conforms with Descartes' view "that the universe was composed of a continuous range of vortices, each with a star at its centre. Thus a body (e.g. a comet) travelling through one vortex would, on passing beyond it, immediately enter the influence of another." (Stevenson, p. 508.) Stevenson believes that Blake may have gleaned some knowledge of Descartes' idiosyncratic cosmology through the writings of Henry More, 1614-87.

¹⁸⁷ Lavater, for instance, uses the vortex in the sense both of a point of reference and centre or focus of desire "a man's interest . . . his God, the ultimate of his wishes, his end of existence . . . to which he makes every other thing a mere appendix;--the vortex, the centre, the comparative point from which he sets out, on which he fixes, to which he irresistibly returns." (Lavater, Aphorisms on Man (London, 1789). Quoted from Erdman, p. 573.) Urizen's act of creating his vortices reads like a parody of Lavater's praise of Christ: "The greatest of characters, no doubt, was he, who, free of all trifling accidental helps, could see objects through one grand immutable medium, always at hand, and proof against illusion and time, reflected by every object, and invariably traced through all the fluctuation of things." (E573) The only immutable medium Urizen knows is his self-interest. The external world is the mirror of his fallen intelligence. Grant points out "the obvious imagistic relationship between the drawing on page 74 and the design in Urizen 23, in which Urizen carries a sun like a bowling ball . . . it is usually assumed that Urizen is depicted in page 74 as carrying the sun. Moreover, we are reminded in the text (p. 74, l. 35; p. 75, l. 3) that he carries a 'globe of fire.' But if one looks carefully, he sees that Urizen is carrying a 'vortex' (which emits no beams), not a globe; it is a 'way' of looking at things, a 'prejudice,' rather than a source of illumination of reality." ("Visions in Vala," p. 178.)

¹⁸⁸ Ault, Visionary Physics, p. 149.

¹⁸⁹ Ault, p. 151.

¹⁹⁰ Annotations to Swedenborg, E591. Keynes reads "it is persecution to others or selfishness." (Keynes, p. 89.)

¹⁹¹ Annotations to Swedenborg, E591.

¹⁹² Ault points out the striking similarity between this image and the illustrations of Descartes' vortices in eighteenth-century editions of his Principia. "Urizen's 'Web,' however, is created to stretch across the void

spaces between the vortices, and thus links the Newtonian and Cartesian systems in the extremely negative spiderlike web which is the best connection Urizen can make between these logically polar systems, both of which are simultaneously appealing and repelling to him." (Visionary Physics, pp. 149-150.)

193 See Night III, 39:11.

194 Annotations to Reynolds, E635. A similar conflation of philosophical, psychological and ethical categories by means of popular etymology can be found in the Annotations to Reynolds, E637: "The Man who says that we have No Innate Ideas must be a Fool & Knave. Having No Con-Science-- or Innate Science."

195 See Erdman, Blake: Prophet Against Empire, p. 374.

196 75:21-23. Damon, p. 378. Erdman points out that "lines 75:19-21 are repeated exactly from America (c): 14-16, E58." Erdman identifies these fifty-two armies of regimented slaves with those raised by their Prince "from his fifty-two counties for the American War." Now, however, they muster round the Spectre. (Blake: Prophet Against Empire, p. 374.)

197 See Margoliouth, pp. XIII, 133-134, 140. Bentley (p. 167), in a somewhat high-handed manner, remonstrates with "all the more responsible Blake critics" for supposing the priority of composition of Night VII(b): "perhaps the partizans of this theory may be forgiven for their ignorance of the stitching-marks . . . but their disregard for the symbolism of the 'early' Night VII, which is only found elsewhere in Nights VIII and IX and in very late additions, is more difficult to explain away."

198 "The absence of stitching-marks in 'b' . . . bear[s] out the belief that Blake did indeed intend to exclude it, binding only its replacement, VIIa, into his gathering of leaves." (Erdman, "The Binding et cetera," 120.) For further criticism of Bentley's theories see 120-123. Also Erdman, pp. 755, 762.

199 Margoliouth, p. XIII.

200 Erdman, "The Binding et cetera," 123.

201 Stevenson, p. 371.

202 "The Four Zoas, revised perhaps quite thoroughly in the light of developments of 1799 and after, dates the complete dehumanization of Orc at the coup d'état of 18th Brumaire, and this may be the date of Blake's disillusionment." The passage quoted "can be dated with some assurance

because it comes in as a sort of special news report interrupting a series of battle dirges that relate to the stages of the British campaign of 1799 in the Netherlands." (Erdman, Blake: Prophet Against Empire, p. 316.) In my view, the date of the coup d'état can at best be considered as a 'terminus a quo.'

203 See 77:20-22.

204 See 79:7-8.

205 See 79:28. Bloom describes this bread as "an emblem of frustration [which] is properly associated with the fruit of Mystery in Night VIII." (Commentary, E877.)

206 Erdman quotes from Pitt's speech in Parliament on 11 November 1800. Blake: Prophet Against Empire, p. 368.

207 See Blake's Annotations to Thornton's The Lord's Prayer, London, 1827. Blake's satirical transposition of Thornton's comments on the Lord's Prayer ("This is Saying the Lords Prayer Backwards") expresses the same sentiments: "Our Father Augustus Caesar who art in these thy--Substantial Astronomical Telescopic--Heavens Holiness to thy Name--or Title & reverence to thy Shadow--Thy Kingship come upon Earth first & thence in Heaven Give us day by day our Real Taxed--Substantial Money bought--Bread-- . . . whatever cannot be Taxed." (E658-659) The effects of the war against Napoleon on the price of bread by the end of 1800 is discussed by Erdman in Blake: Prophet Against Empire, pp. 367-369. See also Erdman's discussion of Malthusian doctrine, *ibid.*, p. 369. On the same subjects, see Paley, Energy and the Imagination, pp. 112-115.

208 Following Erdman's lead, Paley correlates his transformation with contemporary historical events: "The repressive principle, as symbolized by the ingrowing of the chain, has become part of Orc, and France's domestic and foreign policies no longer seem very different from England's." (Energy and the Imagination, p. 112.) For more extensive elaborations on historicist lines, especially with regard to France and Napoleon's seizing of power in November 1799, see Erdman, Blake: Prophet Against Empire, pp. 316-319.

209 Energy and the Imagination, p. 116.

210 Bloom, Blake's Apocalypse, p. 252. Frye, p. 210: "As soon as we begin to think of the relation of Orc to Urizen, it becomes impossible to maintain them as separate principles. If Orc represents the reviving force of a new cycle, whether of dawn or spring or history, he must grow old and die at the end of that cycle. Urizen must eventually

gain the mastery over Orc, but such a Urizen cannot be another power but Orc himself, grown old." In Ahania, Fuzon degenerates into another Urizen. The same cyclic pattern of corruption determines the metamorphoses of The Mental Traveller.

211 Stevenson points out the relevance of John, 3:14 and 12:32, and comments: "Moses, like Urizen, is the Lawgiver; and he could never envisage Christ as Urizen did not envisage Orc." (Stevenson, p. 377.)

212 Bloom defines the Shadow of Enitharmon as "the demonic parody of any poet's muse, and her love entraps the poet in a world of dearth." (Commentary, E877.)

213 See Night VII(b); 93:22-33.

214 Hirsch, p. 141.

215 Hirsch, p. 140.

216 Frye, p. 298.

217 Compare Genesis, 3:24, and Paradise Lost, Book XII: 643-644. The implicit reference to the Lord's Angel with the sword of flame barring mankind from re-entering Paradise on the one hand, and to the Christian doctrine of "Mutual Forgiveness of each Vice / Such are the Gates of Paradise," on the other, anticipate the Spectre's change of attitude on page 85.

218 See Erdman, p. 756; Bentley, p. 87.

219 See Paley, Energy and the Imagination, p. 161.

220 According to Frye, the union of Los and the Spectre of Urthona "produces the tradition of art and prophecy which reaches the culmination in Jesus." (Frye, p. 298)

221 Although much of what Frye has to say about the Spectre of Urthona applies mainly to Jerusalem rather than The Four Zoas, I agree with the following observation: "the Spectre of Urthona does two things for Los: it provides him with a conscious will which makes his vision consistent and purposeful, and it gives him a sense of the passing of time which his imagination creates into a vision of the meaning of history." (Frye, p. 298.)

222 Frye, p. 299.

223 Lines 4-6 were inserted in the text and are probably not later than most of the Night. (See Erdman, p. 756; Bentley, p. 88.) Stevenson believes that they are "not in the main stream of the narrative of Urizen, Orc and Los in the ruins of Urizen's universe, but a sort of gloss on it, made probably when Blake was considering his work some time, perhaps a long time, later." (Stevenson, p. 385.)

224 Standing "on the Limit of Translucence," identified in Night V as the Gate of Luban, Los is "Filled with doubts in self accusation" (87:13-14).

225 See Romans, 5:1.

226 "The conceptual image here turns upon the necessity of saving a world without poetry by merging poetry with it; to make imaginative counterparts for the mass of men." (Bloom, Blake's Apocalypse, p. 255.)

227 Paley interprets this scene differently: "Los will now at least temporarily subordinate his prophetic to his artistic function." (Energy and the Imagination, p. 159.)

228 Lines 59-68 on page 90 "are written sideways in the bottom right margin . . . with a blunter pen than the rest of the page." (Bentley, p. 92.) This points to an even later date of composition than that of the rest of the page.

229 See 90:61-62.

230 In a deleted line Urizen's temple is identified with "the Synagogue of Satan" (E758). There is an extensive description of Urizen's temple in VII(b); 95/Second:31-96:18.

231 Damon, p. 385. On the biblical subject of the Jews crossing the River Jordan, see Frye, p. 367.

232 Bloom detects a reference "to Blake's own works of art, and their prophetic mission 'against the stirring battle.'" (Commentary, E880.)

233 Frye, p. 266.

234 Frye has some interesting things to say in this context: "the artist . . . is . . . woven in the looms of Cathedron, and feels a correspondence between his imagination and nature. But . . . he has much further to go than this. So far we are at the doctrine that the physical appearance is the clothing of a mental reality . . . [but man] has unique powers of dispensing with an external nature. The artist does not use natural images to clothe his ideas so much as to give body to them." (Frye, p. 267.) These woven bodies are to be contrasted with the skeletons of abstract reasoning.

235 See Jerusalem, 92:15-20:

When all their Crimes their Punishments their
Accusations of Sin:
All their Jealousies Revenges. Murders. hidings of
Cruelty in Deceit
Appear only in the Outward Spheres of Visionary Space
and Time.
In the shadows of Possibility by Mutual Forgiveness
forevermore
And in the Vision & in the Prophecy, that we may
Foresee & Avoid
The terrors of Creation & Redemption & Judgment.

236 According to Damon (p. 385), "the Void of the
Indefinite, in the realm of Abstract Philosophy, contains
the Satanic Mills. The Indefinite and the Abstract feed
the Outward Church, and are formed of the agonies of the
victims of the Laws of Reason."

237 Frye (pp. 366-367) associates Og and Sihon with
the biblical giants Og of Bashan and Sihon of Heshbon, and
identifies them as symbols of tyranny, "'spectrous forms,'
abstract ideas . . . [springing] from the union of the
sons of God with the daughters of men--that is from the
surrender of the divine imagination to the female will."

238 Damon (p. 385) identifies Tirzah as Licence and
Restriction. She tempts and tortures man.

239 For the Synagogue of Satan, see Revelation, 3:9.

240 See Revelation, 17:3-5.

241 Milton, 40:20-21.

242 See Stevenson, p. 415.

243 'To Tirzah' which was probably written at the same
period as Milton (See Milton, 17:11) and the present Night
of The Four Zoas, sums up her role in the epic poem:

Thou Mother of my Mortal part
With cruelty didst mould my Heart,
And with false self-deceiving tears,
Didst bind my Nostrils Eyes & Ears.

Didst close my Tongue in senseless clay
And me to Mortal Life betray:
The Death of Jesus set me free,
Then what have I to do with thee? (9-16)

See Stevenson, p. 590, and Erdman, p. 722.

- 244 See Matthew, 27, 60.
- 245 See 100/Second/:28-31.
- 246 See Erdman's discussion of the contemporary social, political and religious context. Blake: Prophet Against Empire, pp. 369-374.
- 247 According to Bloom (Commentary, E881), "Urizen degenerates into his final form before the Last Judgment . . . His pity for the Shadowy Female is the culminating mental error of Deism . . . In this, his ultimate fall, Urizen becomes absorbed into 'the indefinite lust' of the degenerated Orc. On the level of psychic cartography, the superego has been reduced to chaos, and societal and cultural restraint has succumbed to all the forces it sought to contain." Compare Damon, p. 390, on which in this instance Bloom's comment is largely based. Erdman, Blake: Prophet Against Empire, p. 373, for a historical reading.
- 248 The inevitability of human suffering is asserted in A Vision of the Last Judgment (E554). However, I am not aware of any instance in Blake's writings where the Fall is celebrated as a 'felix culpa.'
- 249 Bloom believes that this "manifestation of Anti-christ is, to Blake, a portent of the desired end, and the Last Judgment comes close upon it." (Commentary, E881.)
- 250 The first 88 lines of this Night are later than the rest; and lines 1-13 on page 117 are generally considered the latest. See Bentley, p. 123; Erdman, p. 761.
- 251 See Matthew, 24:29-31.
- 252 See Judges, 16:25-31.
- 253 Paley, Energy and the Imagination, p. 164.
- 254 Paley, p. 164. See Erdman, Blake: Prophet Against Empire, pp. 380-381.
- 255 Erdman, Blake: Prophet Against Empire, p. 381.
- 256 Blake: Prophet Against Empire, p. 380.
- 257 See Erdman, Blake: Prophet Against Empire, p. 380.
- 258 *ibid.*, p. 380.
- 259 Bloom, Commentary, E882. See Damon, William Blake: His Philosophy and Symbols (London, 1969), p. 391.

²⁶⁰On the imperfection of the number 27, see for instance Stevenson, p. 432. For the 'perfect' 28, see Jerusalem, 35:13.

²⁶¹See 120:50-51: "That line of blood that stretchd across the windows of the morning / Redeemd from Errors power." Stevenson (p. 435) points out that this "image is drawn from the exclusion of Rahab's household from the fate of Jericho by the scarlet thread tied in her window when the city was sacked at dawn (Joshua II 18,19; VI 15-25)." According to Bloom (Commentary, E882), "the 'line of blood' is . . . taken by orthodox tradition as a sign of Christ's sacrifice, which made of Rahab a type of the Church. Here, the Rahab of the churches is redeemed of her error, the claim to exclusiveness of salvation."

²⁶²See, for instance, Night VII(b), 95:25-30.

²⁶³It is noteworthy that in all four cases quoted "futurity" replaces the deleted word "remembrance." See Erdman, p. 761; Bentley, p. 128.

²⁶⁴Grimes, "Time and Space," p. 71.

²⁶⁵Bloom, Blake's Apocalypse, p. 271.

²⁶⁶See 122:1-2.

²⁶⁷Commentary, E882.

²⁶⁸See the Parable of the Sower in Luke, 8:5-15.

²⁶⁹See Revelation, 10:6; 14:14-16.

²⁷⁰Bloom, Commentary, p. 883.

²⁷¹Blake's Apocalypse, p. 277.

²⁷²In Revelation, 18:21, the emphasis is a different one.

²⁷³Letter to Flaxman, 14 September 1800. Letters, p. 40.

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