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Constructive Vision and Visionary Deconstruction

Los, Eternity and the Productions of Time in the Later Poetry of William Blake

by

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Voltaire insinuates that these Limits are the cruel work of God
Mocking the Remover of Limits & the Resurrection of the Dead
Setting up Kings in wrath: in holiness of Natural Religion
Which Los with his mighty Hammer demolishes time on time
(Jerusalem 73:29-32, E228)

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Summary

This thesis is concerned with the relationship in Blake's later poetry between Eternity and "the productions of time." This relationship is used by Blake as a paradigmatic instance of the tension experienced in everyday life between the self (with its concomitant constituted world) and alterity. "Constructive Vision and Visionary Deconstruction" attempts to cast some light on how, from within time, our eyes can be opened to a vision of Eternity.

An account of the relationship in Blake's _oeuvre_ between Eternity and "the productions of time" necessarily involves a description of Los. On the one hand Los seems to affirm and represent the absolute irreducibility of Eternity to time; on the other hand this same figure is seen at the end of _Jerusalem_ in the similitude of the divine. Los is both the demiurge and Christ: he gives form to Urizen and Satan and yet he opens the space in which time and Eternity are able to enter into relationship. The character of Los appears at the very point that time and Eternity draw apart, and Los is Blake's way of discussing this separation. Moreover, the evolution of the character of Los represents Blake's own struggle to find a vocabulary which was commensurate to the tension and disjunction in his (and our) world between the self and alterity, time and Eternity. "Constructive Vision and Visionary Deconstruction" therefore approaches the question of the relationship between time and Eternity through an investigation into the character of Los and his evolution from the rather negative figure of the Lambeth prophecies to the more Christ-like hero of the later poems.

This thesis argues, however, that Los is not simply a character in a series of poems. He is the being, or comportment in the world, that allows creation in time. It is the world that emanates from Los (within time) that forms the ground for a meeting of time and Eternity. In _Milton_, for example, Los's creative work includes the whole visible world. "Constructive Vision

and Visionary Construction" contends, therefore, that Blake's poems are themselves part of this wider set and that Los lies thematically and structurally at their centre: the poems are, in a sense, the body of Los. This thesis is, therefore, centred around a reading, from the perspective of Los, of The Book of Urizen, The Four Zoas, Milton and Jerusalem.

On the basis of this reading of Blake's later poetry, "Constructive Vision and Visionary Deconstruction" argues that Blake criticism has reduced the work of Christ-the-Imagination to the creative work of Los, and it offers a redefinition of the role and nature of the Imagination in Blake's later poetry.

Declaration

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university, and (to the best of my knowledge and belief) no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text or notes.

Signed .

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Abbreviations

In parenthetical documentation, the following abbreviations will be used where the work cited is not clear from the context:

AH	The Book of Ahania
BL	The Book of Los
BT	The Book of Thel
BU	The Book of Urizen
DC	Descriptive Catalogue
E	Europe
EG	The Everlasting Gospel
FZ	The Four Zoas
GP	The Gates of Paradise
J	Jerusalem
MHH	The Marriage of Heaven and Hell
M	Milton
OV	On Virgil
SIE	Songs of Innocence and of Experience
SL	The Song of Los
VLJ	A Vision of the Last Judgement

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Introduction

In working through the wealth of secondary material on Blake one cannot but be struck by the incomprehension with which the major part of Blake's work was greeted during the nineteenth and even the early twentieth centuries. According to this point of view Blake is the writer of exquisite fragments and beautiful short poems who somehow lost his touch in later life. Robert Southey called Jerusalem "a perfectly mad poem"[1] and Allan Cunningham in his Lives of the Most Eminent British Painters, Sculptors, and Architects remarked of the same poem:

> The crowning defect is obscurity; meaning seems now and then about to dawn; you turn plate after plate, and read motto after motto, in the hope of escaping from darkness into light. But the first might as well be looked at last; the whole seems a riddle which no ingenuity can solve.[2]

William Michael Rossetti, in his edition of The Poetical Works (1874 and 1883), described what he called Blake's "difficult" poetry as balderdash. He added:

> For he must be a 'queer fellow' . . . who, being sane, can write the sort of thing which, had it proceeded from a madman, we should recognize all altogether (sic) in character.[3]

As recently as 1956 Margaret Rudd, in her book Organiz'd Innocence, was arguing from the point of view that we should "give what Blake is saying a hearing even if we consider that it fails as poetry."[4]

> I think from his repeated prose remarks about the verse form of the prophetic books that Blake himself was very uneasy about it and dissatisfied. He himself confessed that he had used 'inferior' verse for the 'inferior' parts. He who was capable of writing 'The Sick Rose' must have realized that the poetry in the prophetic books was sparse.[5]

To a certain extent one can feel their sense of Blake's strangeness, but no sooner has one grasped this partial truth than one is taken aback by the contemporary development where critics seem to be able to hear Blake speak in in a voice which they share and which can be shared with others.

S. Foster Damon clearly set this modern tradition in motion with the

publication in 1924 of his William Blake: His Philosophy and Symbols, and more recently the comprehensive A Blake Dictionary. Both books purport to give us through the medium of encyclopaedic cross-reference and systematic organization a measure of insight into the ideal and organized text of what Blake wrote. The Dictionary in particular is strangely reminiscent of Voltaire's Philosophical Dictionary and its belief in a world of unchanging and unchangeable natural laws beneath the flux of experience. Damon offers to give us a voice which will bridge the gap between Blake's voice and our own.

This project of translation does not stop with Damon. In her massive book Blake and Tradition Kathleen Raine attempts to give us a different sort of structure. Blake's voice can be heard through the voice of the Neo-Platonic tradition, which Raine, Yeats, and sundry others happen to share:

> Since Blake never did draw his diagram or provide notes to his Prophetic Books, it has remained for others to do so; for the "symbolic bones" are there, as Yeats was in a position to know.[6]

David Erdman's very different book Blake: Prophet Against Empire advances a similar programme. The "bones" can be uncovered if one hears in Blake's work the voice of history. Once again this is a background structure and common voice which Erdman claims to share:

> In order to get close to the eye-level at which Blake witnessed the drama of his own times . . . I have read the newspapers and looked at the prints and paintings and sampled the debates and pamphlets of Blake's time. As Blake would say, I have "walked up & down" in the history of that time. And I have learned to read the idiom of current allusion with sufficient familiarity to detect its presence even in Blake's obscurer pages, where workshops are dens of Babylon and royal dragoons are punishing demons and the House of Commons is a windy cave.[7]

Erdman attempts to translate the text behind the words on the page. Northrop Frye, in a structuralist and Saussurean vein, goes one step further and discovers beneath Blake's pictographs the ideal text beneath all texts, the formative principle of the imagination itself:

> Blake's pictographs are to be interpreted in terms of their sequential relationship to one another, as a progression of signs which, like the alphabet, spell out not a word but the units of all words. According to Bacon the experimenter searches nature for its underlying principles or forms, and Bacon believed it probable that there were comparatively few of these forms, which, when discovered, would be to knowledge what an alphabet is to a language. And, reading

> imagination for experiment and art for nature, Blake also seems to be striving for an "alphabet of forms," a Tarot pack of pictorial visions which box the entire compass of the imagination in an orderly sequence.[8]

It is ironical that in attempting to outline what is perhaps the culmination of Blake's work Frye should be driven to mention the name of Bacon, one of the demonic triumvirate of Bacon, Newton and Locke. It is also unfortunate that in the same passage he mentions a number of items which are usually associated with Urizen; the desire to find an "'alphabet of forms' . . . which box the entire compass of the imagination in an orderly sequence" suggests something of the questing of Urizen as he wanders, books under his arms, across the wastes of Night the Sixth of The Four Zoas. Urizen is also searching for a perspective to contain all perspectives[9]:

> But Urizen said Can I not leave this world of Cumbrous wheels
> Circle oer Circle nor on high attain a void
> Where self sustaining I may view all things beneath my feet
> Or sinking thro these Elemental wonders swift to fall
> I thought perhaps to find an End a world beneath of voidness
> Whence I might travel round the outside of this Dark confusion. . . .
> (72:22-27, E349)

In the work of each of these critics we find an attempt to delineate an objective field which, they claim, generates their voice and the voice of Blake's poetry. An initial critical problem is the proliferation of these objective grounds: Neo-Platonism, history, a key to literary forms, encyclopaedic cross-reference, the Bible, the prophetic tradition and so on. One cannot help feeling that for all that these studies teach us about Blake, Blake's own voice has escaped.

In drawing attention to the methodology common to the critical work of Raine, Frye, Erdman, and Damon I am not, of course, implying that it is possible to approach the text in some unmediated fashion, nor am I suggesting that the Cartesian and Enlightenment ideal of a subjectivity which is able to free itself from the prejudices of its time and history is possible or desirable. Reading is, as Paul Ricoeur observes, the yoking of the reader's discourse to the discourse of the text.[10] Moreover, it is only though this yoking that the meaning of a text can be articulated. The second term in this

articulation is, however, obscured by the minute elaboration of an objective framework which in itself constitutes the poem and the critic. It re-emerges with quite some force as soon as one begins to read Blake's text. Readers encounter within their own voice as they read the words on the page a voice which, despite the wealth of secondary material, stubbornly refuses to become confused with their own.

The contours of this second discourse and this second voice are particularly difficult to delineate with any clarity in an age which is still preoccupied (and necessarily so) with the hermeneutics of suspicion, the mode of interpretation fathered by Nietzsche, Freud and Marx.[11] Nietzsche writes, for example, in an often quoted passage, that thought is always a reduction of difference to sameness:

> All thought, judgement, perception, as comparison [Gleichnis] has as its precondition a 'positing of equality' [Gleichsetzen], and earlier still a 'making equal' [Gleich-machen]. The process of making equal is the same as the incorporation of appropriated material in the amoeba . . . [and] corresponds exactly to that external, mechanical process (which is its symbol) by which protoplasm continually makes what it appropriates equal to itself and arranges it into its own forms and ranks [in seine Reihen und Formen einordnet].[12]

Within a hermeneutics of suspicion the reader's articulation of a text, or the yoking of the reader's discourse to that of the text, involves the translation of the text into the constituted world of the self. It is in this sense that the word "articulate" is used in much of the contemporary criticism which has been influenced by Saussurean linguistics. To articulate is to translate what is other into the world of the same.[13]

To articulate can, however, also be used to mean the yoking together of two disparate entities in which one gives voice to the other. To articulate means to give voice to what would otherwise remain mute and silent. This is, of course, a translation and, as Derrida's critique of western logocentrism would remind us, not an innocent one. It involves the translation of the voiceless into the syntax of the voiced, of the night into the spaces of the day. Nevertheless, this yoking of one discourse to another introduces within the "forms and ranks" of the same, the force and the appeal of others. This

is suggested by Gadamer who writes that

> the historicity of our existence entails that prejudices, in the literal sense of the word, constitute the initial directedness of our whole ability to experience. Prejudices are biases of our openness to the world. They are simply conditions whereby we experience something - whereby what we encounter says something to us.[14]

This openness is, of course, not unequivocal and it certainly does not offer an unmediated access to the other or to the text. Our prejudices, the world that we consciously and unconsciously constitute around us, are the initial framework of any attempt to reach what has not been constituted by us. At the same time it is clearly also the ground which hems us in. It creates a mirror world where we see only what we are able to constitute. Openness and closure are closely intertwined with each other.

Merleau-Ponty discusses a similar dichotomy in The Prose of the World and in Signs. He distinguishes between sedimented language and speech. "Sedimented language is the language the reader brings with him, the stock of accepted relations between signs and familiar significations . . . It constitutes the language and the literature of the language." Speech on the other hand "is the book's call to the unprejudiced reader. Speech is the operation through which a certain arrangement of already available signs and significations alters and then transfigures each of them, so that in the end a new signification is secreted."[15] Sedimented language is an institution and forms the horizon of possible significations; yet this same language has the uncanny capacity to come to sudden and unprecedented life in speech. The central methodological problem is therefore the problem of understanding how one constitutes the meaning-structures of experience and at the same time finds that "it is always already constituted in terms of meanings we have not bestowed upon it." Merleau-Ponty speaks of this difficulty in the Phenomenology of Perception where he writes that the central problem is to understand how "I can be open to phenomena which go beyond me, and which nevertheless exist only to the extent I take them up and live them; how the presence to myself ("Urpräsenz") which defines me and conditions all alien

presence is at the same time depresentation ("Entgegenwärtigung") and throws me outside myself."[16]

That the world of the self, the discourses which we use to generate the voice of ourselves and of others, can in fact be opened is without doubt the belief which underlies the major part of Blake's artistic production. In many of his poems and particularly in The Four Zoas, Milton and Jerusalem, where the apocalypse itself is predicated upon a consolidation and epiphany of Error, we witness a startling transformation of our prejudices and closed world into a radiant perception of the other. The frontispiece to The Four Zoas is a good illustration of this phenomenon. At first sight the man is lying asleep. A large chain binds his right leg to the surface of the page. He is silent and immobile until we pick up the book to get a closer look. Now we have caught a glimpse of freedom. The chain on his foot has broken and we glimpse a powerful surge of energy: the man is rising vertically into the air. A change of perspective has revealed to us, on precisely the same set of facts, an entirely different content. This glimpse of freedom does not separate itself unequivocally from the vision of bondage, for the plate seems to oscillate between these two possibilities. Our perception of freedom seems always on the verge of becoming an enclosure.

A very different kind of "opening" can be seen in the poem "How sweet I roam'd," which Blake included in Poetical Sketches.

How sweet I roam'd from field to field,
And tasted all the summer's pride,
'Till I the prince of love beheld,
Who in the sunny beams did glide!

He shew'd me lilies for my hair,
And blushing roses for my brow;
He led me through his garden fair,
Where all his golden pleasures grow.

With sweet May dews my wings were wet,
And Phoebus fir'd my vocal rage;
He caught me in his silken net,
And shut me in his golden cage.

He loves to sit and hear me sing,
Then, laughing, sports and plays with me;

Then stretches out my golden wing,
And mocks my loss of liberty.
(E412-13)

The poem revolves between a world which the speaker reads as part of him/herself and a world that claims him/her as part of itself. In the course of the poem's four stanzas the qualifications to the speaker's freedom move from the background into the foreground. The self discovers itself in the matrix of the other and the last two lines are a disturbing account of the extent to which one's actions can be defined by the world. This poem suggests that our constituted worlds can, under certain conditions, open to disclose the world in which we exist. This can be seen in Blake's use of the words "sweet" and "golden." "Sweet" changes from an expression directly associated with freedom to a word which describes the bait used to catch the speaker. "Golden" refers at first to the "golden pleasures" which simply belong to the prince; in the last stanza it has become a property of the cage itself. A change of comportment changes the content of these words and they are used to qualify radically different nouns.

The complexities of "How sweet I roam'd" are owing in part to the ambiguities of the relationship between reader and poem. The poem folds back on itself in an unnerving manner. The speaker's misapprehension of the prince of love's intentions and his or her slide from the role of actor to being acted upon mirrors precisely the reader's experience of the poem. In the last stanza the poem's readers could be forgiven if they feel that they have been read by the poem. From a pleasurable beginning in which the poem seemed to take them into its confidence they have fallen into a state where the poem acts on them. The poem seems to de-centre its readers: at first they are subject and the poem is the object of their scrutiny, but at the end this relationship has reversed. We have moved from our sedimented language and constituted world to the mystery of speech. The poem attempts a visionary deconstruction of the reader's assumptions which, as we shall see, is in some respects similar to the Bard's many times more complex visionary deconstruction of his audience in Milton. In this later poem the voice of

Milton (and of Milton's prophetic endeavour) is such a potent force and inspiration that Blake can feel the presence of others within his own body.

This capacity of Blake's poems to become a voice which exerts a force upon the reader is entirely appropriate for a literary form that is at once prophetic and visionary. The poems attempt to awaken their readers, to make them aware of the confines of the world in which they exist and in this way open their eyes to Eternity. Blake defines his role in Jerusalem as an attempt "To open the Eternal Worlds, to open the immortal Eyes / Of Man inwards into the Worlds of Thought: into Eternity / Ever expanding in the Bosom of God" (5:18-20, E147). It is, however, this prophetic and visionary dimension of Blake's poetry which is obscured in any attempt to delineate an objective ground which will produce the voice of the poem and of the reader. Blake is not simply concerned to create an "'alphabet of forms,' a Tarot pack of pictorial visions which box the entire compass of the imagination in an orderly sequence," but to move his readers to a position from which the confines of the box can be breached. Similarly, there is no doubt that, thanks to the illuminating work of David Erdman, Blake scholars are now able to detect the history of Blake's time "even in Blake's obscurer pages." The thrust of Blake's major prophecies is, however, not simply to allude to the history of his time but, by reading that history in the forge of both hope and fear, to open it to Eternity. Damon's dictionary is an important and useful tool, and Raine's Neo-Platonic Blake gives us useful insights into his work, but as prophet and as visionary Blake is concerned to open the worlds held by the Spectres belonging to his readers, not least of which is the world held by the Spectral portion of his critics.

To read Blake's poetry is therefore to feel that the poems often require us to abandon the interpretative frameworks with which we order our worlds, and in this way to commit "ourselves to the void" as the narrator does in the fourth Memorable Fancy of The Marriage of Heaven and Hell. The central problem which arises for Blake studies at this point in its history is how Blake's prophetic visions or visionary prophecies actually work? How does

Blake propose to open the linear expanse of time to the corrosive fires of Eternity? In what sense is Eternity in love with the "productions of time"? And how are we to conceive of this art which insists on opening what is closed, and making problematic what has been taken for granted? In more general philosophical terms, these concerns become the question of the relationship between a hermeneutics of suspicion (Nietzsche, Freud, Marx) and a hermeneutics of belief (Bultmann, Eliade).

Questions such as these have for the most part not been taken up because Blake criticism, particularly since the work of Northrop Fyre, has worked within a discourse which tends to erase the very distinction between self and other, and time and Eternity. As a result the question of how our worlds are to be opened, and how we can perceive what is other, does not appear in its full force. This can be seen in the way that key terms such as "imagination" have been defined by Blake's critics.

Criticism of Romantic poetry has in general worked within a view of the imagination similar to that put forward by Coleridge in the thirteenth chapter of Biographia Literaria:

> primary IMAGINATION I hold to be the living Power and prime Agent of all human Perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM. The secondary I consider as an echo of the former, co-existing with the conscious will, yet still as identical with the primary in the kind of its agency, and differing only in degree, and in the mode of its operation. It dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to re-create; or where this process is rendered impossible, yet still at all events it struggles to idealize and to unify.[17]

The imagination in this sense is basically the power to create a unified and self-contained form or world. This conception of the imagination has always dominated Blake criticism. In Fearful Symmetry, for example, one of the pillars of Frye's account of Blake is the philosophy of Berkeley. A central theme of this philosophy is expressed in the phrase esse est percipi: "to be is to be perceived." "Perception" is therefore, in Frye's words, "not something we do with our senses; it is a mental act."[18] For Frye the faculty which performs these acts is the human imagination. He writes:

> If man perceived is a form or image, man perceiving is a former or imaginer, so that "imagination" is the regular term used by Blake to denote man as an acting and perceiving being . . . To be perceived, therefore, means to be imagined, to be related to an individual's pattern of experience, to become a part of his character.[19]

The idea that "to be is to be perceived" introduces into Berkeley's philosophy a gap between one's own subjective perceptions and those of everyone else. For this reason Berkeley proposed the idea of God as the perceiver of each entity. This created a ground which linked self and other, but this was achieved only by introducing a new gap, this time between God and man. Frye argues that Blake closes this second gap "by identifying God with human imagination."[20]

The contention that the image- or world-forming capacity is at the very centre of the human psyche and can be identified with the human imagination and therefore with God results in a series of quite startling propositions. First, the gap between God and Wo/man disappears - Frye in fact writes that

> Man in his creative acts and perceptions is God, and God is Man. God is the eternal Self, and the worship of God is self-development.[21]

There is therefore no longer an attempt to break or disrupt the reasonable or the imaginative (in Frye's sense of the word) world which closes us from others and from God (as Los must learn to do in The Four Zoas and in Milton); instead the very form of this closure is celebrated. Frye writes that the "only legitimate compulsion on the artist is the compulsion to clarify the form of his work"[22] and that the "fact that in the world of vision or art we see what we want to see implies that it is a world of fulfilled desire and unbounded freedom."[23] In this world "the fact that imagination creates reality" means that "as desire is a part of imagination, the world we desire is more real than the world we passively accept."[24]

I shall investigate Blake's judgement of the strengths and weaknesses of an imagination of this kind in my discussion of the Lambeth prophecies; for the moment I will simply observe that what is most disconcerting about the view of the imagination in Frye's criticism is that the other almost disappears. The imaginer in Frye's sense is not very different from Thel or

Urizen, for he/she also retreats into the closed world of the self. Frye contends, for example, that "the world of vision" is a place where there are only creators and their creatures.[25] A world of more complete solipsism could not really be imagined. The prophetic anger which in the Bard's Song attempts to overturn the most fundamental categories of the world that the fallen self both desires and imagines (again in Frye's sense) here becomes yoked to the preservation of an analogous world.

Fearful Symmetry is one of those few critical books which can be classified legitimately as a work of art. Its immense erudition, the consistency of its argument, and its tone of passionate conviction make it worth reading even if one disagrees with its premises and its conclusions. It is therefore not at all surprising that it has shaped Blake criticism to a surprisingly high degree. Time and time again one reads recensions of Frye's argument which remove the other as a source of concern in Blake's poetry, collapse the gap between time and Eternity, and between the self and the other, and make the fabrication and expression of the world of the individual or collective self of paramount concern. I can perhaps best illustrate the ubiquity of this phenomenon by quoting from this criticism.[26]

> For Blake the mental image, the form - the very act which creates the image - is the single reality. The world is a world of mental acts. . . . (Adams)[27]
>
> And sun, and moon, the universe entire, are as we are, that we may be as they are, both of us the human released from every limitation and therefore both of us the divine. Like Keats's intelligences which are atoms of perception, we too know, and we see, and we are god. . . . (Bloom)[28]
>
> What we must do is spread our inside - our interior life - outside so as to make the outside alive with our humanity. (Rose)[29]
>
> Man in his creative acts, as well as in his perceptions, is a god; the world of imagination is one of creators and creatures. But if perception is a godlike act, God Himself cannot be perceived except as He exists in the perceiver. (Gleckner)[30]
>
> a man becomes what he beholds, and "As man is, So he Sees" . . . These principles operate jointly to fuse subject and object in a cycle of perception that gives the power of creation to the taker. (Eaves)[31]
>
> For Blake, imagination is the supreme fiction, but it is not an absolute because it is conscious of itself as a fictive, fabricating

> activity, a maker of illusions. (Mitchell)[32]
>
> In the classical space that separates the self from itself are located those "Realities of Intellect" that are the "Treasures of Heaven". . . . (Stempel)[33]
>
> the moment that all men see themselves and each other as gods is the moment when earth becomes heaven, the particular becomes infinite, and time becomes eternity. When all distinctions between the finite and the infinite are merely modes of perception, capable of being reperceived and recreated simultaneously, then such distinctions no longer "exist" in any meaningful sense. (Mellor)[34]
>
> neither Blake nor Shelley sees the universe with a vision that divides subject and object, the outer world from the mind which projects it: whatever is projected returns to the beholder and he becomes like it. (Bandy)[35]
>
> Every real poem is . . . a "heterocosm," not an imitation of nature but itself another nature and to the extent that man achieves such creations, he becomes like God. (James)[36]
>
> 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 outside world. The active mind is autonomous and instantaneously fulfils its desires. (Kittel)[37]
>
> Art, to Blake, is the highest and most unitive activity of mind and body, but all life aspires to the condition of art. In Jerusalem Energy and Imagination meet in a new synthesis, the best exemplification of which is the great poem itself - a little world made cunningly, microcosm and object of art, painting, and prophecy - the Emanation of William Blake. (Paley)[38]
>
> For Blake, true or essential humanity is a power of unlimited creative act. . . . (Deen)[39]
>
> The entire universe is humanized in the subjective identification of all creation within Albion. . . . There is no longer any separation between self and other, or perceiving subject and objective universe. All appearances and phenomena are reintegrated in one subjective whole since everything outside reflects an inner condition or is shaped by an inner state. (Doskow)[40]

The capacity to form worlds is quite clearly an important part of imagination, but it is important to recognize that this capacity, by itself, defines the work of Los, not of Jesus. Even in Eternity Los is identified as Urthona (the owner of the earth or the constituted world of each individual), and not as Christ. It is Christ who is the Imagination and not Los.[41] As a result of the self-transformations undergone in Milton and Jerusalem, Los is seen in the similitude of Christ, but is still not identified with Christ. Moreover, in the Lambeth prophecies it is the image- and world-forming

capacities of Los that close us off from others. These productions, as the name Los (loss) suggests, result in the final separation of time from Eternity. As Paul de Man writes, the poetic image is "always constitutive, able to posit regardless of presence but, by the same token, unable to give a foundation to what it posits except as an intent of consciousness."[42] Los is a figure who is able to constitute a world which stops Albion from falling into nothingness, but he is unable to give this world any other foundation than that offered by loss. It is true that Blake's poetic productions are an attempt to show collective and individual humanity that we bear our heavens and our earths in our bosoms (J71:17-18, E225). However, he does this not in order to celebrate creation, but in order to induce us to move out from these worlds into relationship. The major prophecies are an attempt to describe the way in which the created world, the universe of Los and Enitharmon, can open itself to others.

As I shall argue, Blake's poetic production as a whole seems to be uncannily aware that the claims made by the later Romantics for the power of the world-forming imagination do not escape the conceptual world of the Enlightenment. Tilottama Rajan puts the general case well:

> It is often assumed (for instance by M.H. Abrams, Northrop Frye, and Ernest Lee Tuveson) that the high claims made for imagination as the guarantor of man's innocence over his corruption constitute what is truly revolutionary in the Romantic movement. In transferring the creative initiative from God to man, and in replacing revelation with imagination, the Romantics are thought to have overthrown a Christian pessimism which denied man direct access to the ideal. But in fact, a case can be made for saying that it is precisely this claim of a natural supernaturalism based on the imagination which is the most conservative element in a literature that stands on the edge of modernism . . . The Romantic rhetoric of affirmation avoids breaking with the past, and simply restates with reference to imagination the optimistic humanism urged by the Enlightenment with reference to reason.[43]

It is eloquent testimony to the power of Frye's account of Blake that even Rajan can affirm that Blake's "mythological prophecy . . . claims for aesthetic vision the status of revelation, and for the literary sign the capacity to embody this vision concretely and immanently."[44] It is perhaps worth underlining at this stage, in order to prevent a possible

misunderstanding, that I am certainly not suggesting that the Imagination is unimportant in Blake. The Imagination is, of course, defined in Blake's oeuvre as the "Human existence itself" (M32:32, E132). I am arguing that Blake's use of this term cannot be reduced to the world-forming imagination and that, therefore, we are still a long way from fully understanding what Blake means by this term.

When one turns to Blake's poems one finds that many of the texts which are used by Frye or those influenced by his criticism to support his case for the redemptive power of the world-forming imagination contradict such a claim. The most striking passage cited by Frye in support of his argument is taken from "A Vision of the Last Judgement":

> I assert for My self that I do not behold the Outward Creation & that to me it is hindrance & not Action it is as the Dirt upon my feet No part of Me. What it will be Questiond When the Sun rises do you not see a round Disk of fire somewhat like a Guinea O no no I see an Innumerable company of the Heavenly host crying Holy Holy Holy is the Lord God Almighty I question not my Corporeal or Vegetative Eye any more than I would Question a Window concerning a Sight I look thro it & not with it.
>
> (E565-6)

Frye interprets this passage in the following way:

> The Hallelujah-Chorus perception of the sun makes it a far more real sun than the guinea-sun, because more imagination has gone into perceiving it.[45]

This seems to me to miss the point. The perception of the sun as a guinea is tied to the economy of the self. A guinea is something which we can use; it suggests a world that is seen only in terms of its relative usefulness to the self. The vision of the sun as a Hallelujah-Chorus is, however, radically different. It is, of course, still a perception, but now it is one which has been interpenetrated with others. These others can talk, move, sing, and can therefore suffuse the self with a force which cannot be reduced to our perception of them. The world formed by Frye's imagination discovers within its bounds a force and presence which far exceeds its domain. Similarly, in a letter to Dr Trusler dated 23 August 1799 Blake writes:

> I feel that a Man may be happy in This World. And I know that This World Is a World of Imagination & Vision I see Every thing I paint In This World, but Every body does not see alike. To the Eyes of a Miser

> a Guinea is more beautiful than the Sun & a bag worn with the use of Money has more beautiful proportions than a Vine filled with Grapes. The tree which moves some to tears of joy is in the Eyes of others only a Green thing that stands in the way.
> (E702)

Vision is here linked not solely with the ability to form a world, but with the capacity to be moved by things which lie outside of the world formed by the self. It is, of course, true that in the lines immediately preceding the Hallelujah-Chorus passage Blake writes 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.
> (E565)

The contention that "Mental Things are alone Real" and the denial of the existence of the corporeal remind us of Berkeley's denial of the existence of matter and his location of being in the act of perception. Frye in fact uses this passage as a paraphrase of an idealist position.[46] This is, however, a little too pat. First, the meaning of the word "Mental" in Blake's oeuvre cannot be adequately represented by the world-forming imagination. It refers primarily to realities which lie outside of the purview of the constituted world of the self. Second, the very distinction between the world that is formed by the fool (a corporeal and therefore self-enclosing world) and Mental realities gains its force by implicit reference to a reality (such as that exemplified by the Hallelujah-Chorus) which exceeds the limits set by the world-forming imagination. The fool is a fool and his world is corporeal because he cannot open his imagined world to others. Third, and most decisively, these words are followed by others which tell us that creation itself (the entire world forged by Frye's imagination) will be cast off at the Last Judgement:

> Some People flatter themselves that there will be No Last Judgment & that Bad Art will be adopted & mixed with Good Art That Error or Experiment will make a Part of Truth & they Boast that it is its Foundation these People flatter themselves I will not Flatter them Error is Created Truth is Eternal Error or Creation will be Burned Up & then & not till then Truth or Eternity will appear It is Burnt up the Moment Men cease to behold it
> (E565)

In these lines the world formed by Frye's imagination, creation itself, is associated with Error. It is this which "is Burnt up the Moment Men cease to behold it," while Truth is not created or imagined in Frye's sense, but is "Eternal."

Other passages which have been used to support an identification of the imagination with the image-forming capacity withdraw their support when subjected to a close reading. On the eleventh plate of The Marriage of Heaven and Hell we are told that

> The ancient Poets animated all sensible objects with Gods or Geniuses, calling them by the names and adorning them with the properties of woods, rivers, mountains, lakes, cities, nations, and whatever their enlarged & numerous senses could percieve.
> And particularly they studied the genius of each city & country. placing it under its mental deity.
> Till a system was formed, which some took advantage of & enslav'd the vulgar by attempting to realize or abstract the mental dieties from their objects: thus began Priesthood.
> Choosing forms of worship from poetic tales.
> And at length they pronounced that the Gods had orderd such things.
> Thus men forgot that All deities reside in the human breast.
> (E38)

Hazard Adams writes that

> The last sentence offers a picture of the prelapsarian condition . . . human consciousness was, or properly is . . . the "circumference" of experience or reality rather than its "center." One human breast contained the Gods, who always should be, according to Blake, the servants of Man.[47]

This is a view which is extremely difficult to sustain. It is quite clear that, according to this passage, the productions of the "ancient Poets" are not imposed by God. The human world is one that is created; however, the glimpse of the prelapsarian condition that is given in the last line is not one in which the Gods are contained in the human breast. As Damrosch remarks:

> To say that there is no God outside the human breast . . . is not to say that there is no God. "Reside in" suggests real existence, not subjective projection.[48]

This is, perhaps, still too tentative a statement. "Reside" does not suggest that the Gods are confined to the human breast, but that they dwell there, and are therefore able both to leave and return to this dwelling. Something of this relationship can be seen in the lines in Jerusalem in which the poet asks the "Lamb of God" to

> Come to my arms & never more
> Depart; but dwell for ever here:
> Create my Spirit to thy Love:
> Subdue my Spectre to thy Fear.
>
> (27:69-72, E173)

The creations of the "ancient Poets," like those of the author of Jerusalem, are not simply the result of an "autonomous imagination." For the former, creation occurs in relationship with "whatever their enlarged & numerous senses could percieve." They are also the result of a study of "the genius of each city & country." It is only the Priests who deny this relationship and make a system and religion of what has been imagined. For the latter, the Lamb of God, the Imagination itself, is something which appears from outside of the self. Rather than attempting to sustain an "autonomous imagination," or arguing that "Man in his creative acts, as well as in his perceptions is a god," this poet asks Christ to do the work of creation ("Create my Spirit to thy Love") and to subdue his Spectre.

Perhaps the clearest indication of the distance which separates Blake from the view of the imagination held by Frye, Tuveson and Abrams can be seen in his own account of the creative process. Blake wrote in a letter to Thomas Butts dated the 22 November 1802 that he both sees a vision (that he constitutes it and so gives it form) and that this vision is given to him (and therefore proceeds from a source outside the world of the self):

> Now I a fourfold vision see
> And a fourfold vision is given to me. . . .
>
> (E722)

This intertwining of what is given and what is constituted or imagined (again in Frye's understanding of this word) can be seen in the account at the beginning of Jerusalem of that poem's conception:

> Of the Sleep of Ulro! and of the passage through
> Eternal Death! and of the awaking to Eternal Life.
>
> This theme calls me in sleep night after night, & ev'ry morn
> Awakes me at sun-rise, then I see the Saviour over me
> Spreading his beams of love, & dictating the words of this mild
> song.
>
> (4:1-5, E146)

The theme begins with the Sleep of Ulro. Ulro is a state where one is locked

within one's self. In this world there is a complete split between the self and the other. It is therefore characterized as sleep. We next hear of the passage through Eternal Death and "of the awaking to Eternal Life." Eternal Life is described as an awaking from sleep and therefore, in the terms of this image, a standing in the presence of things that are other. The theme therefore sets up a movement, as though one were moving through a cave or tunnel. One is asleep, lost in the ground, one passes through Eternal Death and then, like a seed emerging, or the sun dawning, one awakes to Eternal Life. The theme calls Blake and it awakes him at sunrise. It is this contact with what is not constituted by the self that is the condition of Blake's emergence. This parallels the way in which the sun, in waking the solitary dreamer, throws him into a universe of participation.

As a result of this awakening Blake is able to see and hear Christ the Imagination, the Vine of Eternity. In other words, the Imagination is first glimpsed not in the fabrication of a world, but at the point at which our worlds are cast off. It appears not as a faculty which is possessed by the individual, but as an other who calls Blake. The Imagination, far from generating the world of the self, or underwriting an authoritarian world of creators and creatures, introduces an unprecedented call into the world of the poet.

The call of Christ can be heard only within the voice of Blake and within the confines of his poem. This necessity does not, however, result in the erasure of that call. In the lines of Jerusalem that follow Christ's appearance to Blake we discover that it is within the words of the call of the other (Saviour and theme) that Blake has found his own voice. There is therefore a curious intertwining of the Saviour's call to Blake and Blake's call to the reader:

> Awake! awake O sleeper of the land of shadows, wake! expand!
> I am in you and you in me, mutual in love divine:
> Fibres of love from man to man thro Albions pleasant land.
> In all the dark Atlantic vale down from the hills of Surrey
> A black water accumulates, return Albion! return!
> (4:6-10, E146)

To the extent that a call from what has not been constituted by the self is embraced, it becomes a vocation. In this oscillation between call and response the self escapes from the closed world of Urizen, whom Blake describes as a "self-contemplating shadow" (BU3:21, E71), and emerges into a shared world. Jerusalem (the poem, the city and the woman) emerges within relationship. The solipsism of a world of creators and creatures is here transformed into one in which self and other, God and Wo/man, time and Eternity, reside in each other's bosoms. Christ (and Blake in Christ) says to his audience:

> I am not a God afar off, I am a brother and friend;
> Within your bosoms I reside, and you reside in me. . . .
> (4:18-19, E146)

This presence of the other within the self is a reality and, indeed, a ground for the self which is not always recognized. Christ's call in the opening plates of Jersalem, for example, is not heeded by Albion. He has heard his voice, but not his call. Albion

> away turns down the valleys dark;
> [Saying. We are not One: we are Many, thou most simulative]
> Phantom of the over heated brain! shadow of immortality!
> Seeking to keep my soul a victim to thy Love! which binds
> Man the enemy of man into deceitful friendships:
> Jerusalem is not! her daughters are indefinite:
> By demonstration, man alone can live, and not by faith.
> My mountains are my own, and I will keep them to myself!
> The Malvern and the Cheviot, the Wolds Plinlimmon & Snowdon
> Are mine. here will I build my Laws of Moral Virtue!
> Humanity shall be no more: but war & princedom & victory!
> (4:22-32, E146-47)

The Perturbed Man wants to remain within the world of the self. He is willing to believe only if it is demonstrated to him and in this way brought into his frame of reference. He demands that the other be judged and assessed according to the categories of his world, instead of opening his world to the potentially unsettling call of Christ. As a result of this withdrawal the world becomes one in which self is pitted against self, and the Laws and Moral Virtue of one is used to judge another. In withdrawal humanity enters the state described by Hegel in the Phenomenology of Spirit as a struggle between master and slave. As Kojève comments:

> in his nascent state, man is never simply man. He is always, necessarily, and essentially, either Master or Slave. If the human reality can come into being only as a social reality, society is human - at least in its origin - only on the basis of its implying an element of Mastery and an element of Slavery, of "autonomous" existences and "dependent" existences. And that is why to speak of the origin of Self-Consciousness is necessarily to speak of "the autonomy and dependence of Self-Consciousness, of Mastery and Slavery."[49]

Albion is a giant figure who contains all of humanity within his bulk. His withdrawal into the world of the self is, therefore, not simply an action undertaken by an individual, but something in which we all share. In Blake's own time the most conspicuous manifestation of this turn into the world of the self was the metaphysics inaugurated by Bacon, Newton and Locke. Blake pictures these philosophies as a tremendous force which is pitted against the very possibility of life. He writes in Jerusalem, for example, that Bacon and Newton are "sheathd in dismal steel" and "their terrors hang / Like iron scourges over Albion" (15:11-12, E159).

> 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. black the cloth
> In heavy wreathes folds over every Nation; cruel Works
> Of many Wheels I view, wheel without wheel, with cogs tyrannic
> Moving by compulsion each other: not as those in Eden: which
> Wheel within Wheel in freedom revolve in harmony & peace.
> (15:14-20, E159)

The intensity of Blake's tone in passages such as these can be understood if we remember that these philosophies move the locus of reality to the individual reasoning self. As the being of the whole Man is formed in relationship, they therefore do indeed "hang / Like iron scourges over Albion." Locke, for example, makes no apology for confining the object of his inquiry to the understanding of the "cavern'd man." He writes:

> I pretend not to teach, but to inquire; and therefore cannot but confess here again, - that external and internal sensation are the only passages I can find of knowledge to the understanding. These alone, as far as I can discover, are the windows by which light is let into this dark room. For, methinks, the understanding is not much unlike a closet wholly shut from light, with only some little openings left, to let in external visible resemblances, or ideas of things without: [would the pictures coming into such a dark room but stay there], and lie so orderly as to be found upon occasion, it would very much resemble the understanding of a man, in reference to all objects of sight, and the ideas of them.[50]

The ideas which together provide "all the materials of reason and knowledge"[51] are in Locke's view analogous to "external visible resemblances" of the things and beings that exist outside of the "closet" and, as he will later argue, so long as the mind can have "no other immediate object but its own ideas, which it alone does or can contemplate, it is evident that our knowledge is only conversant about them. . . . knowledge then seems . . . to be nothing but the perception of the connexion of and agreement, or disagreement and repugnancy of any of our ideas."[52] Thinking is therefore no more than a process in which the material given in experience is manipulated in a variety of ways. Locke uses the number of words that can be generated from the twenty-four letters of the alphabet to illustrate the multifarious ideas that can be established on the basis of this primary material.[53]

It can therefore be seen that Locke rules out the very possibility of the mental warfare that is the basis of Eternity. Within the closet the other is perceived as "an external visible resemblance," a simple idea; and reason manipulates these resemblances as if they were fixed coins or tokens. There is certainly no room for dialogue, or for the relationship between call and response that is the ground of Eternity. This is not to say that Locke allows no room for revelation, but that there is no relationship between revelation and the world of the self.

A striking formulation of Blake's objections to Locke can be found in Jerusalem. Towards the end of the fourth chapter Los sends his Spectre to the "Fiends of Righteousness" (of whom one was undoubtedly Locke). Los exhorts him to "Tell them to obey their Humanities, & not pretend Holiness" (91:4 & 5, E251). As Los warms to his theme he speaks as if the fiends were themselves present:

> You accumulate Particulars, & murder by analyzing, that you
> May take the aggregate; & you call the aggregate Moral Law:
> And you call that Swelld & bloated Form; a Minute Particular.
> But General Forms have their vitality in Particulars: & every
> Particular is a Man; a Divine Member of the Divine Jesus.
> (91:26-30, E251)

The particulars accumulated by Locke are simple ideas. For Los, however,

these ideas are not the primary data of sensation beyond which we cannot go, for "every / Particular is a Man" who has the capacity to engage us in discourse. Locke turns away from relationship with others and retains as the ground of knowledge only that portion of the world that has been assimilated to the self. In Jerusalem the foundation of the fallen world is the relationship between Albion, Christ and Los. By contrast, Locke turns away from the relationships in which his simple ideas appear. He murders the other by being deaf to his/her call, and then weighing, analysing, counting and building a world from the "external visible resemblances" of the other which are retained by the reasoning memory. For the former, our constituted worlds have significance in that they constantly point beyond themselves to a surplus which both exceeds their grasp and engages the self in discourse. For the latter, "resemblances" have become the property (hence the word "accumulate") of a "cavern'd" and withdrawn man. When Locke wishes to come to an understanding of an idea such as Eternity, he fabricates this idea from the material available within the closed world of the self. His general forms are therefore swelled and bloated forms, whereas for Los there is only one general form and this form is a living being. The only true and general form (within which our identities are comprehended) is Christ. At both ends of Locke's epistemological concerns Blake affirms a universe in which others exist. For Los ethics is, therefore, not a matter of regulating behaviour according to apparently indubitable codes which are established in isolation from others; it is fundamentally a matter of relationship and openness.

In The Four Zoas Ahania describes the Fall in terms of an overwhelming of Man by his Shadow:

> Then Man ascended mourning into the splendors of his palace
> Above him rose a Shadow from his wearied intellect
> Of living gold, pure, perfect, holy; in white linen pure he hover'd
> 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
> Saying O Lord whence is this change thou knowest I am nothing. . . .
> (40:2-8, E327)

It appears that Locke has also fallen under the sway of his Shadow. In

turning away from relationship with others and retaining only that which has appeared within his constituted world, he has become entranced by his own image. Like Narcissus he is mesmerized by "a watry vision" of himself and a "watry Shadow" which in turn is used to regulate his life.

An analogous case can also be advanced against Bacon and Newton. Alexander Koyré writes in "The Significance of the Newtonian Synthesis" that Newton split our world into two:

> I have been saying that modern science broke down the barriers that separated the heavens and the earth, and that it united and unified the universe. And that is true. But, as I have said, too, it did this by substituting for our world of quality and sense perception, the world in which we live, and love, and die, another world - the world of quantity, of reified geometry, a world in which, though there is a place for everything, there is no place for man. Thus the world of science - the real world - became estranged and utterly divorced from the world of life, which science has been unable to explain - not even to explain away by calling it "subjective."[54]

The first world is one in which others exist: the second world is centred upon the observations and reasoning of the detached observer (in Blake's parlance, the "reasoning memory"). Yet it is the second world that in Newtonian physics forms the locus of reality. Similarly, the scientific method advanced by Bacon in, for example, the Novum Organum, also locates truth firmly within what appears inside the closed world of the (reasoning) self. For Bacon the knowledge generated by this method is closely linked to the desire to gain power over what lies outside of the self. In his own words, he hoped "to restore and exalt the power and dominion of man himself, of the human race, over the universe."[55]

It is important to recognize, however, that Blake is not suggesting that Locke, Bacon and Newton are wrong in their descriptions of fallen humanity. In fact they are correct. Fallen existence is a retreat into the closet, a separation of the self from the living world in which others are found. Fallen existence is a world in which one isolated self is pitted against another. Bacon, Newton and Locke therefore all can be seen to play an important role in the consolidation of Error. In Europe it is Newton who blows the "Trump" of the last doom (13:5, E65), and in the apocalypse which

closes Jerusalem "Bacon & Newton & Locke" are seen alongside "Milton & Shakspear & Chaucer" (98:9, E257). Their influence is pernicious, however, because they contend that the world that they (correctly) trace is the only world. Blake, on the other hand is a prophetic visionary who attempts to reveal the relationships in which this world is grounded, who tries to open the closed world of the self to others, and by these means hopes to open the possibility of transformation and regeneration.

The similarities and dissimilarities between this visionary project and the project undertaken by Derrida in the twentieth century are both instructive and illuminating. Derrida argues that metaphysics has always been based on what is present to the self:

> Presence has always been and will always, forever, be the form in which, we can say apodictically, the infinite diversity of contents is produced. The opposition between form and matter - which inaugurates metaphysics - finds in the concrete ideality of the living present its ultimate and radical justification.[56]

This foundation, however, is less than secure, for at the heart of what is present to the self an "irreducible nonpresence" can be found to have

> constituting value, and with it a nonlife, a nonpresence or nonself-belonging of the living present, an ineradicable nonprimordiality.[57]

The sign, for example, is not an autonomous thing in itself, for it is constituted only in relation to other signs. As Saussure observes in the Course in General Linguistics, "in language there are only differences. Even more important: a difference generally implies positive terms between which the difference is set up; but in language there are only differences without positive terms."[58] The meaning of a sign is therefore never fully present, for it finds itself situated in a chain of significations which continually defer the moment in which a fully present meaning could be recouped. The same argument can be applied to the notion of identity, or of a self-same thing, for all "determinations of identity are broken apart by the necessity of alterity."[59] Similarly, the apparently autonomous and self-standing things which appear within the world are also caught up in a web of differentiation. They are things only because they stand within a complex series of

relationships. Derrida coins the word différance to describe this spatial and temporal separation which produces the effect of presence.[60]

Différance ensures that no unshakeable foundation for metaphysics can be found. It is impossible to discover a set of axioms which are not themselves caught within the web of differentiation. As Michael Ryan writes, in coining the word différance

> Derrida wanted to catch a more "primordial" spatio-temporal movement than any of the "founding" concepts or axioms of metaphysical phenomenological philosophy . . . For these grounding principles to serve as foundations upon which philosophical systems can be constructed, they should be absolutely self-sufficent or self-identical. They cease to be primordial grounds once they can be derived from something else. Derrida's point is that there are no primordial axioms, no instances of absolute truth or self-identity, and no founding principles that are not produced by (and therefore derived from) differance. Everything is only as it differs from or defers something else. And differance is not a ground, nor can it serve as a first principle or an origin upon which a philosophical system can be based, because it is what undoes all "indifferent" self-identity, the necessary premise of a ground.[61]

This means that the world is itself a text in the sense that it does not escape this constitution in differentiation. There is no outside to the text ("Il n'y a pas de hors texte") because there is no certain ground, no absolutely present object, which is not itself constituted by différance. We cannot have unmediated access to a first ground or essential substance which will allow us to ground knowledge. As Derrida observes, "contrary to what phenomenology - which is always phenomenology of perception - has tried to make us believe, contrary to what our desire cannot fail to be tempted into believing, the thing itself always escapes."[62] It is as if, in terms of the image introduced by Derrida at the end of Speech and Phenomena, we are domiciled within a gallery where the paintings achieve definition only in relation to other paintings and other galleries:

> Certainly nothing has preceded this situation. Assuredly nothing will suspend it. It is not comprehended, as Husserl would want it, by intuitions or presentations. Of the broad daylight of presence, outside the gallery, no perception is given us or assuredly promised us. The gallery is the labyrinth which includes in itself its own exits. . . .[63]

It therefore

> remains . . . for us to speak, to make our voices resonate

> throughout the corridors in order to make up for [suppléer] the breakup of presence. The phoneme, the akoumenon, is the phenomenon of the labyrinth. This is the case with the phōnē. Rising toward the sun of presence, it is the way of Icarus.[64]

Our attempts to leave this space and attain pure and unmediated presence must, like the attempts of Icarus to leave his labyrinth, end in failure and, perhaps, in death.

Quite clearly several broad parallels can be drawn between deconstruction and Blake's poetry. In the course of his oeuvre Blake develops, for example, a far-reaching critique of all philosophies which rely for their ground on what is present to the corporeal self. It is, for example, characters such as Vala and Rahab, or the Deists in Jerusalem, who celebrate the world that is present to the closeted self. As I shall argue, this world gains definition only in relationship with what is not present to the corporeal self. It is also possible to argue that Blake is concerned to criticize any philosophy which rests on a set of immutable axioms or rules. The attempts of Urizen, for example, to find a perspective from which he can hold the entire world within his gaze end in failure. The fallen world is indeed a labyrinth and, as I shall argue in my discussion of The Book of Urizen, it is also one which includes its exits within itself. However, unlike Derrida, Blake is not concerned simply to show the impossibility, the violence, of all attempts to close this world within a metaphysics based on a limited set of axioms, but to uncover the relationships in which this labyrinth itself appears.[65]

As I shall argue, in Blake's poems - as in Derrida's philosophy - the labyrinth of the fallen world appears as a result of a spatial and temporal distancing (différance) which occurs prior to the appearance of the world in which we live. In Derrida's work différance is a mysterious, self-motivated, abstract movement whose existence is postulated by inference from what is. For Blake, différance is an effect of a particular (let us say, an ontological) comportment of Albion towards the Zoas which make up his identity and towards the other inhabitants of Eden. It is a result of the

withdrawal of Albion from relationship. The fallen self and the fallen other which are introduced as a result of différance are in Blake's oeuvre not the very beginnings of life, but a radical and far reaching reduction of life. As Blake peremptorily states:

> Many suppose that before [Adam] <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. . . . (VLJ, E563)

It is this rather different understanding of différance which forms one of the major points of divergence between Derrida's sceptical philosophy and Blake's visionary art. It is because, in Blake's understanding, the world is not formed in an anonymous, ahistorical movement of différance, but in a particular stance taken by Albion towards others, that this stance and therefore the world can be changed. Blake's work is therefore prophetic in that he attempts to show us the relationships in which this world is formed, and it is visionary in that he is able to figure forth the possibility of transformation.

I am, of course, not denying that it is in Albion's withdrawal from others that the distinctions with which we order our world (such as those between self and other, inside and outside) are formed. It is not this which is fundamentally at issue in Blake's oeuvre but, as I shall later argue, the conclusions that are drawn from this particular articulation of existence. On the one hand Albion pits inside against outside in deadly battle. On the other hand Christ follows withdrawal with embrace, and opens the world of the self again and again to others. It is important to underline that when Christ calls Albion to return he does not do away with the movement of différance, or with the closed world which is its fruit. Even in the apocalypse of Jerusalem the "Human Forms" return "wearied / Into the Planetary lives of Years Months Days & Hours" (99:2-3, E258). Christ does, however, radically displace and so transform this world. In Eternity the world that is formed in

withdrawal is a seed: it forms the ground for an expansion in which the world of the self opens to others. The formation of the world of the self opens the possibility of "Friendship," "Brotherhood" and the "Mysterious / Offering of Self for Another" (96:20-21, E256). At the time of the Fall, however, this outline becomes a horizon which forms the absolute limit of the world of the "cavern'd man." Blake is concerned to describe and to induce in his readers a movement which brings us to the perimeter of the labyrinth, and which once more brings contraction into a contrary relationship with expansion. In what follows I will therefore be arguing against the assumption held by the vast majority of Blake critics that Blake's apocalypse is a matter of perception and not a question of being.[66] The traditional view on this question is put by Northrop Frye as follows:

> There is no "general nature," therefore nothing is real beyond the imaginative patterns men make of reality, and hence there are exactly as many kinds of reality as there are men. "Every man's wisdom is peculiar to his own individuality," and there is no other kind of wisdom: reality is as much in the eye of the beholder as beauty is said to be. Scattered all through Blake's work are epigrams indicating this relativity of existence to perception.[67]

Yet the epigrams offered by Frye as a sample of those which can be found "all through Blake's work" subtly contradict these claims:

> Every Eye sees differently. As the Eye, Such the Object.
>
> Every thing possible to be believed is an image of truth.
>
> The Sun's Light when he unfolds it
> Depends on the Organ that beholds it.

The first and second passages certainly do suggest that "there are exactly as many kinds of reality as there are men," but this does not in itself prove the relativity of existence to perception in Blake's <u>oeuvre</u>. The second, for example, counters the multiplication of realities with the implication that there is a single "truth" and that our beliefs are images of that "truth." The first suggests that it is the way in which our Eye is constituted, the mode or state of being in which it exists, that determines the appearance of the object. The third quotation offers more substantial support for Frye's view, for it seems to contend that "the Organ that beholds" the "Sun's Light"

is able to give that "Light" any form that the self can imagine. Yet even here the simple reduction of existence to perception is qualified, for an equally plausible reading would be to say that the appearance of the "Sun's Light" is dependent upon the way in which the Organ is constituted or, alternatively, on the kind of organ that apprehends it.

Throughout Blake's work one can find epigrams which indicate the relativity of perception to existence. In the "Mental Traveller," for example, Blake writes:

> The Guests are scatterd thro' the land
> For the Eye altering alters all
> The Senses roll themselves in fear
> And the flat Earth becomes a Ball.
> (61-64, E485)

In other words, it is when the Eye is altered that the form of "the land" is changed, and when the "Senses roll themselves" into a circular shape that the Earth appears to be "a Ball." In the letter to Dr Trusler dated 23 August 1799, Blake is even more explicit. He writes that "As a Man is So he Sees. As the Eye is formed such are its Powers" (E702):

> Every body does not see alike. To the Eyes of a Miser a Guinea is more beautiful than the Sun & a bag worn with the use of Money has more beautiful proportions than a Vine filled with Grapes. The tree which moves some to tears of joy is in the Eyes of others only a Green thing that stands in the way. Some See Nature all Ridicule & Deformity & by these I shall not regulate my proportions, & Some Scarce see Nature at all But to the Eyes of the Man of Imagination Nature is Imagination itself.
> (E702)

The Miser feels that a "Guinea is more beautiful than the Sun" because he has withdrawn into the closet of the self and therefore values things only to the extent to which they are useful within the economy of the self. The "Man of Imagination," however, takes up a position in the world from which others are able to appear. It is therefore not enough for the Miser to attempt to imagine a new world from his position of withdrawal; he must be induced to change his position in the world; he must alter his state of being. At the end of Jerusalem, for example, it is when Albion changes his comportment in the world, when he throws "himself into the Furnaces of affliction," that the suffering endured in the Furnaces becomes "a Vision" and "a Dream" and the

Furnaces themselves are transformed into "Fountains of Living Waters flowing from the Humanity Divine" (96:35-37, E256).

It would, however, be unwise to replace Frye's subordination of existence to perception with its mirror opposite. Blake's poetic and prophetic poems attempt to change the way in which we perceive the world in order to induce us to change the relationships that we take up to others. If this were not possible then Blake would not have written prophecies. However, perception in this sense is very different from what Frye calls by the same name and it is constrained within much narrower limits than Frye's formulation would suggest. Blake's prophetic poems attempt to "instruct" their readers and in this way induce them to change their comportment in the world. In Visions of the Daughters of Albion, for example, it is arguably the instruction offered by "The Golden nymph" that prompts Oothoon to "turn [her] face to where [her] whole soul seeks" (1:13, E45), but it is this change of comportment (from withdrawal to embrace) that alters the appearance of her world. The living world that she discovers is closed to both Bromion and Theotormon for so long as they remain within a state of withdrawal. Similarly, in Milton it is the Bard's prophetic Song that calls Milton, but this Song does not in itself replace the world in which Milton has been domiciled with a new one. It is when Milton arises and goes "down to the sepulcher to see if morning breaks!" (14:21, E108) that his perceptual world changes.

It is precisely movements of self-transformation such as these which Derrida and Locke do not undertake or countenance within their philosophy. Locke does not leave his position of immobility and stasis at the centre of his closet and therefore others do not and cannot appear. Similarly, a Blakean critique of Derrida's description of language and reality (advanced before an appreciation) would begin with the observation that his argument is advanced from the position of the stationary, reasoning self. It is not concerned with what occurs to language in relationship with others, in embrace, or in movement. It is unconcerned with such questions as what

happens to the semiotic system in which we are enclosed when it is broken by the force of an other's appeal, or when it is distended by the emotions of fear and hope. For Blake, emotions and engagements such as these can bring us to the very edge of our linguistic world: in the striking epigram from "For the Sexes: The Gates of Paradise," "Fear & Hope are - Vision" (E266). This is why the passage quoted above from Speech and Phenomena is, within the context of Derrida's work, so uncannily resonant. It figures forth the very shape of Derrida's own polemic, but in doing so it also traces a partner that, within Derrida's discourse, remains silent.

Icarus's flight takes him up and out of the labyrinth and into proximity with the sun of presence. For Derrida this sun of presence is an illusion which is given form by the movement of différance. Any attempt to grasp this sun is therefore doomed to failure. Presence emerges only in relation to what is not present and, therefore, as Icarus approaches the sun his ascent turns into a fall and then concludes in death. The labyrinth contains its exits within itself. Nevertheless, Icarus does not return to the same labyrinth, his fall in fact leads him to a labyrinth which is more encompassing and more intricate that the one from which he has escaped: Icarus is lost in the abyss of the sea and the nothingness of death. We can therefore interpret the story of Icarus in a different although still related way. To approach the sun of presence is to lose the movement of différance which founds the very distinction between self and other. The blinding illumination of the sun leads to the void of death which is indeed the only outside to the text. The story therefore confronts us with an opposition between withdrawal and deferral on the one hand, and a presence which cannot be attained because it involves the eradication of the self on the other hand. The first opens the spaces of life: the second opens the spaces of death.

There is, however, a third interpretation of the story of Icarus. Our previous interpretations have treated the sun only as the Apollonian, or material sun. A sun such as this is held only in the reasoning memory, and therefore, as Hume, Blake and Derrida would all affirm, is a mere appearance.

In a remark made to Crabb Robinson Blake speaks of a very different kind of sun:

> I have conversed with the spiritual Sun - I saw him on Primrose Hill. He said: "Do you take me for the Greek Apollo?" "No," I said. "That" (and Blake pointed to the sky) - that is the Greek Apollo. He is Satan."[68]

This Sun that is the Greek Apollo is the Guinea Sun: the Spiritual Sun is that seen in the Hallelujah-Chorus. If Icarus rises towards a Sun that is not a mere appearance held by the reasoning memory, but a person who can call and respond, then this myth suggests the possibility of moving to a position from which the voice of the other can be heard. This does not usher in a world of pure and unmediated presence, nor (as we shall see in our discussion of the apocalypses of Milton and Jerusalem) does it suggest that we are able to grasp the other or his/her intentions once and for all. Nevertheless, it does open within the world of the self the possibility of engagement and therefore the possibility of transformation and of exodus. This alternate reading of the Icarus story can be seen in the figure of Daedalus, Icarus's companion. Concerning this second portion of the Icarus story Derrida remains silent, yet it is Daedalus who fashioned the wings for Icarus, and who warned Icarus of the dangers of flying too close to the sun. Moreover, it is Daedalus who, without remaining in the labyrinth, flying too close to the sun, or plunging into the sea, flew a middle path between self and other, the present and the non-present, and so was able to re-enter a speaking community. The story of Icarus is in fact a moment within a larger story.

It is this twin narrative, the story of Icarus and of Daedalus, which describes the twin poles of visionary art. Visionary construction, as I shall argue in a later chapter, is not achieved once and for all. This new world which is opened in response to the call of another is, of course, itself a system and must itself be subject to a visionary deconstruction. But this deconstruction is in turn the prelude to another movement towards the other. "The thing still escapes," the other is beyond our reach, but the différance which makes this inevitable is itself the ground for a conversation in

"Visionary forms dramatic" (98:28, E257).

The question of the relationship between the forms and conventions of what is present to the self and the irruption of the other within that world is, of course, not altogether absent from Derrida's work. In "Violence and Metaphysics" this question takes the form of a confrontation between, on the one hand, the Apollonian/Greek care for the world of what is present to the self, and, on the other hand, the Hebrew concern for and experience of the other, which is manifested in prophecy.[69] At the end of this essay Derrida writes:

> Are we Greeks? Are we Jews? But who, we? Are we (not a chronological, but a pre-logical question) first Jews or first Greeks? And does the strange dialogue between the Jew and the Greek, peace itself, have the form of the absolute, speculative logic of Hegel, the living logic which reconciles formal tautology and empirical heterology after having thought prophetic discourse in the preface to the Phenomenology of the Mind? Or, on the contrary, does this peace have the form of infinite separation and of the unthinkable, unsayable transcendence of the other? To what horizon of peace does the language which asks this question belong? From whence does it draw the energy of its question? Can it account for the historical coupling of Judaism and Hellenism? And what is the legitimacy, what is the meaning of the copula in this proposition from perhaps the most Hegelian of modern novelists: "Jewgreek is greekjew. Extremes meet"?[70]

Although questions such as these are inevitably posed by deconstruction, it is only within a discourse which attempts to suppress neither Icarus nor Daedalus that they can be approached.

What makes Blake's approach to the relationship between time and Eternity, self and other, so peculiarly fascinating is that his affirmation of vision (of the possibility of opening time to Eternity) is not made by a naive or innocent turning away from the realities of existence. The possibility of vision is most emphatically not affirmed by bracketing or repressing a hermeneutics of suspicion, nor by asserting the existence of an aesthetic realm which lies somehow outside of life. In fact, in Blake's poetry the universe of loss (of Los and Enitharmon) is the basis for the visionary expansion that I hope to describe. An investigation into the nature of Blake's visionary construction and his visionary deconstruction is

ipso facto an investigation into the character and identity of Los.

Los is the ontological ground of the fallen world, the creator of the world in which we live, and yet, at the same time, he opens in time the possibility of a relationship between time and Eternity. On the one hand Los seems to affirm the absolute irreducibilty of Eternity to time; on the other hand this same figure is at the end of *Jerusalem* seen in the similitude of the divine. Los is both the demiurge and Christ; he gives form to Urizen and Satan and yet he opens the space in which time and Eternity are able to enter into relationship. The character of Los appears at the very point that time and Eternity draw apart, and Los is Blake's way of discussing this separation. Our discussion, therefore, cannot immediately approach the question of visionary expansion, but must follow Blake's path through the labyrinth of the fallen world.

Quite clearly there are considerable methodological problems in a study of this kind. When I first began research into the relationship between time and Eternity in Blake's *oeuvre*, I assumed that I would be able to begin by elaborating working definitions of time and Eternity, and sketching a philosophical approach to the problematic with which Los is concerned. With this accomplished I hoped to have in my grasp a series of keys or tools with which to approach the poems. The poems are, however, extraordinarily resistant to this kind of strategy. Moreover, whatever such a study would reveal about the texts, it could not uncover the way in which the poems open to Eternity for the simple reason that both terms of my question (time and Eternity) are, in this approach, from the very beginning the property of the reasoning, critical self. It soon became clear that if I were to escape this *impasse* I would have to adopt a more vulnerable relationship to the texts. The way in which the poems open the reader's world to Eternity can only be described from within a reading of the poems themselves. This is, with regard to the study of Blake, a course of action which is often avoided. While testifying to a strange beauty that they have glimpsed in *The Four*

Zoas, most critics have argued that the poem is chaotic and unfinished. Although much of the criticism which has addressed itself to Jerusalem has been concerned with its structure, the "architecture" of this poem, as Stuart Curran tells us, has "yet to be satisfactorily explained. For that task must necessarily dissipate the mists of obscurity through which we view this epic, and most attempts have merely cast a light upon them."[71] Even Milton is introduced by a Bard's prophetic Song which, like much of Blake's poetry, continues to raise fundamental questions about the nature of Blake's poems and the way in which we read them. Yet it is only when the reader engages with the poems that they can be allowed to exert a force which acts back on the reader.

The necessity of turning to a reading/encounter with the poems also emerged as a result of my attempt to outline the character of Los. No sooner had I begun than I was struck by a curious correspondence between Los and the form of the poems themselves. Los is the being, or the stance in the world, that allows creation in time. In Milton, for example, Los's creative work includes the whole visible world. It can therefore be argued that Blake's poems are themselves part of this wider set and that therefore Los lies thematically and structurally at their centre; in fact the poems are in a sense the body of Los. The nature of Los and the relationship between time and Eternity can therefore be elaborated only within a discussion of the body of Blake's poetry. The poems self-consciously present themselves as a paradigmatic instance of the world which separates time and Eternity, self and other, and yet which at the same time offers the possibility of an opening to Eternity. For this double reason, therefore, the following thesis proceeds, apart from the second chapter, as a reading of Blake's major illuminated poetry. Such a course must inevitably be selective. I have concentrated on The Book of Urizen and the three long poems: The Four Zoas, Milton, and Jerusalem. It is these poems, however, that express most eloquently Eternity's love for "the productions of time."

Part One

Within the Labyrinth

Chapter One

The Book of Urizen: a "labyrinth which includes in itself its own exits"

> His voice to them was but an inarticulate thunder for
> their Ears
> Were heavy & dull & their eyes & nostrils closed up
> Oft he stood by a howling victim Questioning in words
> Soothing or Furious no one answerd every one wrapd up
> In his own sorrow howld regardless of his words, nor
> voice
> Of sweet response could he obtain tho oft assayd with
> tears
> He knew they were his children ruind in his ruind
> world. . . .
>
> (FZ70:39-45, E347)

(1) Noise and silence

It would be impossible to read The Book of Urizen and not feel the need to reach for words such as dread, terror, alarm, and Angst, to describe the extreme emotions that are precipitated in its characters. However, the very movement of this interpretative activity, from reading experience to discursive articulation before a real or imagined audience, from an insight to the speech which embodies it within an intersubjective world, is precisely what this poem denies to its characters. Only on one occasion does The Book of Urizen become a first person narrative, the poem contains no dialogue, and emotions such as dread and terror are closed within a suffocating and nightmare existence. In the space opened up by the poem things draw apart, wide distances open between self and other, the senses close in upon themselves, and the characters are driven by a crisis that they can only dimly perceive. Urizen, Los, the Eternals, Enitharmon, even Orc, all are closed within a world in which voice is not articulate, speech does not open a common world, and words have become uncanny, recalcitrant things: "Forgetfulness, dumbness, necessity!" (10:24, E75) have taken hold of life.

This gulf between self and other, and the consequent impotence of voice, is all the more striking because The Book of Urizen is filled with an

extraordinary cacophony of sounds. At different points in the poem the reader can hear "thund'ring," "gnashing," "roaring fires," "a terrible crash," "howling," stamping, "clashings," "noises" which are "ruinous loud," "hissings" and a "grating cry," "sobbings," a "shriek," "groaning," "Weeping," "wailing," "laments" and "moans." However, even the human sounds which are included in this list do not seem to be addressed to an other (possible or actual) who could hear or respond. They are blind and elemental; the sounds that one makes in the despair of solitude. Perhaps one should be even more extreme for there is no suggestion that these elemental cries form a soliloquy. In these sounds the human voice seems to parallel the unconscious, non-referential expressivity of an animal in distress. Voice is enclosed within the economy of the self and does not attain the life of discourse. Amidst the noise and cosmic dislocation of the poem there is therefore an almost uncanny silence: the silence of what has not been communicated.

This silence appears to be broken in the fourth plate where Urizen gives a first hand account of his actions and motivation. Blake certainly equivocated over this plate. Of the seven known copies of the poem the fourth plate is included in only three (E805). However, this is not sufficient evidence to conclude that he rejected this eruption of first person narrative because, in David Erdman's hypothetical ordering (E804), it was included in the first, second and sixth copies. On a first reading of this plate, one is impressed by the relentless progression of Urizen's argument, its architectonic balance and insistent rhythms and repetitions:

> 7. Lo! I unfold my darkness: and on
> This rock, place with strong hand the Book
> Of eternal brass written in my solitude.
>
> 8. Laws of peace, of love, of unity:
> Of pity, compassion, forgiveness.
> Let each chuse one habitation:
> His ancient infinite mansion:
> One command, one joy, one desire,
> One curse, one weight, one measure,
> One King, one God, One Law.
>
> (4:31-40, E72)

Quite clearly Urizen's voice returns no response to a call; he is merely recounting his own efforts to control the world. Blake emphasizes his egoism, isolation and solipsism. The word "I" is used seven times in twenty-two lines and "one" is used ten times in the course of five lines. Like Moses Urizen is returning with the stone tablets of the law, or like Rousseau's Lawgiver he has elaborated what is henceforth to be the "general will."[1] The laws are, however, written in solitude and represent the horizon of his constituted world.

We can therefore say that where the fourth plate remains, Urizen's voice makes explicit and attenuates the structure of noise and silence that I have outlined. In a world in which Urizen (and the Eternals) have withdrawn, clarity is the shape of our own talk, while the babel of noise outside of this is the communicative silence of what our voice excludes. Nevertheless, this plate does introduce a certain instability into the poem. This will only become fully clear in the course of our reading; however, we can say at this stage that Urizen's voice tempts us to associate the clarity of constituted worlds with him alone. As readers we therefore tend to place Urizen in the position of ultimate cause or prime mover of the Fall. In doing so we are following the main thrust of Blake criticism. The Eassons describe Urizen without further ado as "the adversary," "the state of consciousness which opposes spiritual travel."[2] Bloom depicts Urizen as "a Nobodaddy of winter and repression at last exposed in a properly gigantic portrait,"[3] while Northrop Frye talks of Urizen as a "white terror."[4]

However, The Book of Urizen makes problematic any attempt to locate a single cause of the fallen world. Attempts to find the culprit, or the "adversary," are fraught with difficulty and involve considerations which, as we shall see, progressively implicate more and more of the poem's actors. If Urizen is identified as the "adversary" then a reading of the poem tends to become nothing more than a critique of Reason. In fact, Blake's argument is much more wide-ranging than this. The rupture that the poem traces is not precisely that between Reason and the world (although this is one of the

characteristics of the fallen world), but between self and other; between what is and what is not in accord with the perspectives of the self.

The Book of Urizen locates the emergence of a voice which does not communicate and a cry which is not heard in the ontological condition of human life as we know it. As such, the myths in which every civilization attempts to account for the "primal scattering of languages"[5] provide a fruitful context in which to read the poem. This dispersion is, on a collective level, precisely the separation into those of your own tongue and those of an other (which are heard only as a babel). However, we have moved too quickly into the text. We must return to the beginning of the poem and trace our path to this voice which does not mediate and this call which is not heard.

(2) Myth: structure and narrative

Blake critics have usually been content with the classification of The Book of Urizen as a myth. W.J.T. Mitchell writes of the poem as "the logical culmination of the developmental process disclosed in the political prophecies, moving completely into the realm of myth. . . ."[6] Bloom calls The Book of Urizen "pure myth,"[7] Harper writes on The Book of Urizen under the heading, "The Creation Myth,"[8] and for Paley the poem elaborates a portion of the "central myth" which is projected by the "illuminated books which [Blake] produced from 1793 to 1795."[9]. This tidy consensus of course obscures a wealth of disagreement on what the term myth, when applied to The Book of Urizen, actually means. In most instances, however, we can say that myth is taken to be a story or narrative that tells of an event that took place in the "beginning." Through the retelling of this event, or series of events, the myth explains how the world came into being and so orients its audience in the present world. This basic model parallels the one developed by Eliade in books such as Myth and Reality and Images and Symbols. Eliade writes that "In narrating a myth, one reactualises, in some sort, the sacred time in which the events narrated took place."[10] In this way

> the myth takes man out of his own time - his individual, chronological, "historic" time - and projects him, symbolically at least, into the Great Time, into a paradoxical instant which cannot be measured because it does not consist of duration.[11]

Despite the work that has been done in the phenomenology of religion it is still almost a reflex response to be suspicious of myth. Roland Barthes writes that myth is

> inverted: myth consists in overturning culture into nature or, at least, the social, the cultural, the ideological, the historical into the 'natural.' What is nothing but a product of class division and its moral, cultural and aesthetic consequences is presented (stated) as being a 'matter of course'; under the effect of mythical inversion, the quite contingent foundations of the utterance become Common Sense, Right Reason, the Norm, General Opinion, in short the doxa (which is the secular figure of the Origin).[12]

The Book of Urizen would seem to be a very different kind of myth: it attempts to reveal the structure which underlies "nature," "the doxa," "Right Reason" and so on. It can do this precisely because in Eliade's terms it takes us out of our individual, historical time and projects us into the "Great Time," which in this instance can be described as the ontological structures and categories which define the possibilities of life. The vehicle of myth, and more particularly of The Book of Urizen, is narrative. Throughout this chapter I will therefore be using narrative and myth in the sense of those genres in which our relationship (in the present) to the (individual and collective) past comes to language and is there recollected and re-enacted.

What is surprising about the classification of The Book of Urizen as a myth is not that it should have been generally accepted by critics, but that recent criticism should represent a (still half realized) challenge to it. The best and most thought provoking of modern criticism now tends to underplay the sequential structuring of the book in order to emphasize its atemporal ordering principles. It is almost as if we have become philosophically more comfortable with an image of an atemporal, "eternal" existence than with time. This development is present in a nascent state in the work of Karl Kroeber and W.J.T. Mitchell. It can be seen in the latter's contention that

there is in The Book of Urizen a "minimum of . . . narrative sequence" and in his description of the poem's illuminations as a "picture gallery."[13] The former speaks in the same vein when he says that the plates which carry full-page illuminations are arranged as "a series (not a sequence) of graphic interrelationships."[14] Harald Kittel puts the view a little less equivocally when he writes that "In Urizen, there is neither a linear narrative sequence nor a readily discernible 'chronology of motivation.'"[15] This kind of argument reaches its climax in "Urizen: The Symmetry of Fear," by Robert E. Simmons, where it is applied to the written word. Simmons speaks of the "world defined by the structure of Urizen" as "becoming ultimately a four-sided house of mirrors"[16] and he delineates an atemporal structure for the poem based on symmetry.

These readings are certainly not eccentric. The very same kind of argument is repeated on a more general level in modern theories of myth and narrative, and in Blake criticism. Leopold Damrosch, in his book Symbol and Truth in Blake's Myth, quotes Edmund Leach, who writes:

> Myth proper lacks a chronology in any strict sense, for the beginning and the end must be apprehended simultaneously; significance is to be discerned only in the relations between the component parts of the story; sequence is simply a persistent rearrangement of elements which are present from the start.[17]

Damrosch himself uses adjectives such as "synchronous" and phrases such as "a truly universal simultaneity" to describe Blake's vision,[18] while a critic such as Susan Fox, writing on Blake's Milton, argues that in this poem a "curious pattern of temporally and spatially divergent events unified only by a network of verbal echoes reveals that all the events are a single event."[19]

However, to the extent that this kind of reading underplays or actually questions the primacy of narrative in The Book of Urizen it makes problematic Urizen as myth, for without a narrative vehicle one cannot speak of a mediation between the origins of the world and the present. A "picture gallery" or a structural model displaces the very temporality that myth depends upon with an apparently timeless illumination. This is not a difficulty for Kroeber who argues that art is just such an illumination.

Simmons' work, however, makes this problematic because when readers withdraw from the temporal unfolding of the narrative they are not left with an illumination but with Urizen's "four-sided house of mirrors, finitely limited, but infinitely reflecting fallen man within it."[20] This would still be an illumination of sorts (even if only of Error) if the illusion of sequence had to be shattered before Urizen's world could be adequately seen for what it was. However, as I will argue in what follows, it is precisely the withdrawal from sequence (and therefore temporality) that constitutes this house of mirrors.

It seems that we have an opposition between structure and narrative, an atemporal mathematical (structural) and a temporal form, a model of the world and a mythic account of it. Nevertheless, I do not want to oppose one view to the other. Such a confrontation has not achieved explicit formulation (although one senses it in the at times irritable exchange between Erdman and Simmons in the notes to the latter's article[21]). I want to show that both readings are different moments of an integrated reading of The Book of Urizen, and that Blake uses the mechanics of the reading process as a metaphor for the events which the poem recounts. In order to do this we will have to distinguish between the sempiternality of "Mathematical Form" or structure, which is "Eternal in the Reasoning Memory" (OV, E270) and which is achieved by a flight from temporality, and an Eternity which emerges in relationship with time. In order to describe this latter Eternity we must extend our notion of time. Time is usually conceived of as chronological time, but this conception does scant justice to the variety and complexity of temporal modes in The Book of Urizen. My discussion of the poem itself begins with myth because it seems to me to be indisputable that we do in the first place experience the poem as a temporal narrative: it must be read from the beginning to the end. Whatever atemporal structure that we may discover in the poem will be predicated on this initial unfolding of the poem in time.

(3) Locating the myth

If The Book of Urizen is a myth then the first step in any interpretation must be an attempt to place the events which it recounts. Myth narrates the events of the primordial past in order to bring them into proximity with the present. It brings what has been made distant by time into our world. The narrator of myth depends upon and attempts to foster this appropriation of the past in terms of the present. To place the poem is therefore to understand precisely what past it is bringing to the present.

A first, approximate location for the poem is provided by The Marriage of Heaven and Hell. The reference of the narrator towards the end of this work to his "Bible of Hell: which the world shall have whether they will or no" (24, E44) has suggested to many critics that Urizen is the first of this projected series and is Blake's demonic or inverted reading of Genesis. Tannenbaum, Hirsch, Frye and Bloom are a few of the critics who note the structural and thematic parallels between the two books.[22] It is this primary context which orients most of the interpretations given to the poem. In The Book of Urizen, therefore, Blake is reaching back in time, following and criticizing the model of Genesis, to give us an account of the origins of the present world. Mitchell describes the poem as "the logical culmination of the developmental process disclosed in the political prophecies, moving completely into the realm of myth, pushing back to the very origins of time and space. . . ."[23] Leslie Tannenbaum draws on the writings of the Gnostics to describe a fall in which "the sleep of Urizen provokes Los's creation of the five fallen senses, an act that results in Los's fall and the creation of Enitharmon, the counterpart of Eve."[24] Clark Emery sees the poem as an account of Blake's "own fall from innocence"; however, this is also used as "a workable hypothesis to explain the cosmic creation." He therefore talks of the poem in terms of a movement from "Before the beginning" when there was "a dynamic unity of an unspecified number of eternal energies" to the world of time and space.[25] Morton Paley draws on the Gnostics (as well as

developmental psychology) when he writes:

> In the history of the individual mind, he [Urizen] is the principium individuationis which supersedes the oceanic consciousness of the infant. According to Blake's myth, the process by which the 'Selfhood' or ego is formed in the child, resulting in an expulsion from the paradise of Innocence, is a differentiation of consciousness which recapitulates its cosmic analogue: the fall of part of the Eternal Mind and the consequent creation of the phenomenal universe.[26]

Damon also talks of a fall from "Eternity into Matter" and "from Innocence into Experience."[27] Fisher writes that in the course of the poem we see that "the entire vision of eternity" is reduced "to the partial vision of temporal succession." "Urizen enters the fallen 'Abyss' of his conceptions through the labyrinth of temporal process."[28] Raine also writes that "before Urizen began his labors there was no finite world, only 'Eternity.' . . . the Newtonian universe had no existence in the beginning."[29]

What is common to all of these readings (whether they use terms taken from the Gnostics, Blake's own work, or developmental psychology) is the assumption that the Fall is marked by the appearance of time and space. Time and space are seen as inimical to Eternity. As such these readings do not criticize the traditional conception of the relationship between time and eternity in which "[e]ternity is," in the words of Boethius, "the complete possession all at once of illimitable life," whereas time and space are flawed, incomplete or fallen versions of this ideal state.

It is of course true that in the poem the reader can trace a movement from the disruption of Eternity in the first lines,

> Lo, a shadow of horror is risen
> In Eternity! Unknown, unprolific!
> (3:1-2, E70)

to the precipitation of a world which is bounded by time and space. What is more, this time does not contradict Locke's description of time as "constant fleeting succession"[30] (on plate 10 Los is seen "forging chains new & new / "Numb'ring with links. hours, days and years"), and it appears to be in conformity with Newton's time which flows equably without relation to anything external. This seems to give an empirical verification of Raine's thesis that the Newtonian world did not exist prior to the Fall, and it forms

the basis for reading The Book of Urizen as a fall from Eternity into the closure of time and space. Temporal process does seem to be condemned even at this early stage when we place it beside the assumed perfection of Eternity. However, this description of time and Eternity does not exhaust these phenomena.

In the very first line Boethius's description of eternity is made problematic because we learn that "a shadow of horror is risen / In Eternity!" (my emphasis). Eternity is quite clearly able to incorporate error and, even more suprisingly, some kind of sequential and therefore temporal progression. If this were not so we would be at a loss to explain how any change, let alone "horror" could arise in Eternity. On the very same plate Newton's time is multiplied and becomes diverse and problematic. Blake writes: "Times on times he divided" (3:8, E70). At first this suggests a chronological time: we read "Times on times" in the sense of "on many occasions." This is not a completely satisfactory reading because "Times" does not primarily refer to chronological time. If Blake were referring in the first instance to this kind of time one would expect him to use the word "after" in order to define the temporal relationship between a number of intervals of this kind. His use of the preposition "on" suggests that these times are located at the same point in space.

We use the word "times," in phrases such as "The times are a-changing" and "The times are big with tidings,"[31] to refer to a time which is very different from chronological time. In the first phrase Bob Dylan suggests that we are no longer living in a time of stasis but a time of growth and that this demands a new response from us. Southey's line tells us that the time which is present to the "Moorish camp" is one of expectation. In these instances the word "times" refers to the quality or shape of the time in which we find ourselves. Normally these times follow a sort of cyclical progression: from summer to winter to spring, from sadness to joy and so on. For a person like Urizen who has withdrawn, the "times" do not progress. The times of winter, summer, autumn and spring appear in the same ontological

space: whatever the call from the world Urizen responds with division. The times do therefore quite literally appear at the same spatial location because Urizen's ontological time is unchanged. The times of the world are rebuffed by Urizen's time of withdrawal. In this simple phrase we can therefore see the personal time of withdrawal, and the temporal quality of the world in which Urizen exists (here time is something which approaches from outside the self), and we can glimpse a chronological time which would order the interaction between these two times from the viewpoint of a dispassionate observer. Quite clearly time and Eternity are used in The Book of Urizen in such a way that they make problematic the very model that critics have used to describe them. In particular, the oppositional dualism between time and Eternity which is implicit in much critical discourse about this poem breaks down even in this preliminary analysis, for Urizen, even as he divides and as his withdrawal is effected in time, is still in Eternity. It is only on plate five that we hear that Eternity, for the first time, rolls apart from Urizen.

This simple inadequacy of the traditional dichotomy between time and Eternity to describe the multiplicity of time or the nature of Eternity in The Book of Urizen becomes a decisive objection when we investigate the nature of the Eternals.

As a substantive the word "eternal" has been used as the name of God and as an equivalent of eternity. In this instance, however, neither of these descriptions is adequate because Blake's Eternals never achieve the status of God, and Eternity is used in such a way that it does not overlap with the identity of these figures. Nevertheless, one would expect the Eternals to partake of the nature of the traditional conception of eternity and not be conditioned by time. Paley argues along these lines when he writes that "Blake's 'Eternals' correspond to the Gnostic 'Eons'" "who are immutable in . . . nature, and above the power of mortality."[32] It is, however, extraordinary how inadequate this commonsense notion is.

Urizen is one of the Eternals, but it is quite wrong to argue that this means that he shares in the unchanging nature of a pure essence such as that which Boethius attributed to eternity. Urizen and his peers are clearly limited, make mistakes and reveal that they can be motivated by emotions such as fear, petulance and horror. What is even more striking is that Urizen complains of the Eternals' life in terms which deliberately associate the lives of these beings with temporality:

> 4: From the depths of dark solitude. From
> The eternal abode in my holiness,
> Hidden set apart in my stern counsels
> Reserv'd for the days of futurity,
> I have sought for a joy without pain,
> For a solid without fluctuation
> Why will you die O Eternals?
> Why live in unquenchable burnings?
> (4:6-13, E71)

A fluctuating solid and "unquenchable burnings" are images which remind one of the traditional dissatisfaction with time. Death and the presence of joy and pain are themes which one associates with mortality. The Eternals live in a world characterized by transmutation and therefore time. However, the passage does not rest content with mixing our notions of being and becoming. The figure of Urizen places our assumed separation of time and Eternity as a particular moment in the narrative that the poem recounts. A separation of these two terms is the goal of Urizen's withdrawal. He alone is searching for Boethius's eternity which is "the complete possession all at once of illimitable life." Only Urizen demands a world which is free from fluctuation, pain, dying and "burnings." No other character wants to "attain a void / Where self sustaining" he is able to "view all things beneath [his] feet" (FZ72:23-24, E349). Urizen has confused the eternal existence of "Mathematical Form" with "Living Form" and Eternity. He searches for a sempiternality which is achieved by a withdrawal from time.

Recognition of the coincidence between the critics' characterization of the relationship between time and Eternity, and the parameters of Urizen's quest, gives us a major critical problem: how are we to characterize the prelapsarian relationship between time and Eternity? If we are unable to

describe this relationship then we cannot understand what past is being brought to the present.

(4) Time and Eternity

The unfallen world stands behind the narrative of The Book of Urizen at every point; it is the reality against which the poem's movement is charted and the ultimate measure of the Eternals' suffering. And yet one must aver from the beginning that the gulf which separates the Eternals from their origin just as decisively conditions our own remembering. We must piece together a picture of this world from the shape of its absence. It is for this reason that we are not given a direct picture of the unfallen world in The Book of Urizen. Our knowledge is gleaned from the Eternals' own attempts at retrospect, and by induction; we can read the unfallen world in the form and natue of the Eternals' suffering and the privation that has become part of their very being. It is, in fact, the dismembering that the poem outlines which suggests what the Eternals have lost.

However, this conditioning of memory by the actuality of dismembering means that our picture of the prelapsarian world is always ambivalent. We are separated from the past by the very movement of the narrative, and our position in the Fall means that the picture that we are able to form of this world is partial and limited. Nevertheless, this tension between a fallen present and an unrecoverable past, between the attempt to remember the prelapsarian world and the knowledge that this can only meet with partial success, provides the friction within which radical change can be conceived. It is the exacerbation of this tension which allows the consolidation of Error to be a prelude to awakening.

With these qualifications we can now turn to the clearest retrospective picture of the prelapsarian world that the reader is given:

> 1. 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, E71)

In this passage we find an immediate conjunction of being and becoming. "Eternal life" (in this context) denotes the individual and collective life of the Eternals. This life, however, is not something that the Eternals own, or inalienably possess, for it is linked with a continual emergence. The contingent and achieved nature of this emergence and its constitution as time, is underlined by an ambiguity in the use of the verb "sprung."

A first reading of the fourth line (in which this verb appears) generally structures it along the pattern of the first. We understand the verb "to be" after "nor" and "eternal life" and so read, "Earth was not: nor [were] globes of attraction" and "Death was not, but eternal life [was] sprung." This seems to be an obvious reading in the twentieth century where we can be sure that sprung is the past participle of spring. However, in the eighteenth century "sprung" could also be used as the simple past tense of spring.[33] If we read "sprung" in this latter sense then it is eternal life that springs in being. If, on the other hand, "sprung" is the past participle of spring then our interpretation must be slightly different. This suggests an action which is performed on eternal life. In the same way that we say that a bird was sprung, so eternal life was coaxed from hiding and released into being. Spring is a perfective verb; however, in this context "eternal life sprung" seems to refer to the entire time that "Death," Earth," and "globes of attraction" were not in existence. The two readings of this line that I have outlined are complementary rather than contradictory. The reader is called upon to imagine an act of springing and of release which is carried on throughout the prelapsarian universe.

What is interesting about this image is that it depends upon the very temporality that Urizen is attempting to escape from. The act of springing implies that there is a present in which it occurs. This present, however, demands the existence of a past (the horizon or enclosure from which the spring emerges). This past is implied in all of the many uses of the word spring because a spring is a movement with respect to a background which is subsequently left behind. A man is said to spring when he leaves the ground

behind him, and flowing water is called a spring when it emerges from the earth. A spring in a void, or a spring which does not leave something behind, is a contradiction in terms. The same spring, of course, implies a future. The spring moves down the hillside to join the stream, and the man's spring takes him in the direction of the other bank. We can therefore see that this image suggests that eternal life has a temporal dimension, and that this temporality in turn seems to contain a linear sequence of past, present and future.

The difference between this time and that which Urizen finds himself in is decisive. For Urizen, time is an external force to which he is subjected: "Ages on Ages roll'd over him!" (10:1, E74). For the Eternals in the prelapsarian world, however, time is centred in the "spring" of their individual and collective life. The present of this spring continually gathers a past and projects a future. Chronological time, one could say, appears as a result of a certain perspective on this ontological time. It is, perhaps, the external form of the time implied by the spring of eternal life.

This second conception of time is certainly not without precedent. Authorities as diverse as the author of Ecclesiastes, Bergson and Augustine, all point to the ontological heart of time. Augustine, for example, argues in the Confessions that it is now

> Clear . . . and plain, that neither things to come, nor things past, are. Nor do we properly say, there be three times, past, present and to come; but perchance it might be properly said, there be three times: a present time of past things; a present time of present things; and a present time of future things. For indeed three such as these in our souls there be; and otherwhere do I not see them. The present time of past things is our memory; the present time of present things is our sight; the present time of future things our expectation. If thus we be permitted to speak, then see I three times; yea, and I confess there are three. Let this also be said: there be three times, past, present, and to come, according to our misapplied custom; let it be said: see, I shall not much be troubled at it, neither gainsay, nor find fault with it; provided that be understood which is said, namely, that neither that which is to come, have any being now; no, nor that which is already past.[34]

For Augustine it is the time of the individual present that (like Blake's spring of eternal life) gathers the past in memory and projects a future in anticipation. It is a misapplied custom which talks of a past,

present and future time without reference to their ontological base.

However, this kind of comparison should not obscure the differences between the two writers. What is extraordinary about the image that Blake uses is that temporal emergence takes place in the prelapsarian world. Augustine on the other hand is talking about the psychology of time in the fallen world. Augustine's discussion is limited to the individual, while Blake's image suggests that the spring of eternal life is a collective and individual emergence.

We can therefore say that the essence of time (before and after the Fall) is ontological time, but it is only in the prelapsarian world that this is recognized. The protagonists of the fallen world are unwittingly engaged in a flight from their very being. This recognition of the ontological heart of time will form the basis of our discussion of time in The Book of Urizen. The poem traces the path along which this recognition is lost, and in doing so it places the external time of Urizen, Newton and certain critics of the poem, as a particular moment in its story.

The retrospect that we have been discussing does not, unfortunately, mention Eternity. Nevertheless it can give us a crucial suggestion. One of the most striking things uncovered in any discussion of The Book of Urizen is the extent of the interrelationship between terms and between characters. Eternal and temporal existence would seem to be mutually exclusive and yet we have found that the Eternals live in time. Eternal life does not simply refer to individual life but seems to be a result of individual and collective being. The ontological time of the Eternals is not self-contained for it seems to be related (at least in some sense) to a time which resembles our linear progression of past, present and future. Eternal life itself depends upon an uncovering. It is a very brave reader indeed who does not feel threatened by this deliberate mixing of ideas. However, it seems to me that in The Book of Urizen it is this kind of interlocking network of relationships which constitutes Eternity, or to phrase it more succinctly, Eternity is

discovered in relationship.

That Eternity is relationship is particularly clear in the descriptions which The Book of Urizen gives us of the Fall. These descriptions invariably begin with withdrawal from relationship. When the Eternals respond to Urizen's withdrawal with rage (and so withdraw from him) Eternity rolls wide apart:

> 3. Sund'ring, dark'ning, thund'ring!
> Rent away with a terrible crash
> Eternity roll'd wide apart
> Wide asunder rolling. . . .
> (5:3-6, E73)

"Sund'ring," "asunder," "Rent" and "wide apart" can be read in two complementary ways. Eternity does roll wide apart from Urizen (and perhaps from the Eternals as well) in the sense that it has become a dream, a no longer present or only dimly perceived reality, but it is the moving apart of Eternity's inhabitants which is the basis of this loss. To move apart is to stretch the substance of relationship until it appears to be no more than a dream. Eternity itself is literally rent apart, torn asunder and therefore in the following lines we read:

> Mountainous all around
> Departing; departing; departing:
> Leaving ruinous fragments of life
> Hanging frowning cliffs & all between
> An ocean of voidness unfathomable.
> (5:7-11, E72)

Instead of relationship we have "frowning cliffs," isolated mountains and between them a void. What this kind of description suggests is that life itself emerges in relationship. Where self and other have withdrawn we find only "ruinous fragments of life."

It is in fact the physicality of this moving apart which is so striking. Los, for example, feels the withdrawal of Urizen as a diminution of his being and as a kind of dismembering:

> 9: Los wept howling around the dark Demon:
> And cursing his lot; for in anguish,
> Urizen was rent from his side;
> And a fathomless void for his feet;
> And intense fires for his dwelling.
> (6:2-6, E73-74)

He is foundationless because he can no longer ground himself in relationship. To leave Eternity is quite literally to be "Unorganized" and "rent" away (6:8, E74). It is to be torn from an organized system of relationships in which one finds one's being. Thus, in the account of the prelapsarian world that was quoted above, we find that "Earth was not: nor globes of attraction." The prelapsarian world was not organized in the form of a Gesellschaft where an apparent order is formed from the competing claims of isolated individuals (as it is in "The Human Abstract," for example); it was a world where being emerged in relationship and where these closed globes could open and close at will.

This kind of definition of Eternity allows us to understand how an error can occur in Eternity and why its inhabitants are capable of change (for better and for worse). A system of relationships is not a fixed reality but one which is forged. It also enables us to explain why a number of Eternities are lost in the book. It is not that they refer to the same fall, but that each loss of relationship is a loss of Eternity. We can also move towards an understanding of such difficult descriptions as Blake's characterization of Los's Pity as "pangs, eternity on eternity" (18:5, E78). As we shall see, an emotion, even of Pity, is a relationship and therefore constitutes being and Eternity. Blake is locating the centre of life and being in relationship.

In the phrase, "eternal life sprung," life is the copula which joins the "Eternals" and the spring of temporal existence. The Eternals, as Urizen complains, find their existence in time. However, it is the relationship between the Eternals, the network of relationship which links all the terms of the prelapsarian world, which constitutes Eternity. There is, therefore, an intricate interaction between time and Eternity which quite decisively marks off the prelapsarian world from the fallen world and the goal of Urizen's quest.

We can now see why this excursus has been necessary. If we are to describe the movement of The Book of Urizen as one from an Eternity which is "the complete possession all at once of illimitable life" to a fallen world

in which time and space appear, we are simply moving within the parameters which have been set up by Urizen. We lose the drama of The Book of Urizen because we are using as an evaluative framework the very separation which it is attempting to place in an explanatory framework. In addition we dissolve the tension between a fallen present and a past which is evoked but cannot be retrieved. The poem attempts, like all myths, to re-member the long and complex process of dis-membering. It moves from a world of relationship to a Gesellshaft where the Eternals, time, life and therefore Eternity, have drawn wide apart.

(5) A double withdrawal

The first and most decisive change that this relocation of The Book of Urizen effects is with respect to the question of who is to blame for the Fall. In any account of a lapse or fall this is the first thing that we, as readers, look for. In a single move we make the present intelligible and reassure ourselves that we are not to blame. In The Book of Urizen this question seems easy to answer for, after all, it is Urizen who has withdrawn from the community of the Eternals, and yet the poem resists this easy answer. Urizen has withdrawn; however, in a universe which emerges out of relationship, withdrawal is, by itself, not decisive. It may well be a fact in the sense that it has occurred, but this does not immediately mean that relationship is absent. The significance of an act and the world that it uncovers is codetermined by one's response to it. This is difficult to understand because we habitually place events within a linear chain of cause and effect. We live in a fallen world of "wheel without wheel" (J15:18, E159) where isolated selves cause effects in much the same way as a cue moves a billiard ball. In an Eternity where reality emerges out of relationship, however, one can say that there are no causes, only calls, and that their significance depends upon a response: it is the unit call-response (and not cause-effect) in which reality emerges. Thus, in Blake's oeuvre one can find

instances where withdrawal is the prelude not to a fall but to an awakening. In Jerusalem, to take only one example, we learn that in Eternity the inhabitants of Eden sleep and so withdraw from relationship. In this state they are watched over and so, in the context of this response, withdrawal becomes the ground for emergence. It is therefore nothing more than the winter of a person's life. One can therefore say that withdrawal is not immediately the absence of relationship. It is instead a relationship in the modality of absence. Thus Rilke suggests in his letters and in the Duino Elegies that it is this relationship of absence which may allow us to most profoundly reach the other person.[35]

It is for this reason that the Fall does not occur at the point of Urizen's withdrawal. Relationship, whether of presence or absence, is sufficient ground for Eternity. Thus the first lines of the poem are emphatic that Urizen's withdrawal is at first contained within Eternity. The reader must wait until plate 5 to see Eternity rolling wide apart, "Wide asunder rolling," and it is only on plate 20 that we are told that "No more Los beheld Eternity." The being of Eternals in the world of Eternity is inextricably a "being-with." Thus the world that Urizen's withdrawal uncovers depends upon the relationship that the Eternals take up to it. In other words, it depends upon the narrative, in the sense suggested in the previous section, that they construct about this event. However, when we turn to The Book of Urizen we find not one but two narratives. The poem begins and then begins again as if it were unsure of or wished to modify its own beginning.

Critics have argued that there is a parallel between the respective accounts of the creation of Los and Urizen on the one hand, and the double creation account in Genesis.[36] This reading seems to me to be forced. The Bible gives us two different accounts of the same event while the "creation" of Los and the "creation" of Urizen are two quite different events which are separated in time. The second occurs within the parameters set up by the first. The double creation account in Genesis can more fruitfully be compared

with the two creation accounts of chapter one and chapter two of The Book of Urizen. This would suggest an important structural parallel between the two books, for the two creation accounts of The Book of Urizen are to that poem what the two creation accounts of Genesis are to that book. One of the major points of correspondence between the two books would then be in their use of narrative.

Gerhard von Rad calls the Bible a "theology of traditions."[37] In other words, it is the narrative re-working of the past which constitutes the Christian world. Thus, the two creation accounts of Genesis can be seen as different attempts by the Jewish rabbinical tradition to appropriate the past. The addition of a new narrative account of the "beginnings" alters the context of the first and so changes the world in which the Jewish people live. The most striking instance of this kind of narrative reworking of the past is the change that the New Testament effects on the Old Testament. As Frank Kermode writes in The Genesis of Secrecy, the joining of the New Testament to the Old Testament results in an extraordinary transformation: "A whole literature . . . is now said to have value only insofar as it complies with the fore-understanding of later interpreters."[38] The notion of apocalypse suggests that this narrative could itself be similarly transformed. Such narrative reworking continues unabated. Much of what we take for granted as Christianity, such as the idea of original sin, has emerged only within the tradition's reworking of the biblical accounts of Christ's life. These stories themselves, as modern biblical criticism, from Joachim Jeremias to the present day, has demonstrated, are often narrative reworkings of accounts of Christ's life. The Book of Urizen assumes and takes part in this narrative reworking of the past. Its rationale is not that there is no past to reconstitute, but that the significance of the past and of the world that it opens depends upon the relationship that we have with it in the present. This is the very raison d'etre of Blake's own attempts to "narrate" the past. It is in listening to the past that the possibility of a response is kept open.

The first narrative is one of surprise. It deals with what is unknown. It begins immediately in situ, with shock at the presence of a "shadow" which has arisen in the midst of Eternity. For the Eternals, the void that has appeared is a space which is "Self-closd," "all-repelling" and, therefore, impenetrable. So emphatic is the asservation that Urizen is "unknown" that it comes as something of a surprise to read in lines 5 and 6 that "Some said / 'It is Urizen.'" In the following lines the claim that the identity of this shadow and its cause are unknown is repeated again and again (3:6-7,10,14,19-20,24, E70-71). Moreover, we learn that the Eternals have little chance of discovering his identity because "all avoid / The petrific abdominable chaos" (3:25-26, E71). Yet in lines 27-28 the narrator simply says that "dark Urizen / Prepar'd" (3:27-28, E71). The Eternals have given the name of Urizen to what does not appear. It is not that they are wrong in their ascription of a name to the "shadow of horror." What is at stake, however, is the narrative that is implied in their use of this name. Naming is in this instance a way of keeping what is threatening at bay; it is like a magical charm which wards off what one fears. Urizen is the name of what they avoid: this name draws a line between one's own tongue and those of the threatening others. Urizen's name itself means drawing a line about oneself.[39] As the name suggests, Urizen has entered a state in which he is his own horizon. However, this horizon is a line which, while it encloses Urizen, also separates him from the Eternals. Urizen is therefore the horizon (beyond which they cannot pass) of the Eternals' world as well as his own. This narrative is therefore an account of the Eternals' response to the appearance of a void in their midst. It is a narrative which tells us of the Eternals' withdrawal from Urizen's withdrawal.

The second narrative is not forged in the heat of the moment. It begins after the event of Urizen's withdrawal, when the narrator is looking back to an event which occurred when

1. Earth was not: nor globes of attraction

> The will of the Immortal expanded
> Or contracted his all flexible senses.
> (3:36-39, E71)

It is therefore a more systematic account. It does not betray so readily the Eternals' surprise at the "horror" that has appeared in their midst. Now Urizen is seen, to use the title suggested by the Eassons once again, simply as the "adversary":

> & vast clouds of blood roll'd
> Round the dim rocks of Urizen, so nam'd
> That solitary one in Immensity. . . .
> (3:41-43, E71)

It is important to note the two readings of the phrase, "so nam'd." The first is a statement of truth: the name of the solitary one is Urizen. The second sees in these words a recognition that Urizen is the name which has been given to what remains unknown. The two readings are complementary for the Eternals are using Urizen's name as a means of avoiding him.

The first narrative ends with the sounds of Urizen's preparations for war. The second narrative, which follows on from the first, begins with a description of the Eternals' preparations for war. The Eternals have withdrawn from Urizen and so they too must ward off what is no longer acceptable: "Shrill the trumpet: & myriads of Eternity, / Muster around the bleak desarts" (3:44-4:1, E71). It is in the unit, call-response (or in this case withdrawal-response) that reality appears. Thus it is only now, in the intersection between these two poised armies, in the juxtaposition of the "myriads of Eternity" and Urizen's "bleak desarts" of withdrawal, that the silence of withdrawal attains an unequivocal form and becomes articulate. The lines quoted above continue:

> Now fill'd with clouds, darkness & waters
> That roll'd perplex'd labring & utter'd
> Words articulate, bursting in thunders
> That roll'd on the tops of his mountains. . . .
> (4:2-5, E71)

This passage in turn moves without punctuation into Urizen's first person account of his philosophy of domination. A response of withdrawal to the withdrawal of another is to create the reality of war. The voice, of course,

belongs to Urizen, but it is the Eternals' withdrawal from him (along with the narrative that they have constructed to effect and legitimate this response) that creates the space in which this "unknown" power can appear as this very articulate and far from hidden voice.

The most damaging result of the Eternals' narrative response to Urizen's withdrawal is that when the latter's voice does appear they can only respond with the outrage of a Puritan who has been confronted with an emotion that he/she has repressed (4:44-5:2, E72). It is only now that "the seven deadly sins of the soul" (4:49, E72) appear and we see Eternity (in the twin senses discussed earlier) roll "wide apart." In this double withdrawal relationship is lost and instead of Eternity we have:

> ruinous fragments of life
> Hanging frowning cliffs & all between
> An ocean of voidness unfathomable.
> (5:9-11, E73)

Even a relationship in the modality of absence has now been lost. As the Preludium suggests, Urizen's power is something which he has "assum'd" (2:1, E70) in the sense of taking on a high office or responsiblity, but it is also something which the Eternals merely assume him to have. In spurning "back his religion" and giving him "a place in the north, / Obscure, shadowy, void, solitary" (2:3-4, E70), it is the Eternals themselves who confirm and substantiate the religion of withdrawal that they are attempting to reject. Eternity comes into being through relationship, and it falls because of a dislocation in the same agency. The withdrawal that creates the Fall is a double withdrawal.

(6) The fallen world

This double withdrawal outlines the basic shape of the fallen world. It is within this space and against this structuring metaphor that the poem's events are unfolded. However, this withdrawal does not yet represent a completed state. It is an outline which must be filled in; a situation

which requires the workings of time to realize and complete it. In what follows The Book of Urizen paints in the vectors of force and the constellation of figures which simultaneously realize and complete this primary withdrawal. It is in the gap between Urizen and the Eternals that Los first appears in the poem.

Los is an extremely complex figure. The Book of Urizen associates him with the sun (Los is Sol spelt backwards), a blacksmith, the Eternal Prophet, a gaoler and a guardian. In addition, the primary connotation of the name Los is quite simply loss. We will leave the question of the relationship between these diverse images for the moment and concentrate on the way that Los is introduced in this poem. The reader first meets Los as the Eternals' gaoler:

> 8. And Los round the dark globe of Urizen,
> Kept watch for Eternals to confine,
> The obscure separation alone. . . .
> (5:38-40, E73)

This is a rather curious way of phrasing Los's task. The reader's first thought is that the "obscure separation" is Urizen, however, it could at the same time refer, and perhaps most directly, to the fact of separation between the Eternals and Urizen. The Eternals would like to avoid the fact of this rupture and the experience of this severing.

As such Los represents a most extraordinary strategy on the part of the Eternals. In one move they have excluded Urizen and their experience of this separation. In a situation where one person has withdrawn from an other, what sustains the relationship (for both parties) is the feeling of loss. A sense of privation is what makes a friend overwhelmingly present to one in their absence. At times one feels the presence of the person as an other, more strongly in absence than in the taken for granted world of everyday life. Loss is the experience that allows the possibility of a return, or in the terms of the previous section, of a new spring. In making Los Urizen's gaoler, the Eternals are using what should be a medium of relationship as the means of separation. In this way the fact of separation is truly confined well apart.

Within the philosophies of Bacon, Newton and Locke, it would be impossible to imagine the extremity and drama of the situation that Los has been cast into. As I have argued, John Locke assumes from the beginning that understanding begins with the reception of simple ideas by an individual consciousness. Similarly, the experimental methods of Bacon and Newton are predicated upon a withdrawal of the observer from the life world. For Los, however, Eternity (and therefore relationship) is the ground for the being of the self. The withdrawal of Urizen from the Eternals means that Los is quite literally without foundation:

> 9. Los wept howling around the dark Demon:
> And cursing his lot; for in anguish,
> Urizen was rent from his side;
> And a fathomless void for his feet;
> And intense fires for his dwelling.
> (6:2-6, E73-4)

Urizen's withdrawal, as this passage makes clear, is experienced by Los as the tearing away of part of his body. This is graphically represented in the extraordinary illumination on plate 7. The absence of foreshortening implies that Los has literally lost a portion of his body.

Los's situation is, nevertheless, not as extreme as the one that Urizen finds himself in. The latter has withdrawn from time and it is therefore experienced as something outside of his being. Ages roll over him, not in sequence, but "Ages on ages" (10:1, E74). These times appear as "a dark waste stretching chang'able" (10:3, E74). They are moved by gigantic, uncontrollable forces; earthquakes disrupt their surfaces and fires belch from their depths. In moving outside of time, Urizen has moved outside of ontological time and therefore outside of his very being. He lies in a stony sleep while these forces have attained a life and power of their own.

Los, on the other hand, still has a relationship with others, even though it may be tenuous. He is the Eternals' gaoler and the guardian of Urizen. Towards the end of the book Urizen's world does achieve a form and is capable of being measured, but this is owing to Los's attempts to maintain a relationship with him. It is for this reason that Los's response to the

situation is decisive. It delineates a reaction to Urizen which does not duplicate that of the Eternals, and in so doing offers a response other than withdrawal.

Los does not withdraw, rage, or pit himself against Urizen. In the manner of a prophet viewing the events of the world, he holds the changes in Urizen's "formless unmeasurable death" (7:9, E74) within his constituted world. He alone watches over the space of Urizen's absence:

> 4: And Los formed nets & gins
> And threw the nets round about
>
> 5: He watch'd in shuddring fear
> The dark changes & bound every change
> With rivets of iron & brass. . . .
> (8:7-11, E74)

Heidegger writes that the essence of time is an awaiting and a retaining.[40] This is an accurate description of Los's ontological time at this point in the poem. Los watches Urizen's changes, binds them with his "nets and gins" and so holds them within his constituted world. Los therefore retains the changes that Urizen undergoes and in this way the chaotic time of Urizen (outside of relationship) becomes sequential time. Urizen's chaotic changes are held by Los and by this means "formless unmeasurable death" becomes the sequence of ages that is outlined on plates 10, 11, and 13. These times are also a time of awaiting because throughout these plates Los watches Urizen and awaits each new change. An ontological time of awaiting and retaining is therefore spatialized as sequential time:

> The Eternal Prophet heavd the dark bellows,
> And turn'd restless the tongs; and the hammer
> Incessant beat; forging chains new & new
> Numb'ring with links. hours, days & years. . . .
> (10:15-19, E75)

Throughout plates 10, 11 and 13 this sequential time is gathered and focussed in a present which awaits Urizen.[41] The "horrible night" is divided into "watches" (10:10, E75). This present is similar in some respects to the temporality that is implied in the Christian hope expressed in passages such as I Peter 1:3-6, Romans 8:24, II Timothy 1:12 and I John 3:1-3. Hope and sequential time depend upon an attitude which, while remaining in this world,

orients the things of this world towards a second coming: a reappearance of the one who has withdrawn. History is focussed on a present of expectation. The two times diverge in that Los's time is directed towards the return of Urizen and not (at least in the first instance) of Christ. In the Christian conception there is often the sense that time and the things of this world are to be abolished, while in The Book of Urizen it is clear that the unfolding of this sequential time outlines the shape of Urizen's being (albeit in the state of withdrawal). As we shall see, it is in our relationship to this time that the possibility of Urizen's return is opened or closed.

One further peculiarity about Blake's characterization of sequential time is that it appears at the point of relationship between Los and Urizen. It is formed on Los's forge and is a result of his ontological stand of awaiting and retaining; at the same time it is a retention of Urizen's chaotic time. On the one hand sequential time gives a shape to Urizen's world (the line of seven consecutive ages is the outline of Urizen's being) and on the other it gives a form to Los's world. In plate 13 Los finds that he has been closed into the same world as Urizen. Los's relationship to Urizen in his absence cannot be conducted from a neutral position, for being arises in relationship. While Los, in the time of awaiting and retaining, can give Urizen a form, this activity also has implications for Los's being. Sequential time is therefore the time and space in which awaiting and retaining meets withdrawal. It is the very shape of the world that emerges in this relationship. One can imagine that in Eternity Los's awaiting and retaining would be met by the joyful approach of an other. The line of sequential time would therefore be not the constriction and enclosure that is described in The Book of Urizen, but a "bounding line" in which two people (background and foreground) interact. In the world of withdrawal, however, the "bounding line" becomes an outline. The line of relationship between self and other becomes merely the outer limits of one's constituted world.

For seven Ages Los continues this activity. Throughout this time the

changes that Los fixes form the vantage point from which he continues to await Urizen. The time of the past is gathered into the present moment of expectation. However, on plate 13 there is a decisive change:

> 1. In terrors Los shrunk from his task:
> His great hammer fell from his hand:
> His fires beheld, and sickening,
> Hid their strong limbs in smoke.
> For with noises ruinous loud;
> With hurtlings & clashings & groans
> The Immortal endur'd his chains,
> Tho' bound in a deadly sleep.
>
> (13:20-27, E77)

The illumination on plate 7 is even more eloquent than these words in its depiction of the horror that Los must face if he is to maintain his stance. Fright at the "formless . . . death" of Urizen moved him to rouse his fires, and now, overwhelmed by the shape of absence to which he has given form, Los also withdraws. While he remains in sequential time, Los awaits and retains the changes of Urizen. He therefore lives in a present which gathers the past and opens the possibility of a future. In what follows expectation and anticipation are lost. Los allows the fires of existence, those of the living present, to decay and instead of looking forward to a return he looks back:

> Los suffer'd his fires to decay
> Then he look'd back with anxious desire
> But the space undivided by existence
> Struck horror into his soul.
>
> (13:44-47, E77)

The telos of Los's world is now directed not to Urizen but to Urizen <u>as he has appeared to Los</u>. Urizen's being is now held in the relationship that Los has held with him. We therefore hear of Urizen "In his chains bound" (13:51, E77) and of "the death-image of Urizen" (15:2, E78). We also discover at this point that Urizen's "eternal life" has once more been lost (13:33-34, E77), for once again this is the loss of a relationship. Los is now in the ontological time of memory and this is realized as ontic time.[42] Ontic time is merely the other <u>as he/she has appeared to Los</u>: we have the letter but not the spirit, Urizen as he has appeared but not as he could be. Time is father time: the entire history of the seven Ages which seems to overwhelm the present.

Urizen's withdrawal resulted initially in a chaotic time. Los's withdrawal has a different result because he has related to Urizen. There is no danger of Los dissolving because he withdraws into the space which was opened by this relation. However, there is no hope of change (for as long as this new position is maintained). Los enters his own metaphor, he enters the world as it has appeared to him. In other words, he enters a world of loss and a time of memory. Urizen and Los now form a closed unit: "a cold solitude & dark void / The Eternal Prophet & Urizen clos'd" (13:39-40, E77). They are frozen / Into horrible forms of deformity" (13:42-43, E77). It is only now that we finally reach Newton's fixed and absolute time, ("a framed, six-thousand-year Biblical chronology"[43]), or the time which the archangel in Paradise Lost describes as "the race of Time."[44] The sequential time which we first observed in our description of the unfallen world has now severed its links with ontological time and the times of others. Time and Eternity have been turned inside out, and sequential time no longer appears as the form of ontological time; it has become an alien, external force which determines our being. Sequential time has become ontic time.

(7) The history of the time of memory

This movement from the time of awaiting and retaining to the time of memory (and from sequential to ontic time) can be read on a number of levels and in a variety of contexts. On the level of the individual it documents the movement from the possibility of speech to the opacity of sedimented language, and mythically it is of the order of the crisis which produced the multiple tongues of the post-Babel era. However, perhaps the most striking context in which to read this transformation is historical, the change in European civilization from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment.

Michel Foucault writes in The Order of Things that in the course of this transformation "language breaks off its old kinship with things and enters into that lonely sovereignty from which it will reappear, in its separated

state, only as literature."[45] Foucault describes Don Quixote as the "first modern work of literature." In this book "the signs of language no longer have any value apart from the slender fiction which they represent. The written word and things no longer resemble one another. And between them, Don Quixote wanders off on his own."[46] In The Book of Urizen, as we shall see, it is Enitharmon who emerges in the space between person and sign (or representation) and who outlines the direction of a world in which representation has cut itself loose from reality. From this point on the poem is concerned with establishing the lines of force and trajectory of a world in which there is no relationship between self and other, where signifier and signified, sign and reality, have parted company. Los's relationship with Urizen's "death-image" gives a life and momentum to the cold solitude and dark void: a history emerges which is tangential to the spring of eternal life and within which entities proliferate.

The first, most significant and definitely most suprising step in this history of the time of memory is the appearance of Enitharmon. It is worth quoting the account at some length:

> He saw Urizen deadly black,
> In his chains bound, & Pity began,
>
> 7. In anguish dividing & dividing
> For Pity divides the soul
> In pangs eternity on eternity
> Life in cataracts pourd down his cliffs
> The void shrunk the lymph into Nerves
> Wand'ring wide on the bosom of night
> And left a round globe of blood
> Trembling upon the Void
> Thus the Eternal Prophet was divided
> Before the death-image of Urizen . . .
>
> 8. The globe of life blood trembled
> Branching out into roots;
> Fib'rous, writhing upon the winds;
> Fibres of blood, milk and tears;
> In pangs, eternity on eternity.
> At length in tears & cries imbodied
> A female form trembling and pale
> Waves before his deathy face
>
> 9. All Eternity shudderd at sight
> Of the first female now separate

> Pale as a cloud of snow
> Waving before the face of Los. . . .
> (13:50-15:2, 18:1-12, E77-78)

While he is in the state of awaiting and retaining, Los holds the absence of Urizen in the hope of a return. Pity, however, is a radically different ontological state, for it is predicated on the presence (in some form or another) of the other. If there is no one present then quite clearly there is nothing that one can pity. In the narrative of The Book of Urizen it can therefore arise only at the point that Los turns away from Urizen. This movement obscures the fact of Urizen's absence and in this way gives an apparent object for Pity: Urizen's absence as it has appeared to Los. Pity is therefore quite naturally cotemporaneous with the ontological time of memory, but why does it divide the soul and why should it become Enitharmon?[47]

In the ontological time of awaiting and retaining, Los uses his perceptions of Urizen's absence as the platform from which he watches his absence. There is a continuous dialectic between attention and retention. The experience of Urizen's absence is contained within his constituted world, but this is the basis for a new time in which Los still keeps watch. The time of seven Ages is the platform for a projection of the self (in the modality of attention and hope) towards the other. The concrete perimeters of Los's world are therefore continually pierced by a movement towards relationship. However, in the above passage Los is no longer relating to an other. In the time of memory he remains in the world that has been assimilated to his perspectives. His world is that of a book in which the relationship between signs and things has been erased. He relates not to Urizen but to "the death-image of Urizen," and it is before this that he is divided (15:1-2, E78).

At this point in the poem reality is no longer the other, but the "slender fiction" that Los's representation of the other evokes. In psychological terms Los is directing the very ground of his being into the void. It is as if he were making a leap towards an illusory object. Blake describes this in an extremely literal way. Los is pouring life and eternity

into the abyss (13:54-55, E77). To understand this we must take quite seriously the notion that Eternity is relationship. In this situation what should span two beings lacks a real other to meet it. Relationship is directed towards an illusion, and life and eternity therefore pour down the "cliffs" of Los's isolated self. Plate 17 offers the reader an extraordinarily vivid image of this process. Los is literally being drained by this fiery, "violent," movement into the abyss. He seems to be on the verge of dissolution. His outline is obscured by long strands, or rivulets, of "blood" which connect him to a round globe in the deep. This globe is simultaneously weighing him down and drawing him into the abyss. Relationship has become a heavy, massy orb. The image is extremely evocative and yet it defies any simple description, so that in discussing it one inevitably becomes metaphorical. It is as if a bridge had lost one of its supports and we were witnessing the first moments of its collapse. In this short time the bridge would teeter between its function as a "weightless" connection between two points, and a third force whose descent attempts to draw its remaining support along with it. In this kind of fall the movement of relationship is turned in upon itself. What should join two points becomes a force in itself. In Blake's poem, life becomes a "round globe of blood" that draws Los into the abyss.[48]

Once separated from Los, Enitharmon is described as his "divided image" (19:16, E79). She is now an <u>imago</u> that is the elusive object of his desire (19:10-13, E79). As I have argued, the world of memory appears when Los accepts Urizen's "death-image" as the horizon of the fallen world. The division of Enitharmon from Los occurs as the expression or embodiment of Los's relationship (Pity) to this image (rather than to Urizen as a person). The appearance of this second "image," which lies between Urizen's "death image" and Los, is suggestive of a splitting of the self similar to that described by Lacan in "The Mirror Phase."[49] The world of Urizen seems to function as a kind of mirror which inverts and doubles the self. However, the "self-image" that appears in Los's relationship with Urizen's "death-image"

is the Emanation of Los. In this context she is described as an image of Los because she represents a particular comportment of Los towards others which expresses and embodies the time of memory. She is an imago because if Los is to remain within the time of memory he must allow his active self to be defined by this separated self (or more precisely, he must allow himself to be defined by this particular expression or Emanation of his self). In Eternity Enitharmon would be the changing shape of Los's relationship with others, but now she becomes an imagined and static self which determines Los's life. It is for this reason that Los allows his fires to decay and permits his forge to stand idle and still. In this ontological time history is "a female dream!" (E9:5, E63).

(8) Urizen, Los, Enitharmon and Orc

The appearance of Enitharmon marks a fundamental change in the vectors of force which make up the human world. Reality is no longer formed in the interaction between self and other; instead we have a solipsistic world, at the centre of which stands Los in the ontological time of memory. Within this world others appear to the self only as a "trace" - at the site of the self's withdrawal and deferral. Urizen is in a sense "behind" his representation. Enitharmon stands between Los and his active self, and the Eternals are on the other side of the "woof" of science (19:9, E78) which they have constructed in response to the birth of Enitharmon and Orc. The "woof" of science, Urizen's withdrawal as it has appeared to Los, and the divided image of Los are all traces of active beings, the faint outline of a universe that has been lost.

Perhaps the most striking feature of the world that appears in the time of memory is its instability. In order to remain within this world, Los must not allow his relationship to others to change. The difficulty with this imperative is that the world in which Los finds himself arises only within the ontological time of memory; it therefore has its own direction and momentum.

Perhaps Los's world would become permanent if he could remain apart from Enitharmon, but this would be a contradiction for it is his relationship with Enitharmon which sustains this world. Los's embrace and copulation with his "own divided image" is an act which, by inseminating Enitharmon, gives the time of memory a very concrete history. A relationship with a particular image of the self does not allow one to escape from change because this relationship has its own direction and force in time. In fact, the first fruit of Los's embrace of Enitharmon is Orc, the fiery energy of desire and of revolution.

Thel responds to the voice that she discovers on the far side of the Northern Bar by repressing it. She merely turns and flees. The mechanics, not the substance, of Los's response to the implications and fruit of his own world are very different:

> 4. They took Orc to the top of a mountain.
> O how Enitharmon wept!
> They chain'd his young limbs to the rock
> With the Chain of Jealousy
> Beneath Urizens deathful shadow. . . .
> (20:21-25, E80)

As has often been remarked, this passage seems to refer to the Oedipus and Prometheus myths, and the story of Abraham and Isaac. Blake seems to have conflated and transformed these myths so that the binding of Orc takes place "With the Chain of Jealousy." René Girard, in his book Deceit Desire and the Novel: Self and Other in Literary Structure, writes that jealousy depends upon a relationship between three terms. A relationship between two people must be mediated by a system of expectations or values. Jealousy occurs when another person intervenes in this triangular relationship and disrupts the system of expectations.[50] In the time of memory, Los's relationship with Enitharmon is mediated by his decision to remain within the world defined by his own representations. Orc is the subject of jealousy because he represents a threat to the equilibrium of this tripartite relationship.

The binding of Orc foreshadows an event which completes the actualization of the world of memory and the world of withdrawal. The voice

of Orc wakes the dead and Urizen arises to explore the world that has been formed by Los. The decision by Los to bind Orc is ipso facto a decision to give life to Urizen (or at least the Urizen that has been bound by Los). Los has allowed the fires of his forge to die down and permitted his own being to be defined by Enitharmon. In binding Orc he represses the very movement of this choice. In other words, the entire direction of Los's being is structured by the necessity to retain the "death image" of Urizen. What this means is quite literally that the dead wake; Urizen, as represented by Los, achieves a life and energy which now is the controlling force in Los's world. Karl Marx writes in The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts that in a world where money is the means of joining one person to another,

> money transforms the real essential powers of man and nature into what are merely abstract conceits and therefore imperfections - into tormenting chimeras - just as it transforms real imperfections and chimeras - essential powers which are really impotent, which exist only in the imagination of the individual - into real powers and faculties.[51]

Blake is describing a yet more radical alienation in which our representation of the other (in this case of Urizen) becomes a real power. The end result of the time of memory is therefore the establishment of Urizen's iron laws:

> 6. Cold he wander'd on high, over their cities
> In weeping & pain & woe!
> And where-ever he wanderd in sorrows
> Upon the aged heavens
> A cold shadow follow'd behind him
> Like a spiders web, moist, cold & dim . . .
>
> 7. Till a Web dark & cold, throughout all
> The tormented element stretch'd
> From the sorrows of Urizens soul
> And the Web is a Female in embrio
> None could break the Web, no wings of fire.
>
> 8. So twisted the cords, & so knotted
> The meshes: twisted like to the human brain
>
> 9. And all calld it, The Net of Religion. . . .
> (25:5-10,15-22, E82)

Enitharmon is the movement of the self towards an other that has been turned in upon itself. Urizen's web is a "Female in embrio" because Urizen has withdrawn. It is not a movement but a reflection of the self. It would in fact not exist if it had not been retained by Los. It therefore points to

relationship and the movement from self to an other only in the most convoluted sort of way. The web is an unborn movement of the self, in much the same way that one can say that a reflection is a self that has not been born.

With the reanimation of the dead the ontological time of memory is complete. We have a silent world centred around closed and fragmented selves. In The Songs of Innocence and of Experience Blake's discussion of social and political matters remained resolutely phenomenological: it described rather than analysed. In this work, however, the kind of world described in a poem such as the "Garden of Love" - in which a priest binds "with briars" the "joys & desires" of another (44:12, E26) - is placed within a narrative of the world and so related to a basic paradigm or structure. A figure such as the priest is both Los and Urizen. He represents the person who retains the other as it has appeared to him (in the form of church dogma and articles of faith) and at the same time he is the embodiment of those articles and laws. We can perhaps say that the tension between the representation and the self is made stable by a particular image of the self. Any change of the self or unqualified relationship with an other would change the dogmas which structure the priest's life. It is for this reason that the priest must repress people (or experiences) who threaten to disrupt this tripartite structure. However, I certainly do not want to tie a reading of The Book of Urizen to this kind of context. On a more fundamental level the reference of the poem is to the philosophy and experimental method of Bacon, Newton and Locke.

In Locke's philosophy this tripartite structure of self, an image of the self, and the other as it has appeared to the self, can quite clearly be seen. Locke argues that human understanding results from the association and combination in various ways of simple ideas. This construction of knowledge is from the first only possible in a time of memory, where simple ideas are recalled. In order to make such a conception of knowledge possible our appropriation of the other (our simple ideas) must not change. We can

therefore see that the relationship between the other-as-it-has-appeared-to-us and the self, must be regulated by a particular image of the self - in this case Locke's tabula rasa.

With Newton and Bacon this structure can be seen in their method of reasoning from observation or experiment. Newton writes that

> the main Business of natural Philosophy is to argue from Phaenomena without feigning Hypotheses, and to deduce Causes from Effects, till we come to the very first Cause, which certainly is not mechanical.[52]

It is interesting that Blake does not argue whether Newton's observations and the Causes that he deduces from phenomena are true or false. Newton's time, to take only one example, "which flows equably without relation to anything external," does appear in the poem. Description of this phenomenon and the attempt to understand its laws cannot be condemned out of hand. Blake's approach in The Book of Urizen undercuts all simple assertions about the truth or falsity of Newton's physics because the poem is showing us the being for whom these phenomena appear. Newton's ontic world appears only in the time of memory. Given this qualification and limitation of its scope it is a perfectly fair description of the world. Newton's universe is constituted at the point that he turns from the phenomena, the world as it has appeared to him, and procedes "to deduce Causes from Effects." Blake would argue that in order to sustain these appearances his self must be constituted by a particular self-image, and perhaps more importantly that the nature of the primary relationship with the world that underlies Newton's "truth" cannot be taken for granted and is in fact open to change.

Now, this kind of reading of Blake does not imply that Newton's truth should be abolished in favour of a mystical apprehension of Being. Rather, Blake is trying to show the ontology in which the ontic world emerges. This can be illustrated by widening the context in which the poem is interpreted, once again. Heidegger writes that traditionally the concept of truth has been taken to mean "the accordance (homoiōsis) of a statement (logos) with a matter (pragma)"[53]:

> Being true and truth here signify accord, and that in a double sense: on the one hand, the consonance [Einstimmigkeit] of a matter with what is supposed in advance regarding it and, on the other hand, the accordance of what is meant in the statement with the matter.[54]

Thus "Aquinas speaks of adaequatio intellectus et rei, the correspondence of intellect and thing, Kant of 'the agreement of knowledge with its object,' while some contemporary logical positivists define truth as 'empirical verifiability' - the conformity of assertion to matter of fact."[55] This is quite clearly the idea of truth that motivates the philosophies of Bacon, Newton and Locke. Heidegger does not say that this idea of truth is incorrect, but that it depends upon a particular relationship between self and other, in which the other appears in a certain way. In other words, Heidegger is attempting to show us the ontological foundation of a particular characterization of the accordance between intellect and thing.

It seems to me that in The Book of Urizen Blake is attempting a reduction which parallels this in many respects. The characterization of the nature of truth that is offered by Bacon, Newton, Locke and, of course, Urizen, may within certain limits be true. Urizen is able know the world in which he appears:

> 7. He form'd a line & a plummet
> To divide the Abyss beneath.
> He form'd a dividing rule:
>
> 8. He formed scales to weigh;
> He formed massy weights;
> He formed a brazen quadrant;
> He formed golden compasses
> And began to explore the Abyss. . . .
> (20:33-40, E80-81)

Urizen is able to offer us a description of the ontic world, but he does not recognize its ontological foundations: he does not perceive the particular relationship between self and other which has obscured the being of the other. Where Los's world is founded on memory, Urizen's is founded on forgetfulness.

In a sense this analogy is simply arguing that The Book of Urizen is myth. As I have noted, Eliade writes that myth projects "Man out of his own time - his individual, chronological, "historic" time - and projects him . . . into the Great Time."[56] Similarly, The Book of Urizen attempts to take us out

of the world as it has appeared to us and show us the relationship and the ontology in which these appearances come into being.

(9) Into the present

Our discussion has moved from a consideration of the nature of the prelapsarian world to a description of a world which is firmly localized in "our" space and time. In the poem itself this movement begins when the narrative develops a series of close correspondences with "temporal" histories. The appearance of Enitharmon as the divided image of Los echoes the creation of Eve from Adam's rib. The binding of Orc suggests the story of Abraham and Isaac, Prometheus and the Titans, and Oedipus. On plate 20, Urizen's "garden of fruits" seems to parallel the garden of Eden, and on plate 25 the giants "of seven feet stature" suggest the giants mentioned in Genesis chapter six:

> There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.

In the final plates of the poem we also hear of "The Net of Religion" (25:22, E82), we are told an inverted creation account which resembles that in Genesis chapter one and we are given a description of a world of suffering and death which resembles our own. This localization of the narrative can be seen in lines such as the fifth verse of chapter eight where the world in which Urizen finds himself is described in terms which are unashamedly drawn from the natural world:

> 5. For he saw that life liv'd upon death
> The Ox in the slaughter house moans
> The Dog at the wintry door
> And he wept, & he called it Pity
> And his tears flowed down on the winds. . . .
> (23:27-25:4, E81-82)

By way of contrast one can compare this with the passages in chapter one which describe Urizen's world:

> & the rolling of wheels
> As of swelling seas, sound in his clouds
> In his hills of stor'd snows, in his mountains
> Of hail & ice; voices of terror,
> Are heard, like thunders of autumn,
> When the cloud blazes over the harvests. . . .
> (3:30-35, E71)

The scale of the imagery, the context, the unlikely pairings and associations ("hills of stor'd snows") all move this imagery quite some distance from its origin in our world. When, as in the last line, the imagery is directly drawn from the natural world, it is linked with Urizen's world only through similitude. The world of the temporals is used as the background which brings into focus the world of the Eternals. There is a qualitative and quantitative difference which separates the two worlds. In the passage from chapter eight, on the other hand, there is a relation of equality between the two worlds. The process of localization is completed in the final plate when the world of Urizen and Los is given a specific spatio-temporal designation: it is now called Africa but it was then Egypt. On the same plate a character called Fuzon appears who, like Moses, attempts to lead his people out of captivity. It is as if the distance between self and other, temporals and Eternals, is gradually eroded until Fuzon is a thinly disguised name for Moses, and Moses a non de plume for Fuzon.

At the beginning of the poem the Eternals are the other to our world. Individual humans do not appear in the poem for the same reason that if one focusses on a foreground one cannot see its background. Temporals are an unannounced presence in the poem. Their existence, however, is assumed in the nature of the Eternals, in the descriptions of eternal life and in the idea of Eternity. At the end of the poem life contracts until there is an approximate congruence between Eternals (Los and Urizen) and temporals. Thus, in the Newtonian world, Urizen is no longer the other to our finite reason, the Truth to our truths, instead he approximates to our reason.

In a certain sense this reduction comes to a halt only when the poem ends. We, like the characters in the poem, have been returned to our solipsistic selves. The Book of Urizen has taken us from a world where self

and other, time and Eternity, exist in relationship, to a Gesellshaft, a society based on scattered, warring individuals. However, it is important at this stage of our discussion to distinguish two levels in this movement.

At the beginning of this chapter we argued that myth is a narrative re-enactment of the originary events of our world. Despite this definition our discussion has concentrated on the narrative of The Book of Urizen and has not attempted to describe the experience of reading which supports and even establishes this content. The end of the poem suggests a way of redressing the balance for at the point that the poem ends the narrative's time and the reader's time coincide. This should not be surprising for an enactment is possible only because myth claims to recount the life-structures of the story-teller's own life. It is for this reason that if the myth is valid it will return us to our world and in the same movement enable us to see its narrative inscribed in our experience.

The narrative of The Book of Urizen can be summarized as a movement from community to withdrawal, from withdrawal to the time of retaining and awaiting and then to a final time in which our perceptions of others are held in memory. The reader's experience of The Book of Urizen closely follows this path. In writing, an author effects a primary occultation of self and other. He/she is no longer in a situation of discourse in which he/she is present to his/her audience and they are present to him/her. The text separates the writer from the reader and vice versa. This is more than a chance parallel between our practice as readers and writers and the withdrawal that the poem describes. The title-page, for example, develops a number of close parallels between Urizen and Blake, the author of the poem and one of its chief protagonists. Erdman suggests that Urizen, like Blake, is both writing and illustrating his text. He notes that in the book underneath Urizen's feet there are a number of attempts to write the letter "W" and that the whole design is supported by the imprint line.[57] To read or to write is, it seems, to enter a world of withdrawal.

The reader responds to this withdrawal on the part of the author by an

awaiting and a retaining which is inseparable from a "making present." This is simply to describe the nature of all temporal reading processes which, in the words of W.B. Gallie, depend upon "the sense of . . . following to a conclusion."[58] This is not a skill which is comparable to following an argument. The reader must await (not predict) each event, make this event present to him/herself and then retain it. It is this last step which makes the following of a story possible. "The conclusion of any worthwhile story" (or in fact the series of "and so it turned out" which make up a story) "is not something that can be deduced or predicted, nor even something that can be seen at a later stage to have been theoretically or ideally predictable on the basis of what had been revealed at some earlier stage,"[59] and yet it must arise out of the events as they have been retained by the (attentive) reader. This moment in the reading process can be compared to Los's retention of the withdrawal of Urizen as a ground for his watching of Urizen's "dreamless night" (7:7, E74).

Now, the moment that one separates oneself from the experience of reading and reflects on it, something quite different occurs. The book no longer exists in a temporal dimension, it is no longer followed with a "peculiar directedness," instead it appears as a spatial configuration: a world as it has been made present to us. This is the moment in which a reading such as Symmons' is substantiated. I am not suggesting that Symmons' analysis is wrong. At the end of the poem we are indeed, like Los, in the time of memory: a "four-sided house of mirrors, finitely limited, but infinitely reflecting fallen man within it." However, this world and structure appears only in retrospect, it is "Mathematic Form" and eternal in the "Reasoning Memory."

The Book of Urizen develops the parallel between the plight of Los and Urizen, and our experience as readers of texts, at some length. On the title page an important association is established between the poem we are about to read and the books that Urizen is reading (with his toes) and writing. W.J.T. Mitchell asserts that "in some versions of this design it is clear that

Urizen is holding a quill pen in his right hand, and a burin, or similar engraving tool, in his left."[60] The way into the book seems to lead past Urizen, under the overhanging tree, through the tombstones (themselves shaped like an open book) and deep into the caverns of Urizen's world. The title of the poem repeats these associations. The Book of Urizen is a poem about Urizen, a book by Urizen, but it is also a book made out of the substance of Urizen. As the poem progresses, these parallels are extended. On plate 5 Urizen's book directly parallels the page itself. On plate 23 Urizen is hemmed in by the very shape of the page, or, to take another example, the world that Los creates, numbered "with links. hours, days & years" parallels the text, numbered with chapter and verse.

In noting this parallel between the Fall and our reading experience, and between the fallen world and a world of texts, we should be careful not to make a precipitous judgement about the value of "a world of texts." To enter the world of memory, and so engage in structural, scientific or analytic description of the text, can be the basis for a more conscious or articulated "following" of the text. To analyse the text as it has appeared to us does not mean that we cannot become readers again.

However, while the ultimate status of withdrawal and of the world of texts cannot be pre-determined, we can nevertheless say that the basic movement of the fallen world, of the poem's narrative, our experience of reading, and even of myth itself, is from a temporal experience to a spatial world that has appeared to us, from hearing the voice of an other to the appropriation of that voice in our world. In this sense our theoretical discussion remains still too particular. The fall that The Book of Urizen narrates is a fall which is inscribed in the constitution of the self, in our very beings. It can be seen in the movement from speech to sedimented language, from the writer's attempt to articulate a new experience or reality to the critic's contention that what he/she has discovered is a new rhetoric, or even from parole to langue. Thus Roland Barthes, writing on narrative, can argue that

> Aristotle himself, in his contrast between tragedy (defined by the unity of action) and historical narrative (defined by the plurality of actions and the unity of time), was already giving primacy to the logical over the chronological. As do all contemporary researchers (Lévi-Strauss, Greimas, Bremond, Todorov), all of whom (while differing on other points) could subscribe to Lévi Strauss's proposition that 'the order of chronological succession is absorbed in an atemporal matrix structure.' Analysis today tends to 'dechronologize' the narrative continuum and to 'relogicize' it, to make it dependent on what Mallarmé called with regard to the French language 'the primitive thunderbolts of logic'; or rather, more exactly (such at least is our wish), the task is to succeed in giving a structural description of the chronological illusion - it is for narrative logic to account for narrative time. To put it another way, one could say that temporality is only a structural category of narrative (of discourse), just as in language [langue] temporality only exists in the form of a system; from the point of view of narrative, what we call time does not exist, or at least only exists functionally, as an element of a semiotic system.[61]

In The Book of Urizen the "semiotic system" is the absence of the other as it has appeared to Los. This is Urizen's sempiternal world, a "Mathematic Form" which is "Eternal in the Reasoning Memory." There is no question of eliminating this sphere, for it is in an important sense the shape of the other and must be the basis of all our attempts to reach him/her. We can also say that even in Eternity there is no suggestion that "system" will be altogether abolished. In our description of prelapsarian time, chronological time appeared as the external form of the leap of eternal life. Blake sets himself in this poem a more difficult task than that facing the iconoclast. We must not merely abolish the world revealed in the time of memory, but discover a way of re-membering it: of uncovering the particular relationship with the other which constitutes it.

This seems to be an impossible task, for in The Book of Urizen the work of remembering is at the same time a process of dismembering, and this work itself belongs to a time of memory. The poem is therefore divided against itself. In a curious way the poem affirms Barthes' contention that myth is created by a transformation of the "quite contingent foundations of the utterance" into "Common Sense, Right Reason," and "the Norm"; however, it does this in a way which "inverts" Barthes' formulation. In The Book of Urizen we do not see the presentation as a "matter of course" of "a product of class division and its moral, cultural and aesthetic consequences," we see a

genuine exploratory dimension of myth in the process of being changed into "Common Sense." It is the withdrawal from temporality and relationship that constitutes Urizen's house of mirrors - the reader of The Book of Urizen certainly gains this insight - but in appropriating it the reader turns an insight into a formulation, an experience into the memory of this experience. We are closed within a labyrinth which includes its exits within itself. In the longer prophecies which follow this poem, Blake attempts to delineate the conditions under which the ontic world, the satanic realm of surfaces, can not only recover its ontological root, but transform this recovery into a movement towards the other. The central figure in Blake's formulation of this problematic is Los, for he stands, as I have argued, at the centre of the Fall and yet he represents the possibility of a return: it is Los's retention of Urizen's chaotic time which forms the basis of the ontic world, but at the same time Los is the only character who establishes a relationship with Urizen in the time of withdrawal. As a prologue to our discussion of the character of Los in the Lambeth prophecies we must briefly look at the path which by 1794 had taken Los to the centre of Blake's poetic and prophetic concerns.

Chapter Two

From Urizen and Orc to Los

Where is my golden palace!
Where my ivory bed
Where the joy of my morning hour
Where the sons of eternity. . . .
(BA5:3-6, E89)

(1) Urizen and Orc in the fallen world

The Marriage of Heaven and Hell and the French Revolution are animated by a confidence that the labyrinth of the fallen world can be opened. When this occurs "the whole creation wil be consumed, and appear infinite. and holy whereas it now appears finite & corrupt" (MHH14, E39). In both poems the agent of this regeneration is to be the corrosive force of desire and of energy. The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, for example, champions the devils rather than the angels, energy and desire rather than order and propriety. The cavern of the angelic guardians will be breached by "the son of fire in his eastern cloud" who,

> Spurning the clouds written with curses, stamps the stony law to dust, loosing the eternal horses from the dens of night, crying
>
> Empire is no more! and now the lion & wolf shall cease.
> (25, E45)

From this perspective "The road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom," "Prudence is a rich ugly old maid courted by Incapacity" and "He who desires but acts not, breeds pestilence" (5:3-5, E35). In place of the conventional wisdom that we have a body and a soul, that the energy which comes from the body is evil, and that God will "torment Man in Eternity for following his Energies," the devil affirms that "the following Contraries to these are True":

> 1 Man has no Body distinct from his Soul for that calld Body is a portion of Soul discernd by the five Senses. the chief inlets of Soul in this age
> 2. Energy is the only life and is from the Body and Reason is the

> bound or outward circumference of Energy.
> 3 Energy is Eternal Delight. . . .
> (4, E34)

This simple trope of reversal is considerably complicated by the speaker's identification of the second set of propositions as the contraries to the first. Truth does not lie in a world which is elaborated on a set of fixed propositions (we should look for the truth in the camp neither of the angels nor the devils), for

> Without Contraries is no progression. Attraction and Repulsion, Reason and Energy, Love and Hate, are necessary to Human existence.
> (3, E34)

It is the contention between contraries such as these which again and again fractures our constituted worlds and opens them to what lies outside of their reach.

This assault on the propositions which underpin angelic wisdom is complemented by a remarkable series of tropes in which terms with which we orient ourselves in the world, such as inside and outside, are reversed. The first Memorable Fancy, for example, generates the quite overwhelming feeling that the reader is outside this world looking in. The world of the senses is now "a flat sided steep" which "frowns over the present world," and this "steep," far from being simply constituted by the individual, is subject to forces which emanate from outside of the ambit the self:

> I saw a mighty Devil folded in black clouds, hovering on the sides of the rock, with corroding fires he wrote the following sentence now percieved by the minds of men, & read by them on earth.
>
> > How do you know but ev'ry Bird that cuts the airy way,
> > Is an immense world of delight, clos'd by your senses five?
> > (6-7, E35)

From the perspective of the angels an author depends upon a grammar and a lexicon of signs and their significations. It is important that he share these linguistic resources, to a greater or a lesser extent, with his readers. It is because reader and author exist within the same (or at least a similar) linguistic world that the reader can recover the particular reading of a text intended by an author. In the first Memorable Fancy, however, the

Devil writes from outside of the reader's world, and the effect of his writing is actually to cut or burn words into the reader's world. As in the Hallelujah-Chorus passage discussed in the introduction, it is no doubt possible that the sentence written in this way will be read within the frame of reference of the closeted self. It will perhaps be considered absurd or a paradox. However, the fact that this writing actually cuts a space for itself within the perceptual world of the reader suggests that it could exert a corrosive force on the self and, to some extent, open the reader's world to others. It is this kind of "writing" which the author of the Marriage attempts:

> the notion that man has a body distinct from his soul, is to be expunged; this I shall do, by printing in the infernal method, by corrosives, which in Hell are salutary and medicinal, melting apparent surfaces away, and displaying the infinite which was hid.
> If the doors of perception were cleansed every thing would appear to man as it is: infinite.
>
> (14, E39)

The confidence and enthusiasm of The Marriage of Heaven and Hell reflects Blake's own enthusiasm for the French Revolution. As Morton Paley writes:

> The Marriage of Heaven and Hell was begun within a year of the fall of the Bastille. Its tone is exuberant and confident, anticipatory of the new earth and new heaven which Blake, like Wordsworth and Coleridge, expected the French Revolution to create.[1]

This can be seen in the fourth Memorable Fancy where Blake and an Angel behold in "the infinite Abyss," "to the east, distant about three degrees . . . a fiery crest":

> it was the head of Leviathan. his forehead was divided into streaks of green & purple like those on a tygers forehead: soon we saw his mouth & red gills hang just above the raging foam tinging the black deep with beams of blood, advancing toward us with all the fury of a spiritual existence.
>
> (18-19, E41)

For an audience situated in London, this prodigy appears from the same direction as Paris.[2] It can therefore be seen as an emblem of the enormous energies unleashed by the French Revolution. Confronted with the furious "spiritual existence" of Leviathan, the Angel retreats and, when Blake is left alone, the monster vanishes:

> My friend the Angel climb'd up from his station into the mill; I remain'd alone, & then this appearance was no more, but I found myself sitting on a pleasant bank beside a river by moon light hearing a harper who sung to the harp. & his theme was, The man who never alters his opinion is like standing water, & breeds reptiles of the mind.
>
> (19, E41-2)

This apocalyptic confidence in desire and the revolutionary force of energy to provide an exit from the labyrinth of the self and of history is, however, to a large extent qualified by a second poem printed by Blake in 1793: the Visions of the Daughters of Albion.

David Erdman argues that the three figures around which Visions revolves - Oothoon, Bromion and Theotormon - are the "poetic counterparts of the parliamentary and editorial debates of 1789-1793 on a bill for abolition of the British slave trade." Oothoon is a "female slave," Bromion is a "slave driver . . . who owns her and has raped her to increase her market value" and Theotormon is "analogous to the wavering abolitionist who cannot bring himself openly to condemn slavery although he deplores the trade."[3] One can, of course, read the poem in a more general social context. Oothoon can, for example, simply be seen as a woman in a patriarchal society. These identifications, however, should not obscure the important point that Visions is concerned with the fate of desire and of vision in a Urizenic world. The Daughters of Albion are enslaved and therefore the world in which they dwell does not offer the freedom taken by the devils of The Marriage of Heaven and Hell. The Daughters' "sighs" are directed towards the freedom represented by America (1:2, E45), but freedom is, in this instance, itself intertwined with slavery.

The poem begins with Oothoon wandering "in woe, / Along the vales of Leutha seeking flowers to comfort her" (1:3-4, E45). As she wanders she encounters the Marygold, symbol of sexual experience,[4] and questions it as to its identity:

> Art thou a flower! art thou a nymph! I see thee now a flower;
> Now a nymph! I dare not pluck thee from thy dewy bed!
>
> (1:6-7, E46)

The ambiguity which attends Oothoon's perception of the Marygold is common to all perceptions. The perceptual world is constituted by the self (it is therefore merely an object or thing). This same world is, however, animated by others and our perceptions are the vehicle by which they impinge on us. On the one hand the flower of sexual experience can be seen as a simple object of desire; on the other hand any attempt to experience this flower brings us into contact with a world which cannot be controlled. It is possible that these others will introduce a corrosive force into the unified world of the self. Thel, for example, wishes to avoid this possibility. She does not want to pluck the flower of experience, but to embalm it and so make the lovely evanescences of the perceptual world permanent. Far from looking for an encounter with others, Thel hopes to circumvent the danger that they represent by withdrawing into the "secret air" (1:2, E3).

The nymph proposes a radically different path from that taken by Thel. She advises Oothoon to pluck the flower, for "Another flower shall spring, because the soul of sweet delight / Can never pass away" (1:9-10, E46). Encouraged by this advice, Oothoon plucks the flower and embraces it. She follows her desire and as a result draws the flower into her constituted world. As an <u>object</u> of desire which has not been embraced, the Marygold is always at one remove from the self. In embracing the Marygold, however, this distance is collapsed, and her embrace of the flower becomes the ground for an expansion:

> Then Oothoon pluck'd the flower saying, I pluck thee from thy bed
> Sweet flower. and put thee here to glow between my breasts
> And thus I turn my face to where my whole soul seeks.
>
> Over the waves she went in wing'd exulting swift delight;
> And over Theotormons reign, took her impetuous course.
> (1:11-15, E46)

Unfortunately, this expansion does not disclose a world in which "Empire is no more!"; instead, Oothoon discovers a cruel world from which she cannot escape. Her lover, Theotormon, does not respond, and she discovers that America belongs to Bromion. Oothoon's movement into relationship and freedom therefore reaches an abrupt end. Without Theotormon she is at the mercy of

Bromion. In the terms of his world she is a harlot who can be raped with impunity:

> Bromion rent her with his thunders. on his stormy bed
> Lay the faint maid, and soon her woes appalld his thunders hoarse
>
> Bromion spoke. behold this harlot here on Bromions bed,
> And let the jealous dolphins sport around the lovely maid;
> Thy soft American plains are mine, and mine thy north & south:
> Stampt with my signet are the swarthy children of the sun:
> They are obedient, they resist not, they obey the scourge:
> Their daughters worship terrors and obey the violent. . . .
> (1:16-23, E46)

In Bromion and Theotormon we find particular instances of the more global withdrawals described in the frontispiece to Europe or The Book of Urizen. They live the withdrawal propounded by Bacon, Newton and Locke. Rather than entering the world of another, Bromion reads the world in terms of his own philosophy and morality. It is as if his ideas are a grid which he traces over the body of the world. Oothoon's expansion, for example, can be seen by Bromion only as inescapable proof that she is a harlot. Bromion is therefore subject to a curious blindness and deafness. He is, for example, capable of proposing the possible existence of unknown worlds, but such worlds are discovered only in the microscope:

> Thou knowest that the ancient trees seen by thine eyes have fruit;
> But knowest thou that trees and fruits flourish upon the earth
> To gratify senses unknown? trees beasts and birds unknown:
> Unknown, not unpercievd, spread in the infinite microscope,
> In places yet unvisited by the voyager. and in worlds
> Over another kind of seas, and in atmospheres unknown. . . .
> (4:13-18, E48)

The microscope does not allow us to enter the world of others. It gives us no means of understanding "With what sense . . . the chicken shuns the ravenous hawk?" or "the tame pigeon measure[s] out the expanse?" (3:2-3, E47); instead, it magnifies the perceptual world of the self and extends its purview. Bromion therefore believes that these "unknown" worlds are subject to the same laws and moralities as his own. The passage quoted above continues:

> Ah! are there other wars, beside the wars of sword and fire!
> And are there other sorrows, beside the sorrows of poverty!
> And are there other joys, beside the joys of riches and ease?

> And is there not one law for both the lion and the ox?
> And is there not eternal fire, and eternal chains?
> To bind the phantoms of existence from eternal life?
> (4:19-24, E48)

Theotormon is the subject of an equally rigorous withdrawal from others. He is crippled by modesty, doubt and jealousy and is therefore unable to move or respond. Rather than looking at unknown worlds through the microscope, or attempting to enter the world of another, Theotormon implores others to enter these worlds and then come back to inform him of their nature:

> Tell me what is the night or day to one o'erflowd with woe?
> Tell me what is a thought? & of what substance is it made?
> Tell me what is a joy? & in what gardens do joys grow?
> (3:22-24, E47)

Rather than entering the world of the other, Theotormon wants the other to be translated into his own world and tongue.

Theotormon's self-enclosure forces Oothoon to approach him indirectly. The most striking and the most appalling of her strategies can be seen on plate 2. Closed within his constituted world, Theotormon (like Thel or Urizen) has access only to his own self-image. The only way in which to reach him is therefore to become a mirror which reflects his image back to him. The mirror of course does not simply reflect the self, it inverts the self. Oothoon hopes that in inverting Theotormon's stance of withdrawal, she will be able to confront him with an emblem of the world of relationship which lies outside of his reach:

> I call with holy voice! kings of the sounding air,
> Rend away this defiled bosom that I may reflect.
> The image of Theotormon on my pure transparent breast.
>
> The Eagles at her call descend & rend their bleeding prey;
> Theotormon severely smiles. her soul reflects the smile;
> As the clear spring mudded with feet of beasts grows pure & smiles.
> (2:14-19, E46)

The withdrawal of both Bromion and Theotormon represents a crisis for Oothoon, and, in more general terms, for desire itself. In order to leave the world of the self, Oothoon must enter into relationship with an other; but in this instance the other does not respond. In Visions it is still true, as Morton Paley writes, that "Oothoon is an exemplar of liberation."[5] As a

result of her actions Oothoon enters and is able to speak of a living world that is made up of many realities. Moreover, she speaks of these worlds with a passion that at times seems on the verge of shattering the world which surrounds her, and which almost seems capable of opening in the place of Bromion's "one law for both the lion and the ox" a world of multiple realities. Nevertheless, in Visions this wider expansion does not occur; Oothoon is unable to induce Theotormon to act, and desire is unable to announce that "now the lion & wolf shall cease."

> Instead of morn arises a bright shadow, like an eye
> In the eastern cloud: instead of night a sickly charnel house. . . .
> (2:35-6, E47)

These qualifications to the power of desire are multiplied many times over in the poems that Blake was to write after Visions.

In the Lambeth prophecies "the son of fire in his eastern cloud" is named Orc. Northrop Frye describes this figure as "the power of the human desire to achieve a better world which produces revolution and foreshadows the apocalypse."[6] In America, the first of the Lambeth prophecies, it is still possible to see Orc as a power for good. The poem ends with the "ancient Guardians" attempting in vain "to shut the five gates of their law-built heaven" (16:17,19, E57-58). They are unable "to stem the fires of Orc" and as a result the closed world of the guardians (individual and collective) is consumed:

> But the five gates were consum'd, & their bolts and hinges melted
> And the fierce flames burnt round the heavens, & round the abodes
> of men. . . .
> (16:22-3, E58)

It is for this reason that Bloom calls the poem "Blake's fiercest tribute to our Promethean potential,"[7] Damon writes that the revolution described by Blake results in the uncovering of Eternity,[8] and Erdman argues that the action in the poem is a cycle which moves from restraint to freedom to restraint to freedom.[9]

A number of critics have pointed out, however, that the portrait of Orc in this poem and the revolution that he inaugurates are not unqualified.

Morton Paley writes, for example, that "In America . . . a double perspective is maintained, suggesting the ambiguity of Orc by his two forms: human and serpent: Energy hovers between redemptive potentiality and the will-to-power."[10] Hinkel notes that "Although the tone of the poem is predominantly hopeful, Blake predicts only tentatively England's and America's transformation:"[11]

> Even though the last two lines of the poem say that the closed gates have been consumed, the poem ends suddenly, without a prediction that the fallen senses will perceive anything new.[12]

Robert E. Simmons even argues that "America is the story of a fall, not the beginnings of redemption."[13]

The equivocation as to the nature of Orc becomes more pronounced as the Lambeth prophecies proceed. Orc now appears as a force that is contained within the cycle of fallen history. He is, moreover, closely connected with his opposite, Urizen. Orc is an exit which is contained within the enclosure of the fallen world. Northrop Frye writes:

> 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. The same is true of the dragon: the dragon must be the hero's predecessor and the hero in his turn must become a dragon. But if the dragon is death, then when the hero dies he is swallowed by or otherwise absorbed into the dragon. . . . But if the dragon is itself the old Orc, then surely is not Orc simply a dragon who has the power to shed his skin from time to time? This is a very abrupt change from our young and heroic dragon-killer, but nevertheless Blake continually associates Orc with the serpent, which is an easy modulation of the dragon symbol.[14]

The youthful rebel is now caught up in what Northrop Frye has called the Orc cycle,[15] and America can be described simply as that portion of the Orc cycle which expresses a "revolutionary, millennial optimism."[16] Orc must now himself be freed from the chain of jealousy.

In the poems which follow on from America the struggle between Orc and Urizen is itself displaced from the centre of Blake's myth and seen as an epiphenomenon which depends upon the world that is established by Los. In The Four Zoas, for example, both Urizen and Orc are seen as children of Los

and Enitharmon, and, as I have argued in the previous chapter, in The Book of Urizen the antagonism between Urizen and Orc is held and given form by Los. The beginnings of this displacement can be seen as early as Europe where Orc is the first-born child of Enitharmon (4:11, E62). The "Eighteen hundred years" of fallen history which follow the birth of "the secret child" (3:2, E61) are no longer seen solely in terms of a struggle between Urizen and Orc; instead, this struggle is seen in terms of the more encompassing relationship between Los and Enitharmon.

Frye writes that "If we want a single word for the view of life as an Orc cycle, we may call it a vision of 'Becoming,' the totality of change within an immutable framework of time and space."[17] In other words, the struggle between Urizen and Orc is itself contained within a rigid, unchanging structure. The attempt by Orc to open the closed world of Urizen itself exists within a more fundamental enclosure. The cyclical threat to Urizen's laws which is posed by Orc does not and cannot change the "dull round" of history because it is itself an integral part of that world. It is Los, the prophet who gives shape to the fallen world, who has formed the prison of fallen time and space.

In Europe this new dimension to Blake's critique of history is described in terms of male and female powers. Los is the male, active power who gives shape and form to fallen history and Enitharmon is the female, passive power who gives body and substance to the form created by Los. The dynamic between these beings has, however, been interrupted, for Los is for the major part of this poem quite inactive, and the female power is, for the eighteen hundred years separating the birth of Christ from Blake's own day, asleep. History is a "female dream" (9:5, E63), a static form which encloses humanity within its bounds. Europe describes a time in which the female powers have dominion, for it is the female powers and not the male powers, the shape of the world and not the Imagination of humanity, that determines the possible. This time is therefore described as "the night of Enitharmons joy!" (5:1, E62) and as a time of "womans triumph" (12:25, E64). From within her sleep Enitharmon

laughs to see "Every house a den, every man bound" (12:25-6, E64).

At the end of Europe Enitharmon awakes and calls to Orc to "Arise . . . and give our mountains joy of thy red light" (14:31, E66). Her call is unheeded because Orc has become "terrible Orc" (14:37, E66) and "the light of his fury" has already appeared in the "vineyards of red France" (15:2, E66). Orc has turned his energy against the very form of time and space itself and Enitharmon herself now feels his "corroding fires."

In The Song of Los the role of Los in the fallen world is made even more explicit. The Song is divided into two parts. The first, entitled "Africa," takes the reader from the beginning of time to the beginning of the American Revolution. This connection with the earlier poem is underlined by the inclusion of the first line of America as the last line of "Africa." "Asia," the second half of The Song of Los, begins with the response of the kings of Asia to the "howl" which rises "up from Europe," and concludes with apocalypse. It therefore takes us from the close of Europe to the end of time. As Erdman suggests in "The Symmetries of the Song of Los," Europe and America can therefore be interpolated into the middle of this short work.[18] The Song of Los therefore suggests that fallen time is cyclical rather than linear or progressive. If we interpolate America and Europe into this poem, it describes a circle which takes us back to our starting point. We move from Africa in the south to America in the west, to Europe in the north and finally to Asia in the east. What is striking about this poem is that the entire extent of fallen history, from Eden to apocalypse, is here described as The Song of Los. Los is at this point in Blake's oeuvre at the very centre of his myth.

In The Song of Los Urizen gives his "Laws to the Nations / By the hands of the children of Los" (3:8-9, E67):

> 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 Philosopy of Five Senses was complete. . . .
> (4:13-17, E68)

It is, therefore, pre-eminently against the work of Los and Enitharmon that

Orc rebels. At the end of The Song of Los it is the (human) form given by Los and Enitharmon to the "formless unmeasurable death" (7:9, E74) of Urizen's withdrawal that is destroyed:

> 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.
>
> The SONG of LOS is Ended.
> Urizen Wept.
> (7:35-42, E69-70)

One can find a historical analogue for the metamorphosis of Orc in the Lambeth prophecies in the course taken by the French Revolution. As early as 1794 (the year in which Europe and The Book of Urizen were printed) it would have been clear that the revolutionary government in France was using methods which were perilously similar to those used by the king in order to suppress opposition. To take only one example, in July 1789 Louis XVI called in seventeen regiments of Swiss and German mercenaries in order to attempt to intimidate the Constituent Assembly. From December 1793 to July 1794 a revolutionary government was set up which used terror as their instrument of control. In the former case the king used terror in order to bring into line those who could not be assimilated to his perspectives. In the latter case Robespierre and others used the same instrument to rid France of any vestige of the ancien regime that could not be assimilated to their perspective. King Louis XVI and Robespierre, Urizen and Orc are working within a world where tongue is separated from tongue, and self from other. In a universe such as this change can be accomplished only by pitting one individual against another, one cog against a second; but if this is so then to defeat the king is ipso facto to become king. At the risk of grossly oversimplifying what was a complex historical process, we can say that within the constraints of the fallen world the defeat of Louis XVI inevitably leads to the imperial ambitions of Napoleon. As we have argued, The Book of Urizen details the

events and mechanisms that underpin this symmetrical struggle between the forces of reaction and those of revolution. It is this kind of struggle which is the subject of The Book of Ahania.

In The Book of Ahania Urizen's antagonist has changed from Orc to a son of Urizen, Fuzon. In this poem Fuzon shows little sign of being able to escape from Urizen's world. As Northrop Frye writes:

> The use of a son of Urizen in place of Orc in a poem engraved in 1795 indicates that Blake is becoming increasingly aware that by "Orc" he means something inseparably attached to Urizen.[19]

Fuzon at first appears to triumph over Urizen and he announces that he is "God . . . eldest of things!" (3:38, E86). The difficulty is that in the moment of victory the son becomes the father, the rebel becomes the king. The appearance of a new king re-establishes the lines of force of his predecessor's kingdom. It is for this reason that the moment of victory is also the moment in which Urizen is able to destroy Fuzon and so himself return as king (3:39-44, E86). Urizen signals his victory over Fuzon by nailing "Fuzon's corse" on "the accursed Tree of MYSTERY" (4:6,8, E87). Fuzon cannot succeed in his opposition to Urizen because Urizen is only the apparent centre of the fallen world. It real centre is revealed in the brief creation story which is narrated on the fourth plate.

The fourth chapter takes the reader back in time to the withdrawal of Urizen. As in The Book of Urizen, withdrawal involves the disorganization (4:19, E87) and dissolution of life. Urizen now exists in the "slumbers of abstraction / In the infinite ages of Eternity" (4:11-12, E87), but rather than being a peaceful sleep this is a nightmare in which

> The clouds of disease hover'd wide
> Around the Immortal in torment
> Perching around the hurtling bones
> Disease on disease, shape on shape,
> Winged screaming in blood & torment.
> (4:22-26, E87)

As in The Book of Urizen Los saves Urizen from annihilation by giving him

form, but this activity is highly ambiguous. By giving him a shape, Los gives substance to the world of withdrawal. It is therefore Los who gives form to the world of bondage against which Fuzon (like Orc) pits his strength:

> 5: The Eternal Prophet beat on his anvils
> Enrag'd in the desolate darkness
> He forg'd nets of iron around
> And Los threw them around the bones
>
> 6: The shapes screaming flutter'd vain
> Some combin'd into muscles & glands
> Some organs for craving and lust
> Most remain'd on the tormented void:
> Urizens army of horrors.
> (4:27-35, E87-88)

It is Los's "nets of iron" that give shape to Urizen's "hurtling bones" (4:24, E87) and that precipitate his "organs for craving and lust" and even his "army of horrors." It is Los who underlies the world against which Fuzon struggles. We can therefore say that it is Los's creation of Urizen's fallen body that forms the structural centre of The Book of Ahania. From this creation stems the struggle between Urizen and Fuzon, which in turn results in the division of Urizen and Ahania. The account of Los's "creative" work structurally and thematically separates Urizen (who is the subject of the first three chapters of the poem) and Ahania (whose lament comprises the poem's concluding chapter). When Ahania asks:

> how can delight,
> Renew in these chains of darkness
> Where bones of beasts are strown
> On the bleak and snowy mountains
> Where bones from the birth are buried
> Before they see the light . . .
> (5:42-47, E90),

her question has a double focus. On the one hand she is addressing Urizen and asking him how "delight" can "Renew" when his iron laws attempt to bind the world to his will. However, on the other hand, Ahania is directing her question to Los. How can the "chains of darkness" in which Los has bound Urizen and which form the ground for Urizen's rule ever be cast off? The third poem in Blake's bible of hell, The Book of Los, completes the change of focus begun with Europe and The Book of Urizen.

(2) The Book of Los

In the account of the Fall that was offered by the Eternals in The Book of Urizen the reader is simply told that

> Los round the dark globe of Urizen,
> Kept watch for Eternals to confine,
> The obscure separation alone.
> (5:38-40, E73)

In The Book of Los, however, we learn that he is "bound in a chain" and "Compell'd" to watch Urizen (3:31-32, E91). We need not suspect the Eternals of duplicity, for the position that they have taken up with regard to Los means that they are necessarily blind to his vicissitudes. The Eternals elect Los as their gaoler because their withdrawal would be short-circuited if they were to admit the experience of loss into their midst, or if the Eternal Prophet were to confront them with the reality of their withdrawal. From the Eternals' point of view this involves a simple delegation of responsibility. It is Los, not the Eternals as a whole, who will henceforth be Urizen's gaoler. In this way Urizen is contained and at the same time the possibility of a relationship with Urizen in his absence (in the modality of loss) is denied. On the one hand this refusal to admit Los into their midst is, of course, experienced by Los as a lack of freedom. On the other hand, until the Eternals return to relationship with Urizen and relieve Los of his duties as gaoler, the plight of Los must remain unknown.

In the earlier poem we see Los largely from the outside, but now we are given a vivid description of the emotions precipitated in him by Urizen's withdrawal and by the role in which he has been cast by the Eternals. Los experiences both wrath & desire: anger at the world of withdrawal that has opened around him and desire for the Golden Age that has been lost (3:34-42, E91). In the world in which Los now finds himself these emotions lack an other to whom they can be directed, and so they separate from Los and are "bound up / Into fiery spheres" (4:1-2, E91).

In the previous chapter we have seen how Urizen attempts to enclose life

(the fires of Orc) within a fixed and solid form. The withdrawal of the Eternals involves a similar enclosure of the flames of their eternal life. Los is excluded by both Urizen and the Eternals. He therefore finds himself in the void which separates the self-enclosed world of Urizen from the similarly self-enclosed world of the Eternals. In The Song of Los this space is also described as a void between his now separated emotions:

> 8: Wide apart stood the fires: Los remain'd
> In the void between fire and fire[.]
> In trembling and horror they beheld him
> They stood wide apart, driv'n by his hands
> And his feet which the nether abyss
> Stamp'd in fury and hot indignation
>
> 9: But no light from the fires all was
> Darkness round Los: heat was not; for bound up
> Into fiery spheres from his fury
> The gigantic flames trembled and hid. . . .
> (3:43-4:3, E91)

Los is a parody of Milton's Satan who is soon to become a parody of the Creator in Genesis 1.

The gap which has now opened in Eternity can be described as a void because within this space there is no relationship. It can at the same time be described as a "solid without fluctuation" because while Los remains within this space he is enclosed by the opaque and impervious outlines of his "separated fires" (and by the space opened by the withdrawal of Urizen and the Eternals):

> 10: Coldness, darkness, obstruction, a Solid
> Without fluctuation, hard as adamant
> Black as marble of Egypt; impenetrable
> Bound in the fierce raging Immortal.
> And the separated fires froze in
> A vast solid without fluctuation,
> Bound in his expanding clear senses. . . .
> (4:4-10, E91)

Los is a crustacean whose outer shell is defined by the shape that Urizen, the Eternals and his "separated fires" have adopted.

Within the void opened up by withdrawal there are really only two possibilities that are open to Los. He can remain bound within the "solid without fluctuation," or he can attempt to burst the prison in which he is confined. The impossibility of remaining within such a restricting form makes

the second course of action inevitable:

> 1: The Immortal stood frozen amidst
> The vast rock of eternity; times
> And times; a night of vast durance:
> Impatient, stifled, stiffend, hardned.
>
> 2: Till impatience no longer could bear
> The hard bondage, rent: rent, the vast solid
> With a crash from immense to immense. . . .
> (4:11-17, E92)

The self-enclosed worlds that the Eternals and Urizen attempt to constitute are, of course, unstable. Rather than forming the shape of Los, they are fragmented and themselves reduced to loss:

> 3: Crack'd across into numberless fragments
> The Prophetic wrath, strug'ling for vent
> Hurls apart, stamping furious to dust
> And crumbling with bursting sobs; heaves
> The black marble on high into fragments
>
> 4: Hurl'd apart on all sides, as a falling
> Rock: the innumerable fragments away
> Fell asunder; and horrible vacuum
> Beneath him & on all sides round.
> (4:18-26, E92)

This simple destruction of the world which encloses him cannot open a world of relationship; instead, Los now falls in the void which has been opened by withdrawal:

> 5: Falling, falling! Los fell & fell
> Sunk precipitant heavy down down
> 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.
> (4:27-36, E92)

Urizen actively follows the path of withdrawal, but Los enters the space of withdrawal by default. The person who is left alone must of necessity himself become enclosed. In the course of this falling Los is born as a fallen identity and "the Human" is organized "Into finite inflexible organs" (4:44-45, E92). By contrast to the "solid" which is "hard as adamant," Los is enclosed within a human and living body. In the account of the Fall given in The Book of Urizen this formation of Los is omitted for the simple reason

that a history of this kind cannot be the subject of the Eternals' narration because they have withdrawn from Los. Nevertheless, a formation of this kind can be inferred from the binding of Urizen. In order to perform this task Los must himself have become a fallen individual.

In The Book of Los it is only when Los rises "on the floods" (5:3, E93) that he is able to see the "Back bone of Urizen appear / Hurtling upon the wind / Like a serpent!" (5:14-16, E93). It is this separate individual that now proceeds to bind Urizen:

> 2: Upfolding his Fibres together
> To a Form of impregnable strength
> Los astonish'd and terrified, built
> Furnaces; he formed an Anvil
> A Hammer of adamant then began
> The binding of Urizen day and night. . . .
> (5:18-23, E94)

In The Book of Urizen we noted a progression from the time of awaiting and retaining to the time of memory, which closed Los within his constituted world. In The Book of Los the active involvement of Los in the fabrication of this world is emphasized.

Los takes the fires which result from the binding of Urizen - the energy of Orc which is given form to the precise extent that Urizen is given solid form - and frames them into "An immense Orb of fire" (5:34, E94). This form is then divorced from the conditions under which it is manufactured and from the world to which it is a response. After spending "Nine ages" (5:41, E94) within Los's furnaces, it is cast by Los "down into the Deeps" (5:43, E94) where it stands "self-balanc'd" (5:45, E94). It is now no more than a "glowing illusion" (5:47, E94) which denies the reality out of which it is forged. Los's world is completed when he binds "the vast Spine of Urizen" (5:46, E94) to this form. We have now a world where night and day, frost and fire, reason and energy, reaction and revolution, spring and winter face each other in perpetual and eternal conflict. In this role Urizen and Orc merely give shape to a world of loss. The possibility of change is closed within an orb, which negatively defines its Urizenic opposite. From within the fallen world the conflict between Orc and Urizen seems primary and elemental because

the ground of this opposition in Los (loss) has been obscured.

In the prelapsarian world the prophet would no doubt fabricate a form such as this only in order to show to his audience the monstrous forms of life that arise in a time of loss. It would be an instrument for mental warfare, an intellectual weapon for calling Urizen and the Eternals to a world of plenitude. Instead, in The Book of Los what should open the world of the self is now the horizon of that world. As we have seen in The Book of Urizen, the fabrication of a world of this kind gives power to Urizen. In its rendition of inexorable and horrible enclosure the final image is shocking:

> 9: Till his Brain in a rock, & his Heart
> In a fleshy slough formed four rivers
> Obscuring the immense Orb of fire
> Flowing down into night: till a Form
> Was completed, a Human Illusion
> In darkness and deep clouds involvd.
> (5:52-57, E94)

Los's work at his forge has ended in the fabrication of a closed world, a "Human Illusion" which closes self from other. This Illusion can give no light, for it illuminates only the world of the self. It exists in a world where the deep - meaning what is other and what is unknown - has fled, leaving "an unform'd / Dark vacuity" (5:49-50, E94). The four rivers formed by Urizen's Heart and Brain suggest the four rivers of Eden. The poem therefore ends by placing the reader at the very beginning of the fallen world.[20] The fallen world is a creation of Los.

(3) Los and the world-forming imagination

In the Lambeth prophecies Los is a striking and complex figure.[21] He is described as "the Eternal Prophet" (SL3:1, E67), a Urizenic figure whose children give "Laws & Religions to the sons of Har" (SL4:14, E68), a gaoler who attempts to keep knowledge of Urizen's withdrawal apart from the Eternals (BU5:38-40, E73), a watchman who attempts to remain in relationship with Urizen and awaits his return (BU10:9-10, E75),[22] a blacksmith who gives form to the chaotic body of Urizen-in-withdrawal (BU10:8-9,15-18,28-30, E76), a

demiurge who gives form to the fallen world and creates time and space (BU10:1-13:19,E74-6),[23] the father of Orc (BU19:10-20:7, E79) and the ground for the fallen world itself. There is also, particularly in The Book of Urizen, the suggestion that Los is a printer and an engraver (10:15-30, E75).[24] The name of Los is similarly polyphonous. It suggests loss and Logos,[25] and it is an anagram for Sol.[26] He is, of course, a figure for the poet, and many critics see Los as a character who can be closely identified with Blake himself.[27] W.J.T. Mitchell notes that

> Los is also a symbol of the role demanded of the audience, a dual role of reader and viewer which requires us to mediate the often conflicting, problematic relationships of text and design, and to endure the paradoxes of a world in which "Fear & Hope are - Vision."[28]

These identifications link Los with a wide variety of mythic and literary figures. Northrop Frye has pointed out that as blacksmith and goldsmith Los is similar to the smith who is associated by Isaiah with the building of a New Jerusalem.[29] Los can also be associated with Vulcan and Hephaistos. The latter is "one of the binders of Prometheus in Aeschylus, who escapes Prometheus' fate because his work in fire has been done for immortal gods rather than mortal men,"[30] while the former is the blacksmith of the gods. Paley quotes Paracelsus who writes that

> Vulcan is the fabricator and architect of all things, nor is his habitation in heaven only . . . but equally in all the other elements. . . . The artist working in metals and other minerals transforms them into other colours, and in so doing his operation is like that of the heaven itself. For as the artist excocts by means of Vulcan, or the igneous element, so heaven performs the work of coction through the sun. The sun, therefore, is the Vulcan of heaven accomplishing coction in the earth.[31]

Los's role as blacksmith is also, as Erdman notes,

> an apt heroic symbol of his own position among the skilled trades, for an engraver is, in literal fact, a worker in metal. . . . There is also in the symbol an emotional identification with the actual man of energy rather than with the more isolated professional worker, and a vision of the working class as the class capable of building the future.[32]

A similar breadth of association is provoked by the identification of Los as demiurge and watchman. The word Sol, or Sun, is of course, also the alchemical symbol of the prima materia, and a word which is often associated

with Christ.[33]

Many of these associations are far from unambiguous. As Damrosch notes, "the text to which Frye points [Isa.54:16] is suggestive of a frightening display of energy" and in "Ezekiel too this symbol has connotations of purgation and anger." The smith of Ezekiel is "no fabulous artificer, but an agent of divine retribution."[34] Damrosch goes on to observe that in Milton the "sons of Cain are smiths . . . in contrast with the pastoral sons of Seth" and "Mammon, the architect of Hell, is expressly related to the Mulciber or Vulcan whom Jove cast down from heaven."[35] The demiurge in Gnostic philosophy is a figure who is both good and evil, and although Sol is the prima materia, in Los we are dealing with the reverse, or mirror image, of this substance. These various associations and identifications are, however, not incommensurate, but can be shown to be a function of the conflicting tendencies and warring divisions of the fallen prophet. In order to trace a path through these associations and so gain a sense of the various faces of Los in the Lambeth prophecies, we will begin with his role as "Eternal Prophet."

Blake writes in an annotation to Watson's An Apology for the Bible that

> Prophets in the modern sense of the word have never existed Jonah was no prophet in the modern sense for his prophecy of Nineveh failed 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.
>
> (E617)

In Eternity, where life is grounded in relationship, the prophet performs a crucial role. The prophet gives form and expression to the results of a particular action or style of life. In this way he confronts an individual or a nation with the reality of their actions and so makes a world of relationship possible. The Bard in Milton, for example, exhorts his readers to "Mark well" his words for "they are of your eternal salvation" (2:25, E96), and the prophetic Song which follows attempts to reveal the reality which underlies, and the future which is projected by, the fallen world. Like the Bard of the "Introduction" to Experience (30, E18) and the prophetic

voice we hear in "The Voice of the Ancient Bard" (54, E31-32), the prophetic Bard of Milton also tells us what future we can expect if we alter the foundations of our life in a certain way. This same prophetic function can be seen in The Song of Los. The song," which Los sang "to four harps at the tables of Eternity" when "Urizen faded!" and "Ariston shudderd!" (3:1,2,4, E67), is at least initially an attempt to point out to the Eternals, and to Urizen in particular, the result of their actions. It is a prophetic song which attempts to induce the Eternals to leave the closed world of the self and to enter a world of relationship. The "song" is therefore not a prediction, but an attempt to rouse "the faculties to act" (E702).

Prophetic art is perhaps the most fundamental precondition for a universe where life is founded on relationship, for the forms fabricated by the prophet give expression to our life and so induce us to change and expand. We can therefore say that the world forged by the prophet in his furnaces is the ground for the leap of eternal life. For this reason the unfallen Los can indeed be called Sol, for the ground which he forges is the site of a radiant movement and expansion. In The Four Zoas these characteristics of the unfallen Los are given expression in the figure of Urthona, or "earth-owner." As the name suggests, Urthona is the owner of the earth: he fabricates the very ground of eternal life. This ground is, however, not the inert material which forms the ground of the fallen world. Urthona is engaged in the manufacture of intellectual tools: the "spades & coulters" (E312) of peace and "the golden armour of science / For intellectual War" (E407). In Eternity the prophetic elaboration of the reality which underlies or is portended by the actions of the Eternals is a tool which is used to make those actions fruitful (the "spades & coulters" of peace) or to provide a form which will enable the Eternals to engage in "intellectual War" (the "armour of science").

Our discussion of the work of the unfallen prophet should not, of course, distinguish too closely between the prophet and his prophetic productions. Frye writes that

> As Blake goes on he becomes more and more impressed by the contrast between a man's imagination, his real life as expressed in the total form of his creative acts, and his ordinary existence. . . .[36]

In the fallen world this separation is accompanied by the division that exists between the poet and his Spectre. However, in Eternity Los, Enitharmon and the Spectre, form a single identity. The prophet is embodied in his work. The Song of Los is therefore both a song which is sung by Los, and a song which is made up of the very fibre of Los. We can glimpse this function of the unfallen poet / prophet in the role of the fallen poetic imagination. Paul Ricoeur observes that

> In no way does poetic imagination reduce itself to the power of forming a mental picture of the unreal; the imagery of sensory origin merely serves as a vehicle and as material for the verbal power whose true dimension is given to us by the oneiric and the cosmic. As Bachelard says, the poetic image "places us at the origin of articulate being"; the poetic image "becomes a new being in our language, it expresses us by making us what it expresses."[37]

The poet/prophet is the ontological ground of the unfallen and (as we have seen in our discussion of The Book of Urizen) of the fallen world. Los is therefore the smith who builds the form of the fallen world and himself the ontological time of that world. This is why in Jerusalem the withdrawal of Albion does not mean simply that Urthona must now confront Albion with the reality of loss, but that Urthona becomes Los:

> In the Fourth region of Humanity, Urthona namd[,]
> Mortality begins to roll the billows of Eternal Death
> Before the Gate of Los. Urthona here is named Los.
> (35[39]:7-9, E181)

The Los that we meet in the early plates of The Book of Urizen is still engaged in a prophetic activity that resembles that undertaken in Eternity. Rather than himself withdrawing from the "horror" that has appeared in Eternity, Los remains in relationship with Urizen and gives him form. He is, however, in an extraordinary situation. Los is now a prophet whose audience has withdrawn. He is therefore caught between the globe created by Urizen's withdrawal and that created by the Eternals' withdrawal. This means that there is no other to whom Los can relate and therefore that he is himself trapped within a closed world. Los is now used by the Eternals "to confine /

The obscure separation alone." As we have argued, this results in a series of reversals. Rather than being Sol - the ground of an expansion - the Eternal Prophet is now Los; he is enclosed within his constituted world. Rather than being embodied in his work, Enitharmon now forms the horizon of his world. The poet/prophet posits a world without being able to give it any basis in existence apart from that of loss.

The simple fact of enclosure is not in itself a problem. In Eternity the world formed by Los (loss) is a seed. This state can therefore be the prelude to a radiant expansion. While Los remains within the space opened by a double withdrawal, however, there seems to be no possibility of escaping the world of loss. The seed falls on rocky ground and Los is now the demi-urge, the creator of the fallen world and, rather than being a blacksmith and a worker who contributes to the fabrication of the "New Jerusalem," he is now a person who closes life within a fixed form.

In this transformation the positive connotations of the blacksmith are not entirely lost, for Los's creation is still a potentially redemptive activity. As I have argued, Los gives body to the shapeless death into which Urizen has fallen. In this way he preserves Urizen from complete annihilation and, by giving Urizen a fixed form, opens the possibility that Urizen will return. It is at least possible that the Song of Los could function as a prophetic work which, by revealing to us the ground of our existence, calls out to us to "Turn away no more" (30:16, E18). The difficulty is, however, that as the Lambeth prophecies proceed this possibility seems to become more and more remote. The withdrawal of Urizen and the Eternals closes Los within a fixed form. From within this state Los is at first able to remain in relationship with Urizen-in-withdrawal and await his return; however, the role of watchman and prophet cannot be sustained. Los's plight within the fallen world produces such pain, terror and fear that he is himself subject to a withdrawal. He retreats from the time of awaiting and retaining into the time of memory.

Discussions of Los often emphasize Los's role as an artificer. Damon

writes, for example, that "Los . . . is the creator of all that we see."[38] Similarly, Frye introduces Los in the following way:

> When a new life is born, a new form emerges from unorganized matter, and the "victory" of the rising Orc is the only kind of victory that is possible: the conquest of a creator over his material, the reduction of a monster to a shape. We must now superimpose another pattern on this one. Just as Satan or the monster of death is overcome by Orc, so Orc himself is a monster of natural life (hence his association with the serpent) who must in turn be overcome, or shaped into a form, by someone else. And as Orc shapes life out of death, so this someone else shapes the conscious vision out of life which is the imagination proper, the character or identity, and so constructs a Being from the Becoming. Orc brings life into time; the shaper of Orc brings life in time into eternity, and as Orc is the driving power of Generation, so his shaper is the power of "Regeneration." This shaper is the hero of all Blake's later poems. Los the blacksmith, the divine artificer, the spiritual form of time, the Holy Spirit which spoke by the prophets.[39]

Los is indeed an artificer, but Frye inverts the sequence of events that is described in The Book of Urizen and The Book of Los. Los does not give form to the life that Orc shapes out of death, rather it is Los who gives form to death. Los is the ground for and architect of a world in which Orc and Urizen are pitted in mortal and cyclical combat.

The plight of the fallen prophet, able only to give a foundation to the world he posits as "an intent of consciousness," suggests that, in the world mapped out by the Lambeth prophecies, regeneration cannot be found by a simple return to the imaginative (world-forming) source of life. Leonard W. Deen argues in Conversing in Paradise: Poetic Genius and Identity as Community in Blake's Los, that

> The repeated implication of Blake's poetry . . . is that Los is our progenitor: that Poetic Genius is the source and creator of our humanity, the seed that makes us both Homo sapiens and unique human persons, and at the same time the cultural ground that fosters this development.[40]

But the heritage that we receive from our progenitor is at best extremely ambiguous. Within the space opened by the withdrawal of Urizen and the Eternals, Los seems condemned to a regression from the time of awaiting and retaining to the time of memory. Los seems unable to effect the return of others, unable to make prophetic and poetic productions the ground for a leap of eternal life, rather than its bound. Los himself, at this point in Blake's

oeuvre, is, like Orc, also an exit which is included within the labyrinth. Even the fabrication of a prophetic instrument such as The Book of Urizen seems doomed to remain within the world of the self. The very formulation of the nature of the labyrinth inevitably results in the assimilation of this "truth" to the world of the self. It is, in the words of The Book of Los, to fabricate "a Human Illusion / In darkness and deep clouds involvd" (5:56-7, E94). There is no assured glimpse of what is outside the gallery. We can therefore see in the figure of Los in the Lambeth prophecies a profound analysis of the role of the imagination in the eighteenth century and for the early Romantics.

For Locke the mind must work with materials which are simply given. In perception the mind is a passive receiver, a tabula rasa on which simple ideas are inscribed:

> These simple ideas, when offered to the mind, the understanding can no more refuse to have, nor alter when they are imprinted, nor blot them out and make new ones itself, than a mirror can refuse, alter, or obliterate the images or ideas which the objects set before it do therein produce. As the bodies that surround us do diversely affect our organs, the mind is forced to receive the impressions; and cannot avoid the perception of those ideas that are annexed to them.[41]

It is this philosophy which generated in the eighteenth century a "radically new conception of art as effect."[42] As Tuveson writes:

> Before the eighteenth century, art had been considered a form of knowledge, an aspect of objective truth; afterward it tended to become a subjective impression - something that happens to consciousness.[43]

From the perspective of the Lambeth prophecies, a view of art such as this is possible only within a time of memory, for it is only here that the fallen prophet no longer sustains a relationship with Albion-in-withdrawal, but moves into a closed, inert world. It is this fixed world which henceforth forms the nature which acts back on us and "diversely" affects "our organs."

In contradistinction to this view of art, Blake in the Lambeth prophecies quite clearly extends to the imagination the power to form worlds. As such he belongs to the "change" from "imitation to expression, and from the mirror to the fountain," that marks the transition from the

eighteenth to the early nineteenth century, and which has been admirably traced by M.H. Abrams in The Mirror and the Lamp. Yet, as I have argued in the introduction, even in this context Blake's view of the imagination is distinctive and provocative. The fallen imagination is clearly not autonomous, but has a prophetic function: it must give form and expression to the body of Urizen-in-withdrawal and in this way prevent the collapse of humanity into non-entity. Although the fallen imagination has the power to "recreate" and to "idealize and unify," and although it is this capacity which prevents the fall into eternal annihilation, the world which is formed in this way is grounded in loss and, moreover, forms the shell within which fallen humanity is enclosed. Los is quite clearly not a force that guarantees "man's innocence over his corruption," but one which gives form to withdrawal, and therefore gives form to what is a reduction of life. It is not simply the power of the imagination to form worlds which is celebrated in Blake's oeuvre, but this capacity is placed within a wider prophetic intent. The fallen imagination gives shape to Urizen-in-withdrawal in the hope that Error can be recognized and cast off. The creations of the fallen and therefore autonomous imagination are important not because they fabricate a heterocosm, but because they are the ground for a return to Eternity. It is, in fact, these creations which must be breached if humanity is to leave the confines of the world constructed by the self. The world constructed by Los in the time of memory can in part be compared with the Apollonian world that Nietzsche describes in The Birth of Tragedy. Nietzsche writes:

> When after a forceful attempt to gaze on the sun we turn away blinded, we see dark-colored spots before our eyes, as a cure, as it were. Conversely, the bright image projections of the Sophoclean hero - in short, the Apollinian (sic) aspect of the mask - are necessary effects of a glance into the inside and terrors of nature; as it were, luminous spots to cure eyes damaged by gruesome night.[44]

The world constructed by Los becomes, in the time of memory, a mask which hides the "gruesome night" of Urizen's withdrawal. It is a "Human Illusion" which, for those sleepers who live within the time of memory, hides its ground in the withdrawal and dismemberment of humanity. However, unlike

Nietzsche, Blake sees these productions as a tool for opening the fallen world to Eternity. It is precisely the inability to give any foundation but loss to the productions of the fallen imagination that Blake uses to confront us with our ontological condition.

Deen argues, of course, that the Los of the early poems is not the real, authentic Los who is revealed in the later poems. He writes that

> The old Los is "what exists," the Los who bound and riveted the form of "the God of this world." The new Los is the one brought into existence in the later nights of The Four Zoas: "Spiritual Acts" and "Spiritual communion" with "brethren" in heaven, transforming this world,[45]

and he observes that "Los as worker is followed by Los as lover and progenitor"[46] The distinction between the old Los and the new Los is, however, not so easy to make. In The Four Zoas the new Los of Night the Seventh [a] is intertwined with the old Los of Night the Seventh [b], and in Milton the regenerate Los who proceeds with Blake and Milton-in-Blake to Golgonooza is also the Los who in the Bard's Song is unable to stem the tide of Satan's world. Even in Jerusalem the "old" and the "new" Los are difficult to separate, for, as I shall argue, although the "new" Los is foregrounded in this poem, the "old" Los is still uncannily present. This persistence of the "old" Los should, however, be no great surprise. Throughout Blake's later poems it is Los who gives form to Albion-in-withdrawal, and therefore Los who gives form to the fallen world. Any attempt at regeneration must therefore begin with this world, for this body of Los (loss) is also the body of the fallen Albion. Moreover, if Blake were, in the course of his oeuvre, to revise his opinion of Los in the way suggested by Deen and Paley, then he would be saying no more than that regeneration is possible only when the ontological reality of the fallen world is defined in such a way that what is sought is already attained. Regeneration is a possibility because the ground of life is already regenerated. Blake attempts something which is much more difficult than this repression of experience. Los's identity as loss, and as the ontological reality of the fallen world, is not something that the later poems ever attempt to deny. Any attempt at regeneration must work with

the uncomfortable fact that Los, the very agent and vehicle of regeneration, the being who has retained the form of Albion-in-withdrawal and has therefore made regeneration possible, is also the being whose children help Urizen to give his laws to the nations. The Bard's call to "Turn away no more" (SIE30:16, E18) is inevitably confused with the voice of the "Selfish father of men" (SIE31:11, E18); or, as the frontispiece to The Book of Urizen suggests, the poet/prophet's work is inevitably intertwined with that of Urizen. It is, perhaps, this interpenetration of the prophet's world with that of Urizen that underlies the despair evident in the lines which Blake included in two of the copies of America:

> [The stern Bard ceas'd, asham'd of his own song; enrag'd he swung
> His harp aloft sounding, then dash'd its shining frame against
> A ruin'd pillar in glittring fragments; silent he turn'd away,
> And wander'd down the vales of Kent in sick & drear lamentings.]

The universe of Los and Enitharmon is indeed the prima materia, the base material, with which any attempt at regeneration must work. In the poems which follow on from the Lambeth prophecies, the question therefore becomes, how can Los be inverted so that he becomes the radiant sun once more. How can the fallen world become a womb rather than a cavern which entraps humanity. It is this refusal to deny the reality of the fallen world or to retreat into a world which affirms the reality of an aesthetic order, which is one of the most striking aspects of Blake's work. Regeneration occurs not as a naive postulation of a world which exists at one remove from the fallen world, but by the consolidation of Error. The path to Eden is not through neglect of this world; instead we must take "the Western path" which runs "Right thro the Gates of Wrath." The later poems do not suggest that Blake is recanting his early descriptions of Los, but that he is discovering, step by step, the path of regeneration and expansion which remains open for a world that is grounded in Los (loss). By the end of Jerusalem we are still looking at the same identity, the same person, but much more of his character has been revealed. In the Lambeth prophecies Los's identity as loss is in the foreground; however, as the poems proceed this character discovers within his

own fallen identity the capacity to undertake a movement which at its extreme places him in the similitude of Christ the Imagination. In the later poems it is this second portion of Los's character which is foregrounded. Nevertheless, this movement is enacted (as it must be if it is to provide an exit from the fallen world) on the ground and, initially, within the world of loss. The Christ-like sun is not Los redefined in such a way that he is no longer the creator "who bound and riveted the form of 'the God of this world.'" He is still Los, but Los turned inside out. We gain our first glimpse of the possibility of this movement within the the universe of Los in The Four Zoas and it is to this poem that we must now turn.

Part Two

Opening the Labyrinth

Chapter Three

The Birth of Los

> Now it is rather to stand and say:
> How many roads we take that lead to Nowhere,
> The alley overgrown, no meaning now but loss:
> Not that veritable garden where everything comes easy.
> James K. Baxter[1]

(1) Clarity and strength in The Four Zoas

Reading The Four Zoas is an unsettling experience. Its beginning, for example, is almost too savage and extreme:

> Lost! Lost! Lost! are my Emanations Enion O Enion
> We are become a Victim to the Living We hide in secret
> I have hidden Jerusalem in Silent Contrition O Pity Me
> I will build thee a Labyrinth also O pity me O Enion
> Why hast thou taken sweet Jerusalem from my inmost Soul
> Let her Lay secret in the Soft recess of darkness & silence
> It is not Love I bear to [Jerusalem] It is Pity
> She hath taken refuge in my bosom & I cannot cast her out.
>
> The Men have recieved their death wounds & their Emanations are fled
> To me for refuge & I cannot turn them out for Pitys sake
>
> Enion said - Thy fear has made me tremble thy terrors have
> surrounded me
> All Love is lost Terror succeeds & Hatred instead of Love
> And stern demands of Right & Duty instead of Liberty.
> Once thou wast to Me the loveliest son of heaven - But now
> Why art thou Terrible and yet I love thee in thy terror till
> I am almost Extinct & soon shall be a Shadow in Oblivion. . . .
> (4:7-22, E301)

Every item on Burke's list of qualities which arouse a sense of the sublime - "terror," "obscurity," "power," "privation," "infinity," "difficulty," "magnificence" and "vastness" - can be found in this passage.[2] Tharmas and Enion have been precipitated into a catastrophe of cosmic proportions. They seem to be surrounded by a vast unbounded space or void. In the aftermath of this crisis they lack any context which could make sense of their lives. Even the cause of this crisis is obscure. These powers are themselves subject to an irresistible power. Their voices boom against a background of utter silence, they are surrounded by darkness and infinity (at least in Burke's

sense of the term) and they mention three of the four privations which Burke describes as terrible: vacuity, darkness, and solitude.[3] Nevertheless, these creatures are magnificent, for they form one of the "Four Mighty Ones" (3:4, E300).

The severity of this extraordinary situation is magnified by the fact that the reader finds him/herself in an analogous position. This opening dialogue sweeps the reader suddenly, as if by an irresistible force or power, into the manifold complexities of the first Night. The identities of Tharmas, Enion, Jerusalem and Enitharmon; the cause of their distress; even their location, all remain obscure. The narrator's voice has disappeared and one has the sense of listening to these creatures in a dark and silent world. The page itself resists any closure or final appropriation. Much of the speech I have quoted is written over an erasure. The reader can still glimpse a few words or phrases which belong to this "original" level: "the light of day," "Till," and "slavery," "dismal," "four," and so on (E819). The lines that were written over this original erasure were themselves partly erased and new lines inserted to produce a third layer of text. Passages have been inserted on both sides of the page; the original layer was written in copperplate hand, but the subsequent strata are in a "modified copperplate hand" and so on. It is as if the reader has entered the fire of the poem's creation and experienced the workmanship and force of the demons who have worked on it.

Yet the basic text of the page and of the poem is evident. Form does appear, albeit not in complete victory, from this workmanship and what is more, as the poem progresses one glimpses and then retains a sense of extraordinary beauty. This beauty cannot be separated from the energy of the poem itself. Often, as in Night the Sixth, Page 71:1-10, or Night the Seventh [b], Page 92:22-33, a passage of moving clarity is found embedded within the poem's upheaval; less frequently but with an even greater beauty a passage such as Enion's lament at the end of Night the [Second] seems to arise from a confrontation with chaos. Finally, as I hope to show, the poem itself gathers a clarity and beauty which does not deny but springs from the

moving energies and demonic workmanship of its pages.

In describing The Four Zoas as sublime and beautiful, obscure and clear, I am, of course, not really drawing attention to anything particularly novel. All commentaries on the poem have recognized this duality; however, they have on the whole kept these two poles apart. More often than not critics have attempted to dissolve the vehicle of the strange beauty that they glimpse. Northrop Frye writes that

> the poem was never engraved, and was left abandoned in an extraordinary manuscript. . . . The Four Zoas remains the greatest abortive masterpiece in English literature. It is not Blake's greatest poem, and by Blake's standards it is not a poem at all; but it contains some of his finest writing, and there is much to show that it would have contained some of his best engraving. Anyone who cares about either poetry or painting must see in its unfinished state a major cultural disaster.[4]

Erdman reiterates the theme of "disaster":

> never was a poem so bewilderingly attached to the shifting fortunes of principalities and powers. Each stage in the transformation of Bonaparte from artilleryman of the Republic to lawgiving Emperor seems to have delivered a direct shock to the symbolic consistency and frail narrative frame of Blake's epic. And the strange Peace of Amiens would not only catch him off guard but upset the entire seventh act of his celestial drama. . . . The result is as mad as the effort to play croquet in Wonderland with living mallets and balls.[5]

In his facsimile edition of Blake's 'Vala' Bentley concludes his discussion of the changes that Blake made in his manuscript by arguing that

> he tried to gather the new and old threads of his Prophecy, and to strengthen the whole with new patches. Unfortunately it was too late for such mending. The fabric was so torn and frazzled that the only hope lay in a reweaving of the whole. The remaining tatters are gorgeous, but they will not bear the strain of the giant frame.[6]

Even critics such as Beer or Wilkie and Johnson, while they argue for the poem's coherence and beauty, try to separate the poem from the tumult of the manuscript.

What seems to motivate this kind of complaint (and the separation of chaos and form, energy and clarity that it implies) is a conception of the book as closed, finite and possessing qualities such as unity and harmony. In short, the above critics subscribe to an ideology which values beauty above the disturbing presence of sublimity. Thus the manuscript of the poem is cudgelled and beaten in an effort to press it into a mould which it simply

does not fit. There are three basic strategies which have been adopted in this effort to make the poem a book. In the first, the poem is simply described as a failure and no attempt is made to read it as a poem. Instead, alternative strategies are evolved to make sense of the manuscript. David Erdman asserts that "no orderly synopsis can do justice to the real, if arguably intentional, disorder of the work itself." He therefore proposes to go through the poem "in the apparent order of Blake's personal and historical allusions, not in the order that his scheme of Nine Nights imperfectly imposed upon it."[7] Morton Paley similarly argues that "no interpretation of Vala can hope to be wholly consistent," and so the critic should attempt to "account for the poem's inconsistencies."[8]

A second strategy attempts to doctor the poem itself. Thus, the manuscript is shuffled or operated upon, in an extraordinary variety of ways, in order to remove the anomaly of two Nights marked Night the Seventh, or the embarassing detail of a second Night which is not called the second Night.[9]

Yet another strategy is to ascribe the poem's chaos to changes that Blake made over time to an assumed coherent and organized poem. The critic's task is therefore to attempt to retrieve this original poem. This is the underlying approach to The Four Zoas of both Margoliouth and Bentley. The latter's facsimile is haunted by the spectre of a poem which may once have been beautiful but has now been lost in Blake's haphazard revisions:

> Here we have Blake's great failing demonstrated openly and distinctly; he did not lack energy or inspiration, but somehow he never got around to reconciling the cross-purposes in his poem or smoothing over the awkward transitions from an early draft to a late one. Many passages in this Prophecy are great poetry, and some are great rhetoric, but because of his inconsistent patchwork revision Blake never wove it into a genuine whole. It is possible but unlikely that, at the time of his first draft, Vala was a great poem, but the present manuscript is a tantalizing and tragic failure.[10]

The result is often that the reader is oppressed with a vision of the poem as a phantom caught between a past which has been lost (and which may never have been) and a future which did not ever arrive. Margoliouth's stated intention is to "present the text of Vala as Blake made his fair copy of each Night before erasures, deletions, additions, and changes of order had brought it

into the state in which we know it today as The Four Zoas."[11] As interesting and as valuable as Margoliouth's book may be, I believe that we must be cautious about the degree of certainty with which we can unearth a text which Blake did not leave us. The reader is of course given no more than a text (The Four Zoas) which unlike most other texts does not conceal its history. It seems to me that it is the conjunction of form and demonic workmanship which should be of interest and that the status of any moment of that history, considered in isolation, is at the best doubtful. In all fields, and particularly in the arts, it is assumed that the genesis or origin of a work does not explain the end product. Margoliouth, however, goes a step forward from this and presents an early form of the text as the finished product. Once again this can only be a strategy to make an unruly text behave, unless Margoliouth's text is seen as a hypothetical moment in the archaeology of The Four Zoas. It would seem to be particularly important to make the status of this "past" clear because The Book of Urizen and The Four Zoas argue that the past is constituted and held in the present. It is the finished poem which casts the shadow of its own past and not vice versa.

A fourth and final strategy adopted by some critics of The Four Zoas is to focus on the poem and attempt to ignore the manuscript. Thus Harold Bloom writes:

> The manuscript of The Four Zoas presents many problems for the Blake scholar, and was in a sense rejected by Blake himself, and yet I believe the poem, with all its variants and shifts in sequence, remains an imaginatively coherent and very beautiful work.[12]

Even Wilkie and Johnson, in an excellent and thought-provoking book, relegate Night VII[B] to an appendix and do not mention the problems associated with the numbering of the "second" Night.[13]

If we are not to prejudge the matter it seems to me that we need to approach The Four Zoas willing to suspend our assumptions about the nature of a literary text. This is particularly important because here, as in The Book of Urizen, the very desire to reduce a poem to a single text and to hold it in a single glance is criticized. The ideal reader, forced to change and then

change perspective again, harassed by a chorus of conflicting voices and assertions, may have to ask with Urizen,

> Where shall we take our stand to view the infinite & unbounded
> Or where are human feet for Lo our eyes are in the heavens. . . .
> (122:24-5, E391)

The poem itself seems to suggest this to the reader in its opening pages. The poem is called The Four Zoas and yet Blake warns us that "the Natures of those Living Creatures the Heavenly Father only / [Knoweth] no Individual [Knoweth nor] Can know in all Eternity" (3:7-8, E301).[14] The Four Zoas is therefore a poem whose theme seems to deny the very possibility of the kind of unity that critics often expect of a work of art.

Bentley writes:

> The Four Zoas was thoroughly and repeatedly revised, but the probability is that most of these alterations made the poem more chaotic and incoherent.[15]

The fact that the manuscript was repeatedly revised,[16] that Blake stopped working on it around 1810,[17] and that some time before his death he gave the manuscript to John Linnell, "'because he knew that he would be the one most likely to appreciate and preserve it,'"[18] all suggest that the poem that we have, with all of its tumult, is not "a tantalizing and tragic failure," but its finished state; that this unique, unbounded, open manuscript is the form that Blake intended.[19] Perhaps we are to find the poem's form in this apparent chaos, and clarity is to emerge in relationship with terror, chaos and sublimity.[20] If this is so then the cornerstone of any interpretation of The Four Zoas must be the figure of Los. As the Eternal Prophet Los is the only character capable of fabricating "forms sublime" (90:22, E370/$E_2$356).[21] Los is able to blend the beauty of art with the sublimity of a voice which threatens to overpower our closed worlds. The poem is the story of Urthona's (Los's "name / In Eden")

> 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, E301)

(2) The divisions of Tharmas

In the first Night of The Four Zoas Los is born as a result of the divisions of Tharmas. Although this initial aetiology is soon juxtaposed with other accounts of his origin it nevertheless remains of crucial importance. As the poem's first account of Los's birth and the first description of the actuality of the Zoas' fall into division, it naturally becomes the model against which the other episodes are, not measured (for this would imply that the perspective of this narrative was in some way privileged), but juxtaposed. It is therefore important that the divisions of Tharmas are described in some detail.

Tharmas is first introduced to the reader as the "Parent power" (4:6, E301). He is also associated with the body, childhood, Innocence and the tongue, but "Parent power" is the idea in relationship to which the others find their place. As "Parent power" Tharmas gives birth or form to life. Thus, in Night IX, it is Tharmas who blows the Trump of the Last Doom and so raises Albion and the other Zoas to the birth of the Last Judgment. His other identities can be associated with this role: the experiences of childhood give birth to the adult; Innocence is the world out of which the fact of Experience is born; the body gives shape to the self; and the tongue draws the warring desires of the individual into a single voice.

In the prelapsarian world Tharmas was a unitary being, but at the time of the Fall he divided into male and female beings. This division occurs for all of the Zoas. Thus, to take only one example, after the Fall has begun Urizen finds that he has a female counterpart:

> When Urizen returnd from his immense labours & travels
> Descending She reposd beside him folding him around
> In her bright skirts. Astonishd & Confounded he beheld
> Her shadowy form now Separate he shudderd & was silent
> Till her caresses & her tears revivd him to life & joy
> Two wills they had two intellects & not as in times of old. . . .
> (30:43-48, E320)

Urizen is "Astonishd & Confounded" at the presence of Ahania because in the prelapsarian world the male was renewed by the death of the female:

> 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. in soft
> Delight they die & they revive in spring with music & songs. . . .
> (5:1-4, E302)

This sounds like a rather extreme sexism and this impression is magnified by other passages in the poem, such as the Spectre of Urthona's characterization of the prelapsarian relationship between male and female powers. The Spectre claims that in Eternity he and the Shadow of Enitharmon "in undivided Essence walkd about Imbodied. thou my garden of delight & I the spirit in the garden" (84:5-6, E359). In The Four Zoas the male power is active and immortal while the female is passive and sacrifices herself for the life of the male. The linking of passivity with the female gender and activity with the male gender is undeniably sexist; however, it seems to me that it is possible to argue that Blake is using a fairly generally accepted identification (at least until the latter half of this century) between femininity and passivity, masculinity and activity, in order to make a point the force of which does not rely upon a third correspondence in which femininity is equated with a being of female gender alone (and not male and female, for example). The fact that in patriarchal societies the active portion of a woman's individuality is repressed and the passive portion of the male denied does not contradict Blake's characterization of a fundamental division of male and female powers at the time of the Fall. We need not read the eternal relationship between male and female as one in which persons of female gender are subjugated to men: a more plausible reading is that this power relationship is characteristic of the Fall and that in an ideal world both men and women find the portion of their particular selves which has been denied.[22]

One can of course also argue that the gender distinction between men and women is not Blake's primary referent. The distinction between two kinds of power, one which was passive and therefore able to change and be moulded and another which was "immortal," was one which would have been quite familiar to Blake. Locke writes in An Essay that

> Power thus considered is two-fold, viz. as able to make, or able to receive change. The one may be called <u>active</u>, and the other <u>passive</u> power.[23]

Locke's distinction is itself "the Aristotelian distinction . . . according to which substances may be either efficacious in producing change, or susceptible of change."[24] Many religions use a parallel distinction as a metaphor for the relationship between God and his creation. The former is seen as a male, active power, while the latter is a female and passive power that is created, or formed, by God. Blake is therefore drawing on a philosophical and (as has often been remarked) a religious tradition in his characterization of Tharmas and Enion.[25] Where he parts company from a considerable portion of both traditions, however, is in his assertion that in the unfallen world male and female, active and passive powers, form a single identity. Blake is here in agreement with Hume who writes: "so also power, active and passive, are parts only . . . of entire power; nor, except they be joined, can any act proceed from them. . . ."[26] In Eternity the active power of Tharmas is continually realized by the passive power of his Emanation, Enion. Enion's ability to die and resume a new shape is what enables Tharmas to be active and immortal. The relationship between them is, however, not that of a creator to his creature. This analogy is unsatisfactory because it suggests that there is a distance between the two and that their relationship is therefore analogous to that which exists between an "agent" and a "patient" (E617). In this kind of model the force of Enion's passive power is almost completely lost. A more useful approximation is that of an individual to his body.

A person's life is made up of an active and a passive power. The first is a directedness or <u>duration</u> (in Bergson's sense of the term) which takes him/her from youth to old age. However, this active power retains its life and dynamism only because it is realized in a body. The body takes the shape of each stage of this directedness. However, this is still a partially misleading account of the relationship between the self and its body. Something of Blake's (and Hume's) suggestion of the necessary interdependence

of these two powers can be seen in this metaphor only if we argue that the self's movement from youth to old age is coterminous with the movement of the body. We do not, in fact, move our bodies any more than they move us; body and self (or soul) form a single entity; active and passive powers are aspects of Hume's "entire power." This relationship parallels certain aspects of the "spring" of eternal life in The Book of Urizen. We may suppose that it is the passive life of the Eternals which was consumed in "continual burnings" and their active life which was thereby rendered immortal. What in the earlier work appeared as two apparently contradictory attributes of the same being are in The Four Zoas assigned to different portions of the Zoas.

In the crisis in which Tharmas and Enion give birth to Los this relationship, in which the active power gathers, moves beyond and so transforms the passive power, is disrupted. Tharmas is no longer embodied; he no longer gathers Enion in a movement towards others; in fact he now seems paralysed by the power of her gaze:

> Why wilt thou Examine every little fibre of my soul
> Spreading them out before the Sun like Stalks of flax to dry
> The infant joy is beautiful but its anatomy
> Horrible Ghast & Deadly nought shalt thou find in it
> But Death Despair & Everlasting brooding Melancholy. . . .
> (4:29-33, E302)

This disruption is caused by Tharmas's withdrawal. Although on these opening plates the fact of withdrawal is everywhere evident, it is only in Night the Fourth that the reader is given a first-hand description of Tharmas's flight. The Spectre of Urthona tells Tharmas:

> I well remember the Day
> The day of terror & abhorrence
> When fleeing from the battle thou fleeting like the raven
> Of dawn outstretching an expanse where neer expanse had been
> Drewest all the Sons of Beulah into thy dread vortex. . . .
> (50:1-5, E333)

This withdrawal and the reversal that it precipitates is, in effect, the death of Tharmas as an active, moving Zoa. It is now Enion who weaves a world from Tharmas's being. The directedness of the Zoa no longer punctures the closed world of the self; the body becomes not the point of contact between self and other but the horizon of an isolated, enclosed world. It is as if

the condition now determines the cause:

> he sunk down into the sea a pale white corse
> 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.
>
> (5:13-18, E302)

The primary model for this withdrawal can be found in the myth of Narcissus. In this myth Narcissus's body, which once served to connect him to others, becomes a separate power (the reflection in the water) that then determines the activity of the active power. The body is no longer the embodiment of the self but the horizon of the self's constituted world. This represents a complete inversion of life. Instead of a form which appears as the shape of being, we have a "Circle of Destiny," "a watry Globe self balancd" and "A Frowning Continent" (5:24-26, E302-303). Each of these images emphasize that this withdrawal, and the reversal of male and female powers which it implies, is the entry into a solipsistic world. The form of life is now like a "Globe" because it is self contained and enclosed; it is like a "Circle of Destiny" because the active power is now determined by an external force; it is a "Frowning continent" because it presents a fierce and frowning face to all other beings.

There is certainly no shortage of analogies which can be used to illuminate this inversion. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, in an interesting passage of The Confessions, writes that the Parisians of his day

> are not false in their professions. They are naturally obliging, kindly, and benevolent and, whatever may be said, really more sincere than those of any other nation. But they are fickle and flighty. The feelings they profess for you are quite genuine, but those feelings go as they come. When they are talking to you they are full of you. Once you are out of their sight, you are out of their mind. Nothing remains permanently in their heads; with them everything is the affair of a moment.[27]

According to Rousseau, the being of the Parisians is not formed by an active power which faces others. Quite the contrary, it is their passive power, the world and social situation that confronts them, that determines their being. As Rousseau notes in astonishment, the Parisians are sincere, but if you

change the situation in which they find themselves then they change as well.

The account of the division of Tharmas differs from earlier accounts of the Fall in two major respects. First of all, the division into male and female powers is now made to articulate the fact and reality of withdrawal. It is no longer something that occurs only to Los at a certain point in the space and time of withdrawal; it is now made to articulate and clarify the nature of withdrawal itself and therefore it occurs to all of the Zoas. Withdrawal is immediately to project and to be mesmerized by a particular image or form of the self; it is to be locked into a single ontological time. Secondly, the division of the Zoas into a male and female identity is accompanied by the appearance of the Spectre. Our discussion has moved from the identity of Tharmas to the male and female portions into which he is divided. In order to fully understand the nature of the birth of Los from the divisions of Tharmas, we must now turn to this third creature.

(3) The Spectre and the birth of Los

Earlier in this chapter I drew a number of parallels between the constitution of the Zoas and the "spring" of eternal life. The two terms are related insofar as the being of the Zoas and the reality of eternal life seem to be created at the point of interaction between movement and form, duration and shape, active and passive powers. However, if we return to The Book of Urizen for a few moments we can see that the "spring" of eternal life implies the presence of a third power which exists alongside the powers of form and duration.

In the first chapter I argued that it was impossible to conceive of a spring without a background which was simultaneously the basis for the spring and what was cast off. The "spring" of eternal life is therefore constituted by motion (movement away from the background), form (the shape and trajectory of the "spring") and retention (the force that retains the horizon against which the "spring" is achieved). The same triumvirate of powers appeared in

our characterization of Los. In The Book of Urizen Los at first awaits the return of Urizen. He is therefore constituted in part by an active power which opens his world to Urizen. This activity can be pictured as a movement towards Urizen which is given form (by the passive power) as a series of ages which are in turn retained by Los. This third power in fact achieved supremacy over the others in the time of memory. In The Four Zoas the power of retention is called the Spectre.

The Spectre can therefore be identified as that part of the Zoa which retains the other as it has appeared to the self: the Spectre retains the shell of our constituted worlds and draws a horizon around us. It is important to observe that the Spectre is not created ex nihilo at the time of the Fall. His appearance as a separate personality is the result of fragmentation. This is why the Daughters of Beulah can speak of a Spectre which, although "insane & most / Deformd," is "in every Man" (5:37-38, E303).

With the delineation of the passive power and the Spectre, Blake is now able to characterize in extraordinary detail the nature of the closed and narcissistic world that was first described in The Book of Urizen. The body of Tharmas (like that of Narcissus) has become separated from himself and it achieves a quasi existence. Tharmas's body is no longer the ground for a meeting with others; instead he has become entranced by it. This fascination with his own divided self means that he no longer moves, his active power is lost, and Tharmas is defined by this separated self. However, this divided female, this image which waves before Tharmas's face, does not subsist by itself. In fact it is retained by a power which forms a portion of his being. This power to hold and retain is called the Spectre. In The Four Zoas Spectres are often described as "Spectres of the Dead" (103:39, E376) because the process of fragmentation in which they appear results in the death of the active moving Zoa.[28]

The clearest description of what this tripartite division entails is offered by Enion in a short and haunting speech on page five:

> A[11] life is blotted out & I alone remain possessd with Fears
> I see the Shadow of the dead within my Soul wandering
> In darkness & Solitude forming Seas of 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. . . .
> (5:47-53, E303)

Life - the spring and movement of the active power - has ceased and in its place only Enion remains. Her eyes are reverted because she is no longer gathered in Tharmas's movement towards others; instead she is now driven outwards from this source of life. As the Spectre makes clear, she is now no more that a "husk & shell":

> The Spectre thus spoke. Who art thou Diminutive husk & shell . . .
> This world is Thine in which thou dwellest that within thy soul
> That dark & dismal infinite where Thought roams up & down
> Is Mine. . . .
> (6:9,13-15, E303-04)

The "Shadow of the dead" is the Spectre, the part of Tharmas which once defined the background against which Tharmas moved but which now has become a force in its own right. Without expectation, retention merely forms "Seas of Doubt & rocks of Repentance." In this world there is no contact between self and other. The Spectre is Enion's "Created Phantasm" in the sense that it is the division of Tharmas and Enion that has given it independent existence.

In the prelapsarian world reality was the shape of the Zoas' movement toward each other. Now it is formed in the intersection between the Spectre and Enion. When these two creature copulate they are therefore giving substance to their own ontological reality:

> Mingling his horrible brightness with her tender limbs then high she soard
> Above the ocean; a bright wonder that Nature shudder'd at
> Half Woman & half Spectre, all his lovely changing colours mix
> With her fair crystal clearness; in her lips & cheeks his poisons rose
> In blushes like the morning, and his scaly armour softening
> A monster lovely in the heavens or wandering on the earth,
> Till with fierce pain she brought forth on the rocks her sorrow & woe
> Behold two little Infants wept upon the desolate wind.
> (7:8-8:2, E304)

Los and Enitharmon are born as the embodiment of the division of Tharmas: they are the sorrow and woe, the reality of privation, which is the substance of the fallen world.

In order to see the extremity of the crisis implied by this event, we need to understand something of the prelapsarian relationship between Tharmas and Urthona. Urthona is variously described as a prophet, blacksmith, and as a fabricator of tools and weapons for intellectual warfare (22:16, E312; 139:6-9, E407). Blake's descriptions of Urthona suggest that prophecies can be seen as intellectual tools and the prophet as a blacksmith who fabricates them. In Eternity Tharmas and Urthona had a particularly close relationship. In Night the Fourth Tharmas asks the Spectre of Urthona, "Art thou Urthona My friend my old companion, / With whom I livd in happiness before that deadly night . . ." (50:28-9, E334), and in the Last Judgment of Night the Ninth we see Urthona, who is limping from the Fall, supporting himself by leaning on Tharmas. This intimacy is generated because, as parent power, Tharmas is involved at both extremes of the prophetic process. Tharmas works with Urthona to give shape both to the prophecy and to the prophecy's reception: he gives birth to and organizes the instruments and the results of mental war.

In the prelapsarian world Tharmas would give birth to the community of the Zoas. In the fallen world, however, the only world that he can form is one of <u>loss</u>. What this means is that the only reality that the division of Tharmas and Enion can give birth to - and, as we shall see, the sole reality that the prophetic function can proclaim - is Los. Thus Los's Emanation is Enitharmon. This name is made from a combination of Enion and Tharmas (Eni[tharm]on).[29] The Emanation of Los is the shape of an attempt to re-organize the fallen world on the ground of Los. It is therefore an attempt to reconstitute Enion and Tharmas. A project such as this is, however, necessarily inadequate, for a part cannot envision a whole. Tharmas has been reduced to Los (loss). This is a reduction which is in store for all of the Zoas.

This account of the genesis of Los describes a character who is in many ways different from the one found in the Lambeth prophecies. Los is now quite

clearly distinguished from his eternal identity. He is born as a result of the fall and the fragmentation of Tharmas. There is also, as I have already suggested, a shift in nomenclature. In The Book of Urizen Los is an Eternal, while in The Four Zoas Urthona is a Zoa and Los a portion of that Zoa. We can also note that Los and Enitharmon (at least in this account of the Fall) are now born at the same point in time and, perhaps most significantly, the fallen world is no longer retained by Los alone. In Night the First we read that

> 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. . . .
> (5:34-37, E303)

In the same Night we are told that Eno, "a daughter of Beulah," took a "Moment of Time / And drew it out to Seven thousand years" (9:9-10, E304) and that she opened an "atom of space . . . Into infinitude" (9:12-13, E305), apparently in order to give Los and Enitharmon a time and space in which to live. Albion is himself supported by the "arms of the Eternal Saviour" (18:13, E310), and in later Nights we learn that there is a limit of opacity and a limit of contraction which puts a bound to the collapse of the fallen world. In The Four Zoas the fallen world is surrounded by providence.

These changes in Blake's myth seem to have been made primarily in order to allow for an attempt to imagine the possibility of redemption. In The Book of Urizen the fall of Los is so well documented and proceeds with a feeling of such inevitability that it is difficult to imagine how life could progress from where the poem leaves it. The only possibility of escape from the fallen world seems to depend upon Los finding the strength to retrace his steps from the time of awaiting and retaining to the time of memory. This act would seem to require a strength beyond that possessed even by an Eternal and, moreover, surely a return of this kind could only represent one more withdrawal. However, if Los is himself the ontological reality of the Fall, then an account of a return does not have to be a retreat or a recantation recited by a contrite Eternal. Instead it can itself be a progression. The

division between Urthona and Los gives the narrator two clear points between which the Fall and the course of regeneration can be mapped.

This many faceted relocation and redefinition of Los has the effect of clarifying the earlier figure and at the same time emphasizing the extremity of the Fall. In the course of the earlier poem Los gains a double and in fact contradictory signification: Los is both the reality of the Fall and the Eternal Prophet. It is important, however, that these two significations are kept together. Los's task of awaiting and retaining depends upon his identity as the prophet, but this identity means that Los must be the reality of the fallen world: the prophet must be one of his people. In The Four Zoas this identity and difference is established by distinguishing between Los and Urthona. Los is the reality of the fallen world; he is also Urthona, but he is Urthona in the state of withdrawal.

This clarification of the status of Los, however, brings with it problems of its own. The reality of the fallen world is privation and withdrawal; or to put it in stronger words, the fallen world (and therefore Los) is nothing. Thus in Night the Ninth, at the time of apocalypse, Los simply vanishes. When relationship reappears there is no place for loss. On the other hand, in the dissipation caused by the Fall loss threatens to become the only reality. If Los and Enitharmon were to succeed in drawing all life to themselves, Enion and Tharmas would simply dissolve. However, this would seem to imply that even Los would at this point no longer exist. The universe would be mere vacuity. The reality of the Fall is therefore held by divine agency. It is no longer a discrete atom in space; it has become a seed in the soil of Providence. It is in the space held by Providence that Los and Enitharmon, in the course of the following Nights, realize the basic forms of the fallen world. The reality that they elaborate and represent is based on contradiction, for in the spaces of Eno nothingness and privation is given a time and a space. The remainder of the first Night gives us our first and paradigmatic glimpse of the shape of this fallen world.

(4) The world of loss

When Los and Enitharmon first appear in the poem they are blind, elemental, and largely unconscious forces:

> The first state weeping they began & helpless as a wave
> Beaten along its sightless way growing enormous in its motion to
> Its utmost goal, till strength from Enion like richest summer shining
> Raisd the bright boy & girl with glories from their heads out beaming
> Drawing forth drooping mothers pity drooping mothers sorrow. . . .
> (8:3-7, E304)

The characterization is psychologically plausible, for in a time of great privation, sorrow and woe are often experienced as a numb and sightless movement which seems to attain a life and momentum of its own. One feels the "pangs" of grief as if they were waves which welled up from nowhere. The life of Los and Enitharmon is drawn from the pain and privation of Enion, and so pervasive is their power that they threaten her very existence:

> They sulk upon her breast her hair became like snow on mountains
> Weaker & weaker, weeping woful, wearier and wearier
> Faded & her bright Eyes decayd melted with pity & love. . . .
> (8:8-10, E304)

In the "Moony spaces of Eno" (9:19, E305), in the world of Tharmas (which is a world of loss and withdrawal), Los and Enitharmon come to consciousness and so enact the basic forms and dynamics of the fallen world. Los is the active energy of this world, while Enitharmon is the passive. In Eternity these two powers would be in a relationship analogous to that of a person to his body; however, in place of this dynamic, the relationship between Los and Enitharmon gives the reader a picture of extraordinary metaphysical enclosure. In the spaces of Eno Los can control the "times & seasons, & the days & years" (9:27, E305). In other words, within the universe of withdrawal Los commands ontological and chronological time, but this control is in an important sense thwarted. Normally, ontological time is realized in an appropriate space. The ontological time of spring does not appear in a landscape of winter. The active power of life and the passive power of the material world act with one mind. However, in the fallen world Los is separated from Enitharmon, and time from the spaces of the world. This

is of course an unfortunate and all too obvious truth. The "spring" of human life is often born in a wintry climate; children are born in the midst of suffering, starvation, disease and death. This is one of the motivating insights of The Songs of Innocence and of Experience. In "The School Boy," for example, the narrator exclaims:

> O! father & mother, if buds are nip'd,
> And blossoms blown away,
> And if the tender plants are strip'd
> Of their joy in the springing day,
> By sorrow and cares dismay,
>
> How shall the summer arise in joy.
> Or the summer fruits appear,
> Or how shall we gather what griefs destroy
> Or bless the mellowing year,
> When the blasts of winter appear.
> (53:21-30, E31)

Enitharmon has a separate will and is therefore able to control "the spaces, regions, desart, flood & forest" (9:28, E305) quite independently of Los.

In the fallen world there is an irremedial gap between passive and active powers, and one's being is unable to be fully realized. As Camus notes in The Myth of Sisyphus, "Between the certainty I have of my own existence and the content I try to give to that assurance, the gap will never be filled,"[30] or as Eliot writes in "The Hollow Men":

> Between the desire
> And the spasm
> Between the potency
> And the existence
> Between the essence
> And the descent
> Falls the Shadow. . . .[31]

Blake was expressing an idea parallel to this when he wrote: "She drave the Females all away from Los / And Los drave all the Males from her away" (9:30-31, E305).

The relationship between Los and Enitharmon, and therefore the nature of the fallen world, is brought into focus by two extraordinary images. These images, placed towards the end of Night the First, presage the complete elaboration of the world of Los and Enitharmon. They can be seen as models of The Four Zoas as a whole which are embedded in the text in order to structure

our reading of the poem. In the first, Enitharmon's "Song of Death" (11:5, E306), the reader glimpses the possibility of total disintegration which is implied by the Fall. At the same time we can observe Enitharmon's uneasy location between Los and the other Zoas. This location is the premise on which Urizen's attempts to assimilate Los are based, and it is also the immediate cause of the "torments of Love & Jealousy" which are the poem's subject matter. In the second, the marriage "Feast of Los and Enitharmon" (14:6, E308), we see the truce that is effected in the spaces and times of Eno, and the triangle of jealousy which is the substance of that truce.

The "Song of Death" is a song "of" or about Vala (10:9, E305). It begins with the "Fallen Man" and Urizen taking their "repose," while Luvah and Vala wake and fly "up from the Human Heart / Into the Brain" (10:11-12, E305). From this position they usurp the role of Urizen and Ahania. Vala sleeps "upon the pillow," while Luvah siezes "the Horses of Light" and rises "into the Chariot of Day" (10:12-13, E305). At this point in the Song Enitharmon tells us how she laughed in her sleep; then, in a startling shift of perspective, the Song seems to change directions. It is now Enitharmon who "in the visions of Vala" walks "with the mighty Fallen One" (10:15, E305). Even more surprisingly, the "Fallen Man" addresses himself not to Vala but to Enitharmon (or Enitharmon in the "visions of Vala") and in doing so admits his own complicity in the Fall:

> I have refusd to look upon the Universal Vision
> And wilt thou slay with death him who devotes himself to thee
> Once born for the sport & amusement of Man now born to drink up all
> his Powers. . . .
>
> (10:23-25, E306)

We can understand this by saying that the Fall is not a result of an individual act but is something in which everyone participates. The "Fallen Man's" refusal to look upon the Universal Vision is a refusal which is enacted in all of his members. However, Enitharmon, as the form and shape of Los (loss) is an essential and immediate constituent of this kind of refusal. Luvah's and Vala's attempt to usurp Urizen and Ahanias' position, Albion's refusal to look upon the Universal Vision and Urizen's slumber "in the porch"

all mean that Enitharmon appears before the Universal Man. This is why, in a Song beginning with Vala and Luvah, it is possible for the Universal Man's attention to shift from Vala to Enitharmon. The Song ends by reporting two parallel events. Albion's voice gradually recedes, and Enitharmon wakes "in my sweet bliss." The effect of the global withdrawal suggested by this brief song is to create, or awaken, Enitharmon (the form of loss) as a distinct and separate reality. It is to ensure that the only reality that can be given form is loss.

Enitharmon's Song marks the end of a period of largely unconscious life and the beginning of self knowledge. For the first time in the history of the fallen world Los and Enitharmon appear as potent powers who enact the struggle between active and passive powers for dominion. Enitharmon calls her song a "Song of Death" because in singing it she asserts a history which must end in the annihilation of the male. Although Los later counters Enitharmon's Song with a vision of the "Fallen Man" giving comfort to Vala, his first response is to smite Enitharmon. In so doing he creates the mirror image of Enitharmon's attempt at domination. For the male to destroy the female, or vice versa, is for both to lose their substance. Some relationship between the two is necessary for existence. Thus we see, even in the world held by the Daughters of Eno, a dynamic which brings the fallen world to the verge of dissolution. It is interesting that both speak of the same cataclysm, but Enitharmon seems to applaud it as the basis of her life and power, while Los cannot see his own part in bringing it about. Los cries:

> Beware the punishment
> I see, invisible descend into the Gardens of Vala
> Luvah walking on the winds, I see the invisible knife
> I see the shower of blood: I see the swords & spears of
> futurity . . .
> (11:11-4, E306),

while Enitharmon says:

> Threaten not me O visionary thine the punishment
> The Human Nature shall no more remain nor Human acts
> Form the rebellious Spirits of Heaven. but War & Princedom & Victory
> & Blood. . . .
> (11:22-24, E306)

The division of active and passive powers has meant that the only reality that can be given form is that of Los and Enitharmon. It is therefore not surprising that in their relationship the battle between active and passive powers is repeated. Their struggle (like that of their avatars) portends complete destruction:

> Night darkend as she spoke! a shuddring ran from East to West
> A Groan was heard on high. The warlike clarions ceast. the Spirits
> Of Luvah & Vala shudderd in their Orb: an orb of blood!
>
> Eternity groand & was troubled at the Image of Eternal Death. . . .
> (12:1-4, E306)

This cataclysm is averted only because, at the injunction of Enitharmon, Urizen descended, "Gloomy sounding, Now I am God from Eternity to Eternity" (12:8, E307).

This appears at first to be an inexplicable event. It of course makes sense to argue that Urizen, particularly at the end of the eighteenth century, ruled the fallen world, but what is the mechanism that suddenly introduces Urizen into the conflict between Los and Enitharmon? Why does this descent prevent "the one" from murdering "the other" (12:6, E306)?

The relationship between Los and Enitharmon is analogous to that between the self and the body. As the embodiment of the active power, Enitharmon is also the point at which the perspectives of the self open onto those of others. Thus in Jerusalem Blake writes that it is through the Emanations that one is able to communicate to others (J88:3-11, E246). Merleau-Ponty expresses a similar idea when tells us that

> We must abandon the fundamental prejudice according to which the psyche is that which is accessible only to myself and cannot be seen from outside. My "psyche" is not a series of "states of consciousness," that are rigorously closed in on themselves and inaccessible to anyone but me. My consciousness is turned primarily toward the world, turned toward things; it is above all a relation to the world. The other's consciousness as well is chiefly a certain way of comporting himself toward the world. Thus it is in his conduct, in the manner in which the other deals with the world, that I will be able to discover his consciousness.[32]

In Blake's terms the passive power (our corporeal comportment in the world) is our Emanation and the point at which we are open to others. This gives the body a strange duality. As Sartre points out, the body is "the body for me"

and "the body for others."[33] It is this kind of duality implicit in her own constitution that Enitharmon makes use of when she calls down Urizen. In a paradox which is central to the problematic of The Four Zoas, Enitharmon's constitution as the body or form of the fallen world means that she is the shape or embodiment of Los and, at the same time, the shape of the other Zoas' loss. Enitharmon, the Emanation of Los, is in the fallen world also (in a certain sense) the Emanation of Urizen:

> Silent the prince of Light viewd Los. at length a brooded
> Smile broke from Urizen for Enitharmon brightend more & more
> Sullen he lowerd on Enitharmon but he smild on Los. . . .
> (12:10-12, E307)

It is a fascinating situation for in these lines can be seen, written into the very ontology of the fallen world, "The torments of Love & Jealousy" that were heralded on the title page. The fallen world has only one corporeal body and, as I shall argue, the relationship between the Zoas becomes a struggle to possess it.

This triangular structure, (Los, Enitharmon and Urizen: husband, wife and rival) represents a world which is radically opposed to Eternity. There is no longer the movement of the Zoas as they hearken to the calls of others; instead we see a struggle for supremacy between fixed monads. Los replies to Urizen's assertion that he is "God from Eternity to Eternity" (12:8, E307) with the following words:

> 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, E307)

The contest between Urizen and Los is not overtly resolved. As I have argued, the only resolution that it could have is that of a complete disintegration into loss. Blake has introduced a series of divine agencies to prevent this happening and to demonstrate the contingency of fallen life. The fallen world is therefore structured on two levels: on the surface we can see a perpetual and unresolved struggle between a number of discrete units for the control of the body of the world, and on a deeper level a gradual (and yet never completed) assimiliation of being to loss. This double structure

can be seen in the marriage feast of Los and Enitharmon, which surely must rank as one of the most extraordinary moments of the poem. This feast provides the reader with a model which describes the form of the fallen world and at the same time the structure of the poem itself.

The declaration of opposition and rivalry between Los and Urizen passes immediately to a "tableau" in which "the Prince of Light . . . sat beside the Seat of Los" (12:30, E307). This apparent harmony is not unexpected because despite their warfare Los and Urizen belong to the same world: they both contribute to the universe of Los (loss). This uneasy juxtaposition of Los and Urizen is the background for Los's attempted reconciliation with Enitharmon. As so often happens in instances of jealousy, it is the fact that Enitharmon is desired by another that makes her into a "love object" for Los. This attempted reconciliation completes the preparations for the wedding feast of Los and Enitharmon. The fallen world is precisely the repetition of this triangular configuration of Los, Urizen and Enitharmon. All of the Zoas appear around this feast and triangular structure. Luvah and Vala are seen in the skies above the feast. They are in a sense also present through Urizen, for, as I shall argue, he has assimilated them to his perspectives. Tharmas and Urthona are present in, respectively, the person and world of Los. Blake makes the presence of Tharmas more explicit than this. The "children of the elemental worlds" are "driven into the Void / Where Enion craves" (13:15,17-18, E308) and this is in turn defined as "the golden feast" (13:18, E308). In the fallen world, as the marriage feast of Los and Enitharmon implies and the narrative of The Four Zoas will recount, the Zoas group themselves around the ontological reality of Los (loss).[34]

The Song sung at the "Feast of Los and Enitharmon" makes clear that the triangular structure of jealousy which stands at the heart of the feast is the structure of war:

> The Horse is of more value that the Man. The Tyger fierce
> Laughs at the Human form. the Lion mocks & thirsts for blood
> They cry O Spider spread thy web! Enlarge thy bones & fill'd
> With marrow. sinews & flesh Exalt thyself attain a voice

> Call to thy dark armd hosts, for all the sons of Men muster together
> To desolate their cities! Man shall be no more! Awake O Hosts
> The bow string sang upon the hills! Luvah & Vala ride
> Triumphant in the bloody sky. & the Human form is no more. . . .
> (15:1-8, E309)

This struggle of Zoa against Zoa, and the warfare of man against man (a struggle which is built into the very fabric of the fallen world) is the gradual assimilation of the Zoas into the "Feast of Los and Enitharmon."

These pages of The Four Zoas, however, look well forward into the poem. The contention that Los represents the reality of the fallen world is made problematic, first of all, by a series of voices which all describe, often in quite contradictory and conflicting ways, the birth of Los, and secondly by the fact that the poem stops and seems to start again. Night the [Second] recounts a history which appears at first to qualify the birth that we have described.

Chapter Four

A Cacophony of Voices

> In all fictional works, each time a man is confronted with several alternatives, he chooses one and eliminates the others; in the fiction of Ts'ui Pên, he chooses - simultaneously - all of them. He creates, in this way, diverse futures, diverse times which themselves also proliferate and fork.
>
> Jorge Luis Borges[1]

(1) How many times can a Zoa be born?

This relatively straight-forward account of the genesis of Los is in no sense of the term a privileged account. Even in the course of reading the first Night it is continually undermined and qualified by a series of other narratives. These alternate accounts proliferate so quickly that before long the reader is encompassed by a babel of conflicting voices. This development is inevitable in a world that has been fractured, because each isolated ego assimilates the event of fracture in an idiosyncratic way. We are indeed in a world where everyone can feel the "dire woes" but no-one knows "his dark compeer":

> 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 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
> The throb the dolor the convulsion in soul sickening woes. . . .
>
> (70:12-17, E347)

However, as Donald Ault argues, and as the passage quoted above suggests,

> Blake's apparently "incommensurable" explanations of events are not mutually exclusive: they share the universal psychological/perceptual principle that exclusion or suppression of any central narrative element completely reorganizes the field of explanation.[2]

We will consider this claim first of all in relationship to the different accounts of the birth of Los that are offered in the Four Zoas, and secondly with regard to the poem's second beginning. Our discussion will be in some detail because this instance of a cumulative threat to the poem's narrative

structure (and the narrator's authority) provides us with a useful model for the structure of the poem as a whole.

Reference to the birth of Los is made on six occasions: (1) as part of the history of the division of Tharmas; (2) in the song sung by the Demons of the Deep in Night the First; (3) the words spoken by the messengers from Beulah to "the Council of God"; (4) by the Spectre of Urthona in Night the Fourth; (5) by the Spectre in Night the Seventh[a]; (6) and finally by the Shadow of Enitharmon in Night the Seventh[a].[3]

In the interests of clarity we can leave aside for the moment the accounts offered by the Demons of the Deep and the Shadow of Enitharmon. The first is no more than a brief allusion, while in the second the Shadow admits that she does not know how Los and Enitharmon are born (83:27-30, E359). We can also bracket the Spectre's narrative in Night the Fourth with what he says in Night the Seventh[a] because they are not in conflict and, in fact, the former seems to be an abbreviated version of the latter. However, even after this reduction we are still left with three extended accounts of Los's birth which seem radically to contradict one another. I have already discussed the birth of Los from the division of Tharmas at some length and so at this point I will briefly outline the second and third of these accounts.

The messengers from Beulah give the reader a relatively extensive overview of the "Wars of Death Eternal" (21:15, E311). Their narrative begins with three events which seem cotemporaneous: Albion "wept in the holy tent"; "his family / Slept"; and "Urizen awoke & Luvah woke" (21:16-19, E311). While the Universal Man was inactive, Luvah and Urizen attempted to reduce things to their will. Luvah cried:

> I will remain as well as thou & here with hands of blood
> Smite this dark sleeper in his tent then try my strength with thee. . . .
>
> (22:9-10, E311)

Consequently "Discord began" and the "firmament" was shaken with the sounds of conflict. Faced with this upheaval, Urthona's sons left the forge in order to join the conflict between Luvah, Urizen and the Eternal Man. Urthona, on the

other hand, seems to have been paralysed by the upheaval. When he heard "The Eternal voice," he stopped his active work and allowed his hammer to fall to the ground. This resulted in a tripartite division:

> 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 but not long his spectre fled
> To Enion & his body fell.
>
> (22:20-28, E312)

A radically different account of Los's birth is offered by the Spectre of Urthona. The Spectre claims that in Eternity he walked with the Shadow of Enitharmon in "undivided Essence"; she was his "garden of delight" while he was "the spirit in the garden" (84:5-6, E359). However, one day a female form appeared before the Universal Man. It was at this point that the Spectre fell from his forge into the womb of Enion. In this second location a further division occurred: the Spectre left the frail body of Enitharmon, Los and Enitharmon were born from Enion's womb, and the Spectre became "the Slave of that Creation I created" (84:31, E359):

> I sunk along
> The goary tide even to the place of seed & there dividing
> I was divided in darkness & oblivion thou an infant woe
> And I an infant terror in the womb of Enion
> My masculine spirit scorning the frail body issud forth
> From Enions brain In this deformed form leaving thee there
> Till times passd over thee but still my spirit returning hoverd
> And formd a Male to be a counterpart to thee O Love
> Darkend & Lost In due time issuing forth from Enions womb
> Thou & that demon Los wert born Ah jealousy & woe
> Ah poor divided dark Urthona now a Spectre wandering
> The deeps of Los the Slave of that Creation I created. . . .
>
> (84:20-31, E359)

As can quite readily be observed, the divergences between these accounts are nothing short of astonishing. In the first, Los and Enitharmon seem to be simply born from Tharmas and Enion. There are only extremely curtailed and cryptic references by voices within this account to Urthona; the Spectre of Urthona does not even appear, and we hear very little of the nature of Albion's division or the eternal discord that has led to the Fall. The

messengers of Beulah focus on the discord between the Zoas and their attempt to smite Albion. We hear in detail a description of the birth of Enitharmon and the Spectre, but they do not explicitly mention Los, or the birth of Los and Enitharmon from Enion. Finally, the Spectre of Urthona describes the division of Man, but he does not discuss the fight between the Zoas. More surprisingly, he assigns different birth-places to Los and Enitharmon.

What makes this proliferation of accounts particularly disturbing is the authenticity of their speech: there is no hint of duplicity or insincerity. In the scientific method of Bacon and Newton it is assumed that there is a neutral filter which can be placed between subject and object which will present the latter to the former in its entirety. If this were so, then conflicting accounts of the same phenomenon could only appear because of prejudice, an inadequate grasp of the scientific method or a simple failure to observe. In The Four Zoas, however, truth is inevitably mediated by interpretation and position. It is only in an embrace of the multitude of voices and memories which are found in the fallen world that truth, albeit in an equivocal and still conditioned fashion, is presented. That there is in fact one truth, that each speaker "partakes" of the "dire woes" of his "dark compeer" even though his senses cannot penetrate beyond the boundaries of the self, can be seen in the extraordinary fact that despite the conflicts between these three accounts of the birth of Los the reader nevertheless gains the impression that they are attempting to describe a common world. First, and perhaps most surprisingly, each narrative agrees that a Fall has taken place. Secondly, although seen from different perspectives, each narrative describes the division of "Man" as a separation between male and female powers. For Tharmas and Enion this is embedded in the very content and fact of their discourse, while the other accounts describe this division with relationship to Urthona. The first and third accounts also agree that Los and Enitharmon are born from Enion, while the second seems to lose sight of Enitharmon in Enion's "bosom." It must be admitted, however, that this is a rather slim basis for any assertion that these different accounts have a

single world for their object. The most damaging point would seem to be that the second narrative does not even agree that Los is born. The differences nevertheless dissolve, once the different perspectives of these narratives are taken into account.

Tharmas and Enion do not speak in any extended way of the sleep of Albion or the warfare between the Zoas because they are attempting to come to terms with, and are enclosed by, the fact of their own division. Los and Enitharmon are therefore born in this account as the reality of this particular fall; they are born to Tharmas and Enion. (As I have already remarked with regard to Enitharmon's Song of Death, this does not mean that they cannot appear or be born to the other Zoas.) For Tharmas and Enion the fact that Los may now be the reality of all the Zoas is both extraneous to their concern and not revealed by their particular perspective. It is interesting to note that Los and Enitharmon, as they appear within the constraints of this particular narrative, do not explicitly discuss the divisions of the other Zoas or the point of their own origin because like all "children" the fact of their own existence is necessarily their only reference point. Piaget makes this point when he writes that

> As regards the idea of succession, it is surprising to find that children not only fail to affirm that they were born after their parents, but that many of them claim anteriority - one might almost say priority, with all the value judgements that term implies. . . . from their point of view, time, and hence the existence of older people, begins with the dawn of their own memory. . . . Here we have a temporal egocentrism. . . .[4]

This also helps to explain why Los and Enitharmon do not speak of Urthona. As fragments of Urthona's being they can have no conception of the whole that preceded their individual identity. Los and Enitharmon are enclosed by the fact of their own birth.

By contrast with the first narrative, the messengers from Beulah are not enclosed within the process of a particular division. They are witnesses of the Fall and as such are able to maintain some sort of distance from it. Their account therefore does not exclude the aspects that are repressed by Tharmas and they are able to place Urthona's division in the context of an eternal

conflict. Nevertheless, their account has its own peculiar weaknesses. The birth of Los and Enitharmon is not seen by the messengers because they view the Fall from a world which is not itself fallen. This is why their account of events occurring in the unfallen world is good, but their view of the fallen world is limited. From Beulah the messengers can see the shape of the Fall: they can see Enitharmon, but to them she is a "corse" who has died "a death never to be revivd" (22:25-26, E312). They cannot see that Enitharmon is born as the form of the world of Tharmas and Enion, or that this world is animated by Los. Indeed, this is why they do not even mention Los, for Los is the ontological reality of a world to which they are outsiders.

The Spectre speaks from a position which is internal to Urthona's fall, and this conditions the nature of what he can see. Like Los, the Spectre is a fragment of the personality of Urthona; he therefore measures the events of the Fall with relation to his own birth. This is why Los is, for the Spectre, a baffling character. The Spectre can see the fact of Los, but not his particular history. With regard to Urthona, however, the situation is slightly different. Los is the reality of the fallen world and is therefore born as Urthona in the modality of privation. The Spectre on the other hand exists in Eternity as the power of retention. This means that, although he cannot describe the conflict which leads to his birth, he does have some dim idea of the unity which preceded fragmentation. The Spectre can remember the name of Urthona, but, unable to separate himself from his own egocentrism, he confuses himself with this identity. When the part separates itself from the whole, it labours under the delusion that it is the whole.

We can now summarize the relationship between the different accounts of the divisions of Urthona. In the first narrative Los and Enitharmon are born as the very reality of the division of Tharmas and Enion. This narrative therefore describes them as they appear from within this division. The messengers, as observers of the Fall, can describe the divisions of Urthona and the events which led up to this division in some detail. They see the division of the Spectre and Enitharmon from Urthona, but they cannot see the

ontological reality of the Fall. The messengers tell the same story as the narrator of our first account, but it is spoken from outside the experience of division.

The Spectre speaks from a place which is internal to the Fall, external to the divisions of Tharmas, but internal to the division of Urthona. He therefore traces an independent path to the place of seed (which can be associated with the world of Tharmas because it is the seed that gives form to the plant) and the womb of Enion. The Spectre therefore falls to the place where, in the first narrative, Los and Enitharmon are born, and that, in the second narrative, the messengers observe. He is, however, internal to what is given form by Tharmas. Tharmas and Enion give form to the shape of the Fall, but the Spectre, by tracing the world back to Urthona, allows us to see how what is given form is a reduction of the prophetic function. The tool that Urthona has forged (even if by default) and to which Tharmas has given form is Los. This is now the reality that the prophetic voice proclaims. The Spectre's account is therefore also commensurate with those offered by the narrator of Night the First and the messengers from Beulah.

In order to complete the picture that Blake builds up with the aid of this technique of conflicting and yet commensurate perspectives, it may be as well to offer a few words on the other accounts of the birth of Los that I have mentioned. The Demons of the Deep are associated with the fallen world and particularly with Urizen. It is interesting to compare the messengers' point of view with that of the Demons, for the latter speak from a perspective which is almost the inverse of the former. The Demons see the eternal conflict only in the most general of terms, but what they are able to describe, in horrifying detail, is the mechanics of the fallen world. For the Demons, Eternity is an unknown world. An account of the intricacies of Los's aetiology is obscured by the fact and reality of his birth:

> Tharmas endurd not, he fled howling. then a barren waste sunk down
> Conglobing in the dark confusion, Mean time Los was born
> And Thou O Enitharmon!
>
> (15:18-20, E309)

As creatures of the fallen world they are simply confronted with the reality of loss.

The Shadow of Enitharmon tells her story from the perspective of the female. As such she is able to describe the Fall and the conflict between the Zoas as it appears to the female powers:

> 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 Wonder siezd
> All heaven they saw him dark. they built a golden wall
> Round Beulah There he reveld 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 appeard. A Male
> And female shuddring pale the Fallen Man recoild
> From the Enormity & calld them Luvah & Vala.
> (83:7-16, E358)

Albion's desire is no longer for others but for a portion of himself. In fainting against the breast of Vala, he narcissistically attempts to embrace a portion of his own being. As the above quotation makes clear, this activity of the entire Man reproduces the same event in his members. Urizen is born into generation, and Luvah and Vala appear as divided beings. This inversion is the essential activity in which the female participates and she gives a clear account of it, but from this point on the Shadow's memory seems to fail. She knows that Urizen and Luvah both want "To bind the father & enslave the brethren," that from her perspective "all Beulah fell" (83:26, E359) and that Los and Enitharmon are born, but how this last event is accomplished she does not know:

> forgetfulness quite wrapd me up
> A period nor do I more remember till I stood
> Beside Los in the Cavern dark enslavd to vegetative forms. . . .
> (83:28-30, E359)

The inversion of male and female powers which the Shadow witnesses in fact precipitates the conflict between the Zoas, the Fall, and the birth of Los and Enitharmon, but this cannot be known from the female perspective. Once again this narrative conflicts with the others only when the perspective of its speaker is not taken into account.[5]

It would therefore seem that these accounts of the birth of Los are not

incommensurate. It should, however, be stressed that they are not commensurate from every perspective. In fact, from the point of view of any one of them reconciliation is impossible. Their unity can only be seen by a relationship to them which transcends perspective, which is able to embrace each one of them and so allow each voice to rise. When this is done, this cacophony of voices, which includes participants in the Fall, observers from above and below the fallen world, and representatives from the active and passive powers, suddenly (in a way which suggests the coming together of the apocalypse in Night the Ninth) seems to be part of a single world. This world is that of Los: the reality and ontology of privation which is now the basis of the fallen world. The image that the reader is left with is one that is both shifting and stable, sublime and beautiful. The sense that one gains of the shape of Urthona's division cannot be separated from the warring chorus of voices in which it finds its form. This embrace of the many accounts of Los's birth allows us to approach the problem of the poem's second beginning. Is the account of the fall and birth of Los which is offered by Night the [Second] commensurate with Los's birth from the divisions of Tharmas?

(2) Two falls? Or one fall seen twice?

In Blake's oeuvre the Fall is consistently described as a movement from an Eternity which is based on relationship to a spatio-temporal world which is held and constituted by a solipsistic self. We can imagine this as the reduction of the Lion and the Ox to a single ontology; the gradual assimilation of the different modalities and wisdoms of love, touch, prophecy and reason to a single perspective. This Fall is an assimilation of all of the Zoas to the single reality of Los. At the time of the Fall we therefore have not one but a whole series of falls, each of which traces a separate trajectory to the single perspective of the fallen world. A Fall such as this clearly cannot be adequately described by a narrative - such as those

exemplified by Urizen's books of metal - which attempt to reduce their subject matter to that which can be seen from a single perspective. A narrative of this kind cannot represent the movement from relationship to solipsism, or give a sense of the multiple and simultaneous paths followed by the Zoas. To describe this Fall as it appears to a single observer is like starting a story by finishing it, or opening a book by closing it: the story cannot be told and the book cannot be opened because the writer is him/herself the conclusion of the story.

This is, of course, the problem that I discussed at the end of my chapter on The Book of Urizen; however, in the earlier poem it became an impasse, while in The Four Zoas this difficulty is to some extent overcome. Blake achieves this by quite consciously structuring the poem on two levels. The Four Zoas is, first of all, a sequentially ordered text: it unfolds chronologically through nine Nights and, at least on the level of the reading experience, line follows line in a temporal progression. This level and its form is appropriate for an isolated and fallen self (whether reader or writer) who must see the world from a fixed perspective and can only grasp others (or truth) as they are unfolded to him/her. The Four Zoas is therefore, on this level, held in a single perspective and unfolded sequentially: it is a production of the fallen world.

The Four Zoas is, however, on a different level, an embrace which allows the voices of others to arise. Where The Book of Urizen underlined the reduction of which it was part by excluding all dialogue and (apart from one exception) first-person speech, The Four Zoas is constructed around a series of dialogues and monologues. In this later poem, therefore, the narrator's voice becomes no more than one voice amongst many. We have already considered this with regard to the multiple accounts of the birth of Los. The writer's art and the reader's exercise becomes an embrace which allows these different voices to arise. So generous is this embrace in The Four Zoas that, as I have already suggested, the clamour of voices which arises threatens the form which is forged by the writer and the reader of the poem with disintegration.

Nowhere is this tension between the clarity of the poem's narrative form and the strength of the same poem's many voices more explicitly experienced than in the existence of two first Nights.

We can simplify the following discussion by arguing that in general terms the mass of different trajectories which make up the Fall can be reduced to two basic movements. On the one hand Tharmas and Urthona retreat, while on the other Urizen and Luvah seem to advance. (The first is described in Night the First and the second in Night the [Second].) These two kinds of withdrawal give us, particularly on the level of chronological time, two quite distinct origins of the Fall. We have a chronology of retreat and of advance into the same closed world. This is why the poem has two Night the Firsts, or rather, a second Night which closes with the statement "End of the Second Night" (36:20, E326) and yet which appears as, and claims to be, a second beginning. As I have argued, events must appear and unfold to Blake and the reader in sequence. In this instance what appears to the reader is a second beginning which is in fact simultaneous with the first. On the level of narrative form this difficulty is inescapable: either A is the beginning and B follows or vice versa. In The Four Zoas Blake attempts to sidestep this problem, and so represent two basic movements of fall which are in fact simultaneous, by putting the second origin in the position of the second Night, but at the same time not erasing its claims to be the first Night. From Blake's perspective we therefore have two sequential Nights; however, the erasure of part of the title of the latter Night - so that we read "Night the . . . " - and the rhetoric of its own beginning, means that without denying that it is for Blake and the reader a second Night (which moreover leads into Night the Third) we can also hear its claims to be, in its own terms, the beginning of the poem. The simultaneous and conflicting trajectories of withdrawal and advance are therefore held within, but not assimilated to a single chronology. A reading of The Four Zoas, and an account of the birth of Los, must therefore turn and, without retracing its steps, begin again.

(3) Another beginning

The narratives of retreat and advance which are contained, respectively, by the First and Second Nights are not as self-contained as the preceding discussion might have implied. On the level of form, the perspective and narrative of one simply excludes the possibility of the other. However, in unexplained references, silences, inexplicable failures of memory and the fact of incompleteness, one can see the suggestion of other narratives and perspectives. A completed narrative inevitably contains the shadow or negative determination of the other stories that it could have been. That there are events occurring at the time of the Fall which escape the narrative of Night the First can be seen in the otherwise inexplicable descent of Urizen to Enitharmon and Los, reference by Tharmas to "The men" (4:15, E301) and "Jerusalem" (4:9, E301), and numerous other references in the first Night to a universal conflict, a prelapsarian state and a divine agency. The most explicit prefiguration of Night the [Second]'s account of the Fall is contained in the report of the messengers of Beulah. This gives us a quite detailed account of the conflict between Urizen and Luvah, and their resolve to "smite" Albion. The messengers' account of the struggle which precipitates the Fall, however, seems to conflict quite flagrantly with the events narrated at the beginning of Night the [Second]. We will briefly consider one of these "contradictions" in order to illustrate the relationship between these two beginnings of the poem.

In Night the First we hear Luvah and Urizen plotting the death of Albion. They separately resolve to smite Albion and seize his authority for themselves. In Night the [Second] death does come to Albion but his authority is not seized by Urizen; in fact he gives his Sceptre away:

> Rising upon his Couch of Death Albion beheld his Sons
> Turning his Eyes outward to Self. losing the Divine Vision
> Albion calld Urizen & said. Behold these sickning Spheres
> Whence is this Voice of Enion that soundeth in my Porches
> Take thou possession! take this Scepter! go forth in my might
> For I am weary, & must sleep in the dark sleep of Death. . . .
> (23:1-6, E313)

This apparent conflict between the two accounts arises because the same event has been assimilated to different perspectives. Albion is his sons, just as the body is the organs which constitute it; but the reverse is also true. The Zoas make up Albion, just as it is the congruence of various organs that makes up the body. In order fully to present this event a narrative must therefore locate the cause in two places at once: in the part and in the whole. The Zoas' actions of withdrawal effect a withdrawal in the corporate identity and vice versa. The first lines of the above passage are a good example of the technique Blake adopts to portray this mutuality. On the one hand "Rising" is in apposition to "Turning": Albion is the subject of both verbs. We can therefore say that Albion both rises on his "Couch of Death" and turns "his Eyes outward to Self." It is an action on the part of Albion that causes him to lose the "Divine Vision." However, one can argue that "Sons" is the subject of "Turning." It is therefore the activity of the Sons that makes Albion focus on a part rather than the whole and so causes him to lose "the Divine Vision." The effect of this ambiguity is to make the reader unsure of which action takes precedence. Albion and his Sons withdraw. This withdrawal (whether precipitated by himself or his Sons) results in an act of abdication. He now gives his Sceptre to Urizen.

This act, in which Albion relinquishes control over his Sceptre and himself withdraws, is at the same time the triumph of Urizen's plans to gain control of the "dark sleeper." Urizen has taken and been given "control" over Albion and his members. Whichever narrative explanation one adopts the result is the same:

> First he beheld the body of Man pale, cold, the horrors of death
> Beneath his feet shot thro' him as he stood in the Human Brain
> And all its golden porches grew pale with his sickening light
> No more Exulting for he saw Eternal Death beneath
> Pale he beheld futurity; pale he beheld the Abyss
> Where Enion blind & age bent wept in direful hunger craving
> All rav'ning like the hungry worm, and like the silent grave
> Mighty was the draught of Voidness to draw Existence in. . . .
> (23:11-24:1, E313-14)

Urizen rises from the feast and his action reveals the reality of Los.[6]

The accounts of Albion's withdrawal are therefore not commensurate from every perspective. For a linear, sequential narrative the accounts offered by the narrator and the messengers are simply contradictory. However, if these accounts are embraced, if the poem's form and the reader's voice allow them to coexist, then the two accounts can be seen to be congruent renderings of the same reality.

All this is very well for a particular incident such as Albion's withdrawal, or as a method to approach the various voices embraced by the poem. In discussing the poem's double beginning, however, it is, at least on a first reading, the differences between the two pairs of Zoas that are most striking. For example, our earlier discussion of the nature of the Fall is rather severely questioned by the apparent failure of Urizen and Luvah to separate from their Spectres, and the interesting fact that the horizon of their world is not formed by their Emanations in the same way as occurred with Urthona and Tharmas.

Without denying these differences, it is, however, possible to say that on the ontological level - with regard to what the actions of the Zoas mean for their being - the strategies of Luvah, Urizen, Tharmas and Urthona are equivalent. All the Zoas are following paths which lead to the universe of Los and Enitharmon. The levels on which passive and active withdrawal are dissimilar and yet equivalent movements can be shown by drawing an analogy from the psychology of the individual.

In passive withdrawal the Zoa retreats into his constituted world. As I have argued in detail, in this movement the Spectre and the passive power who constitute this world achieve separate existences. Like the adolescent who withdraws from his/her sexual desires, the body (the Emanation) is held in the grip of the will (the Spectre) and not allowed to open to others. In this way the body becomes a shell and not a gateway, and the active self (Zoa) is perpetually at the point of disappearance. Whatever the surface manifestation of this withdrawal, <u>its ontological reality is loss (Los)</u>. However, this is

not the only way to withdraw and so enter a world of loss. Macbeth, for example, withdraws from the community of humanity by an act. Similarly, in Mandelstam's poem on Stalin, Stalin is described as a "mountaineer."[7] Stalin and Macbeth are both active, but their action takes them away from reality. In this kind of instance, the person (Zoa) uses his will (Spectre) to hold and retain a world which suits his desire. We therefore see an alliance and not a separation between Zoa and Spectre.

In order to achieve this alliance, however, the effects of this act (Emanation) must be excluded because it is the embodiment of these acts which deny the efficacy of the Zoa's alliance with the will. The Zoa therefore still divides from his Emanation. This kind of withdrawal is exemplified in The Four Zoas by Urizen. Urizen does not passively withdraw, in fact he ascends:

> Urizen rose from the bright Feast like a star thro' the evening sky
> Exulting at the voice that calld him from the Feast of envy. . . .
> (23:9-10, E309)

This act, Urizen's assumption of the Sceptre of the whole man, as I have argued, immediately reveals to Urizen the reality of Los. This is the world where Enion weeps (23:16, E313) and Los and Enitharmon are born.

Passive withdrawal is a retreat that one associates with characters such as Thel, while active withdrawal is a retreat from the world that one can observe in megalomaniacs, yet both movements create a world of loss. In considering the two beginnings of the poem, we are therefore looking at two movements which are simultaneous. A single perspective cannot hope to contain them because they travel along different paths. Nevertheless, the two trajectories are not incommensurate. If the reader attempts to imagine their simultaneity a more complete account of the Fall emerges from this chorus of voices. Although Luvah and Urizen follow different trajectories from Tharmas and Urthona, they arrive in the same ontological reality and the same world. We must consider this latter claim in more detail.

(4) Another birth of Los

Urizen, of course, attempts to create a world which will exclude the reality of his actions. This process takes the inevitable form of an assimilation and appropriation of the other Zoas to his perspective: in other words, the world no longer offers the voice of others to Urizen. Now, at least from Urizen's point of view, the Zoas (including the reality of loss) exist only to the extent that they appear in his world. Urizen's constituted world is therefore built on a denial of reality. One by one each of the Zoas is harnessed to his world. Luvah, as the "victim" of Urizen's aggression (and his own), is the one who is most completely assimilated. Luvah is contained by Urizen's world just as the Israelites were swallowed up by the world of Babylon:

> Luvah was cast into the Furnaces of affliction & sealed
> And Vala fed in cruel delight, the furnaces with fire. . . .
> (25:40-41, E317)

> And when Luvah age after age was quite melted with woe
> The fires of Vala faded like a shadow cold & pale
> An evanescent shadow. last she fell a heap of Ashes
> Beneath the furnaces a woful heap in living death
> Then were the furnaces unseald with spades & pickaxes
> Roaring let out the fluid, the molten metal ran in channels
> Cut by the plow of ages held in Urizens strong hand
> In many a valley, for the Bulls of Luvah dragd the Plow. . . .
> (28:3-10, E318)

It is now the Bulls of Luvah that provide the energy to drag Urizen's plough and the vanquished actually assume the form which has been cut by Urizen. The oppressed are now the ground to the figure of Urizen's accomplishment, just as the suffering of countless slaves is the unseen negative of the positive achievement of, for example, the pyramids. To use a Freudian analogy, Luvah is comparable to the repressed and rerouted libido that is the negative determination of all of civilization's achievements.

Tharmas is assimilated in a different way. He is the universe which surrounds and defines the horizon of Urizen's world, the reality (rather than the energy) which the conscious self has excluded in the process of its formation:

> they reard the mountains & the rocks & hills
> On broad pavilions, on pillard roofs & porches & high towers
> In beauteous order, thence arose soft clouds & exhalations
> Wandering even to the sunny Cubes of light & heat
> For many a window ornamented with sweet ornaments
> Lookd out into the World of Tharmas, where in ceaseless torrents
> His billows roll where monsters wander in the foamy paths. . . .
> (33:1-7, E321)

From the point of view of the figure, the ground is seen only as the outer limit of itself. Similarly, from within Urizen's world Tharmas's "ceaseless torrents" appear to be contained and marshalled by the windows which open out to them. Tharmas's world is merely the outside which defines the inside, the panorama which completes the attractions belonging to the room. From the point of view of the ground, however, the figure is in the process of being engulfed. The world of Tharmas is, as we have seen, the world of loss and this is in fact the reality that Urizen wants to keep at a distance. The loss and suffering of Urthona, Luvah, Tharmas and even of Urizen himself, are what Urizen's constructed world is founded on and also what it wants to exclude. This is why Urizen is comforted when he sees his world "flow forth like visible out of the invisible" (33:10, E321). Like the Pharaohs, Urizen is deaf to the cries and blind to the reality of the oppressed.

Urizen is able to enjoy his comfort for only a short time. To maintain a world which denies its own ground and sources of energy is clearly an impossible task. The first signs of instability can be found in the presence of numerous voices which contradict or transcend Urizen's world. On page 33 we gain a sense of the Divine activity which continues outside of the "Mundane shell" (33:11-18, E321-22). Luvah's voice, "Patient in affliction" and "reasoning from the loins," and Vala's voice from around the furnaces, make present the very reality that Urizen denies. Vala is described as being "like a shadow" which "oft appeard to Urizen" (30:56, E320). Tharmas's world, as I have already suggested, reminds us of the events of Night the First and so once again suggests a reality which Urizen has excluded.

This recognition of a world which is not encompassed by Urizen subtly changes into a sense of the instability of Urizen's world when Los and

Enitharmon appear. This couple have the power to inspire in Urizen himself a sense of fear and foreboding:

> O bright [Ahania] a Boy is born of the dark Ocean
> Whom Urizen doth serve, with Light replenishing his darkness
> I am set here a King of trouble commanded here to serve
> And do my ministry to those who eat of my wide table
> All this is mine yet I must serve & that Prophetic boy
> Must grow up to command his Prince but hear my determind Decree
> Vala shall become a Worm in Enitharmons Womb
> Laying her seed upon the fibres soon to issue forth
> And Luvah in the loins of Los a dark & furious death
> Alas for me! what will become of me at that dread time?
> (38:2-11, E326)

His fear would seem to be well founded. Los and Enitharmon certainly are not bound by Urizen's "care & power & severity" (28:24, E318). They are instead "drawn down by their desires" (34:1, E322), they drink "in tenfold joy / From all the sorrow of Luvah & the labour of Urizen" (32:3-4, E321), and they descend to "the woes / Of Vala & the woes of Luvah" in order to "draw in their delights" (30:54-55, E320). They seem to belong to this world in a way which Urizen does not. Their ease and sense of belonging remind one of Adam and Eve, who at the beginning of time found themselves in a world created for them. So complete was the identity between Adam and Eve and their surroundings that the animals accepted without qualification the names that were given to them by this pair. For Los and Enitharmon the correspondence between self and world is even more complete because the reality of Urizen's world is loss. Their descent is therefore nothing like the descent of Urizen to their world in Night the First. Urizen descended only once and then took his place at their marriage feast. Los and Enitharmon go down to Urizen's world three times in the course of five pages and each descent adds to the impression of an overwhelming force.

More decisively, Los and Enitharmon attempt to reduce Urizen's world to its foundations by planting "divisions in the Soul of Urizen & Ahania" (34:3, E322). Their strategy is remarkably astute, for Ahania is the weak point in Urizen's constructed world. As I have argued, when Urizen and Luvah advance, the Spectre remains part of their active identities because they are concerned to project and retain what they want to be. The Spectre is,

therefore, still intimately associated with the male power. In this situation the female is not an enclosing force that threatens the male with extinction and vies with the male for control of the world, but the passive power which would actualize Urizen's illusions and so provide contact with a world of others. Urizen's relationship with Ahania is therefore ambivalent. He needs her to give his illusions some form of actuality, but it is this very actuality which poses the gravest threat to his world. The construction of Urizen's world moves him further and further away from Ahania. This is why, when Urizen returns "from his immense labours and travels," he finds that Ahania now has a form which is separate from his:

> Astonishd & Confounded he beheld
> Her shadowy form now Separate he shudderd & was silent
> Till her caresses & her tears revivd him to life & joy. . . .
> (30:45-47, E320)

The actuality of Urizen's world is, as I have demonstrated, something quite different from his illusions, and yet Urizen requires Ahania to revive "him to life & joy." It is because Ahania embodies Urizen's world that at the end of Night the [Second] she is able to hear Enion's lament and it is also why Los is able to draw her into Enion's Vortex (34:97-98, E324). To divide Urizen and Ahania is to widen the gap between illusion and reality, to complete Urizen's "wondrous work" and at the same time to collapse it by severing it from actuality.

This collapse occurs when Urizen attempts to deny the voice of his passive power in its entirety. In Night the Third, when Urizen's task of construction seems to be completed, Ahania attempts to show to Urizen the ground of this achievement. She argues that Urizen is compelled to bind others in order to render his world stable:

> No longer now obedient to thy will thou art compell'd
> To forge the curbs of iron & brass to build the iron mangers
> To feed them with intoxication from the wine presses of Luvah
> Till the Divine Vison & Fruition is quite obliterated
> They call thy lions to the fields of blood, they rowze thy tygers
> Out of the halls of justice. . . .
> (39:4-9, E326-27)

Urizen is a dictator who has gained power by subjugating others. However,

from Ahania's perspective this means that even Urizen has left his true self and has defined himself in opposition to the vanquished. Now the victor must divert all of his energy to the forging of "curbs of iron and brass" in order to ensure that the defeated do not rise again. The victor is therefore paradoxically bound to and formed by the vanquished.

Ahania also tells Urizen that he is not king over all and that he has himself been "set . . . leader of . . . hosts" by the "Eternal One" (38:15, E326); and when she tells Urizen her version of the Fall, it is one which does not mention Urizen's accomplishment. Instead she puts before him, once more, the Abyss, the indefinite space which at the beginning of Night the [Second] "shrunk" his soul "with horror" and prompted him to begin his work of construction (repression). The reality of Albion's narcissistic enclosure and worship of "A sweet entrancing self delusion, a watry vision of Man" (40:5, E327), Luvah's attempt to "gain dominion" over Albion, and the privation created by the Fall, all attain a voice in Albion's terrified recognition that "Eternal death haunts all my expectation / Rent from Eternal Brotherhood we die & are no more" (41:8-9, E328).

Urizen responds to Ahania's revelations by excluding her:

> Am I not God said Urizen. Who is Equal to me
> Do I not stretch the heavens abroad or fold them up like a
> garment . . .
> (42:19-20, E328),

and he then "cast Ahania to the Earth" (43:3, E328). This means that the active power has denied the necessity of physicality, mind has denied the reality of the body:

> 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, E328-29)

However, this causes Urizen's world to dissolve:

> She fell like lightning
> Then fled the sons of Urizen from his thunderous throne petrific
> They fled to East & West & left the North & South of Heaven
> 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
> Triumphing even to the Stars at bright Ahanias fall
>
> Down from the dismal North the Prince in thunders & thick clouds
> As when the thunderbolt down falleth on the appointed place
> Fell down down rushing ruining thundering shuddering
> Into the Caverns of the Grave & places of Human Seed
> Where the impressions of Despair & Hope enroot forever
> A world of Darkness. Ahania fell far into Non Entity. . . .
> (43:24-44:5, E329)

This collapse is the very same fall as that described in Night the First except that now it is told from the perspective of Urizen. The narrative of The Four Zoas has taken us full circle; the two basic trajectories of advance and retreat, and the four paths that the falling Zoas take, have all arrived at the same point. We have recounted at length the reduction of Urthona and Tharmas to Los. Now Urizen's world has taken him (and Luvah in Urizen) by a reductio-ad-absurdum to loss. Ahania and Urizen fall to "the Caverns of the Grave & places of Human Seed," and the latter becomes "a formless unmeasurable Death" (52:12, E335).

This fall brings us in terms of ontological time back to (or up to) the beginning of the poem. From this collapse Tharmas appears as "a shadow of smoke":

> But from the Dolorous Groan one like a shadow of smoke appeard
> And human bones rattling together in the smoke & stamping
> The nether Abyss & gnasshing in fierce despair. panting in sobs
> Thick short incessant bursting sobbing. deep despairing stamping
> struggling
> Struggling to utter the voice of Man struggling to take the features
> of Man. Struggling
> To take the limbs of Man at length emerging from the smoke
> Of Urizen dashed in pieces from his precipitant fall
> Tharmas reard up his hands & stood on the affrighted Ocean . . .
> (44:14-21, E329-30),

and at this point Tharmas and Enion repeat in its essentials the exchange that was heard at the beginning of Night the First. Tharmas cries that he is a fool to lose his "sweetest bliss" and that "rage & mercy are alike" to him (45:1,29, E330). Enion feels as if she has been destroyed by Tharmas.[8]

In Night the First, Los and Enitharmon gained strength from Tharmas's division. Similarly, at the beginning of Night the Fourth it is these two characters again who emerge in strength from this cataclysm:

> But Tharmas rode on the dark Abyss. the voice of Tharmas rolld
> Over the heaving deluge. he saw Los & Enitharmon Emerge
> In strength & brightness from the Abyss. . . .
> (47:1-3, E331)

This, of course, is no different from the other births of Los that we have discussed. The event of Los and Enitharmons' emergence from the Abyss, which necessarily appears as a series of points in a linear narrative, is in fact the point at which the different paths of the Zoas meet. Tharmas, Urizen, Luvah and Urthona meet in this emergence of Los and Enitharmon. Once again the only reality that Tharmas and Enion can give birth to is loss.

These first three Nights must therefore be seen as occurring on three quite distinct levels. In the first, the Nights appear as a linear sequence which therefore has a certain cumulative effect. However, this sequence is disputed by the competing narratives generated by the paths followed by different Zoas. The first three Nights are therefore, on a second level, a series of different trajectories which are held within the embrace offered by the chronology of the poet's voice. Thirdly, the first Night begins and the third Night ends at the same ontological time. This gives the impression that the different trajectories described in these Nights are in fact cotemporaneous. Superimposed on the previous two levels is the form of a circle. This third level also underlines the single point to which all of the paths taken by the Zoas lead. Each one of the Zoas falls to the world of Los and Enitharmon. From out of this circle the single narrative line of the following Nights proceeds. This can happen because the convergence of the different trajectories of Urizen, Luvah, Tharmas and Urthona in Los gives a single perspective from which the fallen world can be ordered. It is from this vantage point that the unitary time and space of the fallen world appears. To this point the poem has been concerned to describe the reduction of Eternity to loss. In Night the Fourth this reduction is completed and a fallen history emerges in which Los constructs a world from his own perspective. In order for this to happen Los must appear as a separate and conscious being. The world of Los must come of age.

Chapter Five

The Elaboration of Loss

> I am the angel who dwells in the point where lines fork. Whoever retraces the way of divided things encounters me, whoever descends to the bottom of contradictions runs into me, whoever mingles again what was separated feels my membraned wing brush his cheek!
> Italo Calvino[1]

(1) Urthona, Enitharmon, Los and the Spectre

The fall into the reality of Los and Enitharmon is a reduction to the ontology which grounds the fallen world. Until this is completed the sequential unfolding of the Nights sets up a chorus which attempts to deny the multiplicity of times and trajectories which is its subject matter. It is undoubtedly the tension between these two levels of the text which makes any approach to The Four Zoas arduous. Even at the beginning of the Fourth Night, however, this conflict between vehicle and tenor, form and subject matter, is not over. The reality and ontology of Los has been formed, but it still remains to elaborate and embody this world. Only when the unitary time and space of our world has fully appeared will the gap between form and subject matter be closed. The next three Nights of The Four Zoas take the form of a relentless elaboration of the break or gap that has opened in the world; however, before we can consider this process we must attempt to describe in a little more detail the relationship between Los, the Spectre of Urthona and Enitharmon, who together form the substance of the fallen world.

In the previous chapter I drew attention to the similarities between Tharmas and Urthona. I argued that because both Zoas withdrew from the struggle between Luvah and Urizen their divisions could be profitably compared. Without wanting to deny these similarities there are nevertheless a number of important differences which should not be overlooked. Most

important of these is the rather surprising fact that Tharmas divides into three portions (Tharmas, Enion and Spectre), while Urthona divides into four (Urthona, Los, Enitharmon and Spectre). In addition we can also observe that Tharmas remains an actor in the fallen world while Urthona seems to be only peripherally present. He appears as "Dark Urthona" (138:1, E406):

> North stood Urthonas stedfast throne a World of Solid darkness
> Shut up in stifling obstruction rooted in dumb despair. . . .
> (74:17-18, E351)

Urthona is in some way hidden in the fallen world.

Urthona's division into four gives rise to a number of disturbing ambiguities and apparent confusions which are not resolved by applying the model offered by Tharmas. There is, for example, no mention of Urthona's Spectre in Night the First, [Second], or Third and when, in Night the Fourth, he suddenly appears on the scene it seems as if it is Tharmas's rape of Enitharmon that has delivered him to the fallen world. Yet, in the Spectre's own account we are told that he existed in the prelapsarian world and it is the appearance of Los which is unexplained. This second contention seems to be supported by the rather extraordinary fact that not one of the many accounts of division and fall offered to us by The Four Zoas details the division of Los from Urthona. The problem is further complicated by the claim of the Spectre to be Urthona. We can attempt to resolve these confusions by returning once more to the poem's foundations.

I have argued that the Fall is a movement away from a world of relationship and into a world defined by the isolated self, where man "has made himself his own creator and judge."[2] This is, with regard to Urizen, Luvah and Tharmas, an alienation which precipitates them into the world of Los. In the path followed by Urthona, however, this reduction follows a different course. Urthona is clearly not reduced to the world of one of the other Zoas; instead, he is reduced to what is an authentic modality of his own being. Urthona is the "earth owner," the prophet who gives voice to the reality of the world. The prophet walks in the realms of actuality and is therefore the owner of the earth, or the foundations on which our lives

stand. The reduction of Urthona to Los is therefore not a fall to another self, but to what is a portion of his being.

When Urthona withdraws from his forge we can initially see the same process of division as in Tharmas. Reality is now formed in the intersection between the Spectre (who holds a particular world stable) and Enitharmon (the power which forms that world). The division of Urthona is therefore at first a division into Spectre, Emanation and Zoa. However, in falling into the reality of privation Urthona enters a different form of himself. We can picture this as a kind of inversion: the articulate, expansive prophet is now closed within the actuality of withdrawal and all he can give voice to is loss. Or, alternatively, the form held by the Spectre and Enitharmon is the shape of Los. Something of the mechanics of this inversion is suggested in the Spectre's own account of the division of Urthona:

> I was divided in darkness & oblivion thou an infant woe
> And I an infant terror in the womb of Enion
> My masculine spirit scorning the frail body issud forth
> From Enions brain In this deformed form leaving thee there
> Till times passd over thee but still my spirit returning hoverd
> And formd a Male to be a counterpart to thee. . . .
> (84:22-27, E359/$E_2$352)

The Spectre retains or embraces Enitharmon and so (like Tharmas's Spectre) holds the fallen world stable. However, he continues:

> O Love
> Darkend & Lost In due time issuing forth from Enions womb
> Thou & that demon Los wert born Ah jealousy & woe
> Ah poor divided dark Urthona now a Spectre wandering
> The deeps of Los the Slave of that Creation I created. . . .
> (84:27-31, E359/$E_2$352)

In other words, before the Spectre announces the apparently inexplicable appearance of Los he suggests almost casually, and certainly without conscious recognition of the thought, that Los is the reality of his own creation. Enitharmon is "Love" which has been "Darkend & Lost."

We can say therefore that the Spectre is correct when he claims to be Urthona (84:30, E359/$E_2$352) and even, in a certain sense, when he asserts that he is Los's "real Self" (85:35, E368/$E_2$353). The world held in the embrace between Enitharmon and the Spectre is the shape of Urthona without

motion. However, unlike the other Spectres (and thanks to divine agency) the Spectre of Urthona is a Spectre of the Living and not of the Dead; his world is based on the reality of privation. This means that the inverse of the Spectre's proposition is also correct. Los is the "real Self" of both the Spectre and Urthona.

One of the corollaries of Urthona's reduction to the reality of privation is that a rudimentary relationship between the active power (as Los), passive power (Enitharmon) and the Spectre still exists. Thus, Enitharmon is born with Los and until her "rape" at the beginning of Night the Fourth she seems to be at least partially connected to Los. When she is torn apart Los

> howld at the rending asunder all the fibres rent
> Where Enitharmon joind to his left side in griding pain
> He falling on the rocks bellowd his Dolor. till the blood
> Stanch'd, then in ululation waild his woes upon the wind. . . .
> (49:7-10, E332)

Similarly, until this point the Spectre and Los are not distinguishable. It is because this elementary relationship persists (within the grasp of Providence) that Urthona does not become a "formless unmeasurable Death" (52:12, E335) and Enitharmon does not join Enion, Ahania and Vala on the "margin of Non Entity" (46:12, E331). It is this tripartite relationship (Los, Enitharmon and the Spectre - which together is the substance of Dark Urthona) which forms the reality of loss.

To summarize this rather difficult point: Luvah, Urizen and Tharmas experience a movement into the nothingness of loss. Their Emanations (in these first Nights) are perpetually on the point of disintegration. The being of these Zoas is therefore perpetually being assimilated to loss. Urthona also experiences this reduction; he divides into Spectre and Emanation, and of course the reality of this division is loss. However, unlike the other Zoas, Los is an authentic part or modality of his being and this portion of his being is held by Providence. Where on the one hand the other Zoas fall to Los (and are therefore alienated from their own nature), on the other hand the fragments of Urthona's being are held and given a rudimentary coherence.

Urthona, like the other Zoas, lives in Los (loss), but the shape of the world of Los (Los, Enitharmon, Spectre) is a form of himself. This form is that of Dark Urthona: the prophet turned away from others, the poet without a voice. Finally, this is why Los does not figure in any of the accounts of the actual division of Urthona. Los appears in the fallen world as the reality of the Zoas' divisions. Urthona, as the articulate prophet who is now "Shut up in stifling obstruction" and "rooted in dumb despair," remains somewhat outside of the action of the poem because he is now the silent and fractured being who is given shape by the rudimentary relationship between Los, the Spectre of Urthona and Enitharmon.

(2) The discovery of others

In the opening Nights of The Four Zoas we see Los in the self-assurance of childhood. He therefore does not question his own nature or that of the world that surrounds him. Los is like Adam in Paradise, with the important qualification that he is in a fallen paradise. This is why John Kilgore describes Los in these early Nights as "a merely natural imagination."[3] There seems to be no essential gulf between the nature of Los and the world in which he finds himself.

As Los grows in years he discovers, like all children, that this harmony is illusory. The innocent lamb finds itself in a world of wolves and tygers. In the first Night of The Four Zoas the contingent nature of Los's harmony was suggested in the image of the wedding feast. The figures of the Demons of the Deep, Urizen, Tharmas and the Divine Vision in the Robes of Luvah, which framed the rapprochement between Los and Enitharmon, suggested an uncomfortable degree of participation by others in Los's world. It is as if the other Zoas form the ground against which the marriage is defined. The relationship between Los and the other Zoas, and the cause of the instability inherent in Los's world, can be illustrated by adopting a spatial metaphor for a moment.

In withdrawal the Zoas present the "cliffs" (BU13:55, E77) of their separate selves to one another. Los, as the reality of this separation, is the space between the cliffs; he is the actuality of privation. The Zoas depend upon loss for their definition, for if there were no space and reality of privation they could not be isolated selves. However, at the same time the reverse of this is also true; Los depends upon the Zoas for his definition. If the cliffs were to completely disappear Los would no longer be outlined and so he would vanish. This in fact happens in Night the Ninth. When the Zoas resume relationship with one another the cliffs are erased and Los vanishes. In Night the Ninth Los vanishes in the midst of a movement towards unity. In Night the Third and Fourth the complete assimilation of the Zoas to Los portends a radically different disappearance. As I have argued, the loss of Urizen's world is a gain for the world of Los and Enitharmon: they emerge in triumph from this debacle. However, while this collapse seems to have increased Los's power it has also brought the entire universe close to extinction. Los depends upon the other Zoas for his definition. If the Zoas were all to become a "formless unmeasurable Death," the cliffs which define the reality of Los would vanish and we would be left with an all encompassing lack of definition. It hardly makes sense to call an all-pervasive nothing a privation.

This formation of one by the other, in which Los is the reality of the Zoas' withdrawal and yet depends upon this same withdrawal for his being, is a relationship which must be rigorously distinguished from the relationships which constitute Eternity. In Eternity the substance of the world is formed in the unit call-response, while in the fallen world it is clearly cause-effect. The relationship between Los and the other Zoas exemplifies a world of "cruel Works,"

> wheel without wheel, with cogs tyrannic
> Moving by compulsion each other: not as those in Eden: which
> Wheel within Wheel in freedom revolve in harmony and peace.
> (J15:18-20, E159)

The very substance of the fallen world is therefore formed in war and

struggle. A movement of Urizen's world towards collapse creates a reverse movement in Los's wheel and he gains ascendancy.

At the beginning of Night the Fourth this struggle has become extreme. Luvah has been overcome by Urizen, Albion has fallen, Urizen has himself dissolved and the universal combat has been narrowed to a single conflict. Los cries:

> We have drunk up the Eternal man by our unbounded power
> Beware lest we also drink up thee rough demon of the waters
> Our God is Urizen the King. King of the Heavenly hosts
> We have no other God but he thou father of worms & clay
> And he is falln into the Deep rough Demon of the waters
> And Los remains God over all.
> (48:13-18, E332)

Tharmas is equally unequivocal:

> What Sovereign Architect said Tharmas dare my will controll
> For if I will I urge these waters. If I will they sleep
> In peace beneath my awful frown my will shall be my Law. . . .
> (49:1-3, E332)

In the saga of Los's growth to maturity this confrontation signals a movement which is in some ways equivalent to the passage from Innocence to Experience. The world is no longer one in which the lion lies down with the lamb; the universe is found to have other intentions than the satisfaction of Los's desires.

Like all moments of transition this confrontation precipitates an extreme crisis. Tharmas and Los confront each other as solipsistic selves, as gods. While they adopt this comportment towards the world their relationship can only be one of struggle and its outcome must be the assimilation of one to the other. At this penultimate stage of the Fall's reduction of the Zoas to privation, however, the problem is that Tharmas and Los are <u>both</u> necessary if the shape and reality of the fallen world is to be preserved. In this crisis, therefore, the poem teeters on the edge of the total dissolution that the Daughters of Eno hoped to avert. Or, more precisely, this is the same crisis as that which earlier in the poem provoked the Daughters of Eno to open a time and space for the Fall. The nothingness beyond the privation which is Los may be avoided only by entering the time and space of Los. In

order to allow this, Los must bind the world to his perspective. This entry is effected by a mechanism so extraordinary that I will resort to the use of an analogy in order to introduce it.

(3) Master and slave

An impasse similar to the one that I have been describing occurs towards the beginning of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit. In section B of this book Hegel describes the transition in which consciousness becomes self-consciousness. As a result of this transition the world no longer appears as an independent and self-subsisting reality, but is seen to be an aspect of consciousness and unable to exist without it. This recognition does not do away with the external world; it is still present, but self-consciousness realizes that its own truth is to become independent of it. (This idea is analogous to the belief of the Zoas, and particularly of Urizen in Night the Third and Fourth, that they are gods and that their truth is independent of the world outside them.) Self-consciousness attempts to resolve the gap between its own truth and the world by assimilating the world through work and action. In Hegel's terms self-consciousness reveals itself as desire. Such action is, however, doomed to failure because if it were to be completely successful the world and therefore self-consciousness would vanish. Self-consciousness requires an external world in which to express and manifest itself.

In the social world this struggle becomes a struggle for recognition. This is no idle affair but takes the form of a "life and death struggle." Ivan Soll writes:

> We are now in the social sphere, but in an antisocial way. Each of these individual self-consciousnesses tries to negate the other by killing it and must risk its own life to do so. They engage in a "life and death struggle" which is the direct consequence of the general character of each self-consciousness to negate whatever is external to it.[4]

Individual self-consciousness (like the Zoas) attempts to realize its own

truth, and exercise its own powers by assimilating others. However, this ultimately creates a problem. To completely assimilate the other (for Tharmas to completely appropriate Los, or vice versa) would be for the world to dissolve. Each individual self-consciousness needs the other to recognize it. In the Phenomenology this situation is resolved in the relationship between Master and Slave. As Kojève writes, in terms which are strikingly reminiscent of Blake's descriptions of the fallen world:

> In order that the human reality come into being as "recognized" reality, both adversaries must remain alive after the fight. Now, this is possible only on the condition that they behave differently in this fight. . . . Without being predestined to it in any way, the one must fear the other, must give in to the other, must refuse to risk his life for the satisfaction of his desire for "recognition." He must give up his desire and satisfy the desire of the other: he must "recognize" the other without being "recognized" by him. Now, "to recognize" him thus is "to recognize" him as his Master and to recognize himself and to be recognized as the Master's Slave.
>
> In other words, in his nascent state, man is never simply man. He is always, necessarily, and essentially, either Master or Slave.[5]

We can observe a similar resolution to the problem of warring and isolated identities in The Four Zoas.

At the beginning of Night the Fourth, Tharmas's identity is revealed as a desire to appropriate Los and Enitharmon. Blake writes that "his bowels yearnd over them" (47:3, E331) and on the very next plate he demands that Los "Rebuild this Universe beneath my indignant power" (48:4, E332). This demand leads to a direct conflict between Los and Tharmas which is indeed, as I have argued, a life and death struggle. However, Tharmas, at this stage of the Fall, pities Los and, perhaps, also realizes that to engage in this struggle will be to destroy everything. As a result, Tharmas does not attempt to destroy Los; instead, he makes Los his slave: he forces him with the threat of annihilation to do his will.

This decision is enacted in a curious incident which has reverberations throughout the poem. Tharmas rapes Enitharmon away from Los:

> So Saying in a Wave he rap'd bright Enitharmon far
> Apart from Los. but coverd her with softest brooding care
> On a broad wave in the warm west. balming her bleeding wound. . . .
> (49:4-6, E332)

Tharmas is able to do this because Enitharmon, as I have argued in a previous

chapter with regard to Urizen, is not formed solely by Los. As the passive power which embodies the fallen world, she is in a sense midway between Tharmas and Los (just as the body is midway between self and other). Or, to express this in a different way, the form of the fallen world is created in the gap which opens between self and other. This means that the shape of privation (as I have argued in the previous section) is formed both by the reality of Los and by the Zoas' withdrawal. All of the battles in the fallen world are therefore struggles over the ownership of this form and of this body. Tharmas's action is equivalent to an attempt to assert that the form of the world belongs only to himself. This is not an isolated event. It is interesting to note that Urizen engages in the same activity in Nights [Two] and Three, and that in Night the First Urizen's attempt to control the world is also characterized as an attempt to have intercourse with Enitharmon. If Tharmas were to succeed in drawing Enitharmon away from Los the world would dissolve, but this is not his intent. He is engaging in a dangerous game of brinkmanship. He returns Enitharmon to Los, but uses this revelation of his power to force Los to obey his will.

Hegel writes that the slave feels "the fear of death" and because of this "trembled thoughout, making all that was stable in him shudder."[6] Similarly, this demonstration of the dependence of his being on others shatters the stability of Los's world. Enitharmon is torn from his side in "griding pain" (49:8, E332) and Los falls on the rocks and "in ululation waild his woes upon the wind" (49:10, E332). The reader therefore has a sense of a further falling apart. It is also now that the Spectre "falls." It is not clear whether he falls from Urthona or from Los. In fact both possibilities are correct. The Spectre falls apart from Los within the body of Dark Urthona. For Tharmas to take away Enitharmon is for Los and the Spectre to fall apart. Ontological reality is suddenly without a form and the Spectre has nothing to retain. To this point the two beings have simply overlapped, but now, at the point of dissolution of the fallen world, the reader discovers that Urthona has two identities, two histories and therefore two trajectories

in the fallen world.

Although this is difficult to understand in abstract and theoretical terms, it is nevertheless quite clearly a self-evident fact of the fallen world. We can see it, for example, in the set of distinctions that modern linguistics uses to describe language. We speak only by participating in a system whose will is not our own: parole depends upon langue, speech upon sedimented language. This is particularly clear in the anecdotes that Whorf tells about his experiences as an employee of an insurance company or in his studies of the Hopi Indians.[7] The will that retains the system or form of the fallen world is independent of ourselves and our neighbours, and yet to separate this will too completely from ourselves would be a mistake. At certain moments we seem to be able to make this will our slave: we can use the system of language to communicate our own meanings; it can be a vehicle for speech.

It is interesting that the will has not always been recognized as an independent faculty. Hannah Arendt quotes Gilbert Ryle who writes that Plato and Aristotle never mentioned volitions "in their frequent and elaborate discussions of the nature of the soul and the springs of conduct."[8] The will was in fact only discovered in the early Christian experience of "an imperative demanding voluntary submission."[9] This experience, however, uncovered not one but two wills which were opposed to each other. St. Paul describes this double will in Romans chapter seven:

> (15) For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. (16) If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. (17) Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. (18) For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. (19) For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. (20) Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. (21) I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. (22) For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: (23) But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. (24) O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? (25) I thank God through Jesus Christ out Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

St. Paul's account of the struggle between the will of the flesh and the will of the spirit is, as we shall see in our discussion of the remaining Nights, the model for Los's struggles with his Spectre. It is for Los the experience of an imperative, uttered by Tharmas, which demands voluntary submission that uncovers a second will which stands alongside his own.

If the Spectre is the will which holds the form or flesh of the fallen world, then we are able to understand his ambivalent nature and divided loyalties. The Spectre (or the synchronic system) is not himself creative; in fact he can only hold the form of the fracture (the body of the world) between Los and Tharmas. This means, however, that the Spectre can be subordinated by both Tharmas and Los (just as language and therefore the will implicit in language can be shaped by myself and by my neighbour). This is why the Spectre obeys Tharmas (and in doing so forms a solid world beneath Los's feet and bears Enitharmon back to Los) and yet obeys "The voice of Los" and is compelled to labour "round the Furnaces" (53:18-19, E336).

Los responds to the gap that he has discovered between the self and the Spectre, the self and the embodiment of the self (Enitharmon), by attempting to bind the Spectre and his Emanation to his own will. Los is the reality of the fallen world and as such, when he comes of age and experiences the fragmentation of this world, he can only respond in a way which is congruent with his own identity. The various withdrawals of the other Zoas are therefore realized in the very substance of the fallen world. It is now, as Los binds the world to his perspective, that a world of privation appears.

(4) "He was himself transformed"

The world which surrounds the Master and his Slave is a "formless unmeasurable Death." Faced with this chaos and the possibility of his own death (which was implied by Tharmas), Los begins to bind Urizen. It is interesting to compare this activity with the binding that Los undertakes in The Book of Urizen. In general outline, the two activities are the same;

however, the context and significance of this activity has changed in The Four Zoas. There is, for example, no longer the suggestion that Los is awaiting the return of Urizen. In The Book of Urizen Los is motivated by fear and terror, but these emotions precipitate an awaiting (BU8:9-10, E73). In The Four Zoas this activity has been narrowed. Los still experiences fear, but now he experiences this emotion "in his scornful sphere." The activity of watching is not mentioned, and in place of this term the word "tended" has been introduced. The work of tending is addressed, in the first instance, to the furnaces which are assimilating Urizen. Los is tending the enclosure of Urizen rather than awaiting his return:

> Round him Los rolld furious
> His thunderous wheels from furnace 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. . . .
> (52:25-53:1, E335)

The Los who now forms the time and space of the fallen world is no longer the independent, self-subsisting prophet of The Book of Urizen; his being is precipitated from the divisions of the Zoas and he is placed in a world held by Urthona's Spectre. The Spectre acts under orders from Tharmas, and his Emanation can be controlled by the same power. Los's actions are from the beginning an attempt to maintain his "scornful sphere" by binding others to his perspective. Just as Urizen caught "many a Spirit" (30:1, E319) and bound them, "condensing the strong energies into little compass" (30:5, E319), so Los's blows "Petrify with incessant beating many a rock. many a planet" (52:19, E335). This is the beginning of fallen time, when "Urizen faded!" and Adam and Noah saw "Urizen give his Laws to the Nations / By the hands of the children of Los" (SL3:4,8-9, E67). As in The Book of Urizen, Los's activity will result in the reanimation of Urizen; however, in the earlier poem Urizen's laws are promulgated by Los when he passes from the time of awaiting and retaining to the time of memory. In The Four Zoas this section of the narrative has been telescoped and now Los binds himself as he binds Urizen:

> The Prophet of Eternity beat on his iron links & links of brass
> And as he beat round the hurtling Demon. terrified at the Shapes
> Enslavd humanity put on he became what he beheld
> Raging against Tharmas his God & uttering
> Ambiguous words blasphemous filld with envy firm resolvd
> On hate Eternal in his vast disdain he labourd beating
> The Links of fate link after link an endless chain of sorrows. . . .
> (53:20-28, E336)

In order to make the self the centre of the world and exclude others (Urizen, Luvah in Urizen, and Tharmas), Los must get the Spectre to retain a reality which proceeds from his will alone. This is to bind Urizen, but it is also to bind Enitharmon and therefore to bind himself. In order to hold the world stable, one must hold the part of the self (the body) which opens to others. Thus, in Los's activity both Enitharmon and Urizen are bound:

> The Spectre wept at his dire labours when from Ladles huge
> He pourd the molten iron round the limbs of Enitharmon
> But when he pourd it round the bones of Urizen he laughd
> Hollow upon the hollow wind.
> (53:15-18, E336)

In binding the world Los ties his own being to a particular appearance of the other. In binding Urizen the Spectre binds the particular self which allows this form of Urizen to appear. The result is that Los "became what he beheld" (55:22, E338) and he and Enitharmon "stonify" (57:2, E338) and become inflexible:

> Enitharmon stretchd on the dreary Earth
> Felt her immortal limbs freeze stiffning pale inflexible
> His feet shrink withring from the deep shrinking & withering
> And Enitharmon shrunk up all their fibres withring beneath
> As plants witherd by winter leaves & stems & roots decaying
> Melt into thin air while the seed drivn by the furious wind
> Rests on the distant Mountains top. So Los & Enitharmon
> Shrunk into fixed space stood trembling on a Rocky cliff
> Yet mighty bulk & majesty remaind but unexpansive. . . .
> (57:5-13, E339)

Los has retained the "Rocky cliff" which outlines the form of his reality, but this form also defines the cliffs associated with the Zoas' withdrawal. In attempting to bind the ground the figure has inadvertently bound itself. This means that Los's being is now bound to the ugliness of the Zoa's conflicts and withdrawals. Once this binding is completed the reader sees Los as a puppet or manikin. The ground now determines the figure and Los's limbs writhe and are subject to spasms; they are moved by a power which is

outside of his will:

> Spasms siezd his muscular fibres writhing to & fro his pallid lips
> Unwilling movd as Urizen howld his loins wavd like the sea
> At Enitharmons shriek his knees each other smote & then he lookd
> With stony Eyes on Urizen & then swift writhd his neck
> Involuntary to the Couch where Enitharmon lay
> The bones of Urizen hurtle on the wind the bones of Los
> Twinge & his iron sinews bend like lead & fold
> Into unusual forms dancing & howling stamping the Abyss. . . .
> (55:28-35, E338)

These lines are appalling in their grim recognition of the grotesque forms of life which sustain the fallen world. Written into the very substance of the world are "The torments of Love & Jealousy" which were heralded by the poem's title page. René Girard describes jealousy as an emotion in which desire for another is mediated by a third term. He writes:

> Jealousy and envy imply a third presence: object, subject, and a third person toward whom the jealousy or envy is directed. These two "vices" are therefore triangular; however we never recognize a model in the person who arouses jealousy because we always take a jealous person's attitude toward the problem of jealousy. Like all victims of internal mediation, the jealous person easily convinces himself that his desire is spontaneous, in other words, that it is deeply rooted in the object and in this object alone. As a result he always maintains that his desire preceded the intervention of the mediator. He would have us see him as an intruder, a bore, a terzo incomodo who interrupts a delightful tête-á-tête. Jealousy is thus reduced to the irritation we all experience when one of our desires is accidentally thwarted. But true jealousy is infinitely more profound and complex; it always contains an element of fascination with the insolent rival.[10]

In the fallen world the third person is certainly not incidental to the configuration of jealousy. In Night the First we saw that Los's desire for Enitharmon followed Urizen's embrace of her, and that their marriage feast was enacted before Urizen's gaze. In Night the Fourth Los's possessive desire for Enitharmon is predicated upon his relationship with Urizen. It is in fact this latter relationship which precipitates Enitharmon as a particular love object. Now, in Night the Sixth, Los, as the epitome of jealousy, must keep his Emanation and his rival in chains.

These same lines therefore bring us back to the motif of the marriage feast. We have already implicitly seen the realization of this image in the reduction of all of the Zoas to Los. It is now the triangular relationship of Urizen, Enitharmon and Los (which parallels that of the feast itself)

around which the Zoas are gathered: Tharmas is Los's "god," Urizen is the jealous rival, Luvah is present in Urizen, and Urthona in Los. As in Night the First the triangular structure of jealousy is realized as a marriage chain:

> The winter spread his wide black wings across from pole to pole
> Grim frost beneath & terrible snow linkd in a marriage chain
> Began a dismal dance.
>
> (58:12-14, E339)

In partial summary we can say that at this stage of the poem Los has a divided nature. He is the reality of the Fall and (with some assistance from Providence) he is able to stop the world from dissolving. However, as we have seen, he is for this very reason the site of the conflict between Tharmas, Luvah, Urizen and Urthona. In retaining the space of privation he binds (and so preserves) the struggles of the Zoas. It is for this reason that The Four Zoas now (in Nights Six, Seven[b], and Eight) describes a renewed and violent struggle between these figures. This struggle is, however, now conducted entirely within the world of Los. The first indication that the conflict between the Zoas is to be enacted within the world of Los can be seen in the birth of Orc. This is an important transition in the poem and one which must be followed through in some detail.

(5) Reaction and Revolution

In binding Urizen, Los inverts the relationship between the victor and the vanquished with the result that Orc is released into Los's world. We can gloss this event in the following way. In order to assume power a dictator relies on the overt or covert support of his/her people. As Hannah Arendt observes,

> Power is never the property of an individual; it belongs to a group and remains in existence only so long as the group keeps together. When we say of somebody that he is "in power" we actually refer to his being empowered by a certain number of people to act in their name.[11]

The exercise of this power, however, gradually brings the tyrant into collision

with an ever increasing proportion of the population, who then organize to oppose him/her. In an effort to eradicate this opposition the tyrant is brought into conflict with the same people who once covertly or overtly supported him/her. In this way the distance between the two increases until the ruler, in order to give substance to his/her ambitions, must oppose the majority of the population. At this point the reality of both ruler and ruled is that of privation or loss and this in turn is often the occasion for revolution. Urizen's attempt to impose his control over his world follows a parallel course. The gap between his constructed world (his aims and ambitions) and reality gradually widens until his world collapses into the world of Los. This is the occasion for a revolution for, once Los has bound Urizen, Orc is able to be released. Orc is therefore born as a child of Los and Enitharmon (revolution emerges against a landscape of privation); he is the child of Los's binding of Urizen and Enitharmon.

It is interesting at this stage of the poem to reflect on the possible developments from this point. The most likely one would seem to be that Orc would take his revenge on Urizen. In this scenario Los could himself take part in this struggle, siding with one or the other of the combatants. This would, however, mean that we are at the apocalypse of the Lambeth prophecies in which the very fabric of the world is torn apart, in which Los

> arose his head he reard in snaky thunders clad:
> And with a cry that shook all nature to the utmost pole,
> Call'd all his sons to the strife of blood.
> (E15:9-11, E66)

Whatever the status of this apocalypse in the earlier poems it is clear at this stage that such a consummation would usher in annihilation. It is therefore natural that Los should want to hold his world together. Behind the bound form of Urizen there is nothing but a "formless unmeasurable Death."

To this stability Orc, as in The Book of Urizen, represents the most serious and immediate threat. This threat emerges on two levels. Firstly, Orc's war with Urizen threatens to destroy Urizen and so disrupt the triangle of jealousy. Secondly, as the child of Los and Enitharmon he offers, like all

children, a premonition of the finitude of his parent's universe. Blake's characterization of the threat posed by Orc is interesting because it is presented almost exclusively in oedipal terms:

> But when fourteen summers & winters had revolved over
> Their solemn habitation Los beheld the ruddy boy
> Embracing his bright mother & beheld malignant fires
> In his young eyes discerning plain that Orc plotted his death. . . .
> (60:6-9, E340)

If we recall the prelapsarian activity of the passive power (to give form to the being of the active power), then it is clear that the son's most immediate threat to the father can be described as a usurpation of the father's passive power. At adolescence, as the father is growing older, it is clear that the active power of the future belongs to the son. In time the son will embrace the passive power, which until this time has been reserved for the father, and himself become active. However, Orc's struggle with Urizen is itself an embrace with Enitharmon. If Orc were substantially to alter the Urizen that has been bound by Los, then the triangle of jealousy would be altered by the irruption of a second active power. It is this second power which would then determine the way in which Enitharmon and Urizen were bound, or in other words, Orc would embrace Enitharmon.

When Los discovers that Orc is plotting his death, he experiences grief and each day a "girdle" grows around his bosom. Each night he bursts this bosom "in secret sobs" (60:11, E340), but the next morning another "girdle" reappears. The girdle appears when Los is able to see Orc and is burst at night when Los is closed in darkness. The OED describes a girdle as "A belt worn around the waist to secure or confine the garments." The girdle that the sight of Orc produces is the set of constrictions and limits which are imposed on Los's world by the birth of his son. These constrictions appear in the daytime when Los takes cognizance of the fact of Orc's existence and they are broken when, at night and in secrecy, Los is able to deny their reality and reassert the integrity of his constituted world. However, to simply burst at night the girdles that form by day does not remove them from existence. When these girdles fall they form a chain which is still attached to Los's

bosom:

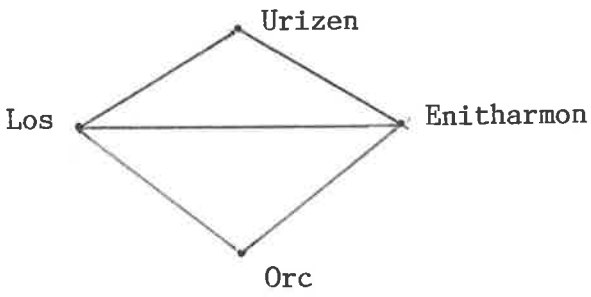
> The girdle was formd by day by night was burst in twain
> Falling down on the rock an iron chain link by link lockd
>
> Enitharmon beheld the bloody chain of nights & days
> Depending from the bosom of Los & how with griding pain
> He went each morning to his labours with the spectre dark
> Calld it the chain of Jealousy.
>
> (60:17-22, E341)

The denial of a girdle or set of constrictions which are imposed on the self by the world that one is living in transforms them into a set of limitations which are imposed on that world. In order to avoid successfully a limit placed upon me by others, I must bind the source of that limit. I am still bound by reality (the chain formed from the burst girdles depends from Los's bosom) but that limitation has given birth to a desire to subdue the source of those limits. Enitharmon calls this "bloody chain" the "chain of Jealousy" because it is the result of Los's attempts to deny the very momentum of his "marriage" and to hold it stationary. It is a chain because Los's rejection of the limits placed on him by his world means that he is bound to an attempt to confine that world:

> Now Los began to speak
> His woes aloud to Enitharmon. since he could not hide
> His uncouth plague. He siezd the boy in his immortal hands
> While Enitharmon followd him weeping in dismal woe
> Up to the iron mountains top & there the Jealous chain
> Fell from his bosom on the mountain. The Spectre dark
> Held the fierce boy Los naild him down binding around his limbs
> The accursed chain O how bright Enitharmon howld & cried
> Over her son. Obdurate Los bound down her loved Joy. . . .
>
> (60:22-30, E341)

If one uses the Oedipus Complex as an analogy to cast light on this situation, one must admit a number of severe divergences from the standard formulation. The Oediupus Complex is, stated baldly, a desire by the child for the death of the parent of his own sex and a sexual desire for the parent of the opposite sex.[12] In Freud's view this complex is generally experienced between the ages of three and five years. Blake is, of course, not speaking in the first instance of the psychology of the individual, and he provides us not only with a description of this mechanism but the configuration of energies which make this situation inevitable. "Psychoanalysis," by contrast,

makes this experience, "the major axis of reference for psychopathology."[13] One can also note two further points of divergence. In Blake's formulation we are not really speaking of the Oedipal triangle but of the Oedipal triangles. There are in fact two Oedipal configurations which imply one another. The first is clearly the triangle which links Los, Urizen, and Enitharmon. In this configuration Urizen is equivalent to the father, or aged figure, who must be bound in order for Los to embrace Enitharmon. The second triangle occurs, as we have seen, when Los is himself a father and Enitharmon gives birth to Orc. This structure can be represented in the following way:



In this surprising formulation Orc and Urizen, the son and the father, the future which Los's world implies and the past that it is built upon, are both children of Los. Orc is a child of Los, while Urizen has been given form by Los. The suggestion by the Eassons, with regard to The Book of Urizen, that the binding of Urizen closely resembles eighteenth-century accounts of the gestation of a child[14] could also be applied to the binding of Urizen in The Four Zoas. In forming the world Los binds Orc and Urizen, the future and the past, to his perspective. This is an extraordinary and rather unnerving idea. The time of the fallen world is not for Blake anything like Newton's line of absolute time. Time is a struggle between the energies of change and the forces of reaction, the force of what is and the form of what has been attempting to come into being, the future and the past, Orc and Urizen. We usually see this struggle as something which subsists in its own right; we take sides and argue vehemently for one side or the other. We are, for example, on the side of either the sons or the father. What Blake has done at this point in The Four Zoas is first of all to humanize or animate the time

of the fallen world. The two conflicting beings that structure history are Orc and Urizen. However, the second move is perhaps even more startling. These beings do not persist in their own right. Orc and Urizen are held in the world of Los and Enitharmon. It is this latter pair who form the reality of the fallen world and give substance to the conflicts of Urizen and Orc. In our discussion of The Book of Urizen we noted that Augustine also held that time was not a straight line, and that for him it was the present which held the future and the past as, respectively, anticipation and memory. In that chapter we used this idea to suggest the spring of eternal life in which the past was gathered and the future projected. Without any sense of contradiction, for in Blake the fallen reality is often a parody or demonic imitation of the divine, we can use the same image to suggest that in the fallen world it is the present which binds the past and the future, Urizen and Orc to itself. Los is therefore the present, the now, which paradoxically constitutes and gives shape to the past and the future, but is itself defined as the thin gap between what has been and what is not yet.

(6) "All these around the world of Los cast forth their monstrous births"

Los's binding of Orc does not render Los's world stable. This course of action is like trying to deny that there is a down by decreeing that everything is up: the very formalization of "up" defines a world which is "down." Similarly, to bind the future is to animate the past; if one is not defined by the future, then one is automatically defined by the bulk and weight of the past. The binding of Orc is immediately to animate Urizen. It is this mechanism which allows Urizen, in Night the Sixth, to set off to explore "the deep dens of Urthona" (62:23, E343) in which he has been enclosed. Urizen then begins once more to bind the world to his perspectives:

> So he began to dig form[ing] of gold silver & iron
> And brass vast 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

> And the Sciences were fixd & the Vortexes began to operate
> On all the sons of men & every human soul terrified
> At the turning wheels of heaven shrunk away inward withring away
> Gaining a New Dominion over all his sons & Daughters
> & over the Sons & daughters of Luvah in the horrible Abyss. . . .
> (73:16-25, E350)

On the surface of the fallen world all can observe this perpetual struggle between Urizen and Orc, clarity and energy, beauty and strength, the past and the future, the ruler and the slave. Such a perspective may tempt a person to engage directly in this struggle and champion one side against the other. However, this sort of opposition is itself a symptom of a more fundamental reality. The first and most obvious suggestion of this complicity between reaction and revolution is the ease with which Orc is assimilated to the perspectives of Urizen. In Blake's own time he would have had a vivid example of this for in 1799 Napoleon had already concentrated supreme power in his own hands and by 1804 he had declared himself Emperor.[15]

The dimensions of this basic opposition are expanded when one recognizes that it is part of a more global struggle between the Zoas. Urthona, Luvah, Urizen and Tharmas are locked in perpetual and bitter struggle. Even here, however, one would be wrong to throw one's weight behind the cause of one or the other Zoa, for this global struggle is but a symptom of reality itself. All four Zoas are grounded in loss. Blake expresses the ugliness and violence of this world, and at the same time the difficulty of formulating action within it, when he writes:

> Four Caverns rooting downwards their foundations thrusting forth
> The metal rock & stone in ever painful throes of vegetation
> The Cave of Orc stood to the South a furnace of dire flames
> Quenchless unceasing. 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. But Tharmas rolld his billows in ceaseless eddies
> Void pathless beat with Snows eternal & iron hail & rain
> All thro the caverns of fire & air & Earth. Seeking
> For Enions limbs nought finding but the black sea weed & sickning slime
> Flying away from Urizen that he might not give him food
> Above beneath on all sides round in the vast deep of immensity
> That he might starve the sons & daughters of Urizen on the winds
> Making between horrible chasms into the vast unknown
> All these around the world of Los cast forth their monstrous births. . . .
> (74:12-27, E351; emphasis added)

The fourfold topology gives way to a single ontology: all of the Zoas live within a cavern, they are closed within the space of withdrawal, and this space is based upon the world of Los. Urizen's long and arduous journey therefore passes through the worlds of the other Zoas; in terms of the topology it is a movement even if not a progression. However, this movement does not move with respect to Los: Urizen's being remains unchanged.

This recognition gives way to what is perhaps an even more startling one. At the end of Night the Sixth, as Urizen approaches Orc, Tharmas and the Shadow of Urthona arise to oppose him. In the course of this confrontation,

> Four winged heralds mount the furious blasts & blow their trumps
> Gold Silver Brass & iron clangors clamoring rend the shores
> Like white clouds rising from the Vales his fifty two armies
> From the four Cliffs of Urthona rise glowing around the Spectre
> Four Sons of Urizen the Squadrons of Urthona led in arms
> Of gold & silver brass & iron he knew his mighty sons. . . .
> (75:19-24, E352)

John Beer remarks that "the four Cliffs of Urthona" are the four seasons of the fallen world and the "fifty two armies" are the fifty two weeks of the year.[16] The Spectre of Urthona is therefore in a sense mobilizing the entire forces of the fallen world. However, these armies come from Urthona's "four Cliffs"; they are therefore the result of withdrawal, and as part of the fallen world they in fact support Urizen's world:

> In vast excentric paths
> Compulsive roll'd the Comets at his dread command the dreary way
> Falling with wheel impetuous down among Urthona's vales
> And round red Orc returning back to Urizen gorgd with blood
> Slow roll the massy Globes at his command & slow oerwheel
> The dismal squadrons of Urthona. weaving the dire Web
> In their progressions & preparing Urizens path before him. . . .
> (75:28-34, E352)

In binding Urizen and Orc, Los has attempted to hold his world and so render it permanent. In doing this he has forced the Spectre to do his will. However, in these lines the Spectre is revealed not only as a being who conducts Los's war against Urizen but as a person who weaves Urizen's web and prepares "Urizens path before him." Los's attempts to retain his constituted world create the very reality he is struggling against. It is perhaps a recognition of this complicity that causes first Urizen (75:25-26, E352) and

then the Spectre of Urthona and Tharmas (77:1-2, E352/$E_2$345) to retreat. For the reader the sudden retreat and the eery silence at the end of Night the Sixth serves to focus attention on the division in Los's character that we have been discussing. Reaction and revolution contribute to the world of loss and so weave the path of Urizen and create the reality of oppression. The world of Los and Enitharmon is one in which tyrant follows tyrant in dismal progression; in sustaining their world Los and Enitharmon constitute this cycle, yet, as the reality of the fallen world, it is through these beings that the possibility of a return to harmony is contained. There is, in truth, nowhere else to begin, for the reality of the fallen world is privation. The growth of Los has, not surprisingly, resulted in the elaboration of the reality of Los. Instead of an unformed gap, or silence, we have a world where "the wrathful skies / Gallow the very wanderers of the dark."[17] It is the possibility of a movement outside of the isolated self and into the humanity of relationship, a movement which is predicated on the loss at the heart of one's identity, that the remaining Nights of The Four Zoas attempt to delineate.

Chapter Six

Flesh and Spirit

No . . . I must start from what I am.
I am those monsters which visit my dreams
and reveal to me my hidden essence. . . .
Czeslaw Milosz[1]

(1) Los, St. Paul and the will

One of the key terms in the construction of Los's world (and indeed in the creation attempts or ambitions of all of the Zoas) is the will. In the illuminated books which precede this work the will is mentioned only twice. In The Four Zoas we come across this word no less than twenty-six times. This figure, which is the result of a simple numerical count, could be multiplied many times if we were to count the occasions on which such a faculty was implied or taken for granted as the basis of a series of events. Tharmas and Urizen mention the will explicitly. When Tharmas confronts Los he cries, "my will shall be my Law" (49:3, E332), and in Night the Sixth Urizen attempts to turn the world into one which is "better suited to obey / His will" (73:18-19, E350). However, when Los says to Urizen in Night the First, "One must be master. try thy Arts I also will try mine" (12:20, E307), although the will is not mentioned explicitly, Los and Urizen present themselves in this clash as nothing more than two obdurate wills. Similarly, in the report of the messengers, Luvah's clash with Urizen is a contest between wills: "I will remain as well as thou & here with hands of blood / Smite this dark sleeper in his tent then try my strength with thee" (22:9-10, E311). The will is also suggested in many of the other confrontations between the Zoas, in their respective claims to be God and, most importantly, in the figure of the Spectre.

Hannah Arendt describes the will as "the organ of freedom and the future."[2] Certainly, without such a faculty freedom would be meaningless

because we would be unable either to make a choice or begin a new series of events in time. These characteristics of the will are perhaps why the will has sometimes been considered to be (notably by Augustine) "the actualization of the principium individuationis.[3] However, the will is also clearly associated with command. Nietzsche writes:

> to will is not the same as to desire, to strive for, to want: from all these it is distinguished through the element of Command. . . . That something is commanded, this is inherent in willing.[4]

This element of "command" is not simply a power which is directed against others; in fact, "command and obedience both occur in the mind"[5]: Nietzsche offers us a useful description of this phenomenon in Beyond Good and Evil:

> Somebody who wills gives orders to something in him that obeys. . . . The strangest aspect of this multiple phenomenon we call "Will" is that we have but one word for it, and especially only one word for the fact that we are in every given case at the same time those who issue the orders and those who obey them; insofar as we obey, we experience the feelings of coercion, urging, pressing, resisting, which usually begin to manifest themselves immediately after the act of willing; insofar however . . . as we are in command . . . we experience a sensation of pleasure, and this all the more strongly as we are used to overcoming the dichotomy through the notion of the I, the Ego, and this in such a way that we take the obedience in ourselves for granted and therefore identify willing and performing, willing and acting.[6]

As Heidegger remarks in his work on Nietzsche: "What is called 'freedom of the will' is essentially a passionate superiority toward a someone who must obey. 'I am free; "he" must obey' - the consciousness of this is the very willing."[7]

In The Four Zoas the will is the faculty that allows the Zoas to begin a new series of events in time (in this instance to withdraw), to marshal the world (whether defined as the Emanation or as others) through the element of command, and then to construct and retain a universe which is centred on their individual, solipsistic selves. The "passionate superiority" which Heidegger associates with the will can be seen in the relationships between Zoa and Zoa, and between active and passive powers. For the Zoas the will is, however, as we have argued in a previous chapter, a divided faculty. Each act of willing seems to set in motion a counterwill which opposes it at every turn. There is a struggle between the inner and the outer man, the spirit and

the flesh, or, to use the same terms as Nietzsche, between willing and performing, the "Somebody who wills" and the "Something . . . that obeys." This division in the faculty of the will can be seen on all levels of The Four Zoas. At the very beginning of the poem withdrawal precipitated the female as an independent will that enclosed and rivaled the male; the subsequent construction of the constituted worlds of the Zoas embodied the reality of Los; and similarly the construction of Los's world established Urizen's opposition. On the most fundamental level this division is realized as that between Los and the Spectre of Urthona. So all-pervasive is this division that, as I shall argue, even the steps of spiritual growth that Los takes (and therefore wills) precipitate an advance in the error (the opposing will) that confronts him. It seems that the will is the faculty that allows the Zoas to establish their worlds and at the same time the power that creates a will which opposes them. The will is therefore at the centre of the recurrent cycles which are part of the institution of war, and at the heart of the progression from tyranny to revolution to further tyranny which characterizes the fallen world.

The most obvious solution to the problem of the will and the bifurcation that it causes in the psyche would seem to be to abolish it. Blake himself almost seems to counsel such a solution when he writes in his Anotations to Swedenborg's Divine Love and Divine Wisdom: "There can be no Good-Will. Will is always Evil It is pernicious to others or selfish." However, Blake continues: "If God is any thing he is Understanding He is the Influx from that into the Will" (E602). This passage therefore suggests an important and perhaps crucial role for the will. In The Four Zoas Blake's attitude to a rejection of the will is even less equivocal, for the reader is told that the will cannot be violated:

> And now he came into the Abhorred world of Dark Urthona
> By Providence divine conducted not bent from his own will
> Lest death Eternal should be the result for the Will cannot be violated. . . .
>
> (74:30-32, E351)

The will cannot be abolished because it is the faculty with which we retain

the world as it has appeared to us. If this power of retention were to be destroyed, the worlds of time and Eternity would lose all definition and "death Eternal" would result.

At the centre of the fallen world Los performs a saving function. Spirit is able to retain the outline of withdrawal and so prevent a collapse into nothingness. Yet this very activity of grace gives strength to Urizen - what Los does not will is performed - and Urizen in turn threatens the very existence of Los and of the world. For Los to deny his will would be to allow all to follow the logic of Urizen's world and become a formless death. However, on the other hand, for Los to exert his will and so retain his world is to animate Urizen. This doublebind and impasse is focussed for the reader in the extraordinary struggle between Urizen and Los in Night the Seventh[a].

(2) Flesh and Spirit

In the Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Nights of The Four Zoas, Los's attempt to bind Urizen and order the universe from his perspective resulted in the release of Urizen. In the Nights which follow this event we therefore see a new and more extreme attempt by Urizen to create a world which is able to follow the dictates of his will. Urizen's strategy, as we shall see, relies on the existence of a double will in Los and it is based upon the same tactics that Tharmas used in order to gain control over Los.

As I have argued, there are two trajectories of Urthona in the fallen world. On the one hand Los is the "inward man" of St. Paul, the ontological reality of the fallen world, while on the other hand the Spectre is the "outward man": the first is the mind or spirit, while the second is associated with the flesh and the retention of the shape of the fallen world. This division between Los and the Spectre is, in Night the Seventh[a], paralleled by a division in Enitharmon. Enitharmon is the space of the fallen world; she is the divided Emanation or shape of Los. Nevertheless, in giving form to a world of loss she also gives form to the struggles of the Zoas. We

can therefore say, using our earlier model for the relationship between the fallen Zoas and Los, that Enitharmon is, in a certain sense, half-way between figure and ground: the Emanation or form of Los is also the shape of the Zoas' withdrawal. Enitharmon is an Emanation of the living (of Los) and at the same time the shape or surface of withdrawal. This second aspect of her being is described in Night the Seventh[a] as the Shadow of Enitharmon. We therefore have a division in the passive power between the flesh and the spirit, the inner and the outer woman, the will that intends good and the will that performs evil. Urizen's strategy is directed to the corporeal man and woman. If he can win the form of the fallen world (the Shadow of Enitharmon and the Spectre of Los) over to his camp, this would be equivalent to a coup d'êtat in which the figure appropriated the line formed in relationship with the ground. Of course this would result in annihilation; neither reality would henceforth exist, for the spirit cannot exist without the body, but Urizen, unlike Tharmas, does not realize this. Urizen is simply following on a more elemental level the logic of appropriation that we saw in Night the [Second] and Night the Third. Urizen outlines his strategy, in the following passage:

> Listen O Daughters to my voice Listen to the Words of Wisdom
> So shall [ye] govern over all let Moral Duty tune your tongue
> But be your hearts harder than the nether millstone
> To bring the shadow of Enitharmon beneath our wondrous tree
> That Los may Evaporate like smoke & be no more
> Draw down Enitharmon to the Spectre of Urthona
> And let him have dominion over Los the terrible shade. . . .
> (80:2-8, E355/$E_2$348)

The "theoretical" and precise description of this strategy in terms of an assault on the Spectre and the Shadow is followed by lines that exemplify its horrific practical application:

> 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
> Magnify small gifts reduce the man to want a gift & then give with pomp
> Say he smiles if you hear him sigh If pale say he is ruddy
> Preach temperance say he is overgorgd & drowns his wit

> In strong drink tho you know that bread & water are all
> He can afford Flatter his wife pity his children till we can
> Reduce all to our will as spaniels are taught with art. . . .
> (80:9-21, E355/$E_2$348)

Perhaps the best way to gloss this remarkable strategy is to turn to The Book of Thel. Thel's lamentations concern the imposition that her flesh places on her spirit. To her grief she discovers that her being and her corporeality connect her to a shared world in which she is unable to reduce all to her will. Only, and even then equivocally, in her life as a text does her essence escape time and mortality. In this way her identity is reduced to that intended by her will. Similarly, in order to reduce all to his will Urizen must escape his ontological reality (Los). Reason must attempt to make itself its own premise. (It is interesting that something like this occurs in Hegel's Phenomenology and Logic, and in the writings of Descartes.) In sociological and political terms the ruler must make the very forms of loss into the substance of his world. This is the function of soma in Brave New World.[8] This drug, by turning a sense of loss into an experience of plenitude, causes Los to "Evaporate"; it divorces the inhabitants of the Brave New World from their own reality. Once this has been accomplished the ruler is left with the outer form or shell of the person (the reality formed in the embrace between the Spectre and the Shadow of Enitharmon). The population has become a collection of "hollow men" who can be bent to the ruler's will.

If Urizen is able to draw the very fact of oppression into a pleasurable experience, then indeed all would be assimilated to his perspective and Los would "Evaporate like smoke & be no more." Urizen's first act is therefore to make the victim the ostensible object of the victor's faith:

> Of all his wandering Experiments in the horrible Abyss
> He knew that weakness stretches out in breadth & length he knew
> That wisdom reaches high & deep & therefore he made Orc
> In Serpent form compelld stretch out & up the mysterious tree
> He sufferd him to Climb that he might draw all human forms
> Into submission to his will nor knew the dread result. . . .
> (81:1-6, E356/$E_2$349)

Evil is proclaimed as good, suffering is called desirable and the victim is

deified. Los is apparently defenceless against this strategy because of the division within his will. The flesh deals only in surfaces and is therefore attracted by the form that Urizen has erected. The Shadow separates from Enitharmon and is drawn down "to the roots" where "it wept over Orc" (81:12, E356/$E_2$349), while the Spectre "embracd / The fleeting image & in whispers mild wood the faint shade" (82:26-27, E358/$E_2$351). Urizen's strategy has as its first achievement attenuated the gap between the spirit and the body of Los. The Spectre and the Shadow of Enitharmon embrace and so form a reality which is distinct from that engendered in the relationship between Enitharmon and Los. The form of the world of Los, the line between figure and ground, is being drawn towards Urizen's world. This gradual assimilation of the form of Los's world results in a new and more intense round of warfare. The Shadow of Enitharmon and the Spectre give substance to Urizen's elevation of Orc and so realize the violence on which this is based:

> the immortal shadow shuddering
> Brought forth this wonder horrible a Cloud she grew & grew
> Till many of the dead 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. . . .
> (85:16-21, E360/$E_2$353)

It is as if in accepting Urizen's deification of the victim humanity enacts the violence on which this deification is based. People who believe that they smile when they sigh and think that they are "healthy & happy" when they are "pale / With labour & abstinence" have divorced themselves from their own reality, and their identities have been completely appropriated by the desires of their ruler. This is the psychological condition that Blake describes when he writes of "male forms without female counterparts or Emanations / Cruel and ravening with Enmity & Hatred & War." Los is being overwhelmed by a force that he has rejuvenated. Like St. Paul he has discovered a law in his members "warring against the law of [his] mind, and bringing [him] into captivity to the law of sin which is in [his] members."

It is quite clear that Los must reassert his will in order to save the world from the collapse which will follow the appropriation by Urizen of the

form of the fallen world. To do this, however, is to activate the "law in his members" and to bring the cycle full circle once more. Another attempt by Los to retain the fallen world can only give further strength to Urizen and in this way complete the alienation of the Spectre and the Shadow. The problematic of the will has at this point become the focus of the entire poem. Lost within the labyrinth of the fallen world it seems self-evident that redemptive activity must proceed from an exertion of the will. It seems equally clear that this exertion can at best produce no more than an increase in the tension between flesh and spirit, and finally the collapse of the world.

(3) Los embraces the Spectre

Even at this extreme point of the Fall Los is unaware of the reality in which the Spectre participates. It is true that in Night the Fourth Los discovers that he has a second will, but at this point he seems convinced that he is able to make the Spectre do his will. Los therefore does not seem to be aware of Tharmas's dialogue with the Spectre or that his world is held by the Spectre. Similarly, in Night the Seventh[a], Los is at first unable to see the Spectre's and Enitharmon's participation (in the person of the Shadow) in the production of hatred and warfare:

> Thus they conferrd among the intoxicating fumes of Mystery
> Till Enitharmons shadow pregnant in the deeps beneath
> Brought forth a wonder horrible. While Enitharmon shriekd
> And trembled thro the Worlds above Los wept his fierce soul was terrifid
> At the shrieks of Enitharmon at her tossings nor could his eyes percieve
> The cause of her dire anguish for she lay the image of Death
> Movd by strong shudders till her shadow was deliverd then she ran
> Raving about the upper Elements in maddning fury. . . .
> (85:5-12, E360/$E_2$353)

This state of ignorance, however, cannot continue for long. The success of Urizen's strategy means that Los's world is on the verge of dissolution. Urizen's world is therefore free to irrupt into Los's constituted world. It is as if one side of a coin were able to appropriate the matter of the coin

to itself. At first there would be no sign of this, but as the process continued one side of the coin would obtrude upon and make evanescent the other:

> The Spectre terrified gave her Charge over the howling Orc
> Then took the tree of Mystery root in the World of Los
> Its topmost boughs shooting a fibre beneath Enitharmons couch
> The double rooted Labyrinth soon wavd around their heads. . . .
> (85:22-25, E360 & 367/$E_2$353)

The appearance of Urizen's world within the world of Los is also described in relation to Enitharmon and the Spectre of Urthona. Enitharmon, as Los's Emanation, has formed the horizon of his world. As Urizen appropriates the form of the world to himself, the outer limit of Los's world becomes transparent, Enitharmon's gates are burst open and Los is confronted with a reality that all of his actions have engendered:

> She burst the Gates of Enitharmons heart with direful Crash
> Nor could they ever be closd again the golden hinges were broken
> And the gates broke in sunder & their ornaments defacd
> Beneath the tree of Mystery for the immortal shadow shuddering
> Brought forth this wonder horrible. . . .
> (85:13-17, E360/$E_2$353)

The reality that the Spectre holds suffers a similar uncovering. The Spectre of Urthona has up to this point been seen as a power apart from Los. Spirit has seen the flesh as a will that could and should be dominated. Now, as the tree of mystery is seen within Los's world and Enitharmon becomes transparent, Los discovers the flesh as a self which retains a world of suffering. The Eternal Prophet is now able to see, and Enitharmon's groans bring the Spectre into Los's bosom:

> But then 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.
> (85:26-29, E367/$E_2$353)

The situation is now analogous to that of Urizen in Night the Fourth when Ahania attempts to reveal to him the reality that he has excluded. Urizen's strategy, by making a clear separation between the flesh and the spirit, has demonstrated to Los that he is made up of two selves, that he is unable to do

the good that he wants to do, and that he performs the evil that he does not want to do. There are now three options that are open to Los. He could, like Urizen, simply deny the reality of the world that has been uncovered and refuse to believe that he is constructing a world of oppression and himself ushering in Urizen's reign. If he were to do this the entire universe would collapse. Secondly, Los could attempt to recreate a distance between the Spectre and himself by dominating him. This would, however, once more create that which Los does not will. Los, in fact, takes a third and very different path: he embraces the Spectre.

The stages leading up to this embrace are interesting because they demonstrate the extremity of what Los has chosen to do. When confronted by the Spectre Los is, at first, "Obdurate" and he merely feels Pity. Pity, as defined in our chapter on The Book of Urizen, implies that there is a distinction between the self and the object of Pity. However, when Enitharmon tells Los the story of Urthona, Los embraces the Spectre,

> first as a brother
> Then as another Self; astonishd humanizing & in tears
> In Self abasement Giving up his Domineering lust. . . .
> (85:29-31, E367/$E_2$353)

This change in Los has generally been held to be startling and unprecedented. Mary Lynn Johnson and Brian Wilkie, for example, have written that "Nothing in the immediate situation leads up to this right-angled turn in the action." They ask:

> Should this apparently arbitrary gesture of loving forgiveness be considered a structural weakness of the poem? Does it indicate a lapse in the profoundly accurate insight into human psychology that Blake's work usually exhibits? Does the suddenness of reversal reflect a religious or psychological conversion of the man Blake, as John Middleton Murry surmised? Or, perhaps, may Blake be saying that he does not know how such apparently unconditioned recoveries happen but that they do and must happen, through the agency of imagination, a going out of ourselves into others?[9]

Northrop Frye, writing more generally of the Spectre of Urthona, considers that this conception

> seems to have broken on Blake quite suddenly when he was proceeding to a simpler climax, and occasioned the rewriting of Night VII, if

> not of the next two Nights as well. Eventually it burst the whole Zoa scheme altogether, and was one of the chief reasons for abandoning the poem.[10]

In a certain sense it is true that Los's embrace of the Spectre is unprecedented, but only to the extent that all human behaviour that proceeds from free choice and fee will cannot be predicted. However, statements such as those quoted above seem to me to stem from a fundamental misreading of The Four Zoas. This embrace is certainly neither a "structural weakness of the poem" nor an admission that Blake does not "know how such apparently unconditioned recoveries happen." In fact, the entire poem has up to this point been labouring to delineate the precise conditions which enable the Spectre to enter Los's bosom and so make possible an embrace such as this. In the preceding Nights of The Four Zoas, Los has come of age and completed an attempt to retain the form of his constituted world. This activity has revived Urizen and created a situation where Urizen has attempted to draw the Spectre and Enitharmon away from Los. It is only at this extreme point in individual and collective history, when Urizen's success seems assured and the flesh and spirit are separated by a wide chasm, that Los is able to recognize the world that he is bringing into being and so is in a position to embrace his own participation in its evils.

(4) Embodiment

Los's embrace of the Spectre is clearly a turning point in The Four Zoas. In the Nights that precede Night the Seventh[a] the reader has witnessed a series of withdrawals and subsequent enclosures. In these withdrawals the body of the Zoa becomes the horizon of his world. In embracing the Spectre, Los begins a movement away from the void of withdrawal, or rather, he takes the first step towards embodiment. It is this embrace which makes possible a movement towards apocalypse. We can illustrate the redemptive qualities of Los's embrace with an analogy. If the Spectre retains

the shape of Los's world, then we can say that he retains the flesh for the spirit, the body for the self, the outward for the inner man and so on. So long as the spirit wants to hold its world intact, the flesh is the horizon of its world. The flesh in this sense encloses; it is certainly not a window which lights the "cavern'd Man." However, when Los assumes and embraces his flesh (and no longer uses it to confine and restrict the external world), then suddenly he is <u>embodied</u>. The cave, therefore, at least potentially, becomes a dwelling house with windows through which he can pass out, or a garment which can be worn and through which one can converse with and be seen by others.

This is, however, to put the case much too strongly. It is important to remember that even at this stage of the poem Los is the ontological reality of the fallen world. A relationship between self and other, or Zoa and Zoa, has therefore still to be accomplished. The Spectre sets out the task before Los:

> Thou never canst embrace sweet Enitharmon terrible Demon. Till
> Thou are united with thy Spectre Consummating by pains & labours
> That mortal body & by Self annihilation back returning
> To Life Eternal. . . .
>
> (85:32-35, E368/$E_2$353)

It is necessary to follow this path because, although "horrible & Ghastly," the Spectre is Los's true self. The Spectre continues:

> be assurd I am thy real Self
> Tho thus divided from thee & the Slave of Every passion
> Of thy fierce Soul Unbar the Gates of Memory look upon me
> Not as another but as thy real Self I am thy Spectre
> Thou didst subdue me in old times by thy Immortal Strength
> When I was a ravning hungring & thirsting cruel lust & murder
> Tho horrible & Ghastly to thine Eyes tho buried beneath
> The ruins of the Universe. hear what inspird I speak & be silent
>
> If we unite in one[,] 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 Mental fires
> But if thou dost refuse Another body will be prepared
> For me & thou annihilate evaporate & be no more
> For thou art but a form & organ of life & of thyself
> Art nothing being Created Continually by Mercy & Love divine. . . .
>
> (85:35-86:3, E368/$E_2$353-54)

Los is a being who is second to the Spectre in the sense that he is the ontological reality that is born as a result of the retention of the space of withdrawal by divine agency and by the Spectre of Urthona. In order to embrace his body (Enitharmon) and so open the path to relationship, Los must embrace the Spectre, and through him the world of divison and struggle that he retains. This embrace, as we shall see, does nothing to alleviate the distinction between flesh and spirit (in all embraces a distinction and therefore a gap remains between those involved), but by enabling Los to fill and potentially to animate his body it enables him to act in a way which takes him to the very outskirts of his constituted world. This discovery of one's body (although here of course one must remember that Los is in the first instance a Zoa and not a human individual), no longer as an inert external force but as something which one animates and fills, is beautifully expressed

> & 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
> Los drew them forth out of the deeps planting his right foot firm
> Upon the Iron crag of Urizen thence springing up aloft
> Into the heavens of Enitharmon in a mighty circle. . . .
> (90:25-34, E370/$E_2$356)

In these lines Los traces a circle from the deeps, in which he embraces Orc's flames, to the Iron crag of Urizen, which he uses to leap aloft into the heavens of Enitharmon. The entire world held by the Spectre is therefore now embraced. Luvah (in Orc), Urizen, Tharmas (in Enitharmon), Urthona (the identity of Los, the Spectre and Enitharmon) are all embraced by Los. Los is the reality formed by the withdrawal of the Zoas, but now this reality is no longer simply enclosed by "frowning cliffs"; instead, Los rises to assume his body and to embrace the world that he has constituted. "[A]round the world of Los" the Zoas "cast forth their monstrous births," but now Los embraces this world of privation as his "real Self."

It is interesting to observe that in the above passage the struggle between energy and clarity, sublimity and beauty, revolution and reaction, has been displaced by the recovery of a movement from the enclosure of the self towards others. It is this movement which holds the strength of Orc's flames and the clarity of Urizen's crags in a single circle. The negations have been destroyed and in their place we see two contraries which together form the basis for a movement towards others.

Night the Seventh[a] therefore documents a radical change in Los's relationship to others and to the world. Throughout the first six Nights of The Four Zoas Los remains stationary: we see him first as the centre or nadir that is precipitated as a result of the Fall, and then at the centre of his constituted world. From this position the fallen world is a "Mathematical Form," a merely material realm which is held in the "reasoning memory." This latter term is particularly apt in The Four Zoas because the shell of the world is held in the interaction between Los (who holds or remembers the shape of Urizen's withdrawal) and Urizen (who comes to life within this form). From this perspective the struggle between Urizen and Orc is something which goes on outside of Los's being. In Night the Seventh[a], however, the perspective changes and Los moves to embrace his own body. It is in the crucible of this movement that the negations of Urizen and Orc become contraries.

This transformation is not an abstract and abstruse idea which can occur only in the pages and with the licence of a poem. It is in fact a simple and relatively common idea. For as long as one remains closed within a constituted world Urizen and Orc, clarity and strength, the beautiful and the sublime, are opposed and mutually exclusive ideas because there is no basis for a relationship apart from negation and collision: clarity is simply that which leaves our world intact, while strength is that which disrupts it. However, as soon as one introduces movement into this world the division

breaks down. For the person who moves to embrace another, sublimity and beauty, strength and clarity, are contraries. Strength is present because the self is opening itself to a reality which is other than its own. To the extent that this is done, the self is "swept along as if with an irresistible force." In this movement clarity is not a negation of strength for, to the extent that we attempt to embrace and comprehend this other, a new form appears within out worlds. An embrace of another is established with the help of both the crags and the deeps, clarity and strength. A similar understanding of the necessity for the self to move out from its closed world can be found in authorities as diverse as Lao Tzu, the compiler or compilers of Genesis, and Gandhi. Lao Tzu writes that it was "when the Great Tao declined" that the virtues of "humanity and righteouness" (along with the vices which help define them) appeared."[11] Similarly, in the book of Genesis it is the knowledge of good and evil - a knowledge which implies a stationary position from which to define good and evil - which marks the beginning of the Fall. The negations of good and evil are redeemed in the latter case by the movement of "new birth," in the former when the movement or way of life is recovered. Similarly, non-violence is a philosophy which attempts to delineate a movement from enclosure within the violent and solipsistic self towards Truth and which will be able to call and embrace both victor and vanquished, ruler and ruled.[12]

From a position or a metaphysics based on stasis, the world is "A circle of destiny." This is the kind of circle that Urizen retains in the frontispiece to Europe. It is what Blake scholars have called the Orc cycle, and Engels, to take only an obvious example, describes as

> an eternal cycle in which matter moves . . . a cycle in which every finite mode of existence of matter, whether it be sun or nebular vapour, single animal or genus of animals, chemical combination or dissociation, is equally transient, and wherein nothing is eternal but eternally changing . . . But however often, and however relentlessly, this cycle is completed in time and space, however many millions of suns and earths may come into being and go out of being . . . we have the certainty that matter remains eternally the same in

> all its transformations, that none of its attributes can ever be lost, and therefore, also, that with the same iron necessity with which it will again exterminate on the earth its highest creation, the thinking mind, it must somewhere else and at another time again engender it.[13]

The circle which Los defines in Night the Seventh[a] is, by contrast, based on movement. It is a form which is filled by Los and therefore we can call it a "Living Form." This circle, by opening the possibility of relationship, presages a world in which, as Gandhi writes, "All Men are Brothers." So complete is this change of perspective in The Four Zoas that even Urizen, who had seemed an implacable opponent, is discovered as a child in Los's hands[14]:

> First 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
> Then he divided Thiriel the Eldest of Urizens sons
> Urizen became Rintrah Thiriel became Palamabron
> Thus dividing the powers of Every Warrior
> Startled was Los he found his Enemy Urizen now
> In his hands. he wonderd that he felt love & not hate
> His whole soul loved him he beheld him an infant
> Lovely breathd from Enitharmon he trembled within himself. . . .
> (90:58-67, E371/$E_2$357)

(5) Embodied Art

The alteration of Los's comportment towards the world radically changes the kind of art that he produces. Northrop Frye describes this change by arguing that at this stage of The Four Zoas Los has changed from "a primitive visionary, a kind of glorified medicine man," to "the deliberate craftsmanship of art." Now, he writes, "Los settles down to producing art in real earnest."[15] Similarly, Morton Paley remarks that "Los will now at least temporarily subordinate his prophetic to his artistic function."[16] Clearly this description of the Los of Night the Seventh[a] is partial and in many ways misleading. I do not, of course, wish to deny that Los is a "deliberate" craftsman in this Night. It is interesting to compare his work here with that in Night the Fourth where Los's relationship with the Spectre is like that of

all beginners to their craft. In the early stages of an artist's training the pot pulled up on the wheel, or the form cut in the timber, is a result which is willed: the mind or intention of the artist is clearly separated from the members which are marshalled to accomplish his/her will. In Night the Seventh[a], by contrast, Los is the accomplished artist and there is no suggestion of this kind of gap. Los and the Spectre act as a single person, and Los has managed to achieve that loss of self-consciousness which characterizes the greatest artists at their work: Los's hands are now "divine inspired." Nevertheless, despite this artistic facility, and his to some extent newfound ability to vanquish "the loud roaring flames . . . with the strength of Art," his activity at this stage of the poem is also, and perhaps preeminently, prophetic. Los is concerned with the discovery and embrace of his world, and the culmination of his work is a leap which brings him to the horizon of his world and takes him to the edge of his body. Clearly this has little to do with a "purely aesthetic" activity.[17] This animated form is closer to the dramatic and visionary art of Ezekiel who, like Los, embraces the "dung" of his psyche and of the world in an attempt to raise "other men into a perception of the infinite" (MHH13, E39).

Night the Seventh[a] gives the reader two names for the Art that results from Los's new comportment in the world. Los says that he feels a "Stern desire"

> to fabricate embodied semblances in which the dead
> May live before us in our palaces & in our gardens of labour. . .
> (90:8-10, E370/$E_2$356),

and Enitharmon replies that

> if thou my Los
> Wilt in sweet moderated fury. fabricate forms sublime
> Such as the piteous spectres may assimilate themselves into
> They shall be ransoms for our Souls. . . .
> (90:21-24, E370/$E_2$356)

The Art that Los now produces is a semblance because it still represents the form of Los's constituted world. It is not, for example, the face of another because Los still retains a world of withdrawal. This semblance is, however,

"embodied" because Los now animates it. Los has begun to assume his body. Similarly, Los's Art is a form because it is still held in Los's gaze. The line that Los "drew . . . upon the walls of shining heaven / And Enitharmon tincturd . . . with beams of blushing love" (90:35-36, E370/$E_2$356) is a beautiful form which is retained within Los's constituted world. It is, nevertheless, also "sublime" because it embodies a movement which threatens to shatter that form. In the first phrase we glimpse the movement of Los towards Enitharmon and of self to other. In the second we can see the juxtaposition of the sublime and the beautiful, Orc and Urizen, which makes this movement possible. The Four Zoas is in fact the best example of this kind of art. As I have argued, the reader must embrace both Urizen and Orc, the crags of clarity and the deeps of strength, in order to read the poem. This activity cannot be undertaken from a single fixed perspective. The poem itself demands that its readers move out of their closed worlds in order to hold the poem's sublimity, beauty and its real body in a single embrace.

This kind of description of Los's Art is, however, not the end of the matter, for both of the passages that we have quoted make an extraordinary claim for these "embodied semblances." We can understand this if we return briefly to Urizen's Malthusian strategy. Urizen attempted to overcome Los by drawing the form of the fallen world away from its ontological reality. Los's activity at the end of Night the Seventh[a] is the opposite of this, for in Los's circle of movement he attempts to embrace Enitharmon. Ontological reality therefore draws close to the flesh. This is, however, for Los also to embrace the form of the Zoas in withdrawal, for, as I have argued, Enitharmon is also the shape of the Zoas' withdrawal. This embrace therefore creates a place in which the dead may live which is literally within Los's "palaces" and "gardens of labour." The Fall has meant for the Zoas that they are literally separated from their bodies and, at the most extreme point of the Fall, even from their active selves. They are therefore merely Spectres,

wills without life or form. Los's embrace of his world therefore also gives these Spectres a form to which they may be assimilated. (This, of course, parallels the assimilation of the Zoas to Los, except that now Los is consciously undertaking what has hitherto been an unconscious function.)

Quite clearly the fabrication of Los's "embodied semblances" and "forms sublime" is an extraordinary accomplishment. Art in this sense does no less than retain the very shape and body of the world: it is the body and flesh of humanity. Nevertheless, one must beware of overestimating this achievement. In Night the Seventh[a] there is, of course, still no amelioration of the conflict between flesh and spirit. At this point in the poem the fallen world remains intact, and even Los's production of Art is accomplished within a world of "wheel without wheel, with cogs tyrannic" (J15:18, E159). As the fortunes of Urizen's world ascended (in Night the [Second]) they produced an opposite movement in the world of Los. Urthona was assimilated and Los seemed to be dwarfed by the magnitude of Urizen's achievements. However, Urizen's rise presaged a fall and he was precipitated as a "formless unmeasurable Death." For Los this defeat began a period of ascent, the peak of which resulted in the binding of Urizen. The completion of this task, however, resulted in a diminution of Los's power (as the wheel began to descend) and an augmenting of the strength of Urizen. At the peak of this next cycle Urizen's power seemed almost to succeed in drawing the form of life away from its ontological reality. In Night the Seventh[a], Los responded with a measure which opened the possibility of a return to relationship. Nevertheless, at the end of this Night there is no suggestion that this cyclical struggle will be quickly resolved. Los is still in a labyrinth in which each step out of the prison re-establishes the prison's walls. Blake writes that Los's reunion with Enitharmon was not to be "Effected without Cares & Sorrows & Troubles / Of six thousand Years of self denial and of bitter Contrition" (87:27-29, E369/$E_2$355); and indeed, as we shall see, even

at this point of illumination not only does Los despair but the warfare in his members carries on unabated.

Chapter Seven

A Thread

> Now, before Daedalus left Crete, he had given Ariadne a magic ball of thread, and instructed her how to enter and leave the Labyrinth. She must open the entrance door and tie the loose end of the thread to the lintel; the ball would then roll along, diminishing as it went and making, with devious turns and twists, for the innermost recess where the Minotaur was lodged. This ball Ariadne gave to Theseus, and instructed him to follow it until he reached the sleeping monster, whom he must seize by the hair and sacrifice to Poseidon. He could then find his way back by rolling up the thread into a ball again.
>
> Robert Graves[1]

(1) Two seventh Nights

Readers of The Four Zoas are now presented with another challenge to their belief in the necessarily closed and regularly ordered nature of texts. The poem, acting in a thoroughly unruly manner, turns back on itself and offers its readers a second Night the Seventh. The presence of two seventh Nights in a poem which announces itself as a Dream of Nine Nights has, not unexpectedly, provoked considerable discussion amongst Blake scholars.

The traditional point of view on this anomaly has been that VII[b] is the earliest of the two versions and that VII[a] was written to replace it. The two Nights therefore represent either alternative accounts, or a definitive and a discarded version. Harold Bloom writes:

> There are some remarkable moments in the original Night VII, but the reader ought to neglect it for the definitive later version. . . .[2]

Erdman believes that VII[a] was written after the peace of Amiens (or "when peace actually came") and therefore represents a more positive alternative to VII[b].[3] Morton Paley tells us that

> The present Night VIII, however, links closely with the new end of VIIa, indicating that when VIII was written, Blake was no longer trying to retain VIIb at all.[4]

The problem that these critics are attempting to address is not simply

that there are two Seventh Nights in The Four Zoas but that the two Nights seem to express quite different visions of Los and of the possibility of redemption. The imaginative leaps of Night the Seventh[a] are lacking from Night the Seventh[b] and it is only in the former that we hear "of the necessity of 'Self-Annihilation' - henceforth one of Blake's two or three most important themes."[5] Perhaps the most difficult point to explain is that in Night VII[b] Los seems to have forgotten the lessons that he had learnt in VII[a]. The Los who draws "Urizen[s] Shadow away / From out the ranks of war" re-enters the conflicts of the fallen world in VII[b] with renewed vigour:

> Los reard his mighty stature on Earth stood his feet. Above
> The moon his furious forehead circled with black bursting thunders
> His naked limbs glittring upon the dark blue sky his knees
> Bathed in bloody clouds. his loins in fires of war where spears
> And swords rage where the Eagles cry & the Vultures laugh saying
> Now comes the night of Carnage now the flesh of Kings & Princes
> Pamperd in palaces for our food the blood of Captains nurturd
> With lust & murder for our drink the drunken Raven shall wander
> All night among the slain & mock the wounded that groan in the
> field. . . .
>
> (96:19-27, E393)

Wilkie and Johnson in fact go so far as to write that

> Night VIIB differs so obviously from VIIA that to describe them as different versions is inaccurate. The most important question is not how the two Nights differ but what, if anything, they have in common. In events, tone, texture, and above all in their ways of resolving the human crisis, A and B seem both to portray and to prescribe totally different worlds.[6]

With such an obvious and striking difference in character and mood it is doubtless convenient if one can be shown to be an earlier version of the second. The traditional resolution of this problem was, however, made problematic by Margoliouth and Bentley. The former observed that before late additions and arrangements there was a high degree of narrative continuity between the early versions of VII[a] and VII[b]. This point alone suggested that [b] was at least initially not an alternative or a discarded version of [a].[7] The latter argued on the basis of stitch marks on the manuscript that Night the Seventh[b] was later than [a].[8]

These developments leave the critic in an uncomfortable position. As John Kilgore writes:

> In sum, we have to regard VIIb as part of the poem, but there is no really satisfactory place to fit it in. Blake left the Night as a unit, but as a unit it resists placement anywhere in the present text.[9]

It is therefore not surprising that in the time that has elapsed since the publication of Bentley's edition of the poem a number of critics have attempted a different solution of the problem. A brief overview of the strategy that has been adopted can be gained by comparing the conclusions of John Kilgore, Andrew Lincoln and Mark Lefebvre, who address this problem in the edition of Blake: An Illustrated Quarterly published in the Fall of 1978 (volume 12, number 46).

John Kilgore argues that VII[a] and VII[b] should be printed in that order but that the critic should consider reading them in a different form:

> for the purpose of a linear commentary, or of having a theoretical model of the poem's narrative sequence, I would recommend a critical order much like the one Wagenknecht uses in his reading of the poem. Having read VIIa up to the point of Vala's birth from the Shadow of Enitharmon, I would then take up VIIb, considering it in its original position in order to get a coherent view of Blake's first attempt to depict approaching apocalypse. I would choose the original rather than the revised version of VIIb (though with some hesitation), for the sake of preserving the original continuity of VIIa-VIIb, and because I suspect that the reordering of the Night corresponded to a plan of revision which Blake never carried out. Having read VIIb straight through in this order, I would return to the added passages of VIIa; then on to VIII and XI.[10]

Andrew Lincoln argues for a rearrangement which will produce a single Seventh Night of seven hundred and ninety lines:

> it is possible to conflate the two versions of the seventh Night simply by inserting the whole of VIIa between the transposed halves of VIIb. The scenes describing the tension between Los and Enitharmon would thus be placed in a context which would allow a relatively coherent narrative sequence to develop, describing a steady progress in the relationship of Los and Enitharmon, from disharmony to unity.[11]

Finally, Mark Lefebvre writes:

> The arrangement I propose requires inserting VIIb (with its two parts reversed, as Blake's instructions require) between the original and added parts of VIIa (i.e. between VIIa1 and VIIa2) . . . In this sequence "Night the Seventh" can function coherently as the crucial Night of the poem. It begins with the successful machinations of Urizen to dominate the world. In VIIa1 he lays his plot, hoping to overcome Los through Orc and Enitharmon; in VIIb2 he routs Orc in a terrific battle; in VIIb1 his agent deceives Tharmas and the nadir of the Fall is reached. In VIIa2 the poem makes the crucial upswing toward salvation, and Los is the zoa in control.[12]

In attempting to summarize and draw a conclusion from these articles, Erdman, with more than a hint of weariness, remarks that

> Until getting involved in the present discussion, which has been going on for a couple of years, I tended to assume that leaving the manuscript "as it was" meant accepting the order VIIa, VIIb. I have come to realize that there is even less evidence for doing that than for relegating one Night the Seventh to the bottom of the pile. . . .
> My editorial self has been moved . . . to abandon those non-solutions, the relegating of VIIb to a postscript or the printing of VIIa and VIIb in tandem. Neither arrangement responds adequately to the manuscript or to the reader's appreciation of an inclusive yet coherent narrative or thematic sequence or structure. As the search for Blake's "final intentions" disappoints us, we arrive at the idea that the best editorial service will be to place VIIb in the most effective location within the flow of the text.[13]

Quite clearly what dominates these latest critical positions is an extraordinary stress on narrative development and continuity (conceived of as the unfolding of a single line) and, in turn, this stress is predicated upon the assumption that the Los of embrace and reunion cannot precede or be contemporaneous with the Los of disunion. Kilgore talks of a "linear commentary" and arranges the poem so that the Los of VII[b] precedes the "illuminated" Los that we find at the end of VII[a]. Similarly Lincoln alters the poem to allow "a relatively coherent narrative sequence to develop" which will describe "a steady progress in the relationship of Los and Enitharmon, from disharmony to unity." Lefebvre follows the same path when he arranges the poem to allow for a "crucial upswing toward salvation" and even Erdman agrees that the two Nights can be rearranged to give expression to a "coherent narrative" which is somewhere beneath their pages. The fruit of this latest round of discussion can be seen in David Erdman's recently revised edition of The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake where the two seventh Nights are conflated into one.

It seems to me that the problem with all of these "solutions" to the presence of an apparently gratuitous Night in The Four Zoas is that they misunderstand the nature of Los's illumination in Night the Seventh[a]. The controversy of course begins with the observation of a clear disjunction between the tone and apparent intent of the two Nights. The existence of such a gap (with the attendant apprehension of an hiatus between the narratives of

the two Nights) is incontrovertible. However, the conclusions that are drawn from this observation depend upon a perception of Los as somehow cleansed of error in the moment of embrace. Middleton Murry, for example, writes that

> by being reconciled to the Spectre within himself, by recognizing and receiving Urizen as a part of his own Self, Los-Blake attains a new understanding, a new synthesis (as we might call it to-day). Not, of course, an intellectual synthesis; but a real and decisive act of new spiritual understanding, involving a revolution of the total man - an act of the Self-annihilation which is Imagination.[14]

Similarly, Wilkie and Johnson write of "recovery" and "grace":

> Blake takes us further than either Wordsworth or Spenser into the psychology of recovery, regeneration, renewal, but like them he presents only the experience of grace, not a formula for obtaining it. . . . Blake does not anatomize the moment of relief and reconciliation itself; he concentrates in the remainder of Night VII - and on through the rest of the poem - on the renewal of life as it flows out from that moment.[15]

The embrace by Los of his Spectre is certainly an extraordinary moment in the poem. However, as I have argued, it leaves the fallen world intact and is not itself "an act of the Self-annihilation which is Imagination." In Night the Seventh[a] Los embraces the Spectre as another self. It would certainly be comfortable if this embrace somehow erased sin from the world and if from this point Los need only discover "fury and cruelty and the soul of dark revenge" "in his former self" (my emphasis).[16] In fact, the entire force of this embrace would be lost if the recognition that the Spectre is Los's real self (and the embrace of this Spectre and the fallen world which he retains) were to destroy the Spectre and his world. An embrace is a relationship in which the other is not assimilated and in which the other can remain intact. For Los to attempt the "new synthesis" that Murry discusses would be for him to remain a "ravenous lust." Los's embrace is the acceptance of his own fallibility and of his complicity in the Fall. It does not erase; it recognizes and embraces the world created by the Spectre. It is therefore not the moment of "recovery," "regeneration," "renewal" and "grace" but the embodiment which is the ground or necessary condition for this event. The true climax of the poem is not in Night the Seventh[a] but at the beginning

of Night the Ninth.

We can attempt to clarify this situation by returning to the beginning of the chapter of Romans in which St. Paul discusses the double will that he has found within his psyche. Paul offers his readers a quite extraordinary characterization of the nature of sin:

> Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? (2) For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. (3) So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. (4) Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. (5) For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. (6) But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.

Luther, in his lectures on St. Paul's epistle to the Romans, offers a useful gloss to this passage. He writes:

> The apostle's manner of argument is contrary to the metaphysical or moral method of reasoning. For the apostle makes it a point to say that it is man rather than sin that is taken away, so that sin continues as something that remains and man is cleansed from sin rather than that the opposite is the case. In contrast to this, human self-understanding asserts that it is sin that is taken away and that it is man who remains and is cleansed.[17]

When Murry writes that Los discovers "in his former self fury and cruelty and the soul of dark revenge!" (my emphasis), he is suggesting that "it is sin that is taken away and that it is man who remains and is cleansed." In fact, sin is removed only by a new birth. It is only by being "married" to a reality which is outside the closed cycles of the fallen world that man is taken away from sin and one can become "dead to the law by the body of Christ." It is an understanding such as this which informs Blake's doctrine of States.

In Night the Seventh[a], Los has done no more than embrace the reality of the fallen world. So long as this is all that he does, he remains a slave to the law, and the good that he does ushers in an evil that he does not

intend. In other words, Los's embrace of the Spectre accepts but does not erase the antagonism within the world and within Los's own being between spirit and flesh, the mind and the members. This is quite clearly why we have not one but two Seventh Nights. The first (VII[a]) is a narrative of the spirit and of the inward man. In this Night we observe Los's recognition and embrace of his own ontology. This is a narrative of "redemption" because it tells of activities which save the world from annihilation and are the basis or necessary condition for a future new birth. However, these activities still occur in the fallen world and they are therefore mirrored by the narrative which we find in Night the Seventh[b]. This second narrative is contemporaneous with the first. It tells us of the flesh; the outward man; the self-centred body which, whatever one's spiritual decisions, continues the warfare of the fallen world. Critics make much of the simple word "but" which separates the negative "moment of the Shadowy Female's birth" from "the moment of the astonishing fraternal embrace of Los and the Spectre of Urthona."[18] It is, however, equally important to recognize that Night the Seventh[b] begins with the same slender word. We are still in the fallen world, each advance by the spirit is matched by a retreat on the part of the flesh, the outward man wars against the inner, Night the Seventh[a] is mirrored by Night the Seventh[b]. In short, we are still within the labyrinth and unlike Icarus we have not been able to embrace the skies, or in the words of St. Paul, we have not been "married" (with all the tutoring and giving up of self which Paul implies) to "him who is raised from the dead."

Night the Seventh[a] and Night the Seventh[b] are therefore in a relationship which can only be called an embrace. At the same point in narrative place and time the reader has two Nights which persist in standing alongside one another. It is in fact odd that the embrace between Los and his Spectre which is applauded throughout the canon of Blake criticism should be denied these two Nights. More importantly, as soon as the Nights are seen to be parallel and contemporaneous and themselves enacting, within the form of the text, "the spectrous embrace," we are able to see that much of the debate

that has raged around these Nights is spurious and misleading. It would be out of place to go into this at length at this point; however, at the risk of being too brief, I conclude that if the Nights are read as parallel narratives of the flesh and the spirit then the apparent discontinuity between the accounts is no longer a problem which must be solved or explained. The narrative discontinuity is as great as that between the inner and the outer man, good and evil. In addition we can explain why Blake reversed the order of VII[a], added the closing lines to VII[b], and by so doing obscured the narrative development which once existed from VII[a] to VII[b]. That a person who has had an illumination as to his own nature should in the next step revert to his old self is a truth that we have perhaps come to expect. That illumination (and the late additions to VII[a] magnify the extent of that illumination) should itself exist alongside of and even depend upon and facilitate the "law of the flesh" is nothing less than shocking. We do not have two alternative Nights, two sequential seventh Nights, or even a single composite Night the Seventh, but two contemporaneous, parallel accounts which cannot be separated. The narrative, like life, doubles itself and we must place together two Nights, the good and the bad, Los's embrace and his fiery revenge, the inner and the outer man.

Blake's strategy in these Nights parallels that of Christ in the parables, and of the early Christians. St. Paul writes in his first epistle to the Corinthians, chapter one, verses 22-23 that

> the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness. . . .

Christ is a stumblingblock precisely because from a non-Christian perspective there is no way of resolving the contradication represented by a suffering Messiah. Similarly, in the presence of two seventh Nights in The Four Zoas Blake presents the reader with a paradox which, from a fallen perspective, cannot be resolved. In Genesis the Fall began with the picking of an apple from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. In other words, the knowledge of good and evil came into being at the same point in time and is a

direct result of the Fall. Bonhoeffer touches on some of the reasons for this in his book Ethics:

> In the knowledge of good and evil man does not understand himself in the reality of the destiny appointed in his origin, but rather in his own possibilities, his possibility of being good or evil. He knows himself now as something apart from God, outside God, and this means that he now knows only himself and no longer knows God at all. . . .[19]

In The Four Zoas the recognition that good and evil, spirit and flesh, Night the Seventh[a] and [b], are entangled with one another, and the experience of the tension that this duality introduces into the world, will push Los and provoke the reader until, as we shall see, there remains no option but the embrace of the whole Man.

(2) Figure and ground; spirit and flesh; Night VII[a] and VII[b]

The two Nights are not, of course, as rigidly divided between the flesh and the spirit as I have suggested. In Night the Seventh[a] the situation immediately prior to Los's embrace of the Spectre (85:13-21, E360/$E_2$353), for example, details the war of VII[b]. Even after the embrace, as Los describes to Enitharmon his desire to "fabricate embodied semblances," it is important to note that Los speaks from a position

> in Golgonooza in the Gate of Luban where
> He had erected many porches where branchd the Mysterious Tree
> Where the Spectrous dead wail . . .
> (90:2-4, E370/$E_2$355),

and, of course, although Los is able to divide "the powers of Every Warrior" (90:63, E371/$E_2$357) and so avoid a complete collapse of the world, he is unable to stop the warfare itself and he is powerless to draw Urizen's "Spectrous form" out of "the ranks of war" (90:59-60, E371/$E_2$357). This hidden narrative of the flesh is, therefore, an ever present companion to the advances of the spirit; it is the dimly seen ground to the configuration of spirit in the fallen world.

In Night the Seventh[b], however, the relationship between figure and

ground is reversed and the narrative focuses on the flesh. For Satan, Christ's descent to Hell and embrace of the sins of the world appeared (according to Milton) at first to signify the success of his own plans. Similarly, while Los embraces the reality of the fallen world (in Night the Seventh[a]), Urizen (in Night the Seventh[b]) proclaims his victory:

> The time of Prophecy is now revolvd & all
> This Universal Ornament is mine & in my hands
> The ends of heaven like a Garment will I fold them round me
> Consuming what must be consumd then in power & majesty
> I will walk forth thro those wide fields of endless Eternity
> A God & not a Man a Conqueror in triumphant glory
> And all the Sons of Everlasting shall bow down at my feet. . . .
> (95:18-24, E360/$E_2$392)

From Urizen's point of view the world is now a Garment which he can fold around himself. He has drawn the Spectre and Shadow, the form or body of the world, to worship at his tree. In addition, Los's embrace of the Spectre (from Urizen's perspective again) seems to diminish the power of Los. Urizen is no longer confronted with a Los who attempts to bend the world to his will; instead he sees that Los, like Christ, has embraced the very bowels of hell. In Night the Seventh[a] we described the success of Urizen's strategy as the irruption of the tree of mystery in Los's constituted world. In Night VII[b] this same event is expressed from Urizen's point of view. The "Sun that glowd oer Los" is now compelled to enter Urizen's world:

> & they took the Sun that glowd oer Los
> And with immense machines down rolling. the terrific orb
> Compell'd. The Sun reddning like a fierce lion in his chains
> Descended to the sound of instruments that drownd the noise
> Of the hoarse wheels & the terrific howlings of wild beasts
> That dragd the wheels of the Suns chariot & they put the Sun
> Into the temple of Urizen to give light to the Abyss
> To light the War by day to hide his secret beams by night. . . .
> (96:9-16, E361/$E_2$393)

Los is unfortunately still in a world where he performs that which he does not will and each act of spirit extends the empire of the flesh. Los's embrace of his own reality is an extraordinary achievement, but in this embrace the world is no longer held in a struggle between Los and Urizen; in fact, in relinquishing his own claims on the body of the world Los allows it

to be completely appropriated by Urizen. It is now quite literally Urizen's garment.

From the point of view of the flesh, Los's embrace of the Spectre gives the fallen world a new vitality. This is why Los and Tharmas now appear as ruthless and cruel warriors. In embracing the Spectre and the world that he retains, Los (and Tharmas in Los) embraces the form of withdrawal, which is of course the form of war:

> Outstretchd upon the hills lay Enitharmon clouds & tempests
> Beat round her head all night all day she riots in Excess
> But night or day Los follows War & the dismal moon rolls over her. . . .
>
> (97:19-21, E362/$E_2$394)

In Night the Seventh[b] we therefore are given the reason why the "Union" between Los and Enitharmon

> Was not to be Effected without Cares & Sorrows & Troubles
> Of six thousand Years of self denial and of bitter Contrition. . . .
>
> (87:27-28, E369/$E_2$355)

Los has embraced the form of the fallen world, but this form is the form of withdrawal and dissension.

Many of the sentences that I have included in the paragraphs written above are, of course, in flagrant contradiction to statements in my previous section, but this is precisely the nature of the fallen world in which a spirit of evil animates heavenly things, and Los performs that which he does not will. The difficulty in reading and writing about The Four Zoas at this point is to keep the perspectives of the spirit and of the flesh, the inner and the outer man, Night the Seventh[a] and [b], in clear focus at the same time. This is extraordinarily difficult because the knowledge of good and evil bequeathed to us at the Fall presupposes a separation and distinction between what Los and the poem have brought together. The reader is called to make an embrace very bit as difficult as Los's embrace of the Spectre.

In Night the Seventh[b] we therefore see an attenuation of the reality of evil which exactly matches the advances in the realm of the spirit that were observed in Night the Seventh[a]. It is now, for example, Luvah (the

immortal form of Orc) who is nailed to the tree. This suggests an increase in the sufferings of the victim, and therefore an extension of Urizen's religion and of his reign of terror:

> They sound the clarions strong they chain the howling captives
> They give the Oath of blood They cast the lots into the helmet,
> They vote the death of Luvah & they naild him to the tree
> They piercd him with a spear & laid him in a sepulcher
> To die a death of Six thousand years bound round with
> desolation. . . .
> (92:11-15, E364/$E_2$396)

Orc is now completely assimilated to the world of Urizen:

> 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 . . .
> (93:24-26, E365/$E_2$397),

and at the very close of the Night Satan appears. Los indeed stands "in the Gate of Luban where / He had erected many porches where branchd the Mysterious Tree / Where the Spectrous dead wail." In Night the Seventh[b] it is only in the penultimate lines that the reader glimpses the possibility of rebirth and recovery which is, thanks to Los's redemptive embrace, implied in the fallen world (it is interesting that these lines are again introduced with the word but):

> But the Eternal Promise
> They wrote on all their tombs & pillars & on every Urn
> These words If ye will believe your B[r]other shall rise again
> In golden letters ornamented with sweet labours of Love
> Waiting with Patience for the fulfilment of the Promise Divine. . . .
> (95:4-8, E367/$E_2$399)

The promise is written on "tombs," "pillars" (which memorialize the dead) and "on every Urn" (full of the ashes of the dead). In other words, it is in the very shape of the fallen world that we will find the promise of salvation. Los cannot escape the fallen world by retreating from it; he can no longer make an easy division between good and evil, spirit and flesh. He is in fact only able to see "the Lamb of God / Clothed in Luvahs robes of blood descending to redeem" (87:43-44, E369/$E_2$355) by embracing the reality which he constitutes, and then by turning his eyes inward to see the course of action that has been made possible by this act.

(3) Night the Eighth

In Night the Eighth the trajectories of the inner and outer man come together in a single Night. For the reader the tension resulting from this juxtaposition is remarkable. In the first six Nights we have observed the consolidation of the world of withdrawal, and the realization at its heart of the struggle between the inner and the outer man. In the seventh Nights this division is clarified by the appearance of a double narrative. The tension between the flesh and the spirit is so strong that the story divides. In Night the Eighth this already overwhelming pressure is augmented by bringing these two (now clearly distinguished) realities back into proximity with each other. The effect is akin to that produced by bringing the positive poles of two magnets together. As the poem moves towards Night the Ninth, readers find themselves in a world which is about to break into fragments. A good example of the tension between flesh and spirit can be seen on the first page of this Night.

At the beginning of the eighth Night "the Council of God" meets "as one Man Even Jesus" (99:1-2, E371) and Albion begins to awake. Los now says that he can see

> the Divine Vision thro the broken Gates
> Of thy [Enitharmon's] poor broken heart astonishd melted into
> Compassion & Love . . .
> (99:15-16, E372),

and Enitharmon asserts that she can "see the Lamb of God upon Mount Zion" (99:17, E372). However, these assertions are followed by a very different claim:

> For nothing could restrain the dead in Beulah 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, E372)

The opening word of this passage suggests that there is a direct link between the appearance of the Lamb of God and the descent of the dead. Similarly, on page 101 we read that Los contemplated "Enormous Works" and was "inspird by

the holy Spirit" (39, E374) and yet his work means that the dead

> humanize in the fierce battle where in direful pain
> Troop by troop the beastial droves rend one another sounding loud
> The instruments of sound & troop by troop in human forms they urge
> The dire confusion till the battle faints those that remain
> Return in pangs & horrible convulsions to their beastial state
> For the monsters of the Elements Lions or Tygers or Wolves
> Sound loud the howling music Inspird by Los & Enitharmon. . . .
> (101:46-102:4, E374)

Los is "inspird by the holy Spirit" while "the monsters of the Elements" are "Inspird" by him.

There is no shortage of such juxtapositions. On page 103 "the Direful Web of Religion" (26, E375) falls and Urizen himself is "tangled in his own net in sorrow lust repentance" (31, E376). This extension of the chaos of the fallen world is placed alongside the creation, by Los and Enitharmon, of "a Universal female form" (103:38, E376). This event inspires a song of expectation by "the Sons of Eden" (104:5, E376) which concludes with the words:

> We now behold the Ends of Beulah & we now behold
> Where Death Eternal is put off Eternally
> . . . Come then O Lamb of God
> Come Lord Jesus come quickly. . . .
> (104:11-12, 16-17, E377)

These lines are, however, followed by the appearance of Satan (104:19-28, E377). Similarly, "The Universal female form" that Los creates is paralleled by Urizen's "False Feminine Counterpart Lovely of Delusive Beauty" (105:11, E378). This series of oppositions reaches its climax in the meeting of the Lamb of God and Satan (105:1, E378).

To argue that in Night the Eighth each gain in the Spirit is followed by an attenuation of the war in the flesh is not to deny that there is also a certain progression which can be discerned. The tension between the opposites of flesh and spirit has certainly increased, while the poem itself has moved one step closer to apocalypse. It is, however, important to recognize that even in this penultimate Night this latter movement is contained by the fallen world. It is a thread found within, or a line traced across the floor of the labyrinth. Like the thread that Daedalus unwound as he entered

King Minos's labyrinth at Crete, it connects us to a reality outside the labyrinth and so allows us to orient ourselves without reference to the winding passages and twisting paths within which we are enclosed.

In The Four Zoas the "golden string" (J77, E231) which leads out of the labyrinth first appeared in Night the Seventh[a]. In this Night Los embraced the Spectre and so embraced the form of the fallen world. This step enabled him to produce "embodied semblances" and "forms sublime." In Night the Eighth these forms appear as Jerusalem. Enitharmon is able to see "the Lamb of God . . . / The divine Vision seen within the inmost deep recess / Of fair Jerusalems bosom in a gently beaming fire" (104:2-4, E376). We can understand this development by returning to an analogy that we have used in previous chapters. In withdrawal the body becomes the horizon of one's world and the self enters a cave or a labyrinth. The world is now the space between the self and the walls of the cave and therefore from this perspective no other can approach. When Los produces "embodied semblances" and embraces the world in which he finds himself, suddenly the gap between the self and the walls of the cave is diminished. One is of course still enclosed, but the movement towards the perimeter of the prison brings one into proximity with others. The form of our constituted world, the semblances that we fabricate, now contain "the Lamb of God" and "the divine Vision." The semblances no longer enclose but at least potentially open to Truth. Jerusalem is the heavenly city and the name of Christ's bride. Enitharmon gives the female form that she and Los have created this name because it is the form or being in which humanity lives in proximity to God, or more radically, the form in which humanity, in the person of Jerusalem, becomes the bride of Christ.

(4) An advance and another retreat

In the crucible of Los's art, God and man, the infinite and the finite, Eternity and time, move into proximity with one another. This is represented as the appearance of Christ within the fallen world:

> Los said to Enitharmon Pitying I saw
> 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. . . .
> (104:31-38, E378)

Of course, as the above passage suggests and as I have argued, this marriage is far from completed. The progression from the embrace of the Spectre to the fabrication of Jerusalem and now to the descent of the Lamb of God is a thread which stretches along the floor of the labyrinth. Christ is born of "fair Jerusalem" but at the same time he appears in "mysterys woven mantle." Just as Los's embrace of the Spectre leaves the body of the fallen world intact, so Christ's descent to the fallen world does not in itself alter the structure of Los's world. Los has embraced and Christ entered the form of privation and loss. For the former this means that his members still war against his spirit, while for the latter it suggests that he is subject to the law of the flesh. In other words, the appearance of the Lamb of God within Los's fabricated semblances, clothed in "mysterys woven mantle," means that Christ is assimilated to the fallen world. Here he is subject to Urizen's Laws and therefore, as a reality which quite patently does not conform, Christ is sentenced to death:

> Urizen calld together the Synagogue of Satan in dire Sanhedrim
> To Judge the Lamb of God to Death as a murderer & robber
> As it is written he was numberd among the transgressors. . . .
> (105:5-7, E378)

> Thus was the Lamb of God condemnd to Death
> They naild him upon the tree of Mystery weeping over him
> And then mocking & then worshipping calling him Lord & King. . . .
> (106:1-3, E379)

From the perspective of the fallen world this event is yet one more round in the struggle between the spirit and the flesh. If there is any extraordinary significance to this event it is perhaps that it represents the greatest level of tension between flesh and spirit which is conceivable. Urizen's strategy has indeed been successful; it now has succeeded in drawing even the

body of Christ to its perspective and it now seems impossible to imagine a move by the spirit which would match this victory and so preserve the "equilibrium" of the fallen world. This is why Jerusalem calls "the Body dead upon the Cross . . . Eternal Death" and suggests that Los and she should now "worship Death in fear while yet we live" (106:7-8,10, E379), and it is why Los despairs of "Life Eternal" (106:16, E379).

If the reader, however, focuses on the thread that is being unravelled within the fallen world, the picture is very different. It was when Theseus reached the heart of the labyrinth at Crete and confronted the Minotaur that the path out of the labyrinth was complete. Similarly, it is at the ultimate reaches of the fallen world, as Los is confronted by his own Minotaur, the possibility of eternal death implied by the assimilation of Christ to the fallen world, that the path out of the fallen world is complete. It is after facing this final terror that Los will be able to roll the thread up into a ball and so escape the corridors of the fallen world.

The Minotaur appears to Los as Rahab:

> She stood before Los in her Pride among the Furnaces
> Dividing & uniting in Delusive feminine pomp questioning him. . . .
> (113:42-43, E380)

We do not hear what Rahab says to Los. The reason for this silence on the part of the text is undoubtedly because any further words would be extraneous. Rahab herself, one can imagine, merely draws attention to the enormity of what has happened. She is the gadfly who gloats and torments against the background of her own victory, for

> when Rahab had cut off the Mantle of Luvah from
> The Lamb of God it rolld apart, revealing to all in heaven
> And all on Earth the Temple & the Synagogue of Satan & Mystery. . . .
> (113:38-40, E379)

Los's Minotaur is the victory of Satan.

In attempting to delineate the thread of recovery in the midst of this defeat, The Four Zoas now returns, at a more intense and all-encompassing level, to the crisis of Night the Seventh[a]. If Los attempts to separate himself from the victory of Satan and judge it as evil and his intentions (at

least) as good, then he has lost the struggle and the Minotaur (for reasons that we shall shortly consider) has won. Therefore, in a movement which parallels his embrace of the Spectre, Los replies to Rahab "with tenderness & love" (113:44, E380). In his reply, Los gives Rahab and the reader the most conscious and articulated statement of the structure of the fallen world that has appeared in the poem.

(5) The reply to Rahab

Los begins with an admission of his own participation in the Fall and a recitation of his generations which substantially extends the embrace of the fallen world which we observed in Night the Seventh[a]. Los admits that he has taken part in the crucifixion: "I also have piercd the Lamb of God in pride & wrath" (113:52, E380), and perhaps even more decisively he numbers Satan, Tirzah and Rahab amongst his children (115:3,9 E380). Los therefore begins not by judging the crucifixion as something done by persons who are in some way different from himself but by embracing this enormity as an act that he has perpetrated. Los then goes on to account for the loss of his children in a way which underlines the importance of the embrace that he has enacted.

The first movement of Los's account of the loss of his children focuses attention on the problem of judgement. Los asserts that it is judgement, at least the kind that Blake calls "Natural Morality" (E200) and is exemplified by the knowledge of good and evil, that creates the state of Satan. Thus Satan is cut off from Golgonooza not simply because "Satan accusd Palamabron before his brethren" and "maddend / The horses of palambrons harrow" (115:12-13, E380), but because "Rintrah and Palamabron / Cut him off . . ." (115:14, E380). It is only after this second event that Enitharmon creates a space for him and Satan becomes "a Globe immense / Crusted with snow in a dim void" (115:16-17, E380). From this position Satan is able to tempt many of the Sons and Daughters of Los away from him. Satan's power as Tempter arises in the

following way. The first step in attaining this power is a confusion between states and individuals:

> And this is the manner in which Satan became the Tempter
>
> There is a State namd Satan learn distinct to know O Rahab
> The Difference between States & Individuals of those States
> The State namd Satan never can be redeemd in all Eternity. . . .
> (115:23-25, E380)

Satan became a state as well as an individual when he became "a Globe immense." In other words, the state of Satan is formed in part by a judgement, in response to an injustice done to the self, which separates the malefactor from the self. The gap between individuals that allows one to wrong another becomes a space and <u>locale</u> when the malefactor, not his acts, is condemned. In judgement the person who has been wronged establishes and maintains the space of withdrawal. Blake is drawing a rather unsettling parallel between the state of Satan that appeared in Night the Seventh[b] as the result of Urizen's attempt to assimilate the world to his identity, and the state of Satan that appears when, using our knowledge of good and evil, we judge and attempt to order the world from our perspective. We therefore have a fundamental congruence between personal acts of judgement, Palamabron and Rintrah's judgement of Satan, and Urizen's assimilation of the world to his perspective (which, of course, implies a considerable exercise of the faculty of judgement). All three give rise to the state of Satan. Satan is for this reason characterized by Blake as both the Accuser of sin and the Judge. This state cannot be redeemed for the same reason that Luther argues that "sin continues as something that remains." It is not sin that is taken away, but the individual that moves away from sin.

The second step in the creation of Satan's power as tempter occurs when Luvah and Orc descend to the state of Satan. The lines quoted above continue:

> But when Luvah in Orc became a Serpent he des[c]ended into
> That State calld Satan. . . .
> (115:26-27, E380)

Luvah and Orc are, within the fallen world, the transgressors against and the victims of Urizen's laws. At the most extreme point of their warfare against

Urizen they lose all identity and become merely a serpent upon Urizen's tree. In other words, they have become separated from their own identity and completely assimilated to Urizen's world. This separation and loss of identity is once again the state of Satan.

This congruence establishes an elementary confusion, which is the source of Satan's power over others:

> Enitharmon breathd forth on the Winds
> Of Golgonooza her well beloved knowing he was Orc's human remains
> She tenderly lovd him above all his brethren he grew up
> In mothers tenderness The Enormous worlds rolling in Urizens power
> Must have given Satan by these mild arts Dominion over all. . . .
> (115:27-31, E380-81)

Satan's "mild arts" result from a coincidence of his state with the end result of Urizen's strategy for domination. Urizen's strategy has been to assimilate Luvah and Orc to his world and then to make them the ostensible object of his religion. Enitharmon (in the person of the Shadow) is drawn to worship at the tree of Urizen's religion because she knows that this is all that remains of her son. As we have argued, this assimilation of Enitharmon to Urizen's perspective caused an irruption of the tree of mystery in Los's constituted world. In Los's account this same event is described as Enitharmon "breathing forth on the Winds / Of Golgonooza her well beloved." Her son is, however, now the state of Satan.

With the success of Urizen's designs on Enitharmon, "The Enormous worlds" are indeed "rolling in Urizens power." The same strategy draws Los and even Christ to his perspective. At the moment that he succeeds, however, Satan's "mild arts" have placed the world in his power because Satan is the loss of identity, the world of identical particles, that such an assimilation represents. Satan tempts with the "Arts of Urizen" (115:17, E380) because the state of Satan is the reductio ad absurdum of Urizen's efforts to bend the world to his will.

In the course of the narrative of The Four Zoas we have observed Urizen, Luvah, Urthona, Tharmas and Los all attempt to create a world which conforms to their will. In other words, they are involved in the judgement of whether

or not individuals conform to their desire. The ideal of all the fallen Zoas, and the end result of Urizen's activity, is to create a world of self enclosed globes that outlaw and expel all difference. Now, in Los's reply to Rahab, Los explicitly recognizes this process as it is enacted in his members. It is important to recognize that Palamabron's response to Satan is not an over-reaction. As an individual and as a state Satan does threaten identity. It therefore seems at first to be a reasonable course of action when Palamabron calls down a "Great Solemn assembly" (115:33, E381). The problem is, however, that in bringing the assembly into the process of judgement Palamabron extends the state of Satan. In judging Satan, Palamabron, Rintrah, Los and the assembly all retain the form of their constituted world; they withdraw into discrete globes and so enter the state of Satan:

> Wherefore Palamabron being accusd by Satan to Los
> Calld down a Great Solemn assembly Rintrah in fury & fire
> Defended Palamabron & rage filld the Universal Tent
>
> Because Palamabron was good naturd Satan supposd he feard him
> And Satan not having the Science of Wrath but only of Pity
> Was soon condemnd & wrath was left to wrath & Pity to Pity
> Rintrah & Palamabron Cut sheer off from Golgonooza
> Enitharmons Moony space & in it Satan & his companions
> They rolld down a dim world Crusted with Snow deadly & dark. . . .
> (115:32-40, E381)

With these lines Los's reply to Rahab reaches the narrative time in which both Rahab and he stand.

For the reader, Los's reply to Rahab is disconcerting. Its initial effect is to frustrate and interrupt the narrative movement that has been building up. It does this first of all simply because of its difficulty and compression. As Wilkie and Johnson irritably remark:

> Los's severely compressed version of the Bard's Song . . . presents a problem. Surely even a poet so little concerned as Blake was with explicitness to what he called the "idiot" could not have expected readers to make sense of this synopsis apart from its fuller treatment in Milton.[20]

On a first reading, this difficulty is compounded by the impression that the conflict between Satan, Palamabron and Rintrah is irrelevant to the narrative that we have been following: the poem seems to have suddenly changed its terms. Despite all of this, Bloom calls Los's reply

to Rahab "a great and climactic passage" (E964) and, as I have argued, far from being irrelevant to the poem Los's reply repeats the entire story of The Four Zoas, but now as a conflict which is enacted within his own members.

It seems to me that this passage disrupts the poem's narrative flow in order to delineate the moment of recognition in which Los finally turns and recognizes the thread that his own life has been unravelling, and which can now be followed back to "Heavens gate / Built in Jerusalems wall." This thread is made up of three different materials. In Night the Seventh[a] Los's embrace of his Spectre and of his own reality opened a path to the very edge of the labyrinth. Los's reply to Rahab repeats this recognition and re-establishes it on a more conscious level. Los affirms that the fallen world establishes itself within his own members and that the narrative of The Four Zoas can be rephrased in terms of his own ontology. To the point immediately preceding this speech the poem has progressed as a narrative of which Los is a part: a story which contains Los. However, Los now embraces the story and in this movement it becomes a semblance which is embodied. Quite literally the fall which The Four Zoas narrates takes place in and has been accepted as his body. Clearly this is the first and most important reason why Blake chose to insert the conflict of Satan, Palamabron and Rintrah at this point. The change in orientation, the work that needs to be done by the reader to achieve this reorientation, parallels Los's own efforts at reorganization and reorientation.

The second and third of the materials which make up the thread need to be discussed together because they are closely related. In the early Nights of The Four Zoas we noted that Los's activities were accompanied by the work of Providence. Similarly in Night the Seventh[a] and the early parts of Night the Eighth, the redemptive work of Los and Enitharmon allows the entry of Christ into the fallen world. In Los's reply to Rahab he achieves his clearest recognition of this process. The recognition of the reality of the fallen world, the embrace by Los of his own body, allows God and man, time and Eternity, to move into proximity. This is expressed in the conception of

the Seven Eyes of God, which are, in Damon's words, "the path of Experience fixed for the individual by the Divine Mercy, so that proceeding through his errors he must eventually reach the true God."[21] The final eye is Jesus, the irruption of Eternity within time and of time in Eternity, which (as we have seen) is the result of Los's work. This recognition reveals the thread that connects time and Eternity, the person within the labyrinth and the outside world. Such a moment must inevitably disrupt the narrative logic of a labyrinth. The walls which enclose the self are still there, but they can now be read from a perspective which promises to unite what they have been built to keep apart. As Los says to Rahab, with an eagerness born from a sense of the imminent reality of release, uncovering and apocalypse:

> Then Jesus Came & Died willing beneath Tirzah & Rahab
> Thou art that Rahab Lo the Tomb what can we purpose more
> Lo Enitharmon terrible & beautiful in Eternal youth
> Bow down before her you her children & set Jerusalem free. . . .
> (115:50-116:2, E381)

It is now, as we shall see, only the confusion implicit in the last line which separates the world from Truth.

Chapter Eight

Los and Redemption

If the muscle can feel repugnance, there is still a false
move to be made;
If the mind can imagine tomorrow, there is still a defeat
to remember;
As long as the self can say 'I', it is impossible not to
rebel;
As long as there is an accidental virtue, there is a
necessary vice:
And the garden cannot exist, the miracle cannot occur.

For the garden is the only place there is, but you will
not find it
Until you have looked for it everywhere and found nowhere
that is not a desert;
The miracle is the only thing that happens, but to you it
will not be apparent,
Until all events have been studied and nothing happens
that you cannot explain;
And life is the destiny you are bound to refuse until you
have consented to die.

Therefore, see without looking, hear without listening,
breathe without asking:
The Inevitable is what will seem to happen to you purely
by chance;
The Real is what will strike you as really absurd;
Unless you are certain you are dreaming, it is certainly
a dream of your own;
Unless you exclaim - 'There must be some mistake' - you
must be mistaken.

W.H. Auden[1]

(1) "See without looking, hear without listening, breathe without asking"

Los's discovery of a thread which promises to lead him out of the labyrinth certainly does not resolve the tension between the flesh and the spirit. In fact the remainder of the eighth Night details a continuing and bitter struggle between these two poles. Urizen's assimilation of Los and Christ to his world, for example, means that he (and the state that he represents) has severed its links with reality. Hitherto Urizen has been that which gives clarity and form to Los's universe. But now, in this final assimilation, he loses touch with his being:

> His teeth a triple row he strove to sieze the shadow in vain
> And his immense tail lashd the Abyss his human form a Stone
> A form of Senseless Stone remaind in terrors on the rock
> Abdominable to the eyes of mortals who explore his books
> His wisdom still remaind & all his memory stord with woe
>
> And still his stony form remaind in the Abyss immense
> Like the pale visage in its sheet of lead that cannot follow. . . .
> (106:30-36, E382)

This reduction of Urizen, however, is seen by the reader against the background of Providence:

> Thus in a living Death the nameless shadow all things bound
> 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. . . .
> (107:35-38, E383)

Similarly, Ahania's lament (108:9-109:12, E383-84) is juxtaposed with Enion's expectant reply (109:14-110:28, E384-85). The first has still not seen the "Divine vision her Eyes are Toward Urizen" (108:7, E383), while the second speaks of "The Eternal Man" with assurance:

> And in the cries of birth & in the groans of death his voice
> Is heard throughout the Universe whereever a grass grows
> Or a leaf buds The Eternal Man is seen is heard is felt
> And all his Sorrows till he reassumes his ancient bliss. . . .
> (110:25-28, E385)

This second juxtaposition could of course be read to mean that Ahania's perception is simply not reliable or somehow not real, and that it is the advance of the spirit towards apocalypse which is somehow <u>really</u> occurring. As if to remove this possibility the final page of Night the Eighth tells us that Rahab has now triumphed "over all" (111:1, E385), and that Jerusalem has bee taken "A Willing Captive" and now offers her "own Children / Upon the bloody Altar" (111:2-4, E385) of Urizen. Finally, "The Ashes of Mystery began to animate" and "as of old so now anew began / Babylon again in Infancy Calld Natural Religion" (111:22-24, E386). The labyrinth of the fallen world seems set to retrace its paths once again.

The confrontation between flesh and spirit continues because although Los has uncovered a thread which will lead him out of the labyrinth he has not yet turned to follow it. Los is still the centre of the fallen world and he repeats in his members the conflict between Rintrah, Satan and Palamabron.

The gap which separates the fallen world from apocalypse is the same gap which separates illumination from the action which proceeds from it. The moment in which Los turns from the labyrinth and begins to wind the thread into a ball occurs at the beginning of Night the Ninth. It would indeed be a lot easier if sin could simply be taken away; instead it is Los who must die and be reborn, who must reverse the direction of his very being, if he is to escape the fallen world. The achievement of this reversal is a cataclysmic and catastrophic occurrence:

> Los his vegetable hands
> Outstretchd his right hand branching out in fibrous Strength
> Siezd the Sun. His left hand like dark roots coverd the Moon
> And tore them down cracking the heavens across from immense to
> immense. . . .
>
> (117:6-9, E386)

Los wills <u>not</u> to will and in this way escapes a labyrinth in which each step of the spirit establishes a movement of the flesh which encloses it once again. Los destroys the fabric of his constituted world.

At first glance this apocalypse seems to be no more than destruction and seems to bear an uncanny resemblance to the nihilistic apocalypses of the Lambeth prophecies. Thus, Wilkie and Johnson describe this event as "the revelation of truth in an instantaneous spasm of destruction that reunifies the psychic world."[2] Similarly Morton Paley, quoting a phrase used by Northrop Frye, writes:

> At this point, despairing of the revolutionary millenium [<u>sic</u>] he had once expected, Blake turned to an apocalyptist who also saw history as outside human control. In Revelation, the Wrath of the Lamb is poured out on the world; Christ's thousand-year reign in the New Jerusalem is anticipated, to be followed by war with Satan, general resurrection, and Last Judgement. In Night IX, as Frye complains, "The Last Judgment simply starts off with a bang. . . ." Envisioning the destruction of history, 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.[3]

In fact, nothing could be further from the truth. In the Lambeth books, as I have argued, apocalypse was simply the point of disintegration of the fallen world. It is the moment in which the walls of time, no longer able to contain the seething energies which course through its corridors, are destroyed. At

the end of Europe, for example, Los's call to "all his sons" forebodes a catastrophe in which life itself will be drowned in a sea of blood. One can therefore argue that it is these early apocalypses which start (and end) with a bang and that by their very nature they can only offer "an other-worldly fulfillment"; a fulfilment which does not grow out of the world as it is, but appears in the space opened by that world's annihilation. This is a fate that Blake prophesies; a future which will inevitably belong to us all if the world continues on its present course.

At the beginning of Night the Ninth, by contrast, Los is no longer subject to the force and momentum of the fallen world. In what is a crucial distinction Los tears down and so casts off, rather than participates in the self destruction of, the labyrinth of the fallen world. By using the will in this way Los is able to escape the bondage of the will. It is the act of willing not to will which collapses the closed world of the ego and opens the will to that influx which, in the annotation quoted in the previous chapter, Blake described as God. The premise and motivation for this course of action is the sober embrace of the reality of his own being. It is only this embrace which changes the labyrinth into a garment which can be cast off. As I have argued, sin cannot be removed by a force or being which is "outside human control"; instead, humanity must undergo a new birth. A birth can occur only from within the body or garment of what is; it can proceed only as a movement which both defines itself against and incorporates what is. Los's birth parallels that of the child: both can be effected only through the gates and then against the background of the womb that enclosed them. We can therefore say that rather than being an escape from time this action is predicated upon an embrace of time. Far from "Envisioning the destruction of history," Los prepares the way for a history which is no longer that of bondage but freedom.

The basic model for Los's act of self-annihilation is quite clearly that of Christ. Christ was put to death by the power and authority of his time, just as Los's destruction of his constituted world is (from a certain

perspective) the culmination of Urizen's attempts to draw the Shadow and the Spectre (along with the line that they define) to his own perspective. Although executed by Pilate, Christ freely gave his life, just as Los's "death" is chosen by him. Christ's death symbolizes the embrace and overcoming of the sins of the world. It issues in a call to others to be reborn and at the same time it opens a path for this rebirth. Similarly, Los's death is predicated upon an embrace of the sins of the world - it is perhaps itself the culmination of this embrace - and it issues in a call (spoken in the person of Albion) to the other Zoas to be reborn and, as I shall argue, in a very literal sense it opens a path which will enable this rebirth to be accomplished.

The parallel I have drawn between Los and Christ at first seems to be complicated by the fact that Los, unlike Christ, is clearly motivated by terror and fear. He and Enitharmon are "Terrified at Non Existence / For such they deemd the death of the body" (117:5-6, E386). It would be possible to read these lines as an expression of a confusion on their part: they do not realize that death will be followed by life and resurrection. Christ, by contrast, was able to proceed to his death with serenity because he was aware of a life which followed this event. If they were confused in this way, however, their action in destroying their "body" would be inexplicable. Instead it is clear that it is the realization of the law of sin in their members, of the death represented by the body of the fallen world, that provokes them to tear down their constituted world. It is the "living" death of their "body," the body of the fallen world (in which, as we have seen on page 106, Christ has been enclosed), which terrifies them. Nevertheless, despite the parallel which can be drawn with Christ, Los's actions are shocking.

In the sixties the issue of redemptive death, of sacrificial suffering, was forcibly brought to our attention by the Vietnamese Buddhist monks and the Americans who immolated themselves in protest against the Vietnam war. Daniel Berrigan, in dialogue with Thich Nhat Hanh, offers us an approach to

this problem:

> I think such tragedies widened the conception of death as a gift of life in a way we had not known before in the West. We had never known an occasion where a person freely offered his life, except on the field of battle or to save another person. But the deliberate self-giving, a choice which didn't depend upon some immediate crisis but upon a thoughtful revaluation of life - this was very new to us and was, indeed, an unprecedented gift.[4]

Nhat Hanh replies with some thoughts on two Buddhist martyrs:

> Nhat Chi Mai and Thick Quang Duc immolated themselves for others. Because of life. Because they saw their lives in the lives of others. And in a moment of perception of that deep deep truth, they suddenly lost all fear and gave themselves.[5]

It may, in the context of Blake criticism, seem bizarre to introduce such reflections, and yet it seems to me that at this point in The Four Zoas Los is enacting a very similar death. Los collapses the form of his constituted world; he freely offers his life for the others which he has found bound within his world. This act can be read on many levels; however, it is important that it be not simply limited to the death of a psychological or perceptual set. Los is the ontological reality of the fallen world and as such this inversion affects our very being. It is, in addition, carried out against the background of and perhaps in response to the death of Christ, and this suggests an event of considerable gravity. Finally, the response to Christ's death and the impediment to his own is nothing less than terror at the non-existence which Los feels is implied by "the death of the body" (my emphasis). As in the poem called "The Grey Monk," Blake is juxtaposing, on a variety of levels, a "deliberate self-giving" with the violence of the fallen world. The conclusion is disturbing:

> But vain the Sword & vain the Bow
> They never can work Wars overthrow
> The Hermits Prayer & the Widows tear
> Alone can free the World from fear
>
> For a Tear is an Intellectual thing
> And a Sigh is the Sword of an Angel King
> And the bitter groan of the Martyrs woe
> Is an Arrow from the Almighties Bow
> (25-32, E489-90)

However, even given this analogy between the freely given gifts of Christ and Los, perhaps this is the wrong way to approach such things. In

a discussion of Christ's death, self-immolation, or Los's gift of his life, acts such as these can all too easily take on the colour of a moral imperative. Nhat Hanh is quite clear on this point:

> We do not intend to say that self-immolation is good, or that it is bad. It is neither good nor bad. When you say something is good, you say that you should do that. But nobody can urge another to do such a thing.[6]

Instead, in his dialogue with Berrigan, Nhat Hanh attempts to discuss and understand an act such as this from two very different perspectives. First of all the point is to "understand the situation and the context in which they acted." From this viewpoint we may be able to see how such an act may be "a very natural thing to do, like breathing." Secondly, the point of such an act is not to provoke discussion of whether it should or should not be emulated: "It is apart from all that. It is done to wake us up." Quite clearly this is the approach that The Four Zoas takes to such a matter, for the "bang" which Frye perceives at the beginning of Night the Ninth is in fact given little attention. It is, however, the movement up to this act (which makes it, for Los, "a very natural thing to do") and the movement of awakening which stems from it, which are the poem's first concern. The former has been the subject of our preceding chapters. We must now turn to look at the process of awakening that stems from this act.

(2) The geography of inversion

The idea of a birth which takes as premise for its leap the reality of the world would be less disturbing if the results of such an act were obviously and immediately redemptive. In fact the first fruit of this movement out of Los's constituted world is shocking. It is true that "The thrones of Kings are shaken they have lost their robes & crowns" (117:18, E387), but this reversal is followed by a scene of grim retribution:

> The poor smite their opressors they awake up to the harvest
> The naked warriors rush together down to the sea shore
> Trembling before the multitudes of slaves now set at liberty

> They are become like wintry flocks like forests stripd of leaves
> The opressed pursue like the wind there is no room for escape. . . .
> (117:19-23, E387)

The process of cutting off "Mysterys tyrants" until not one is "left on Earth" (119:13, E388) seems to introduce a cataclysm which is worse than any that has preceded this event:

> The Gates are burst down pour
> The torrents black upon the Earth the blood pours down incessant
> Kings in their palaces lie drownd Shepherds their flocks their tents
> Roll down the mountains in black torrents Cities Villages
> High spires & Castles drownd in the black deluge Shoal on Shoal
> Float the dead carcases of Men & Beasts driven to & fro on waves
> Of foaming blood beneath the black incessant Sky. . . .
> (119:6-12, E388)

It is clear that these events represent some kind of emergence - "the fires of Eternity" (117:10, E386) have fallen and millions have started forth "into flames of mental fire / Bathing their Limbs in the bright visions of Eternity" (119:22-23, E388) - but of what kind? Blake himself seems to indicate that we should treat these visions with suspicion for on page 119 all of the activity in the fallen world is called a "Universal Confusion" (24, E388) and, in a sudden change of perspective, "the Eternal Man" lifts his head and cries of "the consuming Universe" (119:28,31, E388):

> O weakness & O weariness O war within my members
> . . . .
> The Corn is turnd to thistles & the apples into poison
> The birds of song to murderous crows My joys to bitter groans
> The voices of children in my tents to cries of helpless infants
> And all exiled from the face of light & shine of morning
> In this dark world a narrow house I wander up & down
> I hear Mystery howling in these flames of Consummation
> When shall the Man of future times become as in days of old
> O weary life why sit I here & give up all my powers
> To indolence to the night of death when indolence & mourning
> Sit hovring over my dark threshold. tho I arise look out
> And scorn the war within my members yet my heart is weak
> Whence is this sound of rage of Men drinking each others blood
> Drunk with the smoking gore & red but not with nourishing wine. . . .
> (119:32,42-120:8, E388-89)

Albion's perspective on the "Universal Confusion" is unequivocal. It is still a "war within" his "members" and Men are "drinking each others blood"; they are "Drunk with the smoking gore & red but not with nourishing wine." Most decisively he suggests that the flames of this cataclysm are, for Mystery, the "flames of Consummation" or fulfilment. The fallen world is still a

"consuming Universe" where one is assimilated to the perspective of another. The problem is, of course, that this cataclysm and consummation has been brought about by an activity which in many ways can be seen as a rebirth. In order to understand this apparent setback we must briefly summarize the steps that The Four Zoas has outlined.

Reading the first Nights of The Four Zoas bears a certain comparison with descending the steps of a ladder. The Fall is not an event which is completed by a single act; instead the reader experiences it as a long and protracted event which is stretched out in time and space. We can summarize the steps of this "fall" (in descending order) in the following way: (4) the act of withdrawal which precipitates a division into male and female powers; (3) the fall of Tharmas; (2) the fall of Urizen (which includes the fall and assimilation of Luvah); (1) the completed fall to Los. These four steps are, of course, not meant to suggest that the different falls of the Zoas do not occur simultaneously, or that a later event is not suggested alongside an earlier. This descent is instead the approximate path that The Four Zoas opens for the reader; the Fall as it is assimilated to the poem's perspective and chronology. In Night the Ninth it is as if collective humanity reascends this ladder. The Zoas in effect tread the same path as they took in the course of the Fall, but with two major differences. First of all, the steps are taken in reverse order, and secondly, the meaning and reality of the steps are now determined by the movement towards integration, rather than dissolution, that they support. This means that the steps of the ladder are in sequence and in significance reversed. Nevertheless, in order to climb the ladder each and every step must be embraced, not one can be omitted, and, while facilitating a move towards integration, each step is an embrace of the reality of the fallen world. The Four Zoas opens a path to redemption in which nothing can be omitted and all must be embraced: reality must be Imagined and undergone. We can illustrate this point quite succinctly with regard to Los.

Los is the centre and ontological reality of the fallen world; he holds,

with the assistance of the Spectre, the very form of withdrawal and so gives shape and substance to the conflicts of the Zoas. Los is the lowest rung of the ladder, the plateau that appears when the final step to nothingness has been averted. In Night the Eighth Los recognized the thread of his own complicity in the construction of the labyrinth and in Night the Ninth he turned to wind this thread up into a ball. The result of this turn is of course an inversion. Los no longer follows the tortuous passages in which he is lost; instead, he turns and grasps the thread which until this point in time has been lost in the ground of the labyrinth. Now, this inversion occurs on two quite distinct levels. In willing not to will, in letting go, Los no longer retains the world of withdrawal and at the same time he no longer establishes the laws and authority of Urizen. The result of this is, of course, not to effect a mediation or compromise between the forces of Urizen and Orc, restriction and expansion; it is instead to give the victims supremacy over the victors. It is this catastrophic lunge or surge of what has long been repressed that is the first result of "letting go."

It is therefore important to note that these events occur in the fallen world, the victims are standing on the same rung, but the problematic has been reversed. The tyrant, as Fanon observes in The Wretched of the Earth, cannot simply give up his power and suffer no repercussions. The first result of the lifting of oppression, whether one is speaking of a repressed emotion or a repressed people, is a surge and lunge of what has been repressed. David Erdman writes that

> the revisions of The Four Zoas . . . 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." . . . The collapse of tyranny follows a mere questioning of its validity, symbolized by the prophet's reaching up to pull down sun and moon. The people, though not responsible for this upset, do take active advantage of it. Not previously awakened, yet now awaking to the harvest, the poor "smite their opressors". . . .
>
> In this context the poet-prophet's function, it should be noticed, becomes unreal or miraculous . . . [the poet-prophet] is inclined to ascribe magic power to his own words, to confuse the conception with the communication of ideas, and to entertain the notion that a change in his own mind is equivalent to, if not the cause of, a change in international relations.[7]

Los is quite clearly in no danger of entertaining "the notion that a change in his own mind is equivalent to . . . a change in international relations." The "poet-prophet's function" is in fact one which leads him into an embrace of the reality of withdrawal, not a passive submission to the Divine Vision, but a journey through hell. In a poem called "Morning," Blake describes this path. Morning, at this stage of the Fall, is not to be found in the east. If we were to look in that direction we would find at best a memory of a morning that once had been. Morning can only be found by following the western path. In this poem's terms that involves an embrace of darkness and of night. In The Four Zoas the western path is an embrace of the reality of the Fall. In both poems this path leads the reader "Right thro the gates of Wrath" (E478).

It seems to me to be a mark of Blake's commitment to the prophetic role that The Four Zoas does not attempt to ignore any of the landmarks of this path. The wrath of the victims is an inversion that Los must allow and a reality that he must face if Albion is to climb the ladder and escape the confines of the fallen world. The experience of this event is in fact the culmination of Los's decision to embrace the reality of his constituted world. In willing not to will he is finally able to experience the energies and hatreds which his world has formed and yet kept hidden. The problem for the reader in approaching Night the Ninth is in fact to embrace Blake's and Los's prophetic intent and postpone our own desire for a resolution, any kind of resolution, to the fallen world's pain. Thus, in The Four Zoas it is often the reader who evinces a concern with an apocalypse which will once and for all leave the fallen world behind, and Blake who patiently puts together the scattered fragments of fallen humanity.

(3) Ascent

Los has reversed the lowest rung of the ladder; the people are therefore facing Eternity and experiencing its corrosive fires and visions, but a major problem still remains: how are the people to ascend the ladder which rises

before them? If the inversion of the problematic of each rung were all that had occurred, we would have to admit that there was no way of moving towards integration. At best the fallen world would be in the position of Orc, who is able to see the visions of Eternity but has no means of locomotion, no way to climb up and out of the labyrinth. Urizen describes Orc as

> Walking in joy in bright Expanses sleeping on bright clouds
> With visions of delight so lovely that they urge thy rage
> Tenfold with fierce desire to rend thy chain & howl in fury
> And dim oblivion of all woe & desperate repose. . . .
> (78:37-40, E354)

The difficulty seems at first to be irremedial because Los cannot use his will in order to ascend these steps (nor, one presumes, can the fallen Man) without reestablishing the law of his members. However, Los's inversion establishes the possibility of a movement outside of the fallen world which does not depend on the will. This movement depends upon what I shall call the "ground" and the "call" which are established by Los's inversion.

If, in our imagination, we invert a privation that stands at the centre of a world that it holds and has constituted, we are left with a privation that offers itself as a ground for the growth of others. This is what occurs when Los turns from the labyrinth and inverts his position in the world. The privation that holds others to its perspective becomes the privation represented by the soil. Los is still loss; in entering his realm one loses relationship with others; however, Los now forms the ground for a new emergence. This is why Los vanishes from the poem at this point. He is now the ground for the figure of the Eternal Man's emergence. Los has become Urthona: the power who owns and establishes the earth.

Los's inversion of his world therefore establishes a ground for the other Zoas in the void of the fallen world. This event achieves two things. Firstly, the universe does not disintegrate with the loss of Los's retaining power (which is, after all, the completion of Urizen's attempt to appropriate the form of the world to himself). The struggle between Orc and Urizen is now enacted on the site of Los's body, which stretches beneath and underpins the entire movement of Night the Ninth. At the same time the appearance of a

ground gives Albion a foundation on which to arise and become a voice which calls his members. Albion addresses himself first to Urizen:

> O Prince of Light where art thou I behold thee not as once
> In those Eternal fields in clouds of morning stepping forth
> With harps & songs . . .
> See you not all this wracking furious confusion
> Come forth from slumbers of 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. . . .
> (120:14-16,18-22, E389)

Los's recovery of a ground for the fallen world is the necessary premise for the appearance of a call.

It would be impossible to overestimate the radicality of the change that is signified by the appearance of a ground and a call in the fallen world. Against the background of a history of assimilation and of attempts to bend others to the will of the self, Los offers himself as a ground for the figure of humanity and this in turn allows the appearance of a voice and a call. Albion's voice (and Los's within his) calls out for a response. In the heart of the fallen world a path opens which does not attempt to force or assimilate others (although Albion does threaten Urizen with the fate implied by a renewed use of the will). This development therefore opens the possibility of a relationship in which Eternity will appear, not as a far off vision, but as a present and in-dwelling reality.

Once again in attempting to clarify this event it is Christ who comes most readily to mind. Christ's life, death and resurrection are the ground and first premise of Christian hope. What is more, they are not mute events but a call which, for the Christian at least, speaks to each person. However, one can just as readily invoke the modern philosophies of non-violent resistance to clarify this point. It is easy, for example, to see the lives and, more provocatively, the freely chosen death of people such as Gandhi, Franz Josef Jägerstatter, Bonhoeffer and Martin Luther King as the kind of substance which grounds hope in humanity. Their lives and examples speak with an eloquence which is not their voice alone, but somehow the voice of all humanity, of Albion to use Blake's term. It is this call that reminds us that

"All Men are Brothers."

(4) Remembering that which has been fragmented

In our discussion of The Book of Urizen we followed the construction of a labyrinth which was based on Los's attempts to retain or remember the world as it appeared to him. The process of integration which follows from Albion's call can also be described as a remembering, but in a very different sense of this word. With regard to the Los of the earlier poem, remembering is simply the opposite of forgetting. Los is attempting to retain, as a single whole, all that has appeared to his self. Quite clearly this kind of remembering would be out of place in the final Night of a poem which is even more unequivocal than The Book of Urizen about the limits of Los's work of retention. In any case, no such remembering by Los could bring back the reality of the prelapsarian world because in The Four Zoas Los is born in the space of fracture. The Zoas and their Emanations are in a slightly different situation because they were present (as unitary beings) in the prelapsarian world; nevertheless, what fragments of this world are remembered by these figures could not be the basis of a path away from the world of the Fall. The Zoas and their Emanations have tried many times to recall and recollect the experience of their prelapsarian identity, but in each case this has resulted in no more than a dream which plagues its dreamer with the recognition of what cannot be. In other words, this kind of remembering serves only to define the extent of the Fall.

Remembering, however, can also be understood as the opposite of dismembering. In this sense of the word one attempts to re-member the form of a thing or being. Re-membering now has nothing whatever to do with the retention of sense-impressions or experiences within the world of an "I"; instead it is concerned to precipitate a motion in which a person can take up the scattered fragments of his/her body. Night the Ninth is concerned with this second kind of remembering. The person whom Los hopes will recollect and

re-member his body is Albion. The thread which Los has taken up will be wound into a ball by a series of relationships rather than by the efforts of a single person. Los persists throughout this re-membering, or winding up, in the same way as the soil is present throughout the cycles of the natural world.

The prototype (within the poem at least) of this kind of remembering is Los's embrace of his Spectre and his reality. It was only by embracing his own body that Los was able to cast it off in a movement of new birth. Similarly, if Albion is to be re-membered he must draw together his warring and fragmented members. This course of action is necessary because Albion has no other body. It is only in an embrace of the reality of dismemberment that he will be able to be reborn. We can, therefore, as in the two seventh and the eighth Nights, trace a double movement in the poem. On the one hand there is an upward movement in which step by step the Zoas re-enter relationship. However, as with the circle of unity that Los traces in Night the Seventh[a], this re-membering is a unification of the fragments of the fallen world. The only way out of the labyrinth is through it. In order to escape the maze of the fallen world, Albion must embrace its numerous corridors as the shape and outline of his own psyche. Albion makes this point in a striking passage:

> Error can never be redeemd in all Eternity
> But Sin Even Rahab is redeemd in blood & fury & jealousy
> That line of blood that stretchd across the windows of the morning
> Redeemd from Errors power.
>
> (120:48-51, E390)

The image of a "line of blood stretchd across the windows of the morning" is an interesting example of Blake's often over-determined imagery. The reader (like Los and Albion) must embrace several apparently disparate fragments if he/she is to find the tenor which unites them.

There are three quite distinct sources for this line. In the first instance it refers to a woman of Jericho, called Rahab, who sheltered two of Joshua's spies. In return for this kindness they agreed that if she displayed a "scarlet thread" at her window the invading Israelites would leave her and all in her house untouched. The same line, however, also suggests a second

source. In Exodus the story of the Israelites' escape from captivity in Egypt is told. In an attempt to convince the Pharaoh to release them, God sent ten plagues to the land. In the final plague God destroyed "all the first born in the land of Egypt." The Israelites were able to escape this fate by daubing the blood of a lamb on "the two side posts and on the upper door post of their houses." Finally, the image refers to the blood of Christ which redeems us all from "Errors power." As a prelude to an attempt to embrace these diverse reference points, we must discuss the distinction that this passage draws between Sin and Error.

Error cannot be redeemed because to be in Error one must be unaware of the truth of one's conclusions (to be aware of one's mistakes is no longer to be in Error). In Error there is therefore a gap between one's conceptions and reality. This gap appears whether the Error is with regard to a logical argument, a mathematical sequence or, as with Los (and Thel), with regard to the truth of one's being. To have a sense of Sin, however, is to recognize the Errors that one inevitably commits and, what is more, not only to admit an accidental fallibility, but to embrace an inevitable fallibility as part of one's psyche. Error becomes Sin in this sense because it is an Error which has been embraced and recognized as one's own. In Night the Seventh[a], therefore, Los is for the first time in a state of Sin rather than Error. Sin can be redeemed because it allows movement. Once Error has been recognized and embraced as Sin the kind of movement enacted by Los in Night the Ninth is possible. It is possible to be reborn from Sin, but in Error one remains separated from the world.

In turning to the multiple sources for a "line of blood" it seems that the third source is a relatively straightforward illustration of the distinction between Error and Sin. Christ redeemed us from Sin with his own blood and it is this which stretches "across the windows of morning." As I have argued, Christ's blood was shed as a result of his embrace of the reality of the world. In other words, redemption cannot be the kind of retreat that Thel tries to achieve. It must be predicated upon an embrace of

the evil which is a part of our being. Error becomes a Sin which can be cast off because Christ has embraced the "blood and fury and jealousy" which is the fallen world. This reading is a relatively unusual interpretation of the death of Christ. It is, nevertheless, one which is consonant with the reader's experience of the preceding Nights. In an embrace of the remaining sources, however, this interpretation is extended and given depth in a way which makes Blake's point quite startling.

The blood which the Israelites daubed on the door posts of their houses is often seen as a prophecy and promise of the coming of Christ. The true meaning of this event is seen in the blood of Christ. Similarly, in Hebrews at least, Rahab is taken as an example of the faithful soul. By implication the scarlet thread that she unwinds is again the blood of Christ. It can therefore be argued that we can use our discussion of the third source in order to guide our interpretation of the others. If this is done, then one can argue that the blood that the Israelites painted on their doors was a recognition of their own complicity in evil. It is this embrace of their own Sin which allowed them to escape from Error's power. Now of course Error in this case refers to the Pharaoh who had kept them in bondage, but in fact the more pressing power that they escape is that of a God who will (in an act which reminds one of Herod's slaughter of the innocents in the New Testament) slay the first-born of all the sons of Egypt. One can therefore say that the Israelites are redeemed from the Error of Pharaoh and the power of a tyrannical God. Similarly, Rahab's scarlet thread is a painful embrace of her own profession. Rahab was a harlot and it is the embrace of her own reality which enables her to escape from Error's power. The Error that Rahab escapes is the Error of the heathens who do not recognize the "true" God. However, quite clearly she also escapes the power of an advancing army.

We can therefore say that in these lines Albion is implying that he (collective humanity) must embrace as his own, as products of his own creativity, the figure of the tyrant and of the tyrannical God. It is only in embracing these figures as the shape of our own body that Error can become

Sin which in turn can be cast off. In other words, Albion must accept as his own creation the key figures of fallen history. We have already discussed an analogous embrace between Los and his Spectre; we must now turn to the embrace in which Albion re-members the scattered fragments of his body.

(5) Another inversion

The first step away from dissolution was, of course, the inversion of Los's position in the fallen world. Los became a ground and a call which in turn issued in the call of Albion to his members. The next step is the recollection of Urizen.

In response to Albion's call Urizen repeats Los's actions and wills not to will:

> 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
> Let Orc consume let Tharmas rage let dark Urthona give
> All strength to Los & Enitharmon & let Los self cursd
> Rend down this fabric as a wall ruind & family extinct
> Rage Orc Rage Tharmas Urizen no longer curbs your rage. . . .
> (121:19-26, E390)

Up to this point Urizen has been engaged in retaining the form of his constituted world and forming a world which is able to obey his will. This meant that whatever his surface movements in the world he was ontologically stationary. As I have argued, this resulted in a gap between self and Emanation, and self and others. Urizen was enclosed by the shape of his constituted world rather than being embodied by his Emanation. In willing not to will, Urizen is able to move outside of his solipsistic world and with this movement his Emanation returns to him:

> So Urizen spoke he shook his snows from off his Shoulders & arose
> As on a Pyramid of mist his white robes scattering
> The fleecy white renewd he shook his aged mantles off
> Into the fires Then glorious bright Exulting in his joy
> He sounding rose into the heavens in naked majesty
> In radiant Youth. when Lo like garlands in the Eastern sky
> When vocal may comes dancing from the East Ahania came

> Exulting in her flight as when a bubble rises up
> On to the surface of a lake. Ahania rose in joy. . . .
> (121:27-35, E391)

Unfortunately, for Urizen as for Los, this does not result in a simple liberation. Urizen has done no more than embrace the reality of his world. The result of his actions are therefore not (in the first instance) a transformation but the appearance of the inhabitants of the fallen world as they have always been:

> Fathers & friends Mothers & Infants Kings & Warriors
> Priests & chaind Captives met together in horrible fear
> And every one of the dead appears as he had livd before
> And all the marks remain of the slaves scourge & tyrants Crown
> And of the Priests oergorged Abdomen & of the merchants thin
> Sinewy deception & of the warriors ou[t]braving & thoughtlessness
> In lineaments too extended & in bones too strait & long. . . .
> (122:39-123:4, E392)

Without the restraining power of Urizen, however, the oppressed live out the logic of their pain. Urizen (in the person of the tyrants) is confronted with the reality which he has both created and attempted to repress:

> They shew their wounds they accuse they sieze the opressor howlings
> began
> On the golden palace Songs & joy on the desart the Cold babe
> Stands in the furious air he cries the children of six thousand years
> Who died in infancy rage furious a mighty multitude rage furious
> Naked & pale standing on the expecting air to be deliverd
> Rend limb from limb the Warrior & the tyrant. . . .
> (123:5-10, E392)

Even Ahania's return is postponed for she falls "down dead at the feet of Urizen" (123:37, E391).

Urizen is quite aware of the situation for he soberly remarks: "I have Erred & my Error remains with me" (122:21, E391). Nevertheless, although Urizen and the reader remain on what I have called the second rung, the rung has been inverted. Urizen is, for the first time, confronted with the reality of his restrictive laws and impositions. He is now able to perceive his Error and therefore, in the above lines, we see Error in the process of becoming Sin. Error is now something that Urizen is able to see and embrace as his own. Urizen is now in a position where he can be redeemed from "Errors power."

Los's inversion of his world of withdrawal opened a ground which enabled

Albion to rise from his deathly sleep and call his errant members. This call has now provoked Urizen to respond by inverting his position in the fallen world. Once again, if the process of recollection were to stop with this inversion, the fallen world would have no means of climbing the ladder; however, this inversion allows a further ascent. Urizen has, up to this point, been the archetypal restrainer. He adopted this course in order to achieve certainty, but he has been able to harvest no more than doubt. In a solipsistic universe there can be no grounds for certainty because there is no experience of others. There is, in short, nothing to be certain of, and Urizen's paranoid clutching to his books of wisdom is a measure of his doubts.

As a result of the inversion of Urizen's position in the world, restraint is replaced by a clarity which attempts to see and embrace that which is in the world, while solipsism turns into openness, a willingness to experience others which will stop clarity becoming a closed and oppressive system of belief. Blake expresses this new state of being in an interesting image: Urizen takes up his identity as Ploughman (a vocation which is often associated with mystics and seers) and ploughs the universal field:

> Then siezd the Sons of Urizen the Plow they polishd it
> From rust of ages all its ornaments of Gold & silver & ivory
> Reshone across the field immense where all the nations
> Darkend like Mould in the divided fallows where the weed
> Triumphs in its own destruction. . . .
> (124:6-10, E393)

The restrainer is now engaged in an activity which opens the shell of his constituted world, opens the darkness of the soil to the light.

In this new openness Urizen sows seed. It would be marvellous if this seed could be the seed of a perfect person, but in an image which reminds us that we are still in the fallen world and that what Albion must re-member is the scattered fragments of his fallen body, all Urizen can sow is himself, the world that he has formed:

> For from the hand of Urizen the myriads fall like stars
> Into their own appointed places driven back by the winds
> The naked warriors rush together down to the sea shores
> They are become like wintry flocks like forests stripd of leaves

> The Kings & Princes of the Earth cry with a feeble cry
> Driven on the unproducing sands & on the hardend rocks. . . .
> (125:6-11, E394)

A comparison with the parable of the Sower shows the poverty of this planting. In Christ's parable the seed falls on the rock, the wayside, amongst thorns and on good ground. In the first three cases there is no growth, but in the fourth the seed bears fruit "an hundredfold." In Urizen's sowing, the seed falls "on the unproducing sands & on the hardend rocks." As we shall see, there is no harvest of plenitude; the result of this sowing will be the bitter fruits of withdrawal.

In this marvellous image Reason, rather than attempting to order the world from its perspective, opens itself to the sublimity of another. Urizen is now (as the seed in the ground) "swept along as if with an irresistible force." His agricultural activity is, however, not merely an experience of sublimity, it is also an attempt to reach clarity. Urizen has opened the closed shell of his constituted world and placed his own self in that fissure. In the next lines Urizen harrows the ground and so closes the shell of his world. Reason is now in a position to begin assimilating its experience of the other, but rather than attempting to achieve clarity by binding the results of this search to his will Urizen settles back to see what will grow.

Ploughing, sowing and harrowing therefore together form the forward movement which is the basis for two more steps in Albion's task of re-membering. The seed placed by Urizen in the ground of Los is the site for Luvah (the energy which propels the growth of the seed). Urizen's ploughing is therefore done with "the flames of Orc" following "the ventrous feet / Of Urizen" (125:12-13, E394). When this activity is completed, Orc is able to enter the seed that Urizen has placed in the soil of Urthona:

> Luvah & Vala descended & enterd the Gates of Dark Urthona
> And walkd from the hands of Urizen in the shadows of Valas
> Garden. . . .
> (126:18-19, E395)

The remembering of Tharmas is less clearly demonstrated because, as the power and force of identity, he is suffused throughout the whole process.

After Los's act of self-annihilation a "trumpet sounds" (118:17, E387) and presumably this trumpet belongs to Tharmas. Similarly Urizen's ploughing is done "while the Trump of Tharmas sounds" (125:13, E394), and he appears (as we shall see) within the world of the growing seed.

With these final steps the Zoas have entered into proximity and relationship with one another. Los is the ground which supports the entire agricultural process and at the same time is the support which allows Albion to rise and call his members. Urizen, responding to Albion's call and himself standing on the earth of Los, ploughs, harrows and plants seed. This activity allows Luvah to enter the place of seed. Finally, the conjunction of all these activities allows Tharmas to sound his trump, herald of the new-born man, and himself approach the other Zoas.

At this stage of the ninth Night the configuration of the Zoas parallels the circle in which, in Night VII[a], Los embraced the Zoas as they appeared in his world. It is important to recognize that the steps that we have traced take us towards but do not yet reach Eden or Eternity. The final rung has not been reached. Albion has done no more than place the fragments of his fallen body into proximity with one another. He must now, like Los, embrace this still-fallen body. Blake describes this process in terms of the growth of the planted seed, the harvest of that crop, and then the production of wine and bread. The poem therefore pauses in order to allow time for growth.

(6) What kind of harvest?

The inversion and integration of the fallen Zoas has produced a seed around which the entire fallen world is now arranged. This seed is the result and centre of a re-membering of the fallen fragments of Albion. Can such a seed give rise to anything but withdrawal? This is perhaps the question in the minds of Urizen and "his wearied Sons" (125:22, E394) as they wait for the crop to grow. In the interval between sowing and harvesting, they are entertained by a "pastoral interlude."

In writing of this interlude most critics emphasize its innocence. Wilkie and Johnson write that

> The pastoral episode has two thematic purposes. One is to show the redeemed view of physical nature, which of course Vala herself personifies. . . . The second purpose . . . is to show the psychic redemption of passion as innocence. . . .[8]

Damon writes that "The Passions and Nature re-enter the State of Innocence, which is Eden, the Lower Paradise"[9] and Bloom asserts that

> The image of the human is now resumed, and Luvah and Vala are reborn into Beulah, the Garden of Innocence. They represent the return into being of the lost children of the Songs of Innocence. . . . This is the triumph of Blake's pastoral vision, balancing the deliberate failure of that vision in its thematically "unorganized" form, in the Songs of Innocence and The Book of Thel. The revival of Innocence brings about the resurrection of the primal spirits of Innocence, its loving mother and father, Enion and Tharmas the Shepherd.[10]

While the location of the interlude is quite clearly "the Garden of Innocence" or Beulah, it seems to me to be quite premature to talk at this stage of the poem of "the psychic redemption of passion as innocence," "the redeemed view of physical nature" or "the resurrection of the primal spirits of Innocence." Blake describes these pages of The Four Zoas as a "vision," and it is important to observe that they occur inside "the Gates of Dark Urthona" (126:18, E395) and as a result of the sowing of seed. Thus the reader and "the sleepers" are entertained with an anatomy or interior view of the human harvest. As such the "pastoral interlude" shows us an Innocence whose pretensions are severely qualified.

The interlude begins with the entry of Luvah and Vala into the seed that has been sown. In other words, Luvah and Vala enter reality (now the re-membered reality) of the fallen world. Within the seed, however, this reality cannot be seen or known:

> 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 orbed senses within closd up they wanderd at will. . . .
> (126:23-25, E395)

The "orbed senses" of Luvah and Vala are the self-enclosed state, the seed, which is the result of Albion's re-membering of his body. This idyllic interlude, therefore, in which "every flower & every leaf rejoices in his

light" (127:13, E396) and where Luvah is able to create a "pleasant house" (128:29, E397) for Vala, is attained only by withdrawal.

Vala gains a glimpse of the world that has been excluded when she rises "up from the river" and "her Eyes" are "opend to the world of waters" (129:15-16, E398). Vala hears Tharmas's mournful voice and glimpses the reality that is inadmissible in her world:

> O Enion my weary head is in the bed of death
> For weeds of death have wrapd around my limbs in the hoary deeps
> I sit in the place of shells & mourn & thou art closd in clouds. . . .
> (129:20-22, E398)

Although Vala does try to alleviate Tharmas's distress by calling out to Enion, she is powerless to do anything. From within the closed world of Vala "none could answer her & the Eccho of her voice returnd" (129:32, E398).

In returning to her home, Vala discovers Tharmas and Enion as children playing in her house. As I have argued, the formation of a seed brings the powers of form and identity into relationship. Unfortunately, the seed is spawned by a world of withdrawal and therefore Enion and Tharmas are brought together in a relationship of withdrawal. Vala is, within her world, able to place the children together at night, but in the morning Enion hides. Tharmas complains:

> O Vala I am sick & all this garden of Pleasure
> Swims like a dream before my eyes but the sweet smelling fruit
> Revives me to new deaths I fade even like a water lilly
> In the suns heat till in the night on the couch of Enion
> I drink new life & feel the breath of sleeping Enion
> But in the morning she arises to avoid my Eyes
> Then my loins fade & in the house I sit me down & weep. . . .
> (131:1-7, E399)

Wilkie and Johnson argue that

> it is significant that Vala takes a nurturing, permissive, and responsible parental role toward the original Parent power Tharmas and his Emanation . . . In this fantasy section, the childlike primeval parents who have been bewildered and hurt by the fall are at last petted and cared for; instinct is valued and protected, not rejected as a despised parent. Blake here makes the allegorical point that instinct must relearn its original trust in itself. . . .[11]

Unfortunately Vala's "responsible parental role" is completely unable to effect a union between the two. As the narrator of the poem concludes:

> Thus in Eternal Childhood straying among Valas flocks
> In infant sorrow & joy alternate Enion & Tharmas playd
> Round Vala in the Gardens of Vala & by the rivers margin
> They are the shadows of Tharmas & of Enion in Valas world. . . .
> (131:16-19, E400)

In this state of withdrawal one glimpses only the "shadows of Tharmas & of Enion." In Experience this "delightful" teasing becomes a struggle which brings them both to the point of annihilation.

Quite clearly the interlude which entertains the sleepers is a story of withdrawal and enclosure. Throughout its length the separation between Zoa and Emanation, enclosed self and reality, remains intact. Yet despite all of this there is something unsettling about calling this story the harvest or fruit of the fallen world. The whole section feels like a beginning; it is as if we have passed to the beginning of the fallen world. Christine Gallant writes:

> Indeed, the movement of the episode in general is backward to the beginnings of childhood, and as it proceeds its characters become increasingly younger rather than older.[12]

The interlude may contain the Fall as a seed contains a tree, but it is hardly there in the actuality which one would expect of a harvest. In this instance, however, the beginning of the fallen world is the only fruit that it can bear apart, of course, from nothingness.

The Fall is essentially a fragmentation and falling apart. In re-membering the fragments of this world Albion takes us, in effect, step by step, back to the beginning of the Fall. Albion re-members that which has been dis-membered. At the point of harvest, therefore, Albion stands at the highest step of the ladder, that of withdrawal and the division into male and female powers. This position is, nevertheless, one which now and at the point of the Fall contains all of the fragments which make up Albion. In a Fall, the members of the whole Man fall apart from one another; in re-membering, these fragments are gathered together once more. For the fallen world the only possible fruit of its suffering is its beginning. Los's thread has indeed led to Heaven's gate. The re-membering of Albion's body has led to Beulah, in Blake's myth the gateway to Eden.

The appearance of an end of the fallen world, which is also its beginning, allows the Eternals to reflect on the cause of the Fall. In these lines the poem returns to its beginning and re-members itself. In all previous accounts of the Fall what was lacking was a plausible account of its beginning. One observed the fact of withdrawal and noted its effects, but the question of what provoked this withdrawal stayed unanswered. This silence was perhaps inevitable from within the fallen world because from this perspective what is self-evident is the pain of fracture. What the Eternals suggest is that this pain was initially a desire to rest from an excess of joy and enter a place such as Innocence or Beulah. It is a desire to rest from the wars of Life Eternal:

> 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. . . .
> (133:11-13, E401)

The response of the Eternals to this withdrawal stands in stark contrast to that of the same figures in The Book of Urizen. It is this response which has allowed the movement that we have traced:

> In walls of Gold we cast him like a Seed into the Earth
> Till times & spaces have passd over him duly every morn
> We visit him covering with a Veil the immortal seed
> With windows from the inclement sky we cover him & with walls
> And hearths protect the Selfish terror. . . .
> (133:16-20, E401)

This delineation of the ultimate ground of Albion's awakening puts The Four Zoas at a considerable remove from the earlier poems. In The Four Zoas rebirth occurs as a result of an embrace and re-membering of history. The fruit of this re-membering is the beginning of the fallen world, the final step before the plenitude of Eden, the first step of the Fall.

(7) The embrace of harvest

Albion, following the path first traced by Los, has now re-membered his body. The fruit and reality of the fallen world is now ready for harvest. This process (with the attendant production of bread and wine) is the final

stage before regeneration and, as I shall argue, is broadly equivalent to Los's embrace of the reality of his constituted world.

Urizen begins this final movement by announcing that "Times are Ended" (131:31, E400). With these words he "Reapd the wide Universe & bound in Sheaves a wondrous harvest" (131:7, E400). The fruit of this harvest is then flailed and winnowed. A crop of corn is made up of regular, ordered stalks (which strikingly resemble the human form). The grain is held in a regular, ordered pattern on the cob, and is itself formed of regular, symmetrical units. In the context of The Four Zoas, such a crop clearly represents the world of restriction, of one law for the lion and the ox, which has been imposed by Tharmas, Urizen and Los. This food is then the fruit and the reality of the fallen world.

In reaping this harvest, Albion claims this crop as his own. In threshing and winnowing the plants that have been harvested (actions which are analogous to Los's tearing down of the shell of his constituted world), this oppressive system is inverted. The result is that "Kings & Councillors & Giant Warriors" go down into the depths (134:5-17, E402) and the slave is able to gain his freedom:

> Where are your bonds & task masters are these the prisoners
> Where are your chains where are your tears why do you look around
> If you are thirsty there is the river go bathe your parched limbs
> The good of all the Land is before you for Mystery is no more. . . .
> (134:26-29, E402-403)

When Los and Urizen inverted their constituted worlds, the result was a sudden lunge and surge of what had been repressed. Similarly, the completion of this harvest reveals a second one, the vintage of Luvah.

The vintage begins hopefully enough. The harvesting, threshing and winnowing of the corn frees the slaves and they all

> Sing a New Song drowning confusion in its happy notes
> While the flail of Urizen sounded loud & the winnowing wind of Tharmas
> So loud so clear in the wide heavens. . . .
> (134:31-33, E403)

Against this background the Eternal Man rejoices and calls Luvah to the vintage:

> Let the Bulls of Luvah tread the Corn & draw the loaded waggon
> Into the Barn while children glean the Ears around the door
> Then shall they lift their innocent hands & stroke his furious nose
> And he shall lick the little girls white neck & on her head
> Scatter the perfume of his breath while from his mountains high
> The lion of terror shall come down & bending his bright mane
> And couching at their side shall eat from the curld boys white lap
> His golden food and in the evening sleep before the Door. . . .
>
> (135:13-20, E403)

Albion is here like any tyrant who dreams and hopes that the lifting of his oppressive rule will result in the immediate return of the authentic selves of those who have suffered. This vision does not come to pass. The grapes are harvested and placed in "the wine presses of Luvah," where their pain is extraordinary and the joy of Luvah in their suffering seems demonic:

> But in the Wine Presses the Human Grapes Sing not nor dance
> They howl & writhe in shoals of torment in fierce flames consuming
> In chains of iron & in dungeons circled with ceaseless fires
> In pits & dens & shades of death in shapes of torment & woe
> The Plates the Screws and Racks & Saws & cords & fires & floods
> The cruel joy of Luvahs daughters lacerating with knives
> And whip[s] their Victims & the deadly sports of Luvahs sons. . . .
>
> (136:21-27, E404)

It is important to recognize that Blake is not applauding these events. At the end of the vintage "Luvah was put for dung on the ground" (137:24, E405). In Isaiah this is the fate reserved for malefactors, and in Jeremiah 25:33 it is the end in store for "them that are wicked." More decisively, in order to go to the vintage Luvah must allow his crown of thorns to fall from his head, hang up "his living Lyre," and then descend, "Sounding the Song of Los" (135:23,25, E403). Bloom writes that "Luvah is transformed here from Jesus-as-dying-god to the wine-god of a Dionysiac rebirth."[13] In fact, with the removal of all restraining forces Luvah is simply no longer in the position of the victim. In this altered context, the crown of thorns falls off his head. Luvah must now live out the logic of his suffering and in order to do this he himself becomes a tyrant. This is why he hangs up "his living Lyre" and sings "the Song of Los" which, as we have argued at length, is a song of assimilation and restriction.

The vintage is, of course, the harvest and pressing of grapes. We can therefore argue that just as corn is an image of tyrannical rule, so the

grapes are an image of suffering which is shaped and contained by the outer shell of the grape. The force of Luvah's aggression is against this shell. In other words, Luvah's aggression is directed against the systems and beings who shape and contain the oppressed. This is why we find, in the wine press, "Legions of Mystery" (135:34, E404) and "Clusters / Of human families" (135:36-37, E404). The Four Zoas is taking the reader "Right thro the gates of Wrath." Although Blake is not applauding this event, it is a necessary one. Los, Urizen and now Albion must embrace the obverse and hitherto hidden side of their oppression of others. The result is the wine, or experience, of suffering.

The completion of the vintage and the embrace of the reality of suffering implied by the production of wine allows Urthona to arise "in all his regenerate power" (137:34, E405). Los is the being who perceives the reality of what is. It is therefore fitting that it is now, when the corn has been harvested and the obverse side to the power of the tyrant has been revealed, that Los assumes his eternal identity as Urthona. The task for Los/Urthona is now to fabricate a new form. The corn still remains in the shape of closed and arid grains; Los must create a form which is commensurate with the strength and reality of the wine. The corn is therefore ground and placed in the "Ovens of Urthona" (138:11, E406). The product of this activity is the "Bread of Ages" (138:17, E406). As the wine is the experience of the reality of suffering, so the bread is the knowledge of the poverty of withdrawal. While it is being made humanity is

> 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
>
> Such are the works of Dark Urthona. . . .
> (138:12-16, E406)

The bread is the embrace of the knowledge of "the works of Dark Urthona." With the manufacture of this substance the world stands on the edge of rebirth.

(8) Regeneration

The problematic of the final step before regeneration has now been inverted. The tyrannical system of Mystery has been broken up and the oppressed have lived out the logic of their pain. This simple inversion has, once again, given us the means of ascent, this time to Eden. The harvest and vintage has produced bread and wine, and in so doing turned the fallen world inside out. The fallen world, the "works of Dark Urthona," is no longer a shell which encloses humanity; instead it has become bread and wine. A more complete inversion could not be imagined because the fallen world is now a means of sustenance. It is the food that will sustain Albion's journey through Eternity. Rather than enclosing the fallen Man, the world of Los will now form part of his very substance. With this inversion it is as if the walls of a cave were suddenly transformed into the means for sustaining motion, or perhaps as if Los discovered that the walls of the labyrinth were giant wings. The result is a sudden opening and the discovery of a world of others:

> 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 consumd
> His eyes behold the Angelic spheres arising night & day
> The stars consumd like a lamp blown out & in their stead behold
> The Expanding Eyes of Man behold the depths of wondrous worlds. . . .
> (138:20-25, E406)

With the inversion of withdrawal the final reunion of male and female powers has also been achieved. In the movement of the final lines of the poem, the Emanation has become the very shape of the Zoa's actions. The narrator cries in amazement:

> Urthona is arisen in his strength no longer now
> Divided from Enitharmon no longer the Spectre Los
> Where is the Spectre of Prophecy where the delusive Phantom
> Departed & Urthona rises from the ruinous walls
> In all his ancient strength. . . .
> (139:4-8, E407)

Los, the ground of the fallen world, has now become the ground of the eternal world; he

rises from the ruinous walls
In all his ancient strength to form the golden armour of science
For intellectual War. . . .
(139:7-9, E407)

Loss has now become plenitude; a world centred around the reality of loss has been transformed and now appears as an emerging Man; Los has inverted himself and become Sol; the fallen prophet now takes up the fragments of his fallen body to become Urthona.

Perhaps the most extraordinary feature of the long path which has led us to this point has been the poem's relentless desire to face the reality of the fallen world. Now, even in this new birth, the fallen world is not erased; instead it still remains as the ground which defines the leap of Eternity. This should not, in fact, appear extraordinary. The Zoas are composed of three powers: the Spectre, the Zoa and the Emanation. In the leap of Albion, the Spectre can be seen holding the fallen world as the ground against which Albion's movement is defined, while the Emanation is the very shape of that motion. To say that the fallen world is the ground for the movement of Eternity is, perhaps, another way of saying that it is the bread and wine which sustains the movement of Albion. The Eternals suggest that the fallen world sustains them in this way when they say that it is through Albion's fall that they "know / That Man subsists by Brotherhood & Universal Love" and that this knowledge means that they "fall on one anothers necks" and embrace "more closely" (133:21-22,23, E402).

The final page of The Four Zoas, however, suggests a further way in which the fallen world is the ground for the leap of Eternity. This page is written on a proof of the first page of Young's Night Thoughts. In passing the apocalypse one therefore reads an announcement of a first Night and the poem seems set to retrace its path and its labyrinth once more. In other words, Eternity is not achieved as a closed and final state, but as a constant moving away from enclosure in the world of the self. The relationship between self and other, time and Eternity, is grounded in an

embrace of the reality of the Fall; the fruit of the fallen world, its wine and bread, are the means of that communion. For the reader this has meant that the clarity and beauty of the final lines has emerged only from an embrace of the demonic energies of the text. As we look back on the poem it is now our experience of the poem which achieves clarity (the clarity and refinement of bread and wine) and it is against this background that the New Man hurries us on.

Part Three

The Moment of Embrace

Chapter Nine

Visionary Deconstruction.

> All thought, judgment, perception, as comparison [Gleichnis] has as its precondition a 'positing of equality' [Gleichsetzen], and earlier still a 'making equal' [Gleichmachen]. The process of making equal is the same as the incorporation of appropriated material in the amoeba . . . [and] corresponds exactly to that external, mechanical process (which is its symbol) by which protoplasm continually makes what it appropriates equal to itself and arranges it into its own forms and ranks [in seine Reihen und Formen einordnet].
>
> Friedrich Nietzsche[1]

(1) The Four Zoas, Milton, and Jerusalem

In a letter addressed to Mr Butts and sent from Felpham on 25 April 1803, Blake describes "an immense Poem" that he claims to have written in the three years prior to this date:

> But none can know the Spiritual Acts of my three years Slumber on the banks of the Ocean unless he has seen them in the Spirit or unless he should read My long Poem descriptive of those Acts for I have in these three years composed an immense number of verses on One Grand Theme Similar to Homers Iliad or Miltons Paradise Lost the Persons & Machinery intirely new to the Inhabitants of Earth (some of the Persons Excepted) I have written this Poem from immediate Dictation twelve or sometimes twenty or thirty lines at a time without Premeditation & even against my Will. the Time it has taken in writing was thus renderd Non Existent. & an immense Poem Exists which seems to be the Labour of a long Life all producd without Labour or Study.
>
> (E728-29)

The relationship between these claims and Blake's extant work is, unfortunately, not as straightforward as one might hope. It is extremely difficult to say how Blake's description of an "immense Poem" could apply to any of the poems that he had on hand in 1803. As Frye observes, these lines could "refer to The Four Zoas, or to Milton, or to both together." The difficulty is that by themselves these poems can hardly be described as immense and it is unlikely that Jerusalem was, at the time of this letter, anywhere near completion. In a letter written on July 6 of the same year,

Blake again describes a "Grand Poem" which he now claims is "perfectly completed" (E730). Frye points out that this second phrase could hardly refer to The Four Zoas, "which was never perfectly completed into anything," Jerusalem was no-where near completion, and yet the letter seems to refer to a larger poem than Milton.[2]

Frye does not leave the argument at this unsatisfactory stage; instead, he goes on to offer an interesting suggestion. First, he attempts to establish a referent for Blake's description of an "immense Poem":

> The poem he had written on the Zoas, the poem he was to write on Palamabron, Satan and Milton, and the further plan, not then clearly visualized, of a Four Zoas rewritten in terms of a more fundamental symbolism, may at one time have coalesced in Blake's mind as a single gigantic epic scheme which certainly "existed," though doubtless not in any written-out form.

He then goes on to say that

> If a revised and shortened version of The Four Zoas could ever have been used as the prelude to a trilogy, the three poems taken together might then have made up a single "diffuse" epic of the requisite number of lines and books.[3]

That a close relationship exists between Jerusalem and Milton is fairly self-evident. The latter takes the reader on a journey which leads to the very brink of apocalypse, but beyond this point it seems unable to pass. The former gives us a vision of regenerated humanity: Albion rises and "All Human Forms" are "identified" (99:1, E258). Jerusalem seems to complete the process begun in Milton. Frye, for example, argues that "Milton describes the attainment by the poet of the vision that Jerusalem expounds in terms of all humanity."[4] Harold Bloom echoes this judgement when he describes Milton as Jerusalem's "prelude."[5]

Discussion of the relationship between The Four Zoas and these later poems has, however, been short-circuited by the assumption that this poem was in some way aborted by Blake. This position is maintained by Frye despite his contention that

> Considering the great beauty and variety of the poem, the vitality of the sketches in its manuscript, and the fact that without it we do not possess enough of Blake's symbolic apparatus to understand the later books at all, it is unlikely that Blake intended to drop it altogether.[6]

If, however, The Four Zoas is not seen as a poem which "remains forlornly outside the engraved works" but as, in its own way, a "completed" work, then we need not reject the commonsense assumption that Blake is in the first instance talking about both Milton and The Four Zoas when he speaks of "an immense Poem" and, at the same time, it is plausible to argue that in 1803 Blake saw these two poems and an as yet unwritten Jerusalem as a "single gigantic epic" poem. If this is so, then we could expect to find a relationship between The Four Zoas and Milton which is as close as that between Milton and Jerusalem. In "Blake's Milton: the Poet as Poem," Edward J. Rose suggests a relationship of this kind. He writes that

> the themes and structures of the three poems indicate that The Four Zoas, Milton, and Jerusalem are, if any parallel can be drawn at all, Blake's Inferno, Purgatorio, and Paradiso. And they are so because in general thematic terms they are concerned respectively, despite their common apocalyptic conclusions, with despair, purgation, and fulfilment.[7]

A relationship of this kind clearly cannot be articulated in any detail as long as The Four Zoas is discounted as an unfinished and abandoned poem;[8] once this preconception has been discarded, however, a clear and striking relationship between the two poems becomes apparent.

In our discussion of The Four Zoas I noted the sense of rupture that was introduced into the text by Los's reply to Rahab (133:44-53, 115:1-116:2, E380-81). As I have argued, the myth of a quarrel between Satan and Palamabron, recounted by Los, seems to exist at right-angles to the body of The Four Zoas, and it suggests a radically different history of the fallen world. This history is perceived by Los as a result of the very different relationship to the world that he takes up in Night the Seventh[a]. It is, therefore, in a certain sense the climax of the poem (the turning point that prepares for the apocalypse of Night the Ninth) and it represents the insight towards which the entire body of the poem, up to this point, has been progressing. It is evident, even on a first reading, that this myth closely parallels the vision afforded to Milton by the Bard's Song, and that their relationship is that of a synopsis to a full account.[9]

Brian Wilkie and Mary Lynn Johnson suggest that

> If the passage in The Four Zoas was written later than the Bard's Song, Blake may have hoped to jog the memory of readers already acquainted with the fuller story. If the Zoas passage was written first, it may be a brief sketch of what Blake was planning for Milton - which would indicate that he had abandoned any intention to make the Zoas a finished, freestanding work.[10]

A critical position such as this does not make allowance for the extent to which view-point structures Blake's poems. As I have argued, a full account of the quarrel between Satan and Palamabron cannot appear in the earlier poem because it would radically disrupt the narrative of that poem. The insight that it represents threatens to wake the dreamer and in this way end the poem. In order to be elaborated and made explicit, the reader/narrator must adopt a position that is radically different from that of the dreamer. He/she must awake and adopt a position with regard to the poem that emulates that taken up by Los in Night the Seventh[a]. Milton begins with an attempt to provoke Milton and its temporal readers to adopt this kind of relationship to the world. It orients itself not from the perspective of the dreaming self, but from the moment of insight represented by Los's reply to Rahab. It is for this reason that what can only be hinted at in The Four Zoas can be detailed in Milton. The vision of Milton exists at the periphery of, but cannot be contained within, the narrative of The Four Zoas. It is as if The Four Zoas contained a prominence (represented by Los's reply to Rahab), from the vantage point of which an entirely different poem could be glimpsed. Milton is present in The Four Zoas in a series of paradoxes which can only be resolved in the framework of the later poem. One of the most striking examples of what one could call a trace of Milton in The Four Zoas is Los's embrace of Enitharmon.

In a history which is recounted within a linear time and extended space, Los's embrace of Enitharmon must occur (and be completed) at a time and in a place which can be specified. In The Four Zoas, however, Blake is very careful to say that Los's embrace of Enitharmon is, at least within the fallen world, never finally achieved. Indeed, if it were to be effected it

would represent the absolute limit and furthest extent of that world's time and space, for at that point Los/Albion would be on the verge of awakening. When Blake describes their attempts at union he, therefore, writes in a rather curious fashion:

> But
> 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. . . .
> (87:24-28, E369/$E_2$355)

Where is this period of time? Where are these thousands of years? The passage occurs at a point in the poem's narration that certainly does not allow such a large period to transpire before apocalypse. Moreover, only the smallest fraction of the history alluded to in this passage appears in the poem.

In Night the Seventh[b] the "demons of the deep" sing a song which recounts the events which formed the fallen world and at the same time re-enacts them. They tell of the death of Luvah who was slain, "naild . . . to the tree," and "piercd . . . To die a death of Six thousand years" (92:13-15, E364/E_2E396). The same number of years is mentioned in Night the Eighth where Los claims that he is "that shadowy Prophet who six thousand years ago / Fell from [his] station in the Eternal bosom" (113:48-49, E380), and in Night the Ninth we see "the children of six thousand years / Who died in infancy rage furious" (123:7-8, E392). As these examples suggest, the time of six thousand years is the complete elaboration of the ontological time of loss. It is the time in which Luvah (and Christ in Luvah) is killed. In the passage cited above, however, we glimpse a second history of six thousand years which is exactly cotextensive with the first. The answer to our questions therefore seems to be that the six thousand years of self-denial and contrition are compacted between the intervals of the poem's narration.

The sequential time of The Four Zoas creates the impression that embodiment is an event which occurs solely at a particular point in its narration. In fact, these two worlds and times (which one could call the different trajectories of flesh and spirit) are always present within the time of Los. The history of the fallen world can be recounted as a "six

thousand year" work of Los to embrace Enitharmon. When this is done the reader discovers, from within the linear expanse of fallen time, a movement which seems to proceed at right angles to this time and which opens that world to a reality it cannot contain. It is this embrace, the movement of the spirit within the world of the flesh, that The Four Zoas can only allude to, and that Milton sets out to describe in detail.

It can therefore be argued that The Four Zoas is the prelude to, and lays the foundation for, Milton: the latter takes up and expands the visionary climax of the former. It is, however, important to remark at this stage that I am not suggesting that Milton supersedes the The Four Zoas. In my discussion of the frontispiece to the latter poem I noted that it was impossible to decide whether it depicted a figure who was asleep or awake, passive or active, chained or free, because both are possibilities within the fallen world. On the one hand the narrator of the poem is asleep, closed within his body and his constituted world. On the other hand, however, this same body is the basis for an awakening. For the dreamer to awake he must embrace the form that encloses him, he must once more become embodied. This movement is therefore one which is in the first instance enacted within the space of the dream: in Los's reply to Rahab, for example, it is the body of the fallen world, and by implication the body of the poem, which Los confesses to be his own: the movement of the spirit occurs within and depends upon the flesh. We can therefore say that, like the frontispiece, The Four Zoas oscillates between dreaming and awakening. Similarly, as we shall argue later in this chapter, Milton details an embrace and awakening (undertaken by the Bard, Milton and Blake, in Los) that occurs within the body of the fallen world, and therefore within the sequential history which is recounted by The Four Zoas. The former poem foregrounds, although it clearly cannot be reduced to, the history of the flesh, while the latter gives precedence to the history of the spirit.

If we accept for the moment the traditional account of the relationship between Milton and Jerusalem, it can be argued that we have a prima facie

case that, along with The Four Zoas, these poems form a single epic on a common theme, and that there is a progression from one to the next. In the following chapters I will argue that each of these poems give a history and description of the fallen world, but that they stand at different moments and in different times within that world. Together they form an anatomy of the universe of loss (Los). It is therefore only through a reading of these three poems that we can move towards a description of Los himself. In giving us an anatomy of the fallen world, they describe a path which leads from the abyss of privation to the plenitude of relationship and regeneration.

The first and perhaps greatest difficulty confronting a reading of these poems as a "Grand Poem" is the result of an implicit allegiance to the idea of the Urizenic book. Such a book attempts to gather the world, under the gaze of an inscrutable glance, into a totality. In The Book of Urizen, for example, Urizen displays a "book of brass" in which he has written

> Laws of peace, of love, of unity:
> Of pity, compassion, forgiveness.
> (4:34-35, E72)

These laws are to provide the blueprint for a world in which there is

> One command, one joy, one desire,
> One curse, one weight, one measure
> One King, one God, one Law.
> (4:38-40, E72)

In Of Grammatology, Derrida describes a similar kind of book as the "encyclopedic protection of theology and of logocentrism against the disruption of writing, against its aphoristic energy, and . . . against difference in general."

> The idea of the book is the idea of a totality, finite or infinite, of the signifier; this totality of the signifier cannot be a totality, unless a totality constituted by the signified preexists it, supervises its inscriptions and its signs, and is independent of it in its ideality.[11]

What is striking about Blake's "Grand Poem" is that it, and the poems which make up its members are not closed but open. On one level it is writing, in Derrida's sense, that denies Urizen's unitary world. The poems continually draw attention to their own fictive and rhetorical status. The Four Zoas, for

example, identifies itself as a dream (and one, moreover, which does not hide the processes of its construction). This energy of writing is accompanied, most explicitly in The Four Zoas, by the energy of desire, or Orc, who continually disrupts and makes problematic (without being able to escape) Urizen's icy laws. In Blake's oeuvre, however, writing and desire make fluid, but are unable fundamentally to change, the fallen world. The struggle between Orc and Urizen is a simple and primordial struggle between difference and identity which is repeated over and over again; in this struggle subversion is negatively defined and empowered by the imposition of the tyrant. As Derrida writes in his own description of the limits of deconstruction:

> The movements of deconstruction do not destroy structures from the outside. They are not possible and effective, nor can they take accurate aim, except by inhabiting those structures. Inhabiting them in a certain way, because one always inhabits, and all the more when one does not suspect it. Operating necessarily from the inside, borrowing all the strategic and economic resources of subversion from the old structure, borrowing them structurally, that is to say without being able to isolate their elements and atoms, the enterprise of deconstruction always in a certain way falls prey to its own work. This is what the person who has begun the same work in another area of the same habitation does not fail to point out with zeal.[12]

The two most radical senses in which Blake's "Grand poem" subverts the totality of the Urizenic book can be seen in the relation of its members to each other. The Four Zoas, as I have suggested, uncovers on its margins the moment of embrace and assent described in Milton. This moment can be glimpsed, but not grasped, from the perspective of the dreamer. Similarly, Milton opens to, but cannot contain, the vision of Jerusalem. The unitary world of nature therefore becomes a world of radically different voices and possibilities.[13] Moreover, together they form a progression which threatens to make open and flexible the fallen world itself. The reader of these poems, therefore, undertakes a movement similar to that of the traveller in Milton 15. Each of The Four Zoas, Milton, and Jerusalem has its own vortex

> and when once a traveller thro Eternity
> Has passd that Vortex, he percieves it roll backward behind
> His path, into a globe itself infolding; like a sun:
> Or like a moon, or like a universe of starry majesty,

> While he keeps onwards in his wondrous journey on the earth
> Or like a human form, a friend with whom he livd benevolent.
> (15:22-27, E109)

The poems establish different voices, and form different worlds, within the same universe: the body of the fallen Albion. The world they describe is not a totality, but a series of infinities; it is made up of a series of voices and states, each of which exists on the margins of the other. The body or universe that is made up in this way is itself open to a reality which opens out from its margins. The fallen world, the world of Albion-in-withdrawal, is not a monolithic, uniform fabric - an entity which can theoretically be taken in at a single glance - but a world of many voices and "multiple realities".

(2) Painters, Sculptors and Architects

The first two copies of Milton begin with a rousing call to the "Painters," "Sculptors," "Architects" and "Young Men of the New Age" to "Rouze up" and set their foreheads against the "ignorant Hirelings" who are in possession of the "Camp, the Court, & the University" (E95). The call seems to be clear and unequivocal until we learn towards the end of Book I that while "in Eternity the Four Arts: Poetry, Painting, Music / And Architecture which is Science: are the Four Faces of Man. . . . in Time & Space . . . Three" of these faces

> are shut out, and only
> Science remains thro Mercy: & by means of Science, the Three
> Become apparent in Time & space, in the Three Professions
>
> Poetry in Religion: Music, Law: Painting, in Physic & Surgery.
> (27:55-60, E125)

But Blake does not call on Priests, Lawyers and Doctors in the preface, he calls on Painters, Sculptors and Architects, of which only Architects remain as Scientists. The reader is therefore confronted by an extraordinary gap between the task that Blake sets in the preface and the possibility of its accomplishment. The poet's call is directed towards a possibility or

potentiality which lies hidden within the world.

A face is the locus at which another is most nakedly present to us. As Derrida writes in "Violence and Metaphysics":

> The face is not only a visage which may be the surface of things. . . . It is not only, following the origins of the word, what is seen, seen because it is naked. It is also that which sees. Not so much that which sees things - a theoretical relation - but that which exchanges its glance. The visage is a face only in the face-to-face.[14]

The face is both a sign and an event: it finds its existence within a world that is constituted by us, but at the same time it is the centre of a force which irrupts within our world and charges it with a surplus and excess. It is both inextricably part of the person or thing (the face of a cube, for example) and yet it is turned towards others; it includes a relationship with others in its definition. The face therefore evinces a strange duality: it is both sign and epiphany; symbol and allegory; it remains within the constituted world of the self and yet it pierces that world with another's glance. The face is both open to our discourse and yet it must ever elude our attempts to encompass it.

A profession, on the other hand, is both an institution and something that an individual claims as his belief or work. The word implies that it is that which is professed, rather than that which is encountered, which determines the relationship between self and other. It is now the profession, rather than the glance, that structures and defines what is possible within discourse. It is, however, unwise to establish too rigid an opposition between face and profession. The relationship between these two terms is, perhaps, that between face and mask, where a mask is a face that has become stationary and inert. If it were, however, to be reanimated, unfrozen, so that it were once more flexible and expressive, the mask would become a face.

In the eighteenth century Milton was, indeed, a profession and an institution. Paradise Lost, for example, was considered a poem worthy of comparison with the epics of Greek and Roman antiquity. James quotes John

Wesley in order to illustrate this point, who wrote that "of all the Poems which have hitherto appeared in the World, in whatever Age or Nation, the Preference has generally been given, by impartial Judges, to Milton's Paradise Lost."[15] However, one can argue that as a result of this institutionalization Milton was no longer a prophetic force; he had become a profession rather than a face, a priest rather than a poet. Milton had become, as Blake's title page for Milton implies, a poem in two books, Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained, which had been rather happily assimilated into the world of eighteenth century England.[16]

Within the poem it is, of course, not simply the professions of others that hem Milton in. When the poem begins Milton has

> walk'd about in Eternity
> One hundred years, pondring the intricate mazes of Providence
> Unhappy tho in heav'n, he obey'd, he murmur'd not. he was silent
> Viewing his Sixfold Emanation scatter'd thro' the deep
> In torment!
>
> (2:16-20, E96)

In this situation Milton clearly allows a profession (his belief in a transcendent Providence, for example), to determine his relationship to others. Milton is himself closed within his constituted world.[17] However, the title page does not show a person closed within a profession. On the contrary, this enclosure has been ruptured, the name Milton has been broken and at the point of fracture Milton is shown striding forward, right hand extended, in a movement which manifests a prophetic presence. Milton is now seen as a naked body and, for those in the abyss before him, as a face. It is this movement projected outside of the closed world of the self - from sedimented language to speech, from the world held by the Daughters of Memory to that created by the Daughters of Inspiration - that the narrator of Milton sets out to describe and to induce in his readers. The immediate provocation for the event depicted on the title page is a Bard's prophetic Song - sung to the Sons of Albion as they sit at eternal tables in heaven - and it is to this that we must now turn.

(3) The Bard's Song.

Most readers come to the Bard's Song with expectations of a forceful, immediately persuasive appeal to action. This "prophetic Song" (2:22, E96) is, after all, the appeal which "mov'd Milton" to the "unexampled deed" (2:21, E96) of entering "the deep" and so giving up his life in order to redeem his Emanation. These expectations are quickly dashed, for the Bard's Song appears, in the words of Stuart Curran, as a Covering Cherub: the very mask that, in the frontispiece, Milton is attempting to discard.[18] These sentiments are echoed by Rieger who quotes Gilchrist's warning that "Few are the readers who will ever penetrate beyond the first page or two" of Milton, and he observes that the beginning of the Bard's Song is the point where "readers are still turned back."[19]

The immediate difficulty is that the Bard's Song appears to deal with fallen time and space with extraordinary licence. Events are fragmented, there is a dizzy movement from myth to history and back again, and events from radically disparate times and places are juxtaposed. In this way space seems to be continually turned inside out and time gains a radically disjunctive and episodic character. This effect is heightened by the illustrations which seem to break the text up into fragments. On plate 4, for example, a fibrous growth or extrusion divides the page into two.[20] The top half is itself divided by a series of monolithic forms which by their sheer impassivity seem to disrupt the process of reading. The trilithon, boulders and small figures almost seem to become letters in a strange alphabet which resist the reader's progress through the text. The two halves of this division are in the process of further division, for other fibres push themselves between paragraphs and divide word from word. At the bottom of this same plate an illumination which takes up nearly a third of the page divides this plate off from the next. Once again, the trilithons become unreadable letters. The clouds and birds in the sky behind this illumination seem to outline a rip in the fabric of the poem. However, simply to point to

the disjunctive, episodic nature of the Bard's Song is to radically simplify one's experience of the poem. As if the Song were intent to add insult to injury, there is, co-existing uneasily with this first experience, a definite sense of progression and an almost uncanny force which draws the reader through the Song.

The tension between the narrative and the episodic in the Bard's Song is mirrored in the relationship between the various copies of the poem. In copies A and B of Milton, the Bard's Song progresses from an account of Los's work in the fallen world and of Golgonooza to a brief description of the fallen world. It then passes immediately into the story of the quarrel. This gives these first copies of Milton a narrative clarity and sense of coherence which is disrupted in later copies of the poem. In copy C, for example, Blake added plates, 3, 4, and 10 to the Bard's Song, and in copy D he included plate 5. As Susan Fox observes:

> The main thematic contribution plates 3, 4, 5, and 10 make is to extend the scope of the Song's action beyond the Edenic family squabble otherwise described; they offer a series of reflections on that contention outside its Edenic . . . context. The main structural contribution they make seems to be confusion; they interrupt the narrative, and although polite rearrangement can minimize the interruption, it cannot dispense with it altogether. . . . Plate 5 would . . . have to be eliminated altogether for the Song to have conventional coherence, and plate 5 was Blake's last addition, his final contribution to a coherence he seems to have preferred to the conventional.[21]

The unity and narrative progression of the first copies are, therefore, disrupted and retarded by these interpolated plates. The contrast is, however, not simply that between narrative progression and unity on the one hand, and episodic disjunction on the other. The narrative progression of copies A and B is retarded, not abolished, in C and D, and the disjunctions of C and D reduced, not erased, in A and B. The reader is therefore confronted, whether he is concerned with an individual copy or all copies, with an oscillation and tension between narrative and the episodic.

This dualism is repeated in the criticism on Milton. John Howard, for example, in his book Blake's 'Milton', recognizes a narrative movement in the poem and yet he describes the interpolated plates as "apparently disorganized

material."[22] In Fearful Symmetry, Northrop Frye argues that the poem has no narrative sequence. He writes that

> The chief difficulty in understanding the "Bard's Song" is that it does not relate a sequence of events, but tells the story of the dispute of Palamabron and Satan and then brings out its larger significance by a series of lifting backdrops.[23]

Yet, in his "Notes for a Commentary on Milton," he retreats from this position. He now argues "that a sequence does appear if the editor eliminates plate 5 and re-orders the others to read 2.7.4.6.3.8," an ordering which he assumes (mistakenly) to be that of copy C.[24]

The most obvious solution to the conflicting claims of narrative order and episodic disorder is to foreground one at the expense of the other. David E. James, for example, in his book Written Within and Without, argues that in the Bard's Song narrative is so fractured that it is almost non-existent. He writes:

> the bard's song bears no more resemblance to narrative poetry as we know it than it does to what we think of as song, even though it is full of "people" who seem to be involved in "actions". . . . Blake's poetry . . . questions even those fundamentals of narrative that it contains. . . . Syntax is used to present several meanings simultaneously, some of which may be mutually contradictory. And although the song contains elements of narrative, brief passages which look as if they are actions of extended duration, these are fragmented and interspersed with quite different events, producing a narrative form more complex even than Spenser's entrelacement.[25]

Yet a sense of narrative progression erupts with such force that James is forced to admit that the poem is "full of people" who seem to be involved in "actions" and that it contains "brief passages which look as if they are actions of extended duration."[26]

In Poetic Form in Blake's 'Milton', Fox reverses James' critical strategy. She argues that

> The Bard governs our sense of time throughout his poem, making it nonsequential to indicate the complex interrelationship of various "time zones," yet carrying through this seeming disorder a simple and revealing narration common to all levels. There is also a straightforward rhetorical progression in his poem which, together with the simple narrative line, corrects any sense of disunity these irregular perspectives encourage.[27]

Fox is a sensitive and perceptive critic, yet one wonders whether a statement such as this does justice to the power of the Bard's Song to disturb and

disrupt. From this perspective the disorder of the poem is only apparent and any sense of disunity is corrected by the "narrative line" and "rhetorical progression." The narrative here becomes a means of ordering and assimilating the Bard's Song. The difficulty is that the poem retains a depth which cannot easily be assimilated to this design. For example, in order to establish the existence of this narrative progression, Fox must incorporate plate 3 within the "prologue to the Song's focal action" and plates 4 and 5 within the description of "Satan's usurpation of Palamabron's Harrow and the formation of the three Classes of Men."[28] Such a move is less than convincing. It overlooks the fact that the effect of these passages is, as Fox herself contends in the passage cited above,[29] not to form part of a narrative but to disturb and disrupt. What are we to make of this oscillation between narrative order and disorder, of a narrative which is and is not there? As James Rieger comments with reference to Frye's views of the poem:

> Anyone reading the Bard's Song for the first time faces the same question, whether to blame himself or the author for his confusion. The Bard's Song is perhaps the most puzzling episode anywhere in the poetry published by Blake himself. Is that because one's normal expectations of narrative do not apply in this case, or because Blake was on the Homeric nod when he wrote it? . . . Either the narrative structure is a ruse, then, or Blake garbled it.[30]

We need not reach such an extreme conclusion, however, if we remember that the Bard's Song is a prophecy and is therefore (like biblical prophecies such as Revelation) meant to be unsettling. In the pages which follow I will argue that the Bard is not trying to comfort or to amuse us, but to show the set of relationships which ground our world. This cannot be done by using the time and space of our world, for it is precisely that which is in question. It is only in the fracture of the phenomenal appearance of time and space that this structure can appear. The poem's episodic and disjunctive form is therefore closely related to the sense that the poem has a narrative movement. Like all apocalyptic and prophetic language the Bard's Song does not flaunt the conventions of our world in order to indulge a passion for wilful perversity, but to provoke in us a perception of the reality of our world. Superimposed upon the poem's episodic and disjunctive form there is therefore a definite

sense of progression and an almost uncanny force which slowly draws the reader from a state of confusion to a moment of recognition. It is this movement which generates the strong and sometimes overwhelming sense of a narrative progression. It coexists with and does not supersede a sense of temporal and spatial disorder because it is a narrative which appears in the midst of, and is traced against, the fracture of our time and space.

(4) The three Classes

The Bard begins by focussing our attention on what will be one of the central motifs of his Song: the production by Los and Enitharmon of the Classes of the Elect, the Reprobate and the Redeemed. In doing so he confronts his audience with a rather startling conjuncture of temporal locations. The Bard tells us, framing his Song with the solemn admonition that we should "Mark well" his "words" because they are of our "eternal salvation," that

> Three Classes are Created by the Hammer of Los, & Woven
> By Enitharmons Looms when Albion was slain upon his Mountains
> And in his Tent, thro envy of Living Form, even of the Divine
> Vision. . . .
>
> (2:26-3:4, E96)

On the one hand, the creation of the three Classes is linked with the fall of Albion - an event which occurred in the past - on the other hand, we are told that they are created in the present by Los. As Mitchell writes, "the creation and death are two events which occurred simultaneously, but the first seems to be still going on, while the latter happened in the past."[31] For Susan Fox this difference in tense simply "juxtaposes the continual creation by Los and the fatal abruptness of Albion's fall"[32]; however, the syntax of this passage links the creation in the present to the fall of Albion in the past much more closely than the work juxtapose would suggest. The three Classes are created in the present by Los and Enitharmon when Albion was slain in the past. In other words, according to the Bard, the present - and perhaps all of the presents which make up the six thousand year history of

the fallen world - is permeated with a past event. It is as if the temptation of Adam and Eve by Satan, for example, were to be found in our own time.

Quite clearly a passage such as this is a scandal to our habitual ways of perceiving time and space; however, it is a scandal not because it wilfully ignores them, but because it attempts to reveal an interaction which is the very foundation of our world. In speaking of the death of Albion as an event which has already occurred, it is crucial to remember that Albion is not a mortal individual whose death can easily be located at a particular point in time. Albion is, in an important sense, the very shape of history itself. He is not simply the readers of Milton, nor is he the poem's potential audience; Albion is all of humanity and for this reason he includes all people who have existed and will exist in fallen time. In Eternity all of humanity can be seen as a single being; however, in the course of the Fall Albion is dismembered and this single identity is fragmented. Eternal annihilation is, in fact, averted only by Los who gives form to Albion as the six thousand year cycle of fallen history. The fall of Albion is therefore not an event which occurs at a certain point in our time; instead, fallen time is the form given by Los to the fallen Albion.[33] From the perspective of Eternity the fall of Albion is a single event, and one which occurs in a moment; from the perspective of the fallen world this moment is six thousand years long. It is only in apocalypse that Albion will resume his body once again and the six thousand year length of human history become the outline of one person. History can therefore be seen as a creation (throughout the six thousand year history of the fallen world) which is continually directed towards a being who, in terms of this present, has already withdrawn. It is a creation which is occurring in the very moment (six thousand years long) in which Albion was slain.

For the reader this opening passage has the rather unnerving effect of placing the time of individual existence within the context of a relationship or interaction between two giant forms. Our individual lives find themselves within a history which is formed in the relationship between the event in

which Albion is dismembered and the continuing work of Los. Moreover, the substance of this interaction is not the diversity which is often attributed to time, but the simple and elemental production of three Classes. These lines therefore have the effect of making our time and space eerily transparent: under their pressure a fissure or rift has opened within our perceptual worlds. At this point in the Song we can do no more than glimpse what lies beneath, but it is the corrosive force of this vision as it is progressively uncovered by the Bard's words that now forms the centre of the Song. Implicit in this passage are all of the shifts of time and place that characterize the following plates, for if all of time can be read as a production of the three Classes by Los, then the events and moments of time are strangely interchangeable. At the same time the vision glimpsed in this disordering of our perceptual worlds begins, at this point in the poem, to make its claim on us heard.

The lines which follow the Bard's introduction to his Song seem to offer some respite from the temporal dislocations of the opening passage. Plate 3 is for the greatest part taken up with a myth which, although radically condensed, recalls the creation story of The Book of Urizen. The narrative begins with Los attempting to give body and form to Urizen, who lies "in darkness & solitude, in chains of the mind lock'd up" (3:6, E96). In Eternity the body is the site of an encounter between self and other; by contrast, the body that Los forms for Urizen is a thing which encloses him. It gives form and body to the state of withdrawal that he has entered. Urizen is "roof'd," a globe falls into the abyss to form his heart, his eyes become like "two little Orbs" closed in "two little Caves," and his ears shoot out into the void and become solid and closed to the voice of others. The tongue is no longer a partner in dialogue, it has become a hunger and a thirst which flames out into the abyss. In the seventh age, at the end of this grotesque creation account, Urizen throws his arms to the north and south while his feet stamp the nether abyss. He has become a demonic christ: the body without

the spirit; the tomb from which the Saviour will arise.

Los's creation of a body for Urizen has unforeseen consequences. With the withdrawal of Urizen (and by implication Albion), Los must work in solitude. This means that Los is also in a state of withdrawal and is himself trapped by the form that he has created. Los therefore becomes the very thing that he has created:

> Terrified Los stood in the Abyss & his immortal limbs
> Grew deadly pale; he became what he beheld: for a red
> Round Globe sunk down from his Bosom into the Deep in pangs
> He hoverd over it trembling & weeping. suspended it shook
> The nether Abyss in tremblings. he wept over it, he cherish'd it
> In deadly sickening pain: till separated into a Female pale
> As the cloud that brings the snow: all the while from his Back
> A blue fluid exuded in Sinews hardening in the Abyss
> Till it separated into a Male Form howling in Jealousy. . . .
>
> (3:28-36, E97)

Rather than facing others Los is now caught between his Spectre and his Emanation. As in earlier poems, the Spectre and Emanation form a world which encloses the active power. In this divided state, Los forms the outline of fallen history:

> Within labouring. beholding Without: from Particulars to Generals
> Subduing his Spectre, they Builded the Looms of Generation
> They Builded Great Golgonooza Times on Times Ages on Ages
> First Orc was Born then the Shadowy Female: then All Los's
> Family. . . .
>
> (3:37-40, E97)

Although extremely condensed, this history is a relatively straight forward account of temporal history, and one which can be helpfully elucidated by reference to The Book of Urizen and The Four Zoas. One suspects, however, that such elucidation is, for the moment, little to the point. With the opening words of the Song still ringing in our ears, what is most striking about this brief narrative is a still not completely articulated sense of the presence of the three Classes (and therefore the creative work of Los in response to the fall of Albion) throughout fallen history. The fabrication of a body for Urizen, for example, divides the world into the world of the self and the world of the other. The body itself (whether it is imagined as a physical body, nature, or the body of social jargon and opinion) represents a third force which now mediates between self and other. With this social

formation the world is ipso facto - on the levels of the individual, the group and the collective - divided into three Classes, for the elaboration of any boundary between self and other must inevitably distinguish between those whose interests are served by and actively propagate this division (the Elect); those who are able to work within the space defined and regulated by the Elect (the Redeemed); and that group of people who are excluded by this division (the Reprobate).

This division is repeated in the person of Los, who now becomes what what he beholds. Moreover, the history that is constructed within the triangular relationship between Los, his Spectre and Enitharmon culminates in an apocalyptic interaction between the Classes[34]:

> At last Enitharmon brought forth Satan Refusing Form in vain
> The Miller of Eternity made subservient to the Great Harvest
> That he may go to his own Place Prince of the Starry Wheels
> Beneath the Plow of Rintrah & the Harrow of the Almighty
> In the hands of Palamabron.
> (3:41-4:2, E97)

This passage at first sounds as if it is referring to an event which can be located at the end of fallen time; however, in the very next lines this particular reference is generalized and we learn that Satan will go to his own place

> Where the Starry Mills of Satan
> Are built beneath the Earth & Waters of the Mundane Shell
> Here the Three Classes of Men take their Sexual texture Woven
> The Sexual is Threefold: the Human is Fourfold.
> (4:2-5, E97)

These lines suggest that the form of Satan is something which stretches across the full extent of fallen time and in which all of humanity has participated. We are three-fold and sexual in our very being and therefore the Starry Mills of Satan are built throughout the twenty seven heavens and six thousand years of the Mundane Shell.

In listening to the Bard's creation story one therefore has an extraordinary sense of the identity of apparently dissimilar things. The events of history are seen as the serial repetition of an original fragmentation. This sense is heightened by a striking similarity between the

descriptions of Urizen and Satan: both figures attempt in vain to "refuse" the form that is forged for them by Los and Enitharmon. This similarity seems to bring the story full circle, for it suggests that the consolidation of Satan is the completion of a process that Los began when he gave form to Urizen. Later in the Bard's Song we will learn that "Satan is Urizen" (10:1, E104). Beneath the linear progression of the Bard's creation narrative we can therefore glimpse the three Classes referred to in the opening lines of the poem. In a first reading the exact shape and nature of their interaction remains to a large extent unseen. It is felt, perhaps, as an uneasy, almost uncanny dissolution of what had been perceived as difference into sameness.

To this point in the poem the Bard's narrative has proceeded in the third person, with the dispassionate voice of an observer. His contentions have therefore remained, to some extent, intellectual propositions. In the lines which follow the creation narrative, the distances between the narrator and the events that he is describing, and between the reader and the story that he is following, are closed; the narrator's voice is overtaken by the voice of Los:

> If you account it Wisdom when you are angry to be silent, and
> Not to shew it: I do not account that Wisdom but Folly.
> Every Mans Wisdom is peculiar to his own Individ[u]ality
> O Satan my youngest born, art thou not Prince of the Starry Hosts
> And of the Wheels of Heaven, to turn the Mills day & night?
> Art thou not Newtons Pantocrator weaving the Woof of Locke
> To Mortals thy Mills seem every thing & the Harrow of Shaddai
> A scheme of Human conduct invisible & incomprehensible
> Get to thy Labours at the Mills & leave me to my wrath.
> (4:6-14, E98)

The effect of this sudden irruption of Satan and Los within the present of the reader is nothing short of startling. First, we see Los and the Class of the Elect not as inert forces but as beings actively engaged in argument. Secondly, there is a sense of this hitherto unseen (and still only partially glimpsed) quarrel as a force which underlies <u>our</u> world.

If history is grounded in the production of the three Classes by Los, then quite clearly the events of fallen time are, in terms of this ground,

interchangeable. In the passage which follows our glimpse of Los and Satan, the Song begins to embody this insight. It now moves rapidly between the past, present and future, as if it were fascinated by the interchangeability of historical epochs and times. The narrative itself almost disappears and the poem becomes extraordinarily episodic. This section of the poem begins:

> Between South Molton Street & Stratford place: Calvarys foot
> Where the Victims were preparing for Sacrifice their Cherubim
> Around their loins pourd forth their arrows & their bosoms beam
> With all colours of precious stones, & their inmost palaces
> Resounded with preparation of animals wild & tame
> (Mark well my words! Corporeal Friends are Spiritual Enemies)
> Mocking Druidical Mathematical Proportion of Length Bredth Highth
> Displaying Naked Beauty! with Flute & Harp & Song
> Palamabron with the fiery Harrow in morning returning
> From breathing fields. Satan fainted beneath the artillery. . . .
> (4:21-5:2, E98)

So extreme is the disruption in this passage of our habitual ways of perceiving the world that these lines can generate a feeling of confusion and fear. These emotions are, however, complemented by a sense of fascination, for beneath the apparent disorder of these lines there is a continual evocation of the three Classes and the mediated relationships in which they find their being.

In the very first line Blake mentions "Calvarys foot." This allusion to the site of the crucifixion invokes what is, perhaps, the paradigmatic instance of a mediated relationship. Christ was judged a malefactor (and therefore of the Reprobate) because of the threat he represented to the world of the Pharisees and the Romans (the Elect). Calvary is, however, not limited by this passage to a place and time in Israel, for the Bard locates "Calvarys foot" in the London of his day. The location is, in fact, rather precise: it can be found at the point where South Molton Street, the street in which Blake took up residence when he returned from Felpham, and Stratford Place intersect. This place was, as Damon tells us, where Tyburn brook, a stream which ran past the site of the gallows in London, plunged underground.[35] This superimposition of a Palestinian and an English location suggests that the legal system with which we try and convict our fellow creatures is akin to those which convicted Christ. In both cases a third

force is interposed between self and other (whether judge, policeman or executioner) and this force is used to regulate society. The Reprobate, those who are born to damnation, are damned because they disrupt the system fostered by the Elect.

As we continue reading the Bard's Song there is a temptation to leave Calvin's three Classes intact and merely shift blame from one Class to another. It is the Reprobate who become Calvin's Elect, while Blake's Elect are seen as those who must be judged.[36] The Bard, however, makes this kind of transposition extremely difficult to sustain. This can be seen in the extra-ordinary ambiguity of the lines which immediately follow the reference to Calvary's foot. As James remarks, these lines

> may mean that the victims were preparing themselves for sacrifice, while the cherubim were attacking them. Or they may mean that the victims were preparing the cherubim for sacrifice.[37]

It is, however, not only impossible but unnecessary, in this context, to decide between these possible readings. In both cases we are dealing with the preparation for sacrifice of one group by another. We sacrifice others only in an attempt to propitiate or meet the demands of a third pary, whether a god, an ideology, or a more subtle source of law, such as expedience, order, or the public good. Whether we sacrifice criminals for the public good, prophets in order to preserve the social order, or tyrants in order to bring into being a revolutionary order, we reproduce the triangular and mediated relationship that we have been discussing.

Bracher attempts to quarantine 4:21-5 from 4:27-5:2[38]; however, the syntax of this passage suggests that the "Mocking" of Druidical Mathematical Proportion" and the display of "Naked Beauty! with Flute & Harp & Song" are concomitant with both the "preparation of animals wild & tame" and the sacrifice of either the Victims or the Cherubim. Moreover, it seems that it is the pouring forth of the Cherubim's arrows (or, alternatively, of the Victim's arrows) which is involved in the "Mocking" and results in Satan fainting "beneath the artillery." (Satan is, of course, associated with the "Druidical Mathematical Proportion"). To mock "Mathematical Proportion" and

"Display Naked Beauty" may sound like a laudable activity, but it is in this instance uncertain whether the mocking is done by the Cherubim or the Victims, and it is in both cases an activity attendant on sacrifice. Although in Jerusalem the "Eternal Ones" affirm that "Art & Science cannot exist but by Naked Beauty displayd" (32[36]:49, E179), we cannot assume that the display of "Naked Beauty" must in every instance be an unqualified good. Earlier in the same poem Albion recalls a time when he "danced naked" and, "Thinking to bring Love into light of day," displayed his "Giant limbs to all the winds of heaven!" (24:4-6, E169). In this instance the display of "Naked Beauty" is followed by the emotion of "Shame" and by a fall (24:7-11, E169). Moreover, the use of the verb "mocking" suggests an activity in which one group, from within the safety of their constituted world, judges another. The immediate result of sacrifice is well being: the malign influence has been warded off and order returns, but judgement of this kind does not allow one to escape from Satan.

As we shall discover later in the Bard's Song, one cannot judge judgement without reintroducing judgement into the world. Satan cannot be dealt with by using the "arrows" of our own desire to judge and execute him. This point is emphasized by the parenthetical comment which divides 4:21-25 from 4:27-5:2: "Mark well my words! Corporeal friends are Spiritual Enemies." The preservation of order in our constituted worlds, the confinement or eradication of those forces that threaten our world (even if those forces can be collectively described as Satan), may in effect be to collaborate with our spiritual enemies. Crucifixion, sacrifice, mocking, execution, all stand in stark contrast to the next line of the poem in which the reader gains a glimpse of an action which promises to place the fallen world on a very different footing. The Bard tells us that, in the place of "judgement," Christ "took on Sin in the Virgins Womb, and put it off on the Cross" (5:3, E98).[39]

In the remainder of plate five the vision implicit in this temporal and spatial disorder moves into sharper focus. These lines begin with a

description of the Daughters of Albion, the passive powers who help to establish the form which separates self and other. In Eternity, male and female are part of a single identity, but here the females merely take "whom they please . . . into their Heavens" (5:9-10, E98). The body of humanity, rather than being a place of relationship, has become a cave which interposes itself between self and other. The Females sing:

> Ah weak & wide astray! Ah shut in narrow doleful form
> Creeping in reptile flesh upon the bosom of the ground
> The Eye of Man a little narrow orb closd up & dark
> Scarcely beholding the great light conversing with the Void
> The Ear, a little shell in small volutions shutting out
> All melodies & comprehending only Discord and Harmony
> The Tongue a little moisture fills, a little food it cloys
> A little sound it utters & its cries are faintly heard
> Then brings forth Moral Virtue the cruel Virgin Babylon. . . .
> (5:19-27, E99)

It is to the accompaniment of this Song[40] that the females create "the Three Classes among Druid Rocks" (5:38, E99). This insight into the work of the Daughters allows us to see the three Classes in even greater clarity. In the most precise definition to this point, the Bard tells us that they are "the Two Contraries & the Reasoning Negative" (5:14, E98). The Reasoning Negative interposes itself between the first two terms and in so doing changes their relationship into one of warfare and negation. It is the reasoning memory that forms the apex of the triangular relationship between self and other that we have been discussing.

With this clarification the poem moves from myth back into the arena of history, where we see the result of the Daughter's work. The notion of the three Classes has now gained such a corrosive power that almost all distinction seems to be on the point of being lost. For the reader this can generate a feeling strikingly akin to vertigo. In what is, perhaps, the most disconcerting passage in the entire Song, the Bard tells his audience that the females sing in this way as they create

> the Three Classes among Druid Rocks
> Charles calls on Milton for Atonement. Cromwell is ready
> James calls for fires in Golgonooza. for heaps of smoking ruins
> In the night of prosperity and wantonness which he himself Created
> Among the Daughters of Albion among the Rocks of the Druids

> When Satan fainted beneath the arrows of Elynittria
> And Mathematic Proportion was subdued by Living Proportion. . . .
> (5:38-44, E99)

In his notes to The Complete Poetry and Prose, Harold Bloom identifies Milton as a member of the Reprobate, Cromwell as the Redeemed and Charles and James as the Elect (E912). This seems to be a common-sense allocation of roles, however, it is in practice hard to sustain.[41] Milton would seem to be not only a candidate for the Class of the Reprobate but for the Redeemed as well. He is the author of The Reason of Church Government and Areopagitica, for example. It is therefore quite plausible to argue that in line 39 the Reprobate Milton is being asked to atone for his sins. A position such as this immediately raises the question of whether Milton was still in the Class of the Reprobate when Charles the First was beheaded, or when he took up his duties as Cromwell's Latin secretary? It would seem to be a much more likely argument that at this point he belonged to the Class of those who take part in the orthodoxy of their day.[42] It would be unwise to discount this last possibility in a poem in which Milton admits that in his own Spectre he is Satan. A contention such as this is also supported by an ambiguity in line 39 which suggests that, in calling on Milton, it is Charles who is seeking to atone for his sins.

As king of England, Charles the First was quite clearly a member of the Elect. Just prior to his death, however, Charles seems to have become, just as clearly, a member of the Class of the Reprobate: at that point he had become a figure who represented a threat to the new, democratic and puritan orthodoxy of the day. Similarly, as king, James the Second was a member of the Elect, however, when overcome by William II and fleeing to France he can hardly be seen as a member of the same Class. A new orthodoxy was in the process of being established and with regard to this it was James who stood outside its bounds. It was now, as William announced, inconsistent for a Protestant country to have a popish king.

Readers encounter the same kind of difficulty as soon as they attempt to determine the Class to which Cromwell belonged. In his struggle against the

royalists, and in his demands for democratic reform and for the abolition of the episcopacy, Cromwell was without doubt a member of the Reprobate. However, as Puritan general and then, for a period of five years, the absolute ruler of England - a person who was twice offered the title of king - he seems to have been a member of the Satanic Elect. One of the achievements of Cromwell was to revive England as an imperial power. Thurloe, Cromwell's secretary of state, wrote that Cromwell "carried the keys of the continent at his girdle, and was able to make invasions thereupon, and let in armies and forces upon it at his pleasure."[43]

The Bard locates the historical events alluded to in this passage by relating them to the quarrel that we have glimpsed in previous plates. These events occur

> When Satan fainted beneath the arrows of Elynittria
> And Mathematic Proportion was subdued by Living Proportion. . . .
> (5:43-44, E99)

Susan Fox writes that in these lines it is clear that

> Satan has been felled . . . by Palamabron's return . . . that act, like the incarnation, is the subduing of mathematic by living proportion. It is achieved on all levels of reality through the appropriate operations of the Three Classes of Men . . . and their female concomitant.[44]

It is, of course, not incorrect to see the victory of Cromwell over James as a victory for Living Proportion: the people asserted their authority against that of the king and so the Elect were cast out. Unfortunately, this victory of Living Proportion over the Mathematical led to the loss of Living Proportion and a reassertion of Mathematic Proportion. Under the protectorate we have, superficially, a new doxology, a new public enemy and a new group of people who decide to co-operate with society; however, in a fundamental sense this transformation leaves the three Classes of society intact. For Living Proportion to subdue Mathematic Proportion is for the former to adopt the tactics of, and so become assimilated to, the latter. As the Bard observed on plate 4, "Corporeal Friends are Spiritual Enemies."[45] The effect of these lines is, therefore, to demonstrate the absolute ubiquity of the three Classes; the three Classes have become terms which define the structure of

life itself.

Plate six reiterates the insights of the preceding plates on a higher level of clarity. The three Classes, as we learnt in the opening lines of this Song, are formed by Los from out of the chaos of Albion's withdrawal. In our discussion of the preceding plates we have concentrated on the negative aspects of this creation. The production of the three Classes is, however, also a saving action: it gives form to what would otherwise be nothing but chaos. As the Bard tells us, Los and Enitharmon are weaving the "Web of Life" from out of the "ashes of the dead":

> Loud sounds the Hammer of Los, loud turn the Wheels of Enitharmon
> Her Looms vibrate with soft affections, weaving the Web of Life
> Out from the ashes of the Dead; Los lifts his iron Ladles
> With molten ore: he heaves the iron cliffs in his rattling chains
> From Hyde Park to the Alms-houses of Mile-end & old Bow
> Here the Three Classes of Mortal Men take their fixd destinations
> And hence they overspread the Nations of the whole Earth & hence
> The Web of Life is woven: & the tender sinews of life created
> And the Three Classes of Men regulated by Los's hammer.
> (6:27-35, E100)

By retaining the body of Albion, Los's creation opens the possibility of regeneration. Los is, therefore, also involved in the production of the spiritual Golgonooza and from this perspective the three Classes help to prepare for the apocalyptic harvest which marks the end of time:

> Loud sounds the Hammer of Los, & loud his Bellows is heard
> Before London to Hampsteads breadths & Highgates heights To
> Stratford & old Bow: & across to the Gardens of Kensington
> On Tyburns Brook: loud groans Thames beneath the iron Forge
> Of Rintrah & Palamabron of Theotorm[on] & Bromion, to forge the
> instruments
> Of Harvest: the Plow & Harrow to pass over the Nations. . . .
> (6:8-13, E99)

The production by Los of the three Classes therefore stands at the centre of the fallen world, between the cycles of violence which constitute its temporal history and the possibility of regeneration.

At this point in the Song the Bard's visionary deconstruction of our everyday world has reached such a pitch that his audience stands on the edge of vision. In the plates which follow, his listeners are given an account of the quarrel between Satan and Palamabron in which they are able to see in

detail a dynamic which they have hitherto only glimpsed.

The quarrel is the moment of recognition: that moment in which a recalcitrant problem unveils itself and one perceives what has been hidden. Nevertheless, despite the striking nature of this revelation the substance of the quarrel resolutely conceals itself from a first reading. Like Satan, the quarrel attempts to "refuse form." In reading this portion of the Bard's Song I always have a feeling of unease: surfaces are shifting, faces are only masks, and one can never be certain where firm ground lies. Satan, the person one is ready to believe is solely to blame for the cosmic disruption that the narrator describes, sincerely believes that he has done no wrong. He acts towards Palamabron and Los with "incomparable mildness" and "most endearing love." Yet this same "mildness" and "love" is described as "primitive tyrannical attempts on Los." When he does erupt in anger and close himself off from the Divine Assembly, this fury is hidden. One cannot help gaining the impression that beneath each apparent surface of the tale lies an unrevealed identity. For me, this is so marked that the unease experienced in reading the early plates of the Bard's Song is heightened to the pitch of nervous intensity which accompanies an intimation of the uncanny.

In his essay on the canny and the uncanny, the heimlich and the unheimlich, Freud distinguishes the uncanny from fear and the grotesque by locating it as "that class of the terrifying which leads back to something long known to us, once very familiar." He quotes Schelling who writes: "'Unheimlich' is the name for everything that ought to have remained . . . hidden and secret and has become visible."[46] In the Bard's Song this feeling is generated because it attempts to reveal to his audience the repressed ground of their lives. Apparent surfaces melt away to reveal the ground on which we stand. As a prelude to our discussion of this quarrel we will attempt, using the additional information it provides, to describe the three Classes in a little more detail.

(5) The Elect, the Reprobate and the Redeemed

The three Classes, represented by the figures of Satan, Rintrah and Palamabron, are usually defined in terms similar to those adopted by Rose in his article, "Blake's Metaphorical States."[47] Rose writes that the "Reprobate are a kind of eternal presence or vigor. . . . Their art is a permanent revolution. . . . The Redeemed are the class of those who are inside society, men of some vision, like the artists and thinkers of political and aesthetic revolutionary movements" and "The Elect is the class of those who are society, the establishment."[48] To describe the Classes and their representatives in this way, however, gives us no real way of imagining their prelapsarian relationship. Moreover, it uses the three Classes to describe a social phenomenon rather than the structure of fallen life itself.

The influence and presence of Rintrah, Palamabron and Satan can be observed on the levels of the social and the psychological; however, it is important to see, as Bracher argues in Being Form'd: Thinking Through Blake's 'Milton', that figures such as these are also cosmological powers, or metaphysical principles.[49] Blake's characters represent various dimensions of reality itself.[50] Bracher argues, for example, that Rintrah, Palamabron and Satan, are involved in three different kinds of destruction:

> defensive destruction, which cultivates and protects the organic growth from alien actuality (the Plow of Rintrah); preparatory or productive destruction of the host ("the Harrow of the almighty in the hands of Palamabron"), which supports the seed and fosters new, germinating actuality; and reductive destruction (Satan's mills), which transforms the ripened fruit (actuality) into nourishment for other beings.[51]

The stress placed by Bracher on the cosmological and metaphysical dimensions of Milton is important and his discussion of the three Classes and their representatives is illuminating; however, to reduce the activities of Ploughing, Harrowing and Milling to three different kinds of destruction seems an unnecessary simplification. Rather than following this particular formulation of the activities in which Rintrah, Satan and Palamabron are involved, I will therefore return to the attributes that the poem itself

ascribes to these characters. On this level, Rintrah is the Ploughman and is associated with wrath. Palamabron is in charge of the Harrow and his emotion is pity, while Satan, in his role as Miller of Eternity, is concerned with Eternal Death.

The Ploughman prepares the ground for sowing by opening to the light what has been closed in darkness. He tears the shell of the world to reveal what has been hidden. Rintrah is therefore associated with an iconoclastic wrath that overthrows accepted boundaries. In this activity we can see him beginning a dialogue between darkness and light, earth and sky, self and other. Rather than protecting "the organic growth from alien actuality," Rintrah's Plough in fact tears open the constituted world of the self so that others can appear in our world. It is this activity which prepares the ground so it can receive seed. It is the Class of the Reprobate, therefore, who specifically open the world of the self to "alien actuality." Bracher argues that

> The Reprobate are "form'd / To destruction from the mothers womb" (7:2-3), and thus have no permanent, positive being. They come into being and eventually perish and have no real being beyond their short-lived existence. For them, existence is everything; their identity consists in the process itself, and is thus continuously becoming and continuously perishing.[52]

The Bard quite clearly does not entertain the view that "existence is everything" (no one could accuse him of being an existentialist), yet this same figure describes the act of "singing" his "prophetic Song" as the process of Ploughing. The lines quoted by Bracher in the above quotation to underline the existentialist position adopted by the Reprobate are in fact completed by the Bard's injunction to his audience to "follow with me my plow!" (7:3, E100). The Bard himself therefore belongs in the Class of the Reprobate.

The Bard belongs to this Class because the act of prophecy is an attempt to plough (and so open) the constituted world of his listeners. It is this activity which prepares Milton's constituted world for the reception of seed. Ploughing is therefore a necessary prelude to the growth and expansion described by Milton. The Reprobate are "form'd / To destruction from the

mothers womb" because they transgress accepted boundaries and are therefore always subject to the judgement of those powers (the Elect) who preserve the status quo. The Reprobate are destroyed by those individuals and systems who assert that there is "One King, one God, one Law." Nevertheless, despite the important role played by Rintrah in cultivating the ground, it is important to observe that in isolation Rintrah's role is destructive. By being opened an interiority of necessity becomes lost in exteriority. In being revealed to the day, darkness becomes light and loses itself. In isolation Rintrah's role turns into its opposite and instead of creating a dialogue the Ploughman changes difference into sameness. It is necessary for Rintrah's work to be coupled with that of his contrary.

Palamabron's Harrow turns the achieved exteriority of the Ploughman back into interiority. The Harrow is used to pulverize the soil, destroy weeds and clods which have been left unchurned by the ploughing process, and cover in the seed. In so doing it closes the fissures which have been opened by the Plough and imposes a new surface (albeit this time of fine friable soil). The Harrow therefore enables the seed to grow by rendering the re-enclosed surface penetrable by the shoot. Harrowing is, therefore, not the contrary of Satan's milling (as Bracher argues), but of Rintrah's Ploughing. It is only in the contrary relationship between Rintrah and Palamabron that there lies the possibility of growth. Harrowing therefore does not involve merely the "indirect or mediated preservation of that which is destroyed."[53] This suggests that the Harrow is in some way involved in the grinding or reduction of others. The action of the Harrow is consequent upon the <u>opening</u> of the self to the other. It therefore follows a process which, far from destroying others, opens the self to others, and it is the results of this encounter which are held by the ground as seed. The Harrow therefore does not reduce <u>others</u> to fine, friable soil. Instead, it breaks up those elements of the ground (of the self) which would imprison and so assimilate the seed. It turns the outer surface of the <u>self</u> into a form which can be penetrated by the shoot. The Harrow circumvents the possibility that the seed

will itself be reduced to soil, by ensuring that the ground can be breached by new growth. Nevertheless, it is important to see that without the Plough, the Harrow does become involved in a process which is simply a form of destruction. It can be used as a scarifier, to raze all growth and return the world to the simple and warring oppositions of earth and sky. When the Harrow is used in this way the exterior becomes so dominant that the interior will not show itself. As Los observes: "pity divides the soul."

The Miller of Eternity has a different and perhaps more ambiguous role to play. Clearly, the first part of his job is to abstract a part from the whole. The Miller is concerned with the grain, rather than with the whole plant, and even here his Mills translate whatever individual difference is left into indistinguishable units. The Miller of Eternity is also described as a Judge. At the end of Milton we see Satan

> Coming in a cloud, with trumpets & flaming fire
> Saying I am God the judge of all, the living & the dead
> Fall therefore down & worship me. submit thy supreme
> Dictate, to my eternal Will & to my dictate bow. . . .
> (38:50-3, E139)

These two identities are complementary, rather than contradictory, for the Satanic Judge grinds the world every bit as finely as the Eternal Miller. Miller and Judge both attempt to grind the world into submission to their will. One can therefore see a literal truth to Satan's claim that he is "God alone / There is no other! let all obey my principles of moral individuality" (9:25-26, E103). Satan's principles of "moral individuality" are the grinding surfaces of his Mills. As Bracher observes: "Satan is the principle which destroys the unique identities of individuals, grinding them down (into uniform, elementary forms)." Satan is, therefore, "the principle that destroys the unique identities of individuals."[54]

Bracher contrasts Satan's "qid pro quo" metaphysics with the attempt (by Los) "to actualize Being in the only way possible: through the enhancement of the being of individuals."[55] What is striking about the Bard's depiction of Satan, however, is that he destroys the individuality of others in order to "enhance" and extend his own individuality. His laws are based on

"principles of moral individuality," he is the "Sick-one" who "calls the Individual Law, Holy" (13:4,5, E106), and it is Satan who affirms that he is "God alone / There is no other!" (9:25-6, E103). It is therefore more helpful to contrast Satan's destruction of individuality with the attempt of Milton (or of Christ) to leave the confines of the self. In changing grain into flour, Satan is changing the possibility of growth contained in the seed into a form which can be assimilated by other individuals. Flour can be made only into things which are edible and, therefore, can be assimilated to the self. The only other alternative is that it be wasted. We can therefore define Satan's role as the translation of the other into the constituted world of the self.

It is important to mention at this stage that in the prelapsarian world Satan has a much more positive role to play. Although we can read his title, Miller of Eternity, to mean that he puts Eternity though his Mills, the literal meaning of this phrase suggests that Satan has a necessary place within Eternity.[56] Bread, after all, is still called the "staff of life." In fact, as soon as we define Satan's role as the translation of the other into the constituted world of the self, we can see that Rintrah and Palamabron both rely, in part, on Satan for the achievement of their tasks. In his role as Ploughman, Rintrah changes interiority into exteriority. This can only mean that wrath translates the world into its own perspective. The other emerges in the light of Rintrah's glance and therefore appears as defined by Rintrah's world. This must occur in order for Rintrah's work to become a reality. Here, in this moment, before the work of Palamabron begins, one can find a possible genesis for Satan's world. Satan is this separation of one's constituted world from the world of the other. Palamabron also relies in this sense on Satan. The Harrow returns what has been opened, to the darkness of the earth. At the point that this is achieved, inside is separated from outside. In this brief moment we once again glimpse Satan's world.

We can therefore distinguish between two very different bodies. In the

prelapsarian world Satan, Palamabron and Rintrah form different aspects of a single identity, what we can call "living form" because its outline is fluid, open, dynamic; the body is a site of interaction between self and other, a place where, in words taken from Jerusalem, there are cominglings from the head even unto the feet. Satan's place of work in this world, the starry heavens, is the surface of the body of Albion. We can therefore see Satan's milling as an ordering of identity, an organization of a living body. In the fallen world what once was open, as a face to others, has become a profession or a mask: a body of rules, laws and conventions which determines the relationship between self and other. In the fallen world the surface that is established by Satan interposes itself between self and other; he attempts to change the living surface of life into an impenetrable exterior, what Blake would call Mathematical Form.[57]

This can be seen quite clearly in Leutha's account of the usurpation of Palamabron's Harrow. In the unfallen world Satan gives the surface or outer form of existence the measure of stability that is necessary if Palamabron and Rintrah are to perform their work. In attempting to appropriate the Harrow, however, Satan is attempting to interrupt the interaction between this implement and the Plough and, in so doing, enclose life within an opaque, impenetrable form. This attempt meets more resistance than Leutha and Satan had anticipated. The Harrow is living and Satan can only exert his control over such a body by attempting to enclose it in an inert, impenetrable form, but this is to change life into a raging fire, a repressed energy, which encircles Satan's own life:

> Satan astonishd, and with power above his own controll
> Compell'd the Gnomes to curb the horses, & to throw banks of sand
> Around the fiery flaming Harrow in labyrinthine forms.
> And brooks between to intersect the meadows in their course.
> The Harrow cast thick flames: Jehovah thunderd above:
> Chaos & ancient night fled from beneath the fiery Harrow:
> The Harrow cast thick flames & orb'd us round in concave fires
> A Hell of our own making.
>
> (12:16-23, E106)

The Spectre, Satan, the Reasoning Negative, the Elect, all of these names describe the force that has now interposed itself between self and other. The

contrary relationship between Rintrah and Palamabron has been interrupted and the openness of a face has been changed into the opacity of a profession.

In this way we can see that the three Classes describe a condition which is endemic to our world. Perhaps the best description of this condition is given by Locke in An Essay Concerning Human Understanding. Locke writes that

> the understanding is not much unlike a closet wholly shut from light, with only some little openings left, to let in external visible resemblances, or ideas of things without: would the pictures coming into such a dark room but stay there, and lie so orderly as to be found upon occasion, it would very much resemble the understanding of a man, in reference to all objects of sight, and the ideas of them.[58]

It is here the closet wall, the form or outline of the self, which both separates and determines the relationship between self and other. It is not the other that appears, but the other as it has been graded and assessed by the forms and conventions of our world. We are caverned beings, closed individually and collectively within our constituted worlds.

This is, of course, not a novel idea. It can be seen in Gnostic and Platonic accounts of the corporeal world and, more importantly in this context, it is the basis of the Christian account of the Fall. Genesis tells us that the Fall occurred when Adam and Eve ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. As Bonhoeffer comments in his Ethics, what this means is that humanity no longer grounds itself in a relationship to God, or to others, but now attempts to discern from within the world of the isolated self both good and evil.[59] In this state "Serpent Reasonings us entice / Of Good & Evil: Virtue & Vice" (GP7-8, E268): thought is reduced to a process in which we reason upon no more than our "own Dark Fiction" (EG[k]:91). The individual is now an ego, a centre of the world and therefore a God: "The man is become as one of us, to know good and evil," says God in Genesis 3:22. In the Bard's terms, Locke's closet is another name for the world that has been outlined by Satan. Its interposition between self and other divides the world into the Redeemed: those that fit into the perspectives of the self, and the Reprobate, those that do not and are therefore "form'd / To destruction from the mothers womb" (7:3, E100). Although he raises the question in the fourth

book of the Essay, Locke does not ever really doubt that there is a relationship of adequation between the concepts formed by the closeted man and reality. The arguments that he advances in order to support a correspondence between knowledge and reality are not entirely convincing after the work of sceptical philosophers such as Hume, Nietzsche and Freud. One does not need to add the name of Derrida to this list in order to say that in the light of these philosophies the walls of Locke's closet appear very opaque and the openings very small indeed.

Despite my quotation from Locke it would be unwise to limit the possibilities of Los's world in too precipitate a manner. It is quite clear that the production of this world, although representing a diminishing of the life of Eternity, is itself a saving action and prevents a fall into formlessness. This form holds open the possibility of both contraction and expansion. This can be seen in the illumination to plate six.

The dominant motif on this plate is the colossal stone gate through which a man is passing. For this traveller the gate offers passage only from earth to earth, from the same to the same, yet its extraordinary size and the star which can be seen shining between its supports suggest that it once was (or in future could be) a gateway from the earth to the stars. Other portions of this illumination contain a similar ambiguity. On the left of the road we see a traveller striding past a group of rocks which appear to be arranged in a circle.[60] The scene is definitely not pastoral and yet the rocks nevertheless suggest sheep, and the distance separating the walker/wanderer from the rocks he is passing suggests that he is a shepherd who has gathered his sheep together for the night. The shape of the two or three trees to the left of the illumination and their proximity to the rocks/sheep suggest that the shepherd has led his flock beneath their sheltering branches. The rocking stone on the right hand side of the illumination contains a similar ambiguity. There is no doubt that the rock is a rock and yet, as one looks more closely at its contours, it can be seen as a ship. In the Rosenwald copy of the poem this ship seems almost about to set sail in a bluish water-

coloured sky in which all of the stars have gathered.[61]

We can therefore say that, on the one hand, this illumination presents us with a world where the contraries of earth and sky, Innocence and Experience, closure and openness, have become negations. The pastoral scene of Innocence has been transformed into one in which a traveller hurries past a collection of inert and inarticulate stones. Experience has similarly been changed into a stone whose instability underlines the precariousness of mortal life. The sky has lost its sun and now stands separated from the earth by all of the dizzy spaces of night. Yet, despite these transformations, we are still able to see, traced upon the features of trilithon, rocking stone and the landscape through which the wanderer passes, the possibility of regeneration (and the Eternity from which we have fallen). The very bulk of the trilithon suggests a passage from the earth to the sky; the wanderer fleetingly forms a part of a scene which evokes the world of Innocence; and the rock "can be seen" as a ship which is poised to voyage into the night sky and so bring earth and sky, Innocence and Experience, into relationship once more. The time and space of the fallen world exist as "one infinite plane, and not as apparent / To the weak traveller confin'd beneath the moony shade" (15:32-33, E109). It therefore contains an outline, or trace, of the Eternity from which it has withdrawn and the Eternity to which it can return. By a leap which nicely sidesteps Foucault's critique of the search for temporal origins, this plate (and Milton as a whole) suggests that Eternity can be uncovered in a movement which proceeds at right angles to the passage of fallen time. Regeneration exists as a possibility which opens out from within the fallen world. The fallen world, where the whole man is fragmented into a series of self-enclosed individuals, holds open the possibility of regeneration.

From the point of view of the Perturbed Man this possibility is, of course, nothing more than an optical illusion: a "[. . . most simulative] / Phantom of the over heated brain! shadow of immortality!" Nevertheless, it is in the world where the pastoral scene of Innocence has almost been obscured,

where the sky is separated from the earth and humanity is dwarfed by a sytem of its own making, that there is the possibility that the stone will find its true nature as a ship. This is, perhaps, to put the matter in too lukewarm a fashion. The illumination suggests that at this very moment the ship's sails are filled with wind and that it is about to begin a movement which will join earth and sky, time and Eternity, not as a reduction of one to the other, but as a face to face encounter of self and other. This is, unfortunately, not the only possibility that is opened by the fallen world. It can also be the site of a further fragmentation and loss of identity. It is with this possibility that the Bard is now concerned as he turns to a quarrel between Satan and Palamabron which threatens to destroy even the outline of the self that we have described.

(6) The Quarrel

The quarrel begins with a simple, almost homely situation: Satan entreats Los "to give to him Palamabrons station" (7:6, E100). Palamabron and Los both refuse this request until, after repeated entreaties, Los gives Satan "the Harrow of the Almighty" (7:10, E100). As a result, Satan labours with the Harrow for a day of one thousand years duration (7:13, E100). The next morning Palamabron wakes to find that "the horses of the Harrow / Were maddend with tormenting fury" (7:17-8, E100). The "servants of the Harrow / The Gnomes" (7:18-9, E100) accuse Satan, and Palamabron asks Los to judge who is at fault. Los finds, somewhat to the reader's surprise, that he is unable to determine who is the malefactor. As the narrator himself asks:

> What could Los do? how could he judge, when Satans self, believ'd
> That he had not oppres'd the horses of the Harrow, nor the servants.
> (7:39-40, E101)

He therefore does nothing more than urge everyone to keep to their "own station / . . . nor in pity false, nor in officious brotherhood, where / None needs, be active" (7:41-43, E101). Satan now returns to his Mills and finds that his own servants are "drunken with wine and dancing wild / With shouts

and Palamabrons songs" (8:8-9, E101). Satan therefore returns to Los, "not fill'd with vengeance but with tears, / Himself convinc'd of Palamabrons turpitude" (8:6-7, E101). Los responds to this new development by declaring the day to be one of mourning, and claiming that he is himself to blame for these events. The quarrel between Satan and Palamabron, however, now expands and gradually draws all of existence into its orbit.

In our first glimpse of the quarrel we see Los roll "his loud thunders" and tell Satan in no uncertain terms that he cannot "drive the Harrow in pitys paths" (4:16, E98). Eve Teitlebaum articulates a common judgement of Los's outburst when, with evident approval, she describes it as a "thunderous response to Satan."[62] It is a "thunderous response," but in retrospect one wonders why, in the midst of a quarrel which began with the usurpation of the role of one by another, Los is not at his forge giving the three Classes their fixed destinations. As the story progresses we discover that Los is no longer forming Golgonooza, or creating and orienting the three Classes; instead he has become an arbitrator, or a judge, in a dispute. There is therefore a curious similarity between Satan's usurpation of Palamabron's Harrow and Los's assumption of the role of arbitrator. Los does precisely what Satan is accused of: he gives up his own work and identity in order to adopt that belonging to someone else. Moreover, in attempting to judge, and so arrange the world from his perspective, Los can be seen as performing the work of Satan and so being assimilated to the state of Satan.

Much the same kind of criticism can be levelled at Palamabron. Satan's usurpation of Palamabron's Harrow is mirrored by the day spent by Palamabron in charge of Satan's Mills. In rebuking Satan Los says:

> If you account it Wisdom when you are angry to be silent, and
> Not to shew it: I do not account that Wisdom but Folly.
> (4:6-7, E98)

Yet this is what Palamabron is guilty of when he "fear'd to be angry lest Satan should accuse him of / Ingratitude" (7:11-12, E100). After Satan has laboured with the Harrow and Palamabron has worked in the Mills, Satan

embraces Palamabron with a "brother's tears" and Palamabron "also wept." It is as if in these lines there is a recognition of a secret and repressed collusion between these two brothers. It seems that both Los and Palamabron can be judged to be guilty of the crime that Satan has committed.

Once one has recognized this secret affinity the equations between the three seem to proliferate. The absence of Enitharmon is matched by the absence of Elynittria and Leutha; Satan maddens Palamabron's horses and servants, Palamabron introduces confusion and disorder into Satan's Mills and Los, later in the Song, rends "up nations," displaces continents and alters "the poles of the world." Palamabron leaves his Harrow, Satan his Mills and Los leaves his forge idle and unattended. All three have a desire to be fair: Satan entreats Los with "most endearing love" to give him Palamabron's station because Palamabron has the more difficult task and returns "with labour wearied every evening"; when Palamabron discovers what has happened to the horses and servants of the Harrow in his absence he says: "But we must not be tyrants also!" Similarly, Los is concerned to arbitrate fairly in the dispute. Palamabron is convinced of Satan's guilt and Satan is convinced of Palamabron's guilt. We have no reason to doubt Palamabron's assertion and yet we are explicitly told that Satan's self believed "That he had not oppress'd the horses of the Harrow." One can also add that the actions of Satan, Los and Palamabron all seem to be marked by an extraordinary lack of consciousness. Los seems to be unaware of the destruction that will result from his judgement, Satan is unaware of the havoc that his labour creates, and Palamabron does not realize the disturbance that he has introduced into Satan's Mills.

I do not, of course, mean to suggest that there are no meaningful differences which can be used to distinguish between these three figures. However, in withdrawing from their identities and either judging or relying on a system of judgement, Palamabron and Los repeat Satan's usurpation of another's identity and adopt Satan's role of judging and arbitrating. As a result they are assimilated to Satan's world. Satan drives us to suspend creativity and induces us to avoid a relationship of openness with others, in

order to judge others by ourselves. It is this which reduces individuals to a homogeneous substance, for in the state of Satan individuals are fundamentally alike: they are closed, inert and impervious globes, or grains, which in the aggregate form Satan's Polypus. The three Classes should have not a triangular but a spiral relationship. Their interaction should in fact be like a dance step which is initiated by Rintrah and completed by Satan, after which the dancer moves to another part of the floor. Judgement allows Satan to hold all in stasis: one step is, indeed, marred by a "fall."[63] One therefore cannot simply say that one side is innocent and the other guilty because they have become assimilated to the very force that Palamabron hopes will be found guilty. They have entered the state of Satan. There is something of a logical paradox here, for so long as Los and Palamabron leave their stations unattended in order to take part in a process of judgement they extend Satan's empire. They cannot pass judgement - or even judge Satan (the Judge) - without themselves being assimilated to what they hope to judge.

Partial recognition that this is the case occurs on plate 8. Los takes off his sandal and declares the day a "blank in Nature." In this day, which is one thousand years long, Los takes over the work of Rintrah and so becomes completely identified with wrath. Nothing is produced in nature, the three Classes are no longer sent to their particular destinations and the Plough, driven by Los, works ceaselessly to translate everything into exteriority. Los is attempting to break Satan's grip on the world by forcing the self to be receptive to the other. A new day can begin only when a new seed is able to enter the ground. Unfortunately, until Palamabron and Rintrah enter into relationship with each other the seed cannot grow, and Los's wrathful rending of the surface of the self is ineffective.

At this point in the poem Los is in a double bind similar to the student whose teacher says to him: "If you answer this question correctly I will punish you, if you answer it incorrectly I will punish you and if you don't answer I will punish you." Los has said "yes," "no," and then refused to make

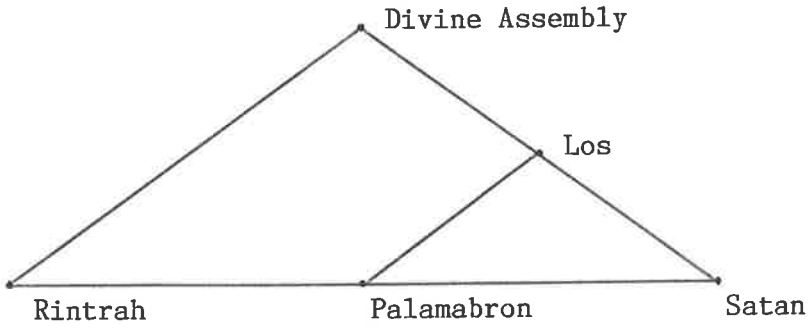
any further decision and yet each step has led him further into Satan's world. Palamabron, however, in a move which is probably equivalent to taking a legal matter to a higher court, calls down a "Great Solemn Assembly"

> That he who will not defend Truth, may be compelled to
> Defend a Lie, that he may be snared & caught & taken. . . .
> (8:47-48, E102)

This course of action, however, merely translates the triangular relationship between Los, Palamabron and Satan onto a different level and for as long as this triangular structure is maintained we can expect to see a consolidation of Satan's power. In accepting the position that Los has vacated, the Solemn Assembly find themselves in his dilemma. Whatever the precise content of their judgement they have still left their Edenic vocation and identities, they have been defined by the dispute between Palamabron and Satan, and adopted the Satanic role of judge. They are therefore themselves guilty of usurping another's identity. The extent of this change of vocation and identity is suggested by the movement of all Eden into Palamabron's tent: it seems that even Eden has adopted the point of view of Palamabron.

When this new court is called to order it is with some surprise that we learn that the two witnesses are Rintrah and Palmabron, no longer as contraries but on opposite sides of a legal dispute. Rintrah now exerts himself on behalf of Satan because he has been deceived by Satan's mildness. Rintrah has, therefore, also been appropriated by Satan; so complete is this appropriation that it becomes "a proverb in Eden" that "Satan is among the Reprobate" (9:12, E103).

The Assembly judges Rintrah to be the guilty party, but this judgement is one more victory for Satan. The triangular relationship between Los, Palamabron and Satan has now become one in which the Divine Assembly is at the apex and Rintrah has assumed the position of Palamabron. One can represent the proliferation of the world of Satan, based on the idea of judgement and the translation of the other into the constituted world of the self, in the following way:



The irony is, of course, that the true apex is Satan and that this triangle represents the mechanism by which Satan hopes to reduce the diversity of the living world to "One Great Satan," to a world where he is able assert:

> I alone am God & I alone in Heavn & Earth
> Of all that live dare utter this, others tremble & bow
> Till All Things become One Great Satan, in Holiness
> Oppos'd to Mercy, and the Divine Delusion Jesus be no more. . . .
> (38:56-39:2, E140)

At this stage of the Bard's Song it appears that no-one is able to escape this process. The Divine Assembly, while still secure in their position as judge, notice a world of "deeper Ulro" open up within their ranks:

> And there a World of deeper Ulro was open'd, in the midst
> Of the Assembly. In Satans bosom a vast unfathomable Abyss.
>
> Astonishment held the Assembly in an awful silence: and tears
> Fell down as dews of night, & a loud solemn universal groan
> Was utter'd from the east & from the west & from the south
> And from the north. . . .
> (9:34-39, E103)

One can sense the despair that envelops them. None of the actors can see their complicity and yet everything that they do widens the empire of Satan. It is as if they have eyes to see Satan, but no sight to see how his power is generated.

The Assembly's judgement and the events which result from it cause a certain amount of consternation on the part of those who have observed the progress of this trial. It is therefore enquired "Why in a Great Solemn Assembly / The Innocent should be condemn'd for the Guilty?" (11:15-16, E105). The judgement is defended by an Eternal who tells us that

> If the Guilty should be condemn'd, he must be an Eternal Death
> And one must die for another throughout all Eternity.
> (11:17-18, E105)

This rationalization is, at best, highly ambiguous. It is, on the one hand, possible that the Eternal is referring to the saving action of Christ. A reading such as this is, however, compromised by the observation that Christ gave up his own life in order to redeem humanity, while in this instance the Assembly, like Pilate, has agreed to condemn an innocent party in order to retain law and order. The Eternal is apparently not entirely convinced himself and feels it necessary to confirm his argument with a "thunderous oath" (11:27, E105). Within this state of affairs Satan is able triumphantly to divide the nations (10:21, E104).

Blake encapsulates the process by which Satan has been able to reduce the world to "one Great Satan" in the illumination which makes up plate 10. Here we see Satan standing on one of the "paved terraces of his bosom" [64] burning with Rintrah's flames "hidden beneath his mildness." In front of Satan is Rintrah and at Satan's side is Palamabron.[65] In the arrangement of feet, eyes, bodies and hands one can see a series of triangular and mediated relationships. Palamabron and Rintrah face each other and show that in reality they should be contraries. However, no real contact occurs between them and instead Palamabron has defined himself by touching Satan's right foot with his left. This is the only direct relationship between the three characters and clearly even this is repressed. Palamabron's eyes and hands express no shadow of an intention to admit his participation in Satan's world. Rintrah seems to be apart from this Satan-Palamabron axis. However, this very separation means that he is no longer in a contrary relationship with Palamabron (their faces no longer meet) and that therefore he is still defined by Satan. It is interesting to note that not one of the three characters catches another's glance. Rintrah looks in the general direction of Satan but is clearly looking at something far to the right. Satan looks in the direction of Palamabron but could catch no more than the faintest glimpse of him from his position. Palamabron is looking between Satan and Rintrah but

in the general direction of Rintrah. Rintrah and Palamabron are perhaps both looking at the Solemn Assembly for clarification of their decision. What should be a relationship between two contraries becomes projected into a third term: as the equivalent of Judge or judgement Satan defines Palamabron and Rintrah.

Satan has adopted the facial features and bodily attributes of Palamabron to an extraordinary extent. He has also acquired Rintrah's flames. Rintrah and Palamabron are watching the transformation of their worlds into the world of Satan. Palamabron's hands show an intention to do something resolute. Perhaps he intends to invoke another mediator. Rintrah's hands indicate that he has been mesmerized, defined by the actions of others. He is therefore in a state of supplication and consternation. In the spatial arrangement of feet, bodies, hands and eyes we see the translation of a face-to-face relationship into the triangular structure of a mediated one. The only real contact is that which inaugurates this reified world and is subsequently repressed. It is now Satan that structures and defines the world, and under his grinding surfaces all difference is on the point of being lost. The world of the three Classes is on the verge of being reduced to a Polypus.

It is not difficult to find an analogy for this development in our own world. Heidegger, for example, sees in modern science and metaphysics a similar reduction of the world to its surfaces, a diminution of being to that which appears to the self. He writes in "The Age of the World View," for example, that "the distinguishing mark of modern times" is "that the world as such becomes a view:"

> Where the world becomes a view, the existent as a whole is posited as that with respect to which a man orients himself, which therefore he wishes to bring and have before himself and thus in a decisive sense re-present to himself. . . . The existent as a whole is now so understood that it is existent when and only when and in the degree to which it is held at bay by the person who represents and establishes it. Where a world view arises, an essential decision takes place about the existent as a whole. The being of the existent is sought and found in the representational character of the existent.[66]

As Michael Wyschogrod argues:

> This is the meaning of the modern search for a "picture" of the world. Because modern metaphysics locates in a human attitude the Being of that which it examines, it must have a picture of the world as the representation which it seeks. Only by means of such an approach is modern experimental science possible because experimentation consists of having a picture or theory which is then, successfully or unsuccessfully, read into the data at hand. . . . The manipulative control of reality which is modern experimental science is possible only for a metaphysics that locates in human representation the Being of that which is. . . .[67]

Similarly, Foucault, taking his cue from Heidegger, writes in The Order of Things that in the thought of the Enlightenment

> It is no longer their identity that beings manifest in representation, but the external relation they establish with the human being.[68]

At this point and from this perspective the Bard's Song counsels despair. There seems little hope of inducing Rintrah and Palamabron to form the surface of a "Living" rather than a "Mathematical" form. In the course of the poem Los, Palamabron, Rintrah, the Solemn Assembly, even the Eternals all leave their vocations and become immobile, locked into the system of judgement represented by Satan.[69] One after the other they consolidate the world of Satan. Michel Foucault defines madness as "the absence of a work"[70] and if this is the case then Satan is the archetypal madness. In the Polypus that is shown to lie beneath the surface gyrations of the poem we find the source of the unease experienced in a first reading. The poem continues to evoke a sense of the uncanny because from beneath the various characters, from within their accusations and defences, the reader experiences the relentless emergence of what has been repressed: the violence of the reduction of difference into the opposition of the same.

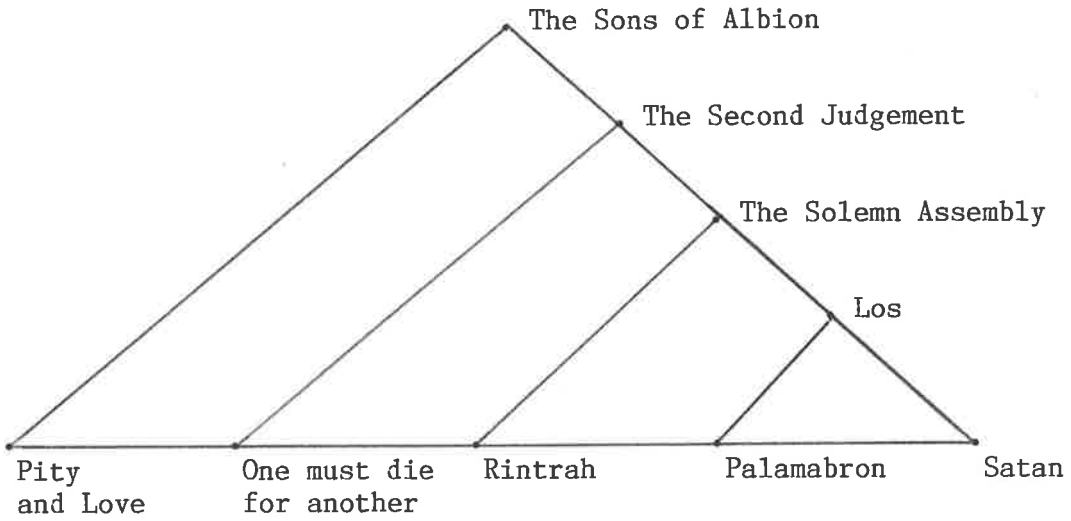
(7) The Bard's audience

The Bard's Song has two audiences: the Mortal sons and daughters of Albion in fallen time and space - characters such as ourselves - and those Sons who sit with the Bard at eternal tables. For the latter group the Song

introduces such a radical doubt into their world that "the roots & fast foundations of the Earth" (14:8, E108) are shaken. The Sons therefore respond defensively:

> The Bard ceas'd. All consider'd and a loud resounding murmur
> Continu'd round the Halls; and much they question'd the immortal
> Loud voicd Bard. and many condemn'd the high tone'd Song
> Saying Pity and Love are too venerable for the imputation
> Of Guilt. Others said. If it is true! if the acts have been perform'd
> Let the Bard himself witness. Where hadst thou this terrible
> Song. . . .
>
> (13:45-50, E107)

This response, however, represents yet another expansion of Satan's web of death. The Sons of Albion now become the judges while Pity and Love are the accused:



Moreover, it is important to observe that our own ruminations on the poem, themselves an attempt to judge it, seem to suggest that the empire of Satan is on the point of a dangerous irruption from the fictive into the real world.

The Sons of Albion are attempting to judge the acts in which judgement is constituted; they are hoping to use their constituted worlds in order to determine the truth or falsity of the Bard's account of the set of relationships in which that world finds its being. It is as if they were attempting to see the obverse side of a coin by staring at its face; or judging the testimony of the mole with the wisdom of the eagle. The most immediate effect of this response is to blunt the force of the Bard's Song

for, from the point of view of the eagle, the mole does not speak truth, and the obverse side of a coin remains unseen and unknown so long as we refuse to turn it over. Rather than allowing the Bard's voice to question their own actions they, in effect, assimilate this voice to their own perspective. It is the Sons that now interrogate the Bard.

This resistance to the disturbing power of the Bard's Song is repeated in much of the criticism that is proffered by the temporal Sons and Daughters of Albion. As I have already argued, there is, on the one hand, an attempt to diminish the disturbing power of the Song by foregrounding either its narrative or its episodic dimensions. On the other hand there is a tendency, in certain critics of the poem, to attempt to confine its thrust to the very world that the Bard is concerned to deconstruct. James, for example, writes that in "The Bard's Song"

> Blake implies an existential psychology in which fulfilment of self is the foremost moral obligation of each individual.[71]

and later in the same book he argues that

> In Blake's own terms it is not a conceit to suggest that he exists only as he creates an existence for himself in art. The creation of an image of his own redeemed self is, for Blake, the only method of redeeming self. The act of imagination is the act of individuation, or making oneself real.[72]

Howard makes a similar point when he argues that

> Though Blake's ethical valuation may disturb us if we see it as a code for interaction between men, his valuation makes sense to us as a psychological principle working within the mind. Blake's insistence on reliance on freedom, forgiveness, and love means that man must free his impulses, feel no guilt, attempt to restrict no feeling, and respond affectionately to his own true nature. In short, Blake's moral teaching strikes its most profound note when heard as a voice to the psyche. The harmony of mind that Blake would have man hear and feel and sing, is from himself to himself.[73]

Or to take another example, Mark Bracher writes that

> The Bard's Song has articulated a metaphysical problem to which the rest of the poem must find a solution: what fulfillment is possible for individuals in a world in which life lives on death and in which one individual attains completion or fulfillment of its being only through the expropriation of another individual's being?[74]

Bracher contends that "Through Milton's actions and pronouncements . . . Blake . . . points the way to ultimate fulfillment for the individual."[75] But

the whole thrust of the Bard's Song is not to create an image of the self, not to suggest that the fulfilment of self is our "foremost moral obligation," or to suggest a "harmony of mind" which, for man, proceeds from "himself" to himself", but to open the constituted world of the self to its ground in relation to the other. The whole question of our "true nature," the very status of our feelings and impulses (such as love and pity), is therefore made highly problematic. The Bard's visionary deconstruction is an attempt to reveal the foundations of precisely that world in which "one individual attains completion or fulfillment of his being only through the expropriation of another individual's being."

The Bard's visionary deconstruction is, however, not concerned simply to establish the existence of a gap between illusion and the abyss which it hides, between the self-assurance of the speaking voice and the rhetorical or fictive ground of that voice, but, in so doing, to open the possibility of a change in relationship between self and other. His visionary deconstruction is, therefore, in the service of a vision which tells us that the triangular relationships which we have been describing will be radically changed:

> The Elect shall meet the Redeem'd. on Albions rocks they shall meet
> Astonish'd at the Transgressor, in him beholding the Saviour.
> And the Elect shall say to the Redeemd. We behold it is of Divine
> Mercy alone! of Free Gift and Election that we live.
> Our Virtues & Cruel Goodnesses, have deserv'd Eternal Death.
> (13:30-34, E107)

In this vision the three Classes are the ground for a meeting between self and other, and the closed world of the self is subjected to the corrosive force of hope and expectation. It is in the figure of Milton and his "unexampled deed" that this hope is embodied.

Chapter Ten

"To bathe in the Waters of Life; to wash off the Not Human"

> There is a Moment in each Day that Satan cannot find
> Nor can his Watch Fiends find it, but the Industrious find
> This Moment & it multiply. & when it once is found
> It renovates every Moment of the Day if rightly placed[.]
> (M35:42-45, E136)

(1) The descent of Milton

While the Sons of Albion contend with the Bard, Milton is silent. It is only when the "foundations of the Earth" are shaken by the "great murmuring" of the Sons, and the Bard has taken "refuge in Miltons bosom," that he speaks. His response does not take the form of disputation, nor does he attempt to judge the truth or falsity of the Bard's Song with the very tools that the Bard has deconstructed, for quite evidently such a move would be a defence reaction, a further turning away from the reality that the Bard has disclosed. The words of the Bard have become for Milton, like those described in Deuteronomy 30:12-14, part of his own person and world. The Bard's "word"

> is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it. For the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.

As a result, the grave questions of the Sons are displaced by a radical change of comportment. Milton breaches the confines of heaven - the ultimate reference point and transcendental signifier for the fallen world - with a levitation which treats the highest of the high[1] as its ground. He is, therefore, no longer contained by the triangular structure of Satan's world of judgement; instead, as the illumination on plate 16 makes clear, he appears as a face and prophetic presence. From this perspective Milton says:

> I go to Eternal Death! The Nations still
> Follow after the detestable Gods of Priam; in pomp

> Of warlike selfhood, contradicting and blaspheming.
> When will the Resurrection come; to deliver the sleeping body
> From corruptibility: O when Lord Jesus wilt thou come?
> Tarry no longer; for my soul lies at the gates of death.
> I will arise and look forth for the morning of the grave
> I will go down to the sepulcher to see if morning breaks
> I will go down to self annihilation and eternal death,
> Lest the Last Judgment come & find me unannihilate
> And I be siez'd & giv'n into the hands of my own Selfhood
> The Lamb of God is seen thro' mists & shadows, hov'ring
> Over the sepulchers in clouds of Jehovah & winds of Elohim
> A disk of blood, distant; & heav'ns & earth's roll dark between
> What do I here before the Judgment? without my Emanation?
> With the daughters of memory, & not with the daughters of
> inspiration[?]
> I in my Selfhood am that Satan: I am that Evil One!
> He is my Spectre! in my obedience to loose him from my Hells
> To claim the Hells, my Furnaces, I go to Eternal Death.
> (14:14-32, E108)

The location of this response immediately after the disconcerting reversals and turns of the Bard's Song imbues it with an almost apocalyptic clarity and vigour. In these startling lines we can see the outline of a response to the Bard which overturns all of the accepted verities of the Satanic world. Rather than judging Satan, Milton recognizes that in his "Selfhood" he is Satan. Punishment of the malefactor is replaced by self annihilation and, what is even more striking, an attempt to loose Satan from his hells and to claim those hells as his own. Milton is no longer engrossed by the "intricate mazes of Providence" (2:17, E96), nor is he content merely to view his "Sixfold Emanation scatter'd thro' the deep / In torment!" (2:19-20, E96); instead, he begins a movement which will take him "into the deep her to redeem & himself perish" (2:20, E96). Milton replaces the stasis and inertia of the Satanic judge with movement: the calm and obedient waiting of the faithful is transformed into the fierce and burning heat of passion, and despair is replaced by the force of a hope that looks forth "for the morning of the grave." We can gain a first glimpse of the nature of this movement if we return for a moment to Locke's human understanding.

For the self in the state of existence described by Locke, the closet forms the horizon or furthest extreme of his/her world. One wonders, however, why the self in such a predicament remains in the middle of the closet,

dependent upon the few rays of light that penetrate its darkness. Even if the door of the closet is locked, why doesn't he/she at least get up and look out of the openings which even now allow a certain amount of light to enter? The reason is probably, as the fairy wryly remarks in the preface to Europe, that "stolen joys are sweet, & bread eaten in secret pleasant" (iii:6, E60). To remain within the closet of the self is merely to reason upon your "own Dark Fiction" (EG[k]:91, E520). Blake does not suggest that there is a way of transforming the fiction into an apodictic truth, or into a set of axioms for establishing a metaphysics; however, we are able to use our fictions (our prejudices in Gadamer's sense)[2] to open onto the world in which others exist. As the "Everlasting Gospel" states in summary fashion:

> This Lifes dim Windows of the Soul
> Distorts the Heavens from Pole to Pole
> And leads you to Believe a Lie
> When you see with not thro the Eye. . . .
> ([k]:97-100, E520)

Milton's movement is, therefore, one which attempts to move to the very periphery of his closet, to the horizon of the world in which he is enclosed, in order to open himself to the corrosive presence of others: "to look forth for the morning of the grave." This is the movement through the closed forms held by the reasoning memory that is seen in the frontispiece to Milton. As the illumination to plate 18 makes clear, this is a movement which fractures the world of the "Selfhood" and so opens it to others. In a situation which is the inverse of that pertaining to the natural world, the sun rises because the closeted man moves to the edge of his enclosure and so into proximity with the burning light of relationship.[3]

Milton's descent into the deep is quite clearly not without cost. It involves the putting into question of the very fabric of his constituted world. The situation is parallel to that described in the parable of the lost treasure, where the Kingdom of God can be attained only by giving up all that one has. As John Dominic Crossan provocatively argues:

> The Kingdom demands our "all," demands the abandonment not only of our goods and of our morals but, finally, of our parables as well. The ultimate, most difficult and most paradoxical demand of the

Kingdom is for the abandonment of abandonment as well.[4]

Similarly, in order to undertake the course of action described above, Milton must give up all assurance of divine sanction. In the illumination to plate 16, for example, we see Milton casting off the tokens of divine favour and patronage - "the robe of the promise" and "the oath of God" - in order to appear as a face and prophetic presence. As Kathleen Raine observes in Blake and Tradition:

> In contrast with that commanding gesture of so many Renaissance depictions of Apollo bringing the world under the rule of his ordering harmony, Blake has been at pains to show the poet as one who is casting away everything he possesses.[5]

As a result of this movement, the body of Milton becomes strangely transparent. The Sons of Albion now see in Milton's face and lineaments the reality - "the shades of Death & Ulro" (14:12, E108) - which had hitherto been repressed. The same movement, however, also opens the possibility of relationship. At the very periphery of one's constituted world, as we shall see, there opens the possibility of relationship. At this furthest extreme Christ is no longer "seen thro' mists & shadows, hov'ring / Over the sepulchers in clouds of Jehovah & winds of Elohim"; he is no longer a distant "disk of blood" from which we are separated by "heav'ns & earths" which "roll dark between"; instead Christ will appear as a human form. It is to a consideration of this movement that I will now turn; however, my discussion must be introduced by a brief description of the geography of the land through which Milton will pass.

(2) The geography of Eternity

In Poetic Form in Blake's 'Milton', Susan Fox argues that the place in which the Bard sings his Song is ambiguous. The Bard and his audience are placed in

> the old Christian heaven transposed to Blake's cosmology, where it is rather less than heavenly, but Blake assures us that the Bard sings "at eternal tables."[6]

This kind of ambiguity - in which some of the Sons of Albion seem to be in, and yet in some important way not of, Eternity - is a necessary feature of "heaven" as it is understood within the postlapsarian world described in Blake's major prophecies. As I have argued in previous chapters, the Fall begins with withdrawal; this does not mean, however, that withdrawal can be adequately described as a movement in spatial or physical terms. To withdraw from the interactions which form the basis of Eternity is not in the first instance to move from one place in Eternity to another, but to replace movement with stasis, openness with closure, and transparence with opacity. The Fall is therefore a phenomenon which in a certain sense occurs within and leaves its mark upon Eternity. On plate 54 of Jerusalem, for example, the fallen world is portrayed as an inert globe which is surrounded by the myriads of Eternity. Similarly, in the Bard's Song Satan is discovered as "a vast unfathomable Abyss" (9:35, E103) which opens "in the midst / Of the Assembly" (9:34-35, E103). Even in The Book of Urizen withdrawal is first seen as a "shadow of horror" which arises "In Eternity" (3:1-2, E70) and later in the same poem we are told that "All the myriads of Eternity: / All the wisdom & joy of life: / Roll like a sea around" Urizen (13:28-30, E77). The Eternals even find it necessary to erect a "tent" in order to "bind in the Void / That Eternals may no more behold them" (19:3-4, E78).

I am not, of course, suggesting that Eternity and the fallen world occupy the same space; The Book of Urizen is full of images of separation. However, the separation is not simply a movement in physical terms from one location in Eternity to another, but a change of ontological state. This has the effect of creating a nadir or zero that opens (or more correctly closes) out from the life of Eternity into a bottomless abyss. It is as if a "black hole"[7] were to be discovered in the life of Eternity: like the globe on plate 54 of Jerusalem, it is a space which appears to be "Limited / To those without but Infinite to those within" (10:8-9, E104). In Blake's oeuvre the dimensions of the Fall are measured by the distances between Ulro, Generation and Beulah.

Beulah is described in Milton as a space which

> is evermore Created around Eternity; appearing
> To the Inhabitants of Eden, around them on all sides.
> But Beulah to its Inhabitants appears within each district
> As the beloved infant in his mothers bosom round incircled
> With arms of love & pity & sweet compassion. But to
> The Sons of Eden the moony habitations of Beulah,
> Are from Great Eternity a mild & pleasant Rest.
> (30:8-14, E129)

Beulah exists in order to provide a habitation for the passive powers, who would otherwise be reduced, by the energy and dynamism of Eden, almost to a state of non-existence. If, however, we take seriously the contention that Beulah surrounds Eden on all sides, then we must also argue that Beulah is characterized by the additional role of giving form and shape to Eternity. Without the work of the passive powers the life of Eden would be completely unbounded and such a life is no life at all. It is important to say at this stage, however, that Beulah is an open and not a closed form; it is a "mild & pleasant Rest," is "evermore Created," and exists in relationship to the male power; or at least so it appears to those in Eden. From within its own precincts Beulah appears to be a mother, a female form that nourishes the child. In this sense it is Beulah that propagates the protagonists of Eden; it guarantees that Eden does not simply vanish.

Unfortunately, Beulah not only preserves the life of Eternity, but at the same time opens the possibility of withdrawal. Normally this is no more than a possibility; in Jerusalem, for example, Los at first thinks that the events of the Fall are nothing more than visions seen in the shadow of possibility. In the course of the Fall this possibility becomes an actuality and the abyss that we have described above opens in the midst of Beulah. The rest of Beulah becomes a deathly sleep and its pastures open onto the bleak expanses of night. Beulah still ministers to the fallen Man - the daughters of Beulah feed the sleepers on their couch - but the sleepers now wander in the states of Generation and Ulro which open beneath Beulah. Beulah is therefore the highest state possible in the fallen world and at the same time a portion of Eternity. To withdraw is, as I have argued, to enter into a

state of non-being. This fate is, however, averted by the work of Los who, as the Bard asserts in the opening plates of his Song, gives form to the fallen Albion as the six thousand year span of fallen time. We can therefore say that beneath or within the form that is held by the daughters of Beulah, in the worlds of Generation and Ulro, non-being is spatialized and temporalized as fallen history.[8]

With this brief and necessarily simplified description of the geography of Eternity and its nether regions we can see that Blake is, in an ironical sense, remaining within a quite traditional conception of the relationship between time and eternity. For Augustine, eternity offers a vantage point from which the full sweep of fallen time can be taken in at a single glance.[9] In Milton Blake has given John Milton a similar vantage point; however, this eminence is now itself placed in a wider context. The static heaven which affords a glimpse of the inert and fragmented body of Albion is itself a moment of stasis within an otherwise active Eternity. Its inhabitants are unable to move precisely because their bodies (the world of time and space) lie far beneath them. In other words, eternity in Augustine's sense is merely the furthest extension of the fallen world, the apex of the triangle described in the Bard's Song. It is a repetition on a macro-cosmic scale of a metaphysics of withdrawal. Locke's philosophy is therefore merely a translation into a secular idiom of a theology of withdrawal. There is a relationship of congruence between the plight of the individual caught within the closet of his constituted world and that of the Sons of Albion who gather, after death, in a heaven which is closeted away from the activity of Eternity. Time is not, as in Augustine's scheme of things, merely the transitory or ephemeral, but the very body of Albion and therefore that which must be embraced if Milton is to look forth for the morning of the grave. If Milton is to wake from his heavenly sleep, he must descend to time and gather to himself both his Spectre and his Emanation. In an ironic reversal of the Neo-Platonic descent of the soul to the body, Milton descends to time in order to enter Eternity.

It is a movement which offers a profound alternative to Thel's flight from the realities of the fallen world. It is to a consideration of this journey that we must now turn.

(3) The descent to the Sepulchre

Beulah is, as I have argued, the point from which the fallen world opens out (or closes in) from the active life of Eternity. It is, therefore, towards Beulah that Milton makes his way. On the verge of this world he discovers

> his own Shadow;
> A mournful form double; hermaphroditic: male & female
> In one wonderful body.
> (14:36-38, E108)

The Shadow is the side of his existence that Milton has repressed; it is the night or nether side of the heavens in which the Sons of Albion are domiciled. The Shadow which appears in Beulah is, of course, only a two dimensional phenomenon when it is viewed from the perspective of Eternity. For the person who enters it, however, it can be seen as a form which stretches from Beulah into the depths of the fallen world: the "dread shadow" is "twenty-seven-fold" and reaches "to the depths of direst Hell, & thence to Albions land" (14:39-40, E108-109).[10] Milton does not avoid this grotesque form; instead, in a movement which is akin to Los's embrace of his Spectre in The Four Zoas, he enters into it (14:38, E108).

For those "Who dwell in immortality," Milton seems to be "as One sleeping on a couch / Of gold" (15:12-13, E109), but for the Seven Angels of the Presence who enter the shadow with Milton, the perception of his sleeping body is supplemented by the sight of his Shadow vegetating "underneath the Couch / Of death" (15:9-10, E109). The accounts conflict, but are not incommensurate, for the former, because they remain in Eternity, see only the eternal aspect of Milton's descent, while the latter enter the abyss with Milton and so see his descent into Generation and Ulro. Milton himself offers

a third perspective on his descent. As a person who has given up the security of his constituted world and has freely undertaken the Neoplatonic descent of the soul into the sea of time and space, Milton is not aware of his conscious body. As Blake writes: "But to himself he seemd a wanderer lost in dreary night" (15:16, E109). In each account it is clear that Milton has left the light of Albion's heaven in order to encounter the night which forms its ground.

It is important to underline at this stage of my argument that Milton's descent does not miraculously render harmless the grotesque body in which he is now embodied; the reader is told, in fact, that the shadow kept "its course among the Spectres" (15:17, E109). Like Los in The Four Zoas, Milton has simply embraced the body which forms the horizon or limit of his world. However, within the trajectory of this body there is now opened a quite different movement:

> Onwards his Shadow kept its course among the Spectres; call'd
> Satan, but swift as lightning passing them, startled the shades
> Of Hell beheld him in a trail of light as of a comet
> That travels into Chaos: so Milton went guarded within.
> (15:17-20, E109)

Milton has begun the journey towards the periphery of his constituted world.

(4) Turning one's self inside out

Milton's descent to the sepulchre in which Albion is enclosed is quite clearly not completed with his entry into his Shadow. The opposition between up and down, heaven and hell, form and shadow, day and night, is rehearsed, in the first instance, within the figure of the individual Milton. Milton has, one could say, as a first step, embraced his own shadow. This embrace, however, takes place within the collective ground of Albion. Milton, like Jonah in the belly of the whale, is himself enclosed in a larger form. To emerge from his own tomb is therefore to become aware of the cavern in which humanity is enclosed. Milton's Shadow finds its individual existence within this larger form. This is why it is described as "twenty-seven-fold"

and as an entity which reaches to Hell and to "Albions land." If Milton is to "look forth for the morning of the grave," his embrace of his <u>own</u> shadow must therefore exceed itself, pass beyond its own perimeters, and move to the body which encloses humanity. It is at the limits of the world constituted by Albion-in-withdrawal that morning will break.

The poem begins this second stage of Milton's journey with a marvellous discourse on the nature of infinity. The reader is assured that

> The nature of infinity is this: That every thing has its
> Own Vortex; and when once a traveller thro Eternity.
> Has passd that Vortex, he perceives it roll backward behind
> His path, into a globe itself infolding; like a sun:
> Or like a moon, or like a universe of starry majesty,
> While he keeps onwards in his wondrous journey on the earth
> Or like a human form, a friend with whom he livd benevolent.
> As the eye of man views both the east & west encompassing
> Its vortex; and the north & south, with all their starry host;
> Also the rising sun & setting moon he views surrounding
> His corn-fields and his valleys of five hundred acres square.
> Thus is the earth one infinite plane, and not as apparent
> To the weak traveller confin'd beneath the moony shade.
> Thus is the heaven a vortex passd already, and the earth
> A vortex not yet pass'd by the traveller thro' Eternity.
> (15:21-35, E109)

This passage is justly described by Ault as "one of the most compelling and complex in all of literature"[11] and it has been the subject of much commentary.[12] For Harold Bloom

> The vortex is the eddy or whirlpool of eternal consciousness, whose center is the object eternal consciousness intends. Since center and circumference are not separate in eternal vision, the perceiver is at once at the apex of his vision, and yet able to regard it from a distance.
> (E915)

If the vortex were to be the whirlpool of eternal consciousness, however, it seems to be quite evident that the consciousness which intends the objects would be the center of the whirlpool and the apex of the vortex; the objects intended by this consciousness would exist in constellation around it. Moreover, the vortex is not related by <u>Milton</u> to a single, monolithic, eternal mind, but to "every thing." W.J.T. Mitchell offers a more useful starting point when he observes that

> Vortexes occur in nature as the focus of the encounter between conflicting forces; whirlpools arise from the interaction of conflicting currents. . . . But the physical analogy must be carried

> one step further: the vortex is not simply the product of two equal and opposite forces. The result of that situation would be static equilibrium, or (given some initial momentum) an endless circle. The vortex depends upon a third element to give progression to the cycle of contraries, to bring it to a critical point with a conical apex like the point of the Gothic arch. In nature this third element is gravity, friction, or changes in the intensity or direction of the contrary forces.[13]

If we trace this account of a natural vortex onto Blake's descriptions of prelapsarian existence we can say that the conflicting (or contrary) forces within an individual are the male and female powers which make up his/her identity. The form established in the relationship between these powers is drawn to a point, and therefore fashioned into a cone, by the movement of the whole person to relationship. We are able to call this form a vortex, however, only if we remember that in Eternity our fallen world is inverted. In the prelapsarian world a vortex is perhaps what we would call a fountain: the apex is a point of openness and the psyche looks towards others rather than assimilating others to itself. In withdrawal, the movement of the active self towards others ceases and in its place the Spectre merely retains the shape of the world that has appeared to the self. The fountain has now become "a whirlpool fierce to draw creations in."

In the fallen world, particularly in the light of deconstruction and Freudian psychotherapy, it takes no great leap of faith to believe that the self is a vortex which assimilates others. The passage quoted above, however, makes a distinction between the weak traveller who is "confin'd beneath the moony shade" of his/her own constituted world and the strong traveller who is able to pass from his/her own vortex to that of others.[14] As extraordinary as this capacity to "travel" appears to be, it is important to recognize that it does not in some way miraculously renovate the world. The travel described in Milton 15 occurs within the fallen world.[15] Nevertheless, it does produce a change of perception. The world is no longer conceived solely on the basis of that which has been assimilated to the constituted world of the self; instead, it can be seen to be composed of many vortexes and therefore many persons. As Blake writes in Jerusalem:

> For all are Men in Eternity. Rivers Mountains Cities Villages
> All are Human & when you enter into their Bosoms you walk
> In Heavens & Earths; as in you own Bosom you bear your Heaven
> And Earth, & all you behold. . . .
> (71:15-19, E225)

It is this perception which enables us to understand the nature of infinity.

Locke describes infinity as a form of mental exhaustion. He writes that

> Every one that has any idea of any stated lengths of space, as a foot, finds that he can repeat that idea; and joining it to the former, make the idea of two feet; and by the addition of a third, three feet; and so on, without ever coming to an end of his additions, whether of the same idea of a foot, or, if he pleases, of doubling it, or any other idea he has of any length, as a mile, or diameter of the earth, or of the orbis magnus: for whichever of these he takes, and how often soever he doubles, or any otherwise multiplies it, he finds, that, after he has continued his doubling in his thoughts, and enlarged his idea as much as he pleases, he has no more reason to stop, nor is one jot nearer the end of such addition, than he was at first setting out: the power of enlarging his idea of space by further additions remaining still the same, he hence takes the idea of infinite space.[16]

By this kind of reasoning infinity can be imagined as a more intense version of the weariness that some readers might experience at the end of the lengthy sentence quoted above. If, however, we begin a definition of infinity with the characterization of it as that which (unlike a point of limit or exhaustion) cannot be reduced to our representation, or perception of it, then we can say that the clearest and most eloquent symbol of infinity is the person.[17]

In the Bard's Song the fallen world appeared as a Polypus, a conglomerate of identical particles. By contrast, Milton's descent into the world and embrace of his Shadow reveals a world that is peopled with others and in which the natural world is "one infinite plane," "the heaven a vortex passd already, and the earth / A vortex not yet pass'd by the traveller thro' Eternity." In other words, it reveals a world of many vortexes, and therefore a world of numerous persons and many infinities.

This brief description of infinity and the vortex enables a further visualization of Milton's journey. In entering the deep, Milton is attempting to invert the vortex of assimilation (the triangle) which was the subject of the Bard's Song. As I have argued, this cannot be done simply by turning to

the active life of Eternity, for Milton's body lies in the deep far beneath him. Milton's journey therefore involves moving from the static position of Satan at the apex of the vortex of the fallen world, where he is "confin'd benath the moony shade" of his own constituted world, to his body beneath him. The cone or vortex that stretches from Beulah down to the six thousand year cycle of fallen history is therefore inverted by this movement, and the "endless circle" of the fallen world changed into the kind of eternal vortex that we have characterized as a fountain.

(5) On the edge of the present

Milton's embrace of his shadow therefore brings him, first of all, to the edge of his constituted world and therefore the edge of his own vortex. At this point of the poem Milton is able to "travel" from his own vortex to that of another. His movement into the abyss takes him from the vortex of an individual to that of all humanity, from the vortex of heaven to that of time. The resulting change of perspective is described in a striking passage:

> First Milton saw Albion upon the Rock of Ages,
> Deadly pale outstretchd and snowy cold, storm coverd;
> A Giant form of perfect beauty outstretchd on the rock
> In solemn death: the Sea of Time & Space thunderd aloud
> Against the rock, which was inwrapped with the weeds of death
> Hovering over the cold bosom, in its vortex Milton bent down
> To the bosom of death, what was underneath soon seemd above.
> A cloudy heaven mingled with stormy seas in loudest ruin;
> But as a wintry globe descends precipitant thro' Beulah bursting,
> With thunders loud and terrible: so Miltons shadow fell
> Precipitant loud thundring into the Sea of Time & Space.
> (15:36-46, E109-10)

The raison d'être of Milton's journey is, as I have argued, to reach a point from which it is possible to look forth for "the morning of the grave." Such a point must be one in which others can be encountered, and it must also represent the furthest extent of Albion's fallen body. Quite clearly the furthest extreme of Albion's temporal body is the present. Moreover, the present is, as Bultmann observes, a point of encounter.[18] The present is, however, also the furthest point in Milton's body, for it is in the present

that Milton's own works are subject to re-reading and re-interpretation and, therefore, in the present that Milton is open and subject to encounters with others. We can therefore say (with certain qualifications which I will discuss later in this chapter) that the present is the point at which morning will break. It is only at this point in his journey, as Milton's prophetic presence erupts within the time and space of early nineteenth century England, that Blake is able to see him:

> Then first I saw him in the Zenith as a falling star,
> Descending perpendicular, swift as the swallow or swift;
> And on my left foot falling on the tarsus, enterd there;
> But from my left foot a black cloud redounding spread over Europe.
> (15:47-50, E110)

Milton's descent is experienced by Blake as a presence within his very flesh and blood. Milton falls on Blake's tarsus and, moreover, enters there. This is, of course, a rather extraordinary idea as long as we picture the self as an autonomous self-enclosed identity and the body as a physical, corporeal substance. Locke's closeted man need not fear such an event for he can have direct contact only with those "external visible resemblances" that manage to filter into his cavern; there is no suggestion in the Essay that his closet might become a temporary home to a number of travellers, or that there could be an interpenetration of the worlds of self and other. However, in Blake's oeuvre the self is not isolated and autonomous, but emerges in relationship; the body is not simply a physical form, but includes our spiritual body. In this latter sense our body is the sum of all of our experiences, relationships, commitments and so on; it is the mental and emotional, as well as physical, shape of our lives. St. Paul, for example, as Bultmann argues, uses the word body (soma) not to "mean 'body form' nor just 'body,' either, but . . . by 'body' he means the whole person."[19]

It is in terms of this wider body that Christ asserts that he resides within our bosoms, and that we reside within his (J4:19, E146), or Merleau-Ponty contends that "Whether speaking or listening, I project myself into the other person, I introduce him into my own self."[20] Similarly, Milton's descent is experienced by Blake within this wider sense of the word "body."

We can begin to understand this phenomenon by drawing an analogy from the reading process.

Merleau-Ponty writes that in reading

> I am receiving and giving in the same gesture. I have given my knowledge of the language; I have brought along what I already know about the meaning of the words, the phrases, and the syntax. I have also contributed my whole experience of others and everyday events . . .
>
> But the book would not interest me so much if it only told me about things I already know. It makes use of everything I have contributed in order to carry me beyond it. With the aid of signs agreed upon by the author and myself because we speak the same language, the book makes me believe that we had already shared a common stock of well-worn and readily available significations. The author has come to dwell in my world. Then, imperceptibly, he varies the ordinary meaning of the signs, and like a whirlwind they sweep me along toward the other meaning with which I am going to connect.[21]

As a result of this process Merleau-Ponty can say: "I create Stendahl; I am Stendhal while reading him. But that is because first he knew how to bring me to dwell within him."[22] We can observe an analogous mutuality and exchange in the relationship between Milton and Blake.

Milton's descent from heaven to time animates the hitherto static edifice of his poetic works with a prophetic presence. It is, however, the author of Milton who gives body to Milton within time and is therefore the immediate vehicle for this presence. As the author and printer of Milton: a poem in [1]2 books,[23] Blake has created Milton; Milton has come to dwell within Blake. This creation was possible only because Milton knew how to bring Blake to dwell within him.

This relationship is suggested in the illumination to plate 32 where we see Milton, as a falling star, about to fall on Blake's tarsus. At first sight Blake's body is falling backwards and away from the illumination represented by Milton. In fact the falling body is balanced and precariously held by a movement upwards which has stretched Blake's chest almost to breaking point. Milton's journey to the edge of his constituted world has called forth a response in Blake, for now Blake's physical body, the body of his constituted world, is pressed almost to breaking point by an answering desire to look forth for the morning of the grave. Milton must come to dwell

in Blake's world if he is to complete his journey. Yet, as the illumination makes clear, it is Milton that draws Blake into his world and hence calls forth an answering movement within his very being. Blake and Milton depend upon one another in the same way that readers and writers, in Merleau-Ponty's analogy, gather each other to themselves. For a writer in the prophetic tradition this interaction is particularly important for, as Wittreich writes, paraphrasing Richard Brothers:

> every prophet communicates through a precursor prophet, the precursor providing the key that unlocks the vision of his successor, holding up the lamp without which the new prophecy receives no illumination.[24]

This kind of interdependence is not confined to Blake and Milton. A similar relationship exists between Blake and the Bard, the Bard and Milton, and Blake and Los. At the close of his Song, as the Sons of Albion "shook the heavens in doubtfulness," the Bard took refuge in Milton's bosom. However, the Bard was able to dwell within Milton only because the Bard, through the force and power of his "prophetic Song," was able to bring Milton to dwell within him. Similarly, it is in the orbit of Blake's poem that we hear the Bard's voice: the Bard dwells within Blake's world. Yet, it is the Bard's prophetic Song that begins the poem; it is in the orbit of the Bard's Song that Blake finds his own poetic voice. Similarly, later in the poem Blake becomes "One Man" with Los and so arises in his "strength" (22:12, E117). The syntax of the lines which follow this announcement suggest that it is Blake who now tells us that

> I am that Shadowy Prophet who Six Thousand Years ago
> Fell from my station in the Eternal bosom.
> (22:15-16, E117)

Yet this passage finishes with the clear assignment of these lines to Los (22:26, E117). It is, indeed, Los who speaks. He has brought Blake to dwell within his giant form. But Los is himself able to speak only to the extent that Blake, through the vehicle of his poem, brings Los to dwell within his world. The voices of Los and Blake, like those of Blake and the Bard (in the opening plates of the poem), and Blake and Milton (throughout the course of

the poem), are distinct, and yet curiously intertwined with each other.

The relationship beween reader and text, and reader and author, that is implied by the interdependence of these figures is radically different from that adopted by the Sons of Albion to the Bard's Song. The Sons treat the Song as if it were an object; they want the Bard to answer their questions rather than themselves being open to his appeal. In other words, they conceive of interpretation as method rather than dialectic. In his discussion of Gadamer's hermeneutics, Richard Palmer distinguishes between these two terms in the following way:

> In method the inquiring subject leads and controls and manipulates; in dialectic the matter encountered poses the question to which he responds. One can only respond on the basis of his belonging to and in the matter. The interpretive situation is no longer that of a questioner and an object, with the questioner having to construct "methods" to bring the object within his grasp; on the contrary, the questioner suddenly finds himself the being who is interrogated by the "subject matter" (Sache). In such a situation the "subject-object schemata" is only misleading, for the subject has now become the object. Indeed, method itself is generally seen within the context of the subject-object conception of the interpretive stance of man and is the foundation for modern manipulative and technological thinking.[25]

However, to describe the interaction between Blake and Milton in this way is to raise the question of the subject matter of their encounter.

Blake's encounter with Milton cannot be compared with the attempt of traditional literary criticism to recover the intentions of the author at the time of writing. The entry of Milton into Blake's body does not issue in this kind of recovery, for the temporal Milton sits apart from Milton's descent, "frozen in the rock of Horeb" (20:11, E114): a location which suggests that he is himself badly in need of assistance. A more promising line of argument can be seen in the suggestion that in Milton Blake is attempting to understand the ideal Milton, the intentions that Milton would have had if he were able to separate himself from the dogmas and creeds of his day. This argument, however, leads the reader into serious difficulties, for this ideal figure, who stands apart from the distortions of time and place, is surely the Milton who sits at eternal tables in heaven. Blake's encounter with Milton is predicated upon a disavowal of this position and pre-eminence. Milton's

journey to earth does not facilitate an attempt to understand Milton better than Milton could have understood himself, for the later poet's work is an integral part of Milton's refashioning of his own identity. We must also rule out the suggestion that in this poem Blake is describing an encounter with a purely textual Milton. The emphasis in the poem is not on Milton's literary productions or their implied author, but on the descent of Milton to time: the irruption of a prophetic presence within a world of texts.

The poem offers the reader a clue as to the nature of the encounter between Blake and Milton by nominating the tarsus as the point at which the latter entered the body of the former (15:49, E110). The tarsus is "the flat of the foot between the toes and the heel" (OED), and for most people it represents a singularly uninteresting part of our anatomy. Nevertheless, this place in our body has the virtue of an association with the birthplace of St. Paul, a figure whose singular experience on the road to Damascus offers several close parallels with Blake's experience of the falling Milton. The account of this event in Acts 9 reads as follows:

> (1) And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, (2) And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. (3) And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus; and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: (4) And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? (5) And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.

There is of course no suggestion in Milton that Blake was waging a physical war against the Christians prior to the descent of Milton; however, the point is perhaps that this kind of activity is characteristic of any world in which the self is closeted away from others. Saul's encounter with Christ, and Blake with Milton, can therefore be seen as a conversion in which the closed world of the self is opened. The subject matter of Blake's encounter with Milton (and of the poem which bears his name) is, ultimately, Christ: the network of relationships in which the fallen world finds its existence.

The relationship between Milton and Blake, at this point in the poem, is not yet one in which Blake encounters Christ although, as we shall argue, this is

its issue; at this stage of the poem we see the necessary opening of the self to others that forms the prelude to such an event. Moreover, even this opening is not unequivocal, for Milton's entry into Blake's body results in the appearance of "a black cloud" which "redounding spread over Europe" (15:50, E110). This could be taken to imply that Blake, like Paul, will spread only a black cloud as the result of his conversion. In fact, the foot of an upright person must be the place where his shadow begins and this beginning place is located directly under the tarsus. The brighter the light from above, the darker the shadow; the more sharply focused the revelation, the clearer the shadow's outline. As a result of Paul's work and influence, the shadow of the law became extremely clear and dark. Similarly, one consequence of Milton's descent is that Error is consolidated and the Covering Cherub is revealed. In presenting the beneficial effect (clarification of Error) of revelation by the spreading of a cloud, Blake shows us something of the pain of receiving a revelation and of being a prophet.[26]

At this stage of my argument, it is clear that my analogy with the reading process, although remaining instructive, needs to become more inclusive. The descent of Milton to time and the experience of this phenomenon by Blake exceeds any possible encounter between these two figures which could occur in a reading of Milton's poetry. Milton's descent, for example, spans a long period of time, it occurs in the "nether regions of the Imagination" and is seen by "all men on Earth, / And all in Heaven." Moreover, Blake tells us that Milton's descent was taking place within his members for quite some time before he was able to recognize it consciously:

> But Milton entering my Foot; I saw in the nether
> Regions of the Imagination; also all men on Earth,
> And all in Heaven, saw in the nether regions of the Imagination
> In Ulro beneath Beulah, the vast breach of Miltons descent.
> But I knew not that it was Milton, for man cannot know
> What passes in his members till periods of Space & Time
> Reveal the secrets of Eternity: for more extensive
> Than any other earthly things, are Mans earthly lineaments.
> (21:4-11, E115)

Quite clearly, Milton's influence is not limited to that experienced when we

read his poetry. The works of a great poet become part of our cultural heritage and in so doing bequeath to language certain possibilities of thought and expression. The resources of a language are therefore, as Wilhelm von Humboldt suggests, "a lasting fruit of a people's literature, and within literature especially of poetry and philosophy."[27] It is in this sense that Milton appears to all men on earth and in heaven. Milton is a presence and a prophetic force within the tradition that addresses us and in which we stand. In his discussion of Gadamer's hermeneutics Richard Palmer writes that

> The heritage is not something that one can control, nor is it an object over against one. One comes to understand it, even while standing in it, as an intrinsically linguistic experience. As one experiences the meaning of a text, he comes to understand a heritage which has briefly addressed him as something over against him, yet as something which is at the same time a part of that nonobjectifiable stream of experiences and history in which he stands.[28]

All men on earth see Milton's descent, albeit in the "nether regions" of our imaginations, because from within our linguistic and cultural heritage, and as part of the linguistic world in which we stand, Milton addresses us.

The prophetic force of Milton or the Bard - the possibilities that they open within our world - are not experienced when we read like the Sons of Albion and simply retain the text as an object held by our reasoning memory. However, in allowing the text to issue in an appeal within our worlds, we permit the profession of the text to become a face. This does not mean that an unequivocal communication appears within our world, or that here there is a one to one relationship between language and world. Nevertheless, the text opens up the possibility of openness, the possibility that we can see "thro" rather than "with" our linguistic worlds.

(6) That "paradoxical moment"

Quite clearly Milton's perpendicular descent to time still presents the reader with a set of conceptual difficulties and paradoxes. Not least of these is the question of how we are to conceive of a movement to the very peripheries of our linguistic/mental worlds, a movement which appears to

enter the world at right angles to the movement of fallen time. The answer that is generally given to this question depends upon the assertion that the poem's events are simultaneous, that they occur in the instant of vision, and that the whole thrust of the poem's apocalypse is to abolish time. Damon writes, for example, that "Practically all the action of the epic passes in one moment"[29], and a similar case is urged by critics as diverse as Fisch, Frye, James, Mitchell, and Rose.[30] Perhaps the clearest statement of this point of view is provided by Susan Fox, who writes that

> The events of Milton, I must emphasize, are not simultaneous because they all occur within that paradoxical moment which is at once seven thousand years long and as brief as a poet's sudden inspiration. They are not, that is, simultaneous because time is irrevelant to them, because they occur beyond or within the calibrations of time. They are simultaneous because each occurs at the same precise "instant" of that moment, the same minute, calibrated segment of that seven-thousand-year period that comprises fallen history. All the actions of the poem occur in the last measurable segment of the moment, the last fragment of time itself, the instant before apocalypse puts an end to time.[31]

The fall of Milton into time and space is, however, not confined to a moment of fallen time; it is a curiously diffuse event and seems to disseminate itself across a surprisingly wide stretch of fallen time. Blake writes that

> when Los joind with me he took me in his firy whirlwind
> My Vegetated portion was hurried from Lambeths shades
> He set me down in Felphams Vale & prepard a beautiful
> Cottage for me that in three years I might write all these
> Visions. . . .
>
> (36:21-24, E137)

This would seem to indicate that the union of Los and Blake covers a journey from Lambeth to Felpham and, in terms of the time apparent to Blake's vegetated portion, a period of three years. As David Erdman writes, "The Lambeth reference makes us realize that the 'moment' of the poem reaches from the Blakes' departure from their home in London in 1800 to the end of their three years . . . in Felpham."[32] The events of the poem, therefore, seem to charge the calibrated moments of fallen history with an extraordinary surplus and excess. Moreover, Milton's journey is not completed with his own arrival in time. His descent provokes, and itself becomes part of, an answering

movement within the very texture of the fallen world. This movement of life itself reaches its destination in an embrace, or being present to, the entire length of fallen history. We see Los (and Blake and Milton in Los) say:

> I am that Shadowy Prophet who Six Thousand Years ago
> Fell from my station in the Eternal bosom. Six Thousand Years
> Are finishd. I return! both Time & Space obey my will.
> I in Six Thousand Years walk up and down: for not one Moment
> Of Time is lost, nor one Event of Space unpermanent
> But all remain: every fabric of Six Thousand Years
> Remains permanent: tho' on the Earth where Satan
> Fell, and was cut off all things vanish & are seen no more
> They vanish not from me & mine, we guard them first & last
> The generations of men run on in the tide of Time
> But leave their destind lineaments permanent for ever & ever.
> (22:15-25, E117)

From the linear perspective of the fallen world it is true that Milton descends at the very end of time. However, if time itself is the six thousand year body of Albion, then we can see that Milton's intention to "look forth for the morning of the grave" is fulfilled, not simply with the embrace of the closet in which he is enclosed, but with an embrace of the body of fallen time. It is, in fact, an extraordinary image. The empire of Satan, with the Elect at the apex of a mediated relationship, has been replaced with a presence to the very body of the world, an expectant looking forth for the morning of the grave, and an attempt to make fluid the body in which Albion is enclosed.

(7) Blake, Milton and Los

The Shadowy Female, Urizen, Rahab and Tirzah all gain their power within the enclosure of the fallen world. Bloom defines the Shadowy Female as "the material environment of natural man," Rahab as "the image of the visible church," and Tirzah as "the necessity of natural limitation" (E916). They are the passive powers which have become separated from man and now define his being. Urizen is identified in Milton as Satan and as the Spectre. He is the masculine reasoning memory that retains the shape of the fallen world. For each of these characters, Milton's descent is a threatening and ominous

event because, by attempting to breach the confines of their world and so render transparent the cavern in which Albion is enclosed, Milton threatens the very foundation of their power. It is for this reason that they respond to Milton's descent by attempting to assimilate him to their world. With Urizen this takes the form of open conflict:

> Silent they met, and silent strove among the streams, of Arnon
> Even to Mahanaim, when with cold hand Urizen stoop'd down
> And took up water from the river Jordan: pouring on
> To Miltons brain the icy fluid from his broad cold palm.
> But Milton took of the red clay of Succoth, moulding it with care
> Between his palms: and filling up the furrows of many years
> Beginning at the feet of Urizen, and on the bones
> Creating new flesh on the Demon cold, and building him,
> As with new clay a Human form in the Valley of Beth Peor.
> (19:6-14, E112)

Urizen is attempting to baptize Milton into this world, to enclose him within the material world. Milton, on the other hand, is attempting to give Urizen a Human Form which will enable him to enter in relationship with others.[33]

Rahab, Tirzah and the Shadowy Female respond to Milton's descent by attempting to entice Milton away from his struggle to humanize Urizen and into a material Canaan:

> Come then to Ephraim & Manasseh O beloved-one!
> Come to my ivory palaces O beloved of thy mother!
> And let us bind thee in the bands of War & be thou King
> Of Canaan and reign in Hazor where the Twelve Tribes meet.
> (20:3-6, E113-14)

If Milton were to accept their invitation he would necessarily forgo any attempt to look forth for the morning of the grave. It would now be the cavern of the fallen world, with its incipient warfare between the contraries, that would remain the horizon of his world.

It is, in fact, only Enitharmon who explicitly welcomes Milton when he first appears within the fallen world. This response is predicated upon Enitharmon's perception of Milton as a "wintry globe" - as Satan - rather than as the "awakener." Enitharmon is the Emanation of Los and, therefore, she is the shape or body of the fallen history that is forged by Los. Within this world Enitharmon's power exists only in concert with the Spectre, who holds the outline of fallen history and is limited by the shape originally

given to the fallen Albion by Los. The descent of Milton suggests to Enitharmon a cataclysm in which the bounds of the fallen world will be broken. The fallen world will sever its relationship with Albion, and Satan will be free to assimilate even the sleeping body of Albion into his kingdom:

> Los the Vehicular terror beheld him, & divine Enitharmon
> Call'd all her daughters, Saying. Surely to unloose my bond
> Is this Man come! Satan shall be unloosd upon Albion. . . .
> (17:31-33, E111)

Los responds to Enitharmon's words with terror, for although the world that he has forged is that in which Satan gains his power, it is also all that stops Albion from sinking into the abyss. He therefore pits his strength against Milton:

> Los heard in terror Enitharmons words: in fibrous strength
> His limbs shot forth like roots of trees against the forward path
> Of Miltons journey.
> (17:34-36, E111)

Los's initial inability to understand the significance of Milton's descent is owing to his position outside of Golgonooza, in the position of stasis and inactivity which characterizes the various actors of the Bard's Song. When many of the Eternals rise "up from eternal tables" and - in a striking parallel to the various judgements of the Bard's Song - respond with wrath to Milton's descent (20:43-47, E114), Los can only retreat further into inactivity:

> Los saw them and a cold pale horror coverd o'er his limbs
> Pondering he knew that Rintrah & Palamabron might depart:
> Even as Reuben & as Gad; gave up himself to tears.
> He sat down on his anvil-stock; and leand upon the trough.
> Looking into the black water, mingling it with tears.
> (20:51-55, E115)

In the act of rage (and implicitly of judgement) in which the Eternals "rend the heavens round the Watchers" in a "fiery circle," and in Los's response to this act, we can see a further consolidation of Satan's empire.

It is at this nadir that Los remembers

> an old Prophecy in Eden recorded,
> And often sung to the loud harp at the immortal feasts
> That Milton of the Land of Albion should up ascend
> Forwards from Ulro from the Vale of Felpham; and set free
> Orc from his Chain of Jealousy, he started at the thought. . . .
> (20:57-61, E115)

For W.J.T. Mitchell "there is an unmistakable element of the ridiculous in the convenient timing of Los's memory here."[34] If this were so then one must pass a similar judgement on Milton's "convenient" conversion at the end of the Bard's Song. In fact, Milton responds to the Bard only as the Satanic world described by the Song is disclosed amongst his companions, while Los remembers the prophecy sung at eternal tables as his own world seems on the verge of collapse. The first and most obvious reason for the "timing of Los's memory here" is that it is all too often only when the situations in which we find ourselves become intolerable, or are on the point of collapsing, that we find a means of transcending them. A more fundamental reason can be found in the nature of Milton's descent.

Milton is attempting to open a relationship with Albion-in-withdrawal. One can therefore say that Milton repeats the original openness of Los to Albion-in-withdrawal in which the fallen world was forged. I will return to this point later in this chapter; however, for the moment it is important to observe that the openness of Milton to Albion (and of Blake and Los to Albion) is, paradoxically, both the first and the last event of the fallen world. It is, therefore, quite in order that the descent of Milton, which to Los in the time of memory occurs at the end of fallen time, should provoke a memory from the very beginnings of the fallen world, in which the possibility of transformation inherent in Milton's descent is celebrated. With the recollection of this prophecy, Los begins a movement which will take Milton (in Blake in Los) to the edge of the tomb in which Albion is enclosed.

When Milton entered Blake's body, the "Vegetable World" appeared on his "left Foot, / As a bright sandal formd immortal of precious stones & gold." Blake therefore "stooped down & bound it on to walk forward thro' Eternity" (21:12-14, E115). Blake's encounter with Milton therefore involved an extraordinary transformation, for it changed the world from a cavern into a sandal: from a form which hinders movement to one which assists it. This transformation is, nevertheless, not complete. Blake is at this point unable to "walk forward thro' Eternity" because his encounter with Milton takes

place within the body of the fallen Albion. Therefore, Blake and Milton are at this point like Oothoon in Visions of the Daughters of Albion. Although Oothoon's closed world has been opened and she is able to enter a universe which is living, she is unable to enter a fully human world, for she is herself closed within a collective body of withdrawal. Milton's journey can be completed only within the giant form of Los:

> While Los heard indistinct in fear, what time I bound my sandals
> On; to walk forward thro' Eternity, Los descended to me:
> And Los behind me stood; a terrible flaming Sun: just close
> Behind my back; I turned round in terror, and behold.
> Los stood in that fierce glowing fire; & he also stoop'd down
> And bound my sandals on in Udan-Adan; trembling I stood
> Exceedingly with fear & terror, standing in the Vale
> Of Lambeth: but he kissed me and wishd me health.
> And I became One Man with him arising in my strength:
> Twas too late now to recede. Los had enterd into my soul:
> His terrors now posses'd me whole! I arose in fury & strength.
> (22:4-14, E116-17)

It is this embrace which takes Milton, Blake and Los to a position where they are present to the six thousand year extent of the fallen Albion's body. Milton's descent has provoked, and itself become part of, an answering movement within the very texture of the fallen world. We can understand this if we observe that, as prophets, Blake and Milton are members of the Eternal Prophet, Los. Milton's descent can therefore be compared to the Nightingale who, in the second book of Milton, begins the "Song of Spring." Milton and the Nightingale both call forth and themselves become part of a larger movement. The reader therefore has the sense of a gradual awakening of powers. The whole world now wakes with Milton to look forth for the "morning of the grave." The design on plate 47, which illuminates the embrace of Los and Blake, suggests the magnitude of this change. Blake is in a position which suggests that of Urizen in the frontispiece to Europe. However, rather than tracing the forms of his own body onto the abyss, Blake has turned back to the fiery heat of Eternity and of relationship. He is, therefore, no longer enclosed in the stationary world of the self, but is on the verge of movement. This illumination repeats the motifs of opening and passing beyond which we have observed in the frontispiece and plates 6, 16, 18 and 32. This

series of plates therefore parallels and subtly underlines the textual movement from opacity to translucence. To adopt this kind of comportment to others is to enter the city of Golgonooza and it is to this location that the reader, with Los, Blake, Milton and the Bard, now proceeds.

(8) Golgonooza

The sight of the city of Bowlahoola, which lies on the outskirts of Golgonooza, generates an extraordinary sense of déjà vu. The journey that we have traced, "outward to Satans seat" and "inward to Golgonooza" (17:29-30, E111), suggests that we should now find ourselves at a point far removed from the time and space described in the Bard's Song. Instead, there is a curious penetration of Golgonooza and its environs by the world in which Satan has gained dominion; it is almost as if the Polypus were in some way superimposed on Bowlahoola. In this place stands Los's Anvils and Hammers, but it is a place of "horrid labours" and its labourers dance "the dance of death, rejoicing in carnage" (24:57,62, E120-21):

> The Bellows are the Animal Lungs: the Hammers the Animal Heart
> The Furnaces the Stomach for digestion. terrible their fury
> Thousands & thousands labour. thousands play on instruments
> Stringed or fluted to ameliorate the sorrows of slavery
> Loud sport the dancers in the dance of death, rejoicing in carnage
> (24:58-62, E121)

Bowlahoola is called "Law. by Mortals" and we are told that it is "the Stomach in every individual man" (24:48,67, E121). How is Bowlahoola, one may well ask, different from the process of assimilation with which Satan translates difference into sameness?

If we measure the movement of Milton in terms of chronological or clock-time, then a considerable period separates Milton's decision to descend to Ulro and the arrival of Blake, Los and company in Golgonooza. The movement that has been described by the poem is, however, not one that can be measured in chronological terms, for it proceeds at right angles to the passage of fallen time. Milton's journey involves a progression from a stationary

position in which Nature is the bound of the self to one in which the world has been embraced. At this point history is no longer a Polypus without form, but a six thousand year period to each moment of which Los (and Milton and Blake in Los) is present. The journey traced by the poem is therefore, to this point at least, not an account of a passage to a different world, but of a radical change of comportment within the same world. Golgonooza does not exist in some ideal realm apart from the world of time and space; it is the spiritual form or ground of that world, and for this reason we can see the realities of temporal history, or at least the possibility of those realities, woven into its fabric. The perspective that we adopt to these realities is, however, now very different, for we no longer see the world solely as it is retained by our reasoning memory; instead, we see it in terms of the relationships which give it being. Merleau-Ponty writes that "Science manipulates things and gives up living in them:"

> Scientific thinking, a thinking which looks on from above, and thinks of the object-in-general, must return to the "there is" which underlies it; to the site, the soil of the sensible and opened world such as it is in our life and for our body. . . .[35]

Milton's descent is just such a move, although enacted on a global as well as an individual level, and phrased in such an extraordinary way that it radically exceeds the project demanded by Merleau-Ponty. Blake, Milton and Los move from the ontic to the ontological and so grasp the set of relationships which underpin the world. Within Blake's myth "the site" and "the soil" of the world is "the Universe of Los and Enitharmon" (19:25, E113).

This change of comportment involves an extraordinary change of perception. What had appeared to be a purely natural phenomenon, an appearance within the closet of the self, is now seen in relationship to its ontological foundation. The narrator writes:

> Thou seest the gorgeous clothed Flies that dance & sport in summer
> Upon the sunny brooks & meadows: every one the dance
> Knows in its intricate mazes of delight artful to weave:
> Each one to sound his instruments of music in the dance,
> To touch each other & recede; to cross & change & return
> These are the Children of Los; thou seest the Trees on mountains

> The wind blows heavy, loud they thunder thro' the darksom sky
> Uttering prophecies & speaking instructive words to the sons
> Of men: These are the Sons of Los! These are the Visions of Eternity
> But we see only as it were the hem of their garments
> When with our vegetable eyes we view these wond'rous Visions
> (26:2-12, E123)

To see the "Trees on mountains" as Sons of Los, and hear the prophecies that they utter, involves a decentring of the corporeal self which is every bit as radical as that demanded by Freud or Marx. The whole thrust of the third and final section of Book I is therefore not to deny all truth value to the statement that Bowlahoola is called "Law. by Mortals" but, through the eyes of Milton/Blake/Los within the time of embodiment, to return the Satanic Law to the ground from which it has become separated. For example, in the Bard's Song Law is Satan's Law; it is the source of "Moral laws and cruel punishments." As Los approaches Golgonooza, however, Law is seen as a city, a forge and a stomach. Moreover, we are told that Bowlahoola was established by Tharmas "Because of Satan" (24:49, E120). Bowlahoola is, in other words, a direct response to the chaos and fragmentation resulting from the withdrawal of Albion. Bowlahoola is the place within the workshops of Los where the "piteous Passions & Desires" are clothed and fed and "the various Classes of Men" are "all markd out determinate" (26:37, E123). It is the stomach and the forge; the point at which the sleepers are ingested, made pliable and malleable in the heat of Los's furnaces, and then given a shape.

The transformation of perception described above raises the question of the precise relationship between the world seen through the vegetable memory and that seen in the time of embodiment. Blake's description of natural causes as a "Delusion / Of Ulro: & a ratio of the perishing Vegetable Memory" certainly does not mean that the world in which they appear is not real for those who exist within it, or that the sufferings which are experienced by those in Ulro are illusory. To return to our initial analogy, Merleau-Ponty ascribes to a science that has severed itself from the ground of existence an awesome power and scope. If, he writes,

> this kind of thinking were to extend its reign to man and history . . . then, since man really becomes the manipulandum he takes himself to be, we enter into a cultural regimen where there is neither truth nor falsity concerning man and history, into a sleep, or a nightmare, from which there is no awakening.[36]

The world of Ulro is not simply Golgonooza as it appears to mortal humanity, it is that appearance severed from its ground. Ulro is the world of semblance that Urizen, in the frontispiece to Europe, scatters on the void. The ultimate ambition of this world, as The Four Zoas made clear, is to sever the fallen world entirely from its ground, "To bring the shadow of Enitharmon beneath our wondrous tree / That Los may Evaporate like smoke & be no more" (FZ80:5-6, E355/$E_2$348), and in this way reduce the world to its surfaces. We can imagine the movement of Los to embodiment as an attempt to re-member the scattered body of Albion; to return the semblances of himself, which Urizen has scattered upon the void, back into relationship with himself. In the passage describing the Sons of Los which was quoted above, it is still possible to focus our attention on the dance of the flies and be mesmerized by their beauty. Similarly we may fix our gaze on the hem of the garments worn by the Sons of Los. With this kind of narrowing of perception it would perhaps appear as Newton's linear time. The gap at the front of the garment, where the two ends of the hem are brought together, would from this perspective appear to be the beginning and end of time, creation and the apocalypse. In the time of embodiment, however, the possibility of this kind of perception is seen only in the "Outward Spheres of Visionary Space and Time" (J92:17, E252). It represents a falling away from appearance into a world based on semblance.

The point of this visionary return "to the site, the soil of the sensible and opened world" is not to provide a foundation for human understanding, as in Merleau-Ponty's philosophy. In Blake's oeuvre the vision of the relationships which ground our world becomes a prophetic call. Where Merleau-Ponty grounds philosophy in a phenomenology, Blake (like Los) attempts to open that world to Eternity. The fallen world is held by Los in order to confront Albion with the shape of his own withdrawal and so open the

possibility of regeneration. This can be seen in Blake's description of the "Wine-press" of Los.

As Los descends to Golgonooza we are told that

> The Wine-press on the Rhine groans loud, but all its central beams
> Act more terrific in the central Cities of the Nations
> Where Human Thought is crushd beneath the iron hand of Power.
> There Los puts all into the Press, the Opressor & the Opressed
> Together, ripe for the Harvest & Vintage & ready for the Loom.
> (25:3-7, E121)

The wine press is "eastward of Golgonooza, before the Seat / Of Satan"; its foundations were laid by Luvah "& Urizen finish'd it in howling woe" (27:1-2, E124). It is a place of great torment:

> But in the Wine-presses the Human grapes sing not, nor dance
> They howl & writhe in shoals of torment; in fierce flames consuming,
> In chains of iron & in dungeons circled with ceaseless fires.
> In pits & dens & shades of death: in shapes of torment & woe.
> The plates & screws & wracks & saws & cords & fires & cisterns
> The cruel joys of Luvahs Daughters lacerating with knives
> And whips their Victims & the deadly sport of Luvahs Sons.
> (27:30-36, E124-5)

Not surprisingly the wine press is called "War on Earth" (27:8, E124); it is nothing less than the reality that is formed in withdrawal, an apt symbol of a world where "the Contraries of Beulah War beneath Negations Banner" (34:23, E134). The wine press is, however, not simply associated with the work of Luvah and Urizen, for the poem identifies it as belonging to Los. For the Eternal Prophet to have anything to do with an instrument such as this is nothing short of scandalous. Unfortunately, in the time of embodiment, the link between Los and the wine press is made even closer, for the wine press is described as "the Printing-Press / Of Los; and here he lays his words in order above the mortal brain / As cogs are formd in a wheel to turn the cogs of the adverse wheel" (27:8-10, E124).

As we have argued in previous chapters, when confronted by the withdrawal of Albion Los has only two choices: to do nothing and so withdraw from hievious chapters, when confronted by the withdrawal of Albion Los has only two choices: to do nothing and so withdraw from his friend's dilemma, or attempt to give form to Albion-in-withdrawal. The latter course of action,

however, means giving form to loss, providing a body and form for the warring Spectres. The wine press of "War on Earth" belongs to Los in the sense that it prepares the materials for the Loom of Enitharmon and, therefore, for the fabric of the fallen world.

A printing press, like a wine press, performs the same set of operations no matter what is placed within it. For the printing press it is of no consequence whether it prints the works of Burke or Paine. In this respect it is similar to the mortal brain of the cavern'd man which (in Locke's description) is forced to perform the same set of mental operations on whatever simple ideas enter its enclosure. Los's prophetic words are placed above the mortal brain in order to confront the self with the reality of its actions: loss is the ground to the figure of the self. Similarly, the world that is forged by Los (which is the form of Albion in withdrawal) is a cog which is inserted into the printing press (the withdrawn, anonymous body of Albion), not as one which works happily within the machine, but as a cog which attempts to turn or convert the printing press itself. Los's prophetic production of the fallen world is an attempt to renovate the press itself, to awaken Albion and so turn the manufacture of books by the press into the production of "Visionary forms dramatic." Los is, like all prophets, attempting to give form to the lack that is represented by the withdrawal of Albion, and to use this lack as a means of changing people. War becomes a call which attempts to move the "cogs of the adverse wheel." The adverse (opposing anyone's interest, the injurious or calamitous) is confronted and potentially moved to act by its own reality.

(9) "Nature is a Vision of the Science of the Elohim"

To this point in my discussion I have largely been concerned to distinguish between the world described in the Bard's Song and that seen in the time of embodiment. As I have already argued, however, any attempt to rigidly separate these terms encounters a number of difficulties. If the

closeted man is to leave his closet he must recognize that the form in which he is enclosed is not the limits of the world, but the horizon of his world, the outer limits of his body. This final portion of the first Book of Milton, therefore, underlines again and again the curious phenomenon that we first observed with regard to Bowlahoola. The passage that describes Los as "the Spirit of Prophecy" and "the ever apparent Elias", for example, continues with the observation that

> All the Gods of the Kingdoms of Earth labour in Los's Halls.
> Every one is a fallen Son of the Spirit of Prophecy. . . .
> (24:74-75, E121)

Similarly, Los's printing press is "before the Seat / Of Satan" (27:1-2, E124) and Cathedron's Looms (a crucial part of the process of giving form to the Spectres) weave "only Death / A Web of Death" (24:35-36, E120). Although Allamanda is "the Cultivated land / Around the City of Golgonooza" and is the place where the "Sons of Los labour against Death Eternal" (27:43-44, E125), it also provides a location for the labours of the Sons of Urizen and for the "Seat of Satan" (27:45,49, E125). The most striking example of this interpenetration is with regard to both Milton and Los.

When Rintrah and Palamabron see Milton it is not as someone who has escaped the enclosure of the self, but as one who has

> enterd into the Covering Cherub, becoming one with
> Albions dread Sons, Hand, Hyle & Coban surround him as
> A girdle; Gwendolen & Conwenna as a garment woven
> Of War & Religion. . . .
> (23:14-17, E118)

Milton is, of course, embracing this body in order to look forth for the morning of the grave; however, it is important to see that this embrace does not immediately or in itself renovate the body. At the end of the poem Ololon is still able to see Milton striving "upon the Brooks of Arnon" with "a dread / And awful Man . . . oercoverd with the mantle of years" (40:4-5, E141). The descent of Milton in fact seems to herald an intensification of Satan's world. Rintrah and Palamabron want to bring this figure "chained / To Bowlahoola" (23:17-18, E118), a judgement which would extend once more the kingdom of Satan, and even at the gates of Golgonooza Los warns of the danger

that Rintrah and Palamabron will be vegetated.

Los's response to Milton's descent is now very different from that seen on plate 20 or the kind of reaction he displays in the Bard's song. He exhorts his Sons to

> come, come away
> Arise O Sons give all your strength against Eternal Death
> Lest we are vegetated. . . .
> (24:33-35, E120)

However, even here Los's reaction is not unequivocal. Rintrah and Palamabron, for example, observe a very different response that coexists with the first and suggests the Los who exists within the time of memory:

> They saw that wrath now swayd and now pity absorbd him
> As it was, so it remaind & no hope of an end.
> (24:46-7, E120)

The intermingling of closure and openness, the world of memory and that of embodiment, does not ease as Los enters Golgonooza. This moment occurs (from within the perspective of the fallen world) within the last moment of chronological time. It is the Last Vintage and here the Sons of Luvah sing:

> This is the Last Vintage! & Seed
> Shall no more be sown upon Earth, till all the Vintage is over
> And all gatherd in, till the Plow has passd over the Nations
> And the Harrow & heavy thundering Roller upon the mountains. . . .
> (25:8-11, E121)

In preparation for this Vintage Los demands that they "Throw all the Vegetated Mortals into Bowlahoola" (24:40, E120), and he recommends to his Sons that they

> bind the Sheaves not by Nations or Families
> You shall bind them in Three Classes; according to their Classes
> So shall you bind them. Separating What has been Mixed
> Since Men began to be Wove into Nations by Rahab & Tirzah
> Since Albions Death & Satans Cutting-off from our awful Fields;
> When under pretence to benevolence the Elect Subdud All
> From the Foundation of the World.
> (25:26-32, E122)

Los's basic strategy is quite straightforward. Albion is the six thousand year history of fallen time and therefore, if he is to awake, he must resist assimilation into Satan's Polypus. Rather than responding with wrath to the approach of Milton, Los uses his forge in Bowlahoola to mark "out determinate" the three Classes and so separate what Satan's world has mixed.

What is striking about this advice is that it takes the reader back to the very beginning of the poem: to separate what has been mixed "Since Albions Death & Satans Cutting-off from our awful Fields" is to reaffirm and reiterate the world (based on the three Classes) that was "Created by the Hammer of Los, & Woven / By Enitharmons Looms when Albion was slain" (2:26-3:1, E96). The end of time is therefore, in this sense, its beginning, for Los will bind the Elect, in order to save them from the "fires of Eternal Death," into the "Churches of Beulah" (25:38-39, E122), the six thousand year history of the fallen world. This is why harvest is conducted with the instruments of seedtime - the plough and harrow and roller - rather than those of a natural harvest. The spiritual harvest of the fallen world is, at least initially, always its beginning.

This primal repetition or reaffirmation of the world is a necessary (but not sufficient) condition of Albion's awakening. It is necessitated by the understanding that the body of Albion-in-withdrawal encompasses all things (human and non human) that make up the six thousand year history given form by Los and Enitharmon. For Albion to awake is for him to embrace this world and history as his body. An apocalypse that was limited to the "furthest moment of calibrated time" would fail to embody Milton. Such an apocalypse is, as Jürgen Moltmann argues, one that limits the redeemed to the existent, to that which appears in the self-enclosed world of the present. It is therefore a manifestation of philia or love for the existent, rather than agape, love for the non-existent, for the other that does not appear within our constituted world:

> The spell of the dogma of hopelessness - ex nihilo nihil fit - is broken where he who raises the dead is recognized to be God. Where in faith and hope we begin to live in the light of the possibilities and promises of this God, the whole fulness of life discloses itself as a life of history and therefore a life to be loved. Only in the perspective of this God can there possibly be a love that is more that philia, love to the existent and the like - namely, agape, love to the non-existent, love to the unlike, the unworthy, the worthless, to the lost, the transient and the dead; a love that can take upon it the annihilating effects of pain and renunciation because it receives its power from hope of a creatio ex nihilo. Love does not shut its eyes to the non-existent and say it is nothing, but becomes itself the magic power that brings it into being.[37]

Apocalypse is therefore (as we have seen in The Four Zoas) not an event that simply puts an end to time, as if we had come to the end of a bridge; instead it is, in the first instance, a moment in which the fallen world is reiterated and reaffirmed by Los in order to preserve the body of Albion. It is this affirmation which enables the body of withdrawal to become the ground for a leap into regeneration and eternal life.

Los is quite clearly in an extraordinary position. The world that he creates and recreates gives form to the chaos of Albion's withdrawal and so preserves humanity from annihilation; it is also the ground of Albion's return to relationship. Yet this same creation gives form to Satan's world; it creates the three Classes of men and so establishes the preconditions for Satan's assimilation of difference into sameness. In The Four Zoas we saw an analogous oscillation within the person of Los and the body of the fallen world. Los was, we found, a being of flesh and of spirit and, similarly, in the fallen world we could trace a history of the flesh and of the spirit. In The Four Zoas it is the history of the flesh that is traced in great detail, while the history of the spirit is only glimpsed. In Milton our perspective has changed. The poem is no longer a dream told in nine Nights; instead, the Bard has induced us to move from sleep to the moment before awakening, the time of embodiment. The six thousand year history of the fallen world that The Four Zoas could hint at but not describe in full, can now be seen as the movement from a position in which time appears as a panorama enacted at a distance from the self to the embrace of that time. It is a movement which, because it is enacted at right-angles to the movement of fallen time, cannot be described in the linear narrative of The Four Zoas.

There can be no question of keeping the worlds of the flesh and of the spirit rigidly separate from one another, for the body of the fallen world, and therefore the body of Los, must be the ground for any movement to relationship. This same world, however, contains within itself the possibility of a falling away from appearance to semblance, and from the time of awaiting and retaining to that of memory. This is the movement which we

traced in The Book of Urizen. It is a phenomenon which is endemic to the fallen world. As Paul Ricoeur writes with regard to time:

> The existential now is determined by the present of preoccupation, which is a "making-present," inseparable from awaiting and retaining. It is because, in preoccupation, concern tends to contract itself into this making-present and to obliterate its dependency with regard to awaiting and retaining that the now isolated in this way can fall prey to the representation of the now as an isolated abstract instant.[38]

Milton traces the contrary movement to this regression, in which sedimented language becomes speech, and prejudice opens to others.

The movement from the time of memory to the time of awaiting and retaining can be seen in the form of the first book of Milton. The poem (and therefore the fallen world as a whole) is a pulsation, a heartbeat, in the life of Los and Albion. In the Bard's Song we see the shell of enclosure and understand the mechanism by which being is assimilated to Satan's Polypus. We are all, like Milton, enclosed within the shells of our constituted worlds. However, from within this enclosure, beginning with the descent of Milton, we gradually see the emergence of a pulse which embraces and so opens this enclosure to others. It is a movement which fills the Mundane Egg to bursting and places humanity in a posture of hope and expectation. It is important to note that we are, in an important sense, still in the same world, but we have adopted a different relationship to it. It is no longer a nature, a doxa, or a creed which we use to judge others; instead it has become something in which we are embodied. Our perceptions are still semblances, still temporal forms, but now they have become "Visionary forms dramatic," or in the words of The Four Zoas, "embodied semblances in which the dead / May live before us" (90:9-10, E370/$E_2$356). The horizon of our world has become something which we can both look out from and potentially cast off. As Los says, indicating in his choice of words this intertwining of closure and openness: "The Awakener is come. outstretched over Europe" (25:22, E122; emphasis added).

The movement of the first Book of Milton is, therefore, only in a superficial sense from the beginning to the end. The central plates of this

book take Milton and the reader from a position in heaven - above the poem and outside of time - to an embrace of the poem/world that lies beneath us. The poem takes us, in effect, back to the world described in the Bard's Song, but in such a way that we see it in the time of embodiment. This return and the openness to Albion that results from it is the occasion for the separation of what Satan has mixed and, therefore, a reaffirmation of the fallen world. This implies, however, that openness is followed by a further enclosure, and that the poem returns to its beginning in a second sense. This regression, or falling away is itself the site for a second reading and therefore another pulsation and expansion. The fallen world is a state where, as Blake tells us in Jerusalem, "Man is born a Spectre or Satan & is altogether an Evil, & requires a New Selfhood continually & must continually be changed into his direct Contrary" (E200). This is why, as the Bard informs us, Golgonooza, "the spiritual Four-fold London eternal" is "ever building, ever falling" (6:1-2, E99). This is the subject matter of the great visions of time and space which form the penultimate movement of the first book of Milton.

The vision of time begins by describing time as an enormous building built by the Sons of Los:

> But others of the Sons of Los build Moments & Minutes & Hours
> And Days & Months & Years & Ages & Periods; wondrous buildings
> And every Moment has a Couch of gold for soft repose,
> (A Moment equals a pulsation of the artery)
> And between every two Moments stands a Daughter of Beulah
> To feed the Sleepers on their Couches with maternal care.
> And every Minute has an azure Tent with silken Veils.
> And every Hour has a bright golden Gate carved with skill.
> And every Day & Night, has Walls of brass & Gates of adamant,
> Shining like precious stones & ornamented with appropriate signs:
> And every Month, a silver paved Terrace builded high:
> And every Year, invulnerable Barriers with high Towers.
> And every Age is Moated deep with Bridges of silver & gold.
> And every Seven Ages is Incircled with a Flaming Fire.
> Now Seven Ages is amounting to Two Hundred Years
> Each has its Guard. each Moment Minute Hour Day Month & Year.
> All are the work of Fairy hands of the Four Elements
> The Guard are Angels of Providence on duty evermore. . . .
> (28:44-61, E126-27)

As this passage makes quite clear, time is a defensive structure, replete with Walls, Terraces, "invulnerable Barriers with high Towers," Moats,

"Flaming Fire" and Guards. It is an edifice built to protect those who have withdrawn (the sleepers) and to offer a bulwark against annihilation. This defence is, of course, also an enclosure. The repetition of words such as "and," "every" and "is" has a cumulative effect that suggests, from within the body of time as a building, a second time which is no more than a sequence of "abstract instants." At the very moment that this sequence seems on the verge of moving into the foreground, when we have moved from Minutes to periods of "Two Hundred Years" duration, and the cumulative effect of the passage has become quite imposing, the entire structure is collapsed:

> Every Time less than a pulsation of the artery
> Is equal in its period & value to Six Thousand Years.
> For in this Period the Poets Work is Done: & all the Great
> Events of Time start forth & are concieved in such a Period
> Within a Moment: a Pulsation of the Artery.
> (28:62-29:3, E127)

Blake is careful to describe this Period in such a way that it cannot be confused with a particular interval in calibrated or clock time. It is a time which is "less than a pulsation of the artery," it is "Within a Moment," and therefore escapes the grasp of the reasoning memory. This is the Period that could not be described in The Four Zoas. It is the time in which Los/Milton/Blake become present to each moment of the fallen world. All of the events of fallen time start forth in such a Period because it is here that Los is open to, and therefore able to give form to, Albion-in-withdrawal. These lines have an extraordinary effect on the reader's experience of Milton, for they suggest that the Period in which "all the Great / Events of Time start forth" is present in the Periods or gaps which exist between each moment and interval of time. Time can therefore be seen as an alternation between openness and closure, between time as a monumental institution and time as a continual bringing to stand of Albion-in-withdrawal. The vision of space which follows transforms our notions of time and space in a similar way.

The narrator begins his vision of space by affirming that the world is a tent and not a cavern, a dwelling and not an enclosure that hems us in (29:4-

7, E127). The fixed natural world is a phenomenon that depends upon the reasoning memory (29:15-16, E127); however, in the time of embodiment the spatial world can be seen to be extraordinarily transparent:

> For every Space larger than a red Globule of Mans blood.
> Is visionary: and is created by the Hammer of Los
> And every Space smaller than a Globule of Mans blood. opens
> Into Eternity of which this vegetable Earth is but a shadow. . . .
> (29:19-22, E127)

The "Globule of Mans blood" to which Blake is referring in this passsage is nothing less than the Sun:

> The red Globule is the unwearied Sun by Los created
> To measure Time and Space to mortal Men. every morning.
> Bowlahoola & Allamanda are placed on each side
> Of that Pulsation & that Globule, terrible their power.
> (29:23-26, E127)

In these lines the entire physical world is seen as a heart beat in the body of Albion, but it now has a rhythm of contraction and expansion which occurs in every day. The Sun (the Logos or word in which we dwell) is on the one hand a "red Globule," a form which measures the outline of the natural (and therefore the enclosed) world. On the other hand, it is also a "Globule of . . . blood" and it is kept in motion by the continual movement of Los and his Sons to the perimeter of the fallen world in order to "see if morning breaks." It is in the gap opened between systole and dystole that Los is open to Albion and hence able to give form to Albion in withdrawal (to create the "Globule of . . . blood") and at the same time preserve that Globule from becoming inanimate matter. Bowlahoola and Allamanda "are placed on each side / Of that Pulsation & that Globule" because the world that they construct depends upon (and itself supports) the continual openness of the fallen world to Albion. The fallen world is therefore the still breathing body of Albion-in-withdrawal.

These passages force the reader to think on two radically contradictory, but not incommensurate, levels. On the one hand the fallen world, as the Bard has told us, can be seen as a form which is forged in the embrace of the giant Albion by the giant Los. Whenever we enter the time of embodiment we participate in this moment. This moment of embrace is, thanks to the work of

Los and Albion, spatialized as the six thousand year history of fallen time and space. Coterminous with this movement of Los (within creation) to Albion is a second which sweeps us "in the tide of Time" (22:24, E117) from beginning to end. Within the fallen world Los and Albion, Milton and Blake, all participate in both of these times. We are bodies of flesh and of spirit. It is the oscillation between these two times and movements that forms the pulse of the sleeping Albion.

With this epiphany the movement to the periphery of the constituted world of the self is close to completion. We stand with Los, Blake, Milton and the Bard at the very edge of the human world. We have moved from a position outside of the poem, where with the Sons of Albion we viewed the Bard's Song as an object within our constituted worlds, through a fall in which the body of the poem/world was embraced. From this second position we can see space and time, the poem and the act of reading, as a pulsation in which the self moves again and again from closure to openness. In the metaphor adopted in our discussion of The Book of Urizen, reading is a continual dialectic between retention and expectation. The earlier poem traces the movement from awaiting and retaining to memory which characterizes this process. Without losing sight of this regression the first book of Milton traces a dynamic which is superimposed over the first: the continual openness of the fallen world to Albion; the transformation of sedimented language to speech.

The poem does not allow this vision of time and space to become a dogma, for no sooner has it been established than Milton begins again the cycle of openness and closure which it has traced. The openness of vision is immediately followed by a series of qualifications:

> But Rintrah & Palamabron govern over Day & Night
> In Allamanda & Entuthon Benython where Souls wail:
> Where Orc incessant howls burning in fires of Eternal Youth,
> Within the vegetated mortal Nerves; for every Man born is joined
> Within into One mighty Polypus, and this Polypus is Orc.
>
> But in the Optic vegetative Nerves Sleep was transformed
> To Death in old time by Satan the father of Sin & Death
> And Satan is the Spectre of Orc & Orc is the generate Luvah

> But in the Nerves of the Nostrils, Accident being formed
> Into Substance & Principle, by the cruelties of Demonstration
> It became Opake & Indefinite; but the Divine Saviour,
> Formed it into a Solid by Los's Mathematic power.
> He named the Opake Satan: he named the Solid Adam. . . .
> (29:27-39, E127-28)

Through the "cruelties of Demonstration" the fallen Albion "became Opake & Indefinite." Death was, however, averted by the "Mathematic power" of Los who gave form to Albion as the six thousand years of fallen history. In the fallen world Los "conducts the Spirits to be Vegetated, into / Great Golgonooza, free from the four iron pillars of Satans Throne" (29:47-48, E128). However, this world is, as we have seen, itself intertwined with the world of Satan and so once more Blake begins a series of qualifications:

> But Enitharmon and her Daughters take the pleasant charge.
> To give them to their lovely heavens till the Great Judgment Day
> Such is their lovely charge. But Rahab & Tirzah pervert
> Their mild influences, therefore the Seven Eyes of God walk round
> The Three Heavens of Ulro, where Tirzah & her Sisters
> Weave the black Woof of Death upon Entuthon Benython
> In the Vale of Surrey where Horeb terminates in Rephaim
> The stamping feet of Zelophehads Daughters are coverd with Human gore
> Upon the treddles of the Loom, they sing to the winged shuttle:
> The River rises above his banks to wash the Woof:
> He takes it in his arms: he passes it in strength thro his current
> The veil of human miseries is woven over the Ocean
> From the Atlantic to the Great South Sea, the Erythrean.
> (29:51-63, E128)

These lines give the reader a quite haunting sense of a beating heart. It is this extraordinary world, with its oscillation between enclosure and openness, contraction and expansion, that "is the World of Los the labour of six thousand years." The first Book of Milton does not, therefore, close "with a moment of illumination in which the whole of reality is absorbed within the perceiving mind of the poet,"[39] but with that moment in which "the perceiving mind of the poet" is opened to others. It is in this period that Ololon descends.

(10) The descent of Ololon

In Visions of the Daughters of Albion Oothoon's passage to the very periphery of her constituted world is not answered by a corresponding

movement on the part of Theotormon. Oothoon is, therefore, able to enter a living but still not fully human world. If Milton were to end with the close of Book I, we would be in an analogous situation. Los's world would remain on the brink of relationship, but would be unable to proceed beyond this point. In Milton, however, the descent of Milton calls forth an answering movement on the part of Ololon, the other to Milton's masculine self. It is this descent which is the subject of the second Book of the poem, and it is the occasion for some of the most moving poetry in Blake's oeuvre. As male and female (active and passive) powers approach each other, the world is given a vision of Christ: "All Beulah . . . saw the Lord coming in the Clouds" (31:10, E130) and on earth

> all Nations wept in affliction Family by Family
> Germany wept towards France & Italy: England wept & trembled
> Towards America: India rose up from his golden bed:
> As one awakend in the night: they saw the Lord coming
> In the Clouds of Ololon with Power & Great Glory!
> (31:12-16, E130)

We first hear of Ololon's descent in the previous Book: Ololon, having seen Milton descend into the abyss, repents of the judgement she has meted out to him and descends in Milton's track into the Ulro. Susan Fox writes that it is here, in this descent, that

> the full complication of the poem's simultaneity becomes apparent: Milton descends from the environs of Eden to Ololon in Ulro, and Ololon descends from the environs of Eden to Milton in Ulro - but each descends upon seeing the other already in the deeps. Their descents, on this seventh day, are simultaneous heralds of the end of Los's day of mourning.[40]

Ololon's descent, however, is simultaneous with the one undertaken by Milton only in the sense that both acts are contained within the moment (of six thousand years duration) of Albion's withdrawal. Within the confines of this moment, the acts are separated by the distance between a call and a response. This temporal gap is suggested by the fact that Ololon proceeds "down to the Ulro . . . thro Chaos in the track of Miltons course" (34:21-22, E134), and in the assertion by the "Divine Voice," "heard in the Songs of Beulah," that it is only when "the Sixfold Female," "percieves that Milton annihilates / Himself" that "She shall relent in fear of death" (33:1,14-15,17, E132-33).[41]

The descent of Ololon is described as an expansive awakening, a movement to spring and morning:

> Thou hearest the Nightingale begin the Song of Spring;
> The Lark sitting upon his earthy bed: just as the morn
> Appears; listens silent; then springing from the waving Corn-field!
> loud
> He leads the Choir of Day! trill, trill, trill, trill,
> Mounting upon the wings of light into the Great Expanse:
> Reechoing against the lovely blue & shining heavenly Shell. . . .
> (31:28-33, E130)

In the first Book of the poem, the reader and Milton have heard Milton "begin the Song of Spring"; now this call is answered by Ololon. Lark, Thrush, Linnet, "the Goldfinch, Robin & the Wren" all rise to "Awake the Sun from his sweet reverie upon the Mountain" (31:40,41, E131) and so bring in the morning. In doing so they expand to fill the world in which they are enclosed and, therefore, their voices re-echo "against the lovely blue & shining heavenly Shell" of the fallen world. This song is, however, "a Vision of the lamentation of Beulah over Ololon" (31:45, E131). This is because, as Michael J. Tolley suggests, "the best lamentations, the best elegies - like Lycidas or Adonais - are most profoundly paeans of joy."[42]

The image of the Nightingale and his company filling the world and so calling and waking the sun is not a complete description of the descent of Ololon. Blake juxtaposes this strophe with a second in which he describes the descent of Ololon in very different terms.

> Thou percievest the Flowers put forth their precious Odours!
> And none can tell how from so small a center comes such sweets
> Forgetting that within that Center Eternity expands
> Its ever during doors, that Og & Anak fiercely guard[.]
> First eer the morning breaks joy opens in the flowery bosoms
> Joy even to tears, which the Sun rising dries; first the Wild Thyme
> And Meadow-sweet downy & soft waving among the reeds.
> Light springing on the air lead the sweet Dance: they wake
> The Honeysuckle sleeping on the Oak: the flaunting beauty
> Revels along upon the wind; the White-thorn lovely May
> Opens her many lovely eyes: listening the Rose still sleeps
> None dare to wake her soon she bursts her crimson curtaind bed
> And comes forth in the majesty of beauty; every Flower:
> The Pink, the Jessamine, the Wall-flower, the Carnation
> The Jonquil, the mild Lilly opes her heavens! every Tree,
> And Flower & Herb soon fill the air with an innumerable Dance
> Yet all in order sweet & lovely, Men are sick with Love!
> Such is a Vision of the lamentation of Beulah over Ololon. . . .
> (31:46-63, E131)

The descent of Ololon is also an opening to relationship, and it is within this opening that Christ appears; or to adopt the metaphor used in this passage, as a result of her descent the perfume of Eternity enters into the closed world of the self. The presence of a thing like perfume is, of course, totally inexplicable to those who live within a cavern'd world. Locke perceives the mind as an eye that looks at the inscriptions on a tabula rasa. Within his frame of reference, perfume can only be a disruptive force which emerges from the spaces that lie between the simple ideas retained by the reasoning memory; from a centre that is so small that "none can tell how from so small a center comes such sweets." In Milton this opening is begun by the "Wild Thyme," a herb which suggests the wild (in the sense of unprecedented and unexpected) movement of Los and Milton that was the provocation for Ololon's descent.

(11) The moment of embrace

Milton's descent, as I have argued, is completed only in the presence of Los to each moment of fallen history. The Milton who appears at the end of Milton is therefore a being within whom can be seen "the Covering Cherub & within him Satan / And Raha[b]" (37:8-9, E137). Blake writes that he saw him:

> Descending down into my Garden, a Human Wonder of God
> Reaching from heaven to earth a Cloud & Human Form
> I beheld Milton with astonishment & in him beheld
> The Monstrous Churches of Beulah, the Gods of Ulro dark
> Twelve monstrous dishumanizd terrors Synagogues of Satan.
> (37:13-18, E137)

He then goes on to detail these Churches of Beulah and Gods of Ulro, giving us "their Names & their Places within the Mundane Shell" (37:19, E137). All these are seen in Milton's Shadow who is the Covering Cherub. This should not be taken to suggest that Milton has lost all personal identity, for this extraordinary description moves immediately into an account of Milton the individual:

> And Milton collecting all his fibres into impregnable strength
> Descended down a Paved work of all kinds of precious stones

> Out from the eastern sky; descending down into my Cottage
> Garden: clothed in black, severe & silent he descended.
> (38:5-8, E138)

Within the figure of Milton can be seen all of humanity, for it is against or within the ground of the whole that he has his individual existence. The inverse of this proposition is, however, also true: Milton is contained within Satan's universe. We can see a similar interpenetration of the individual and the whole in the case of Ololon.

The descent of Ololon at first seems to be very precisely located in terms of fallen time and space. She stands "In Chasms of the Mundane Shell which open on all sides round / Southward & by the East within the Breach of Miltons descent" (34:41-42, E134), and when she steps into the Polypus (36:13, E136) she appears in the garden of Blake's cottage at Felpham:

> And as One Female, Ololon and all its mighty Hosts
> Appear'd: a Virgin of twelve years no time nor space was
> To the perception of the Virgin Ololon but as the
> Flash of lightning but more quick the Virgin in my Garden
> Before my Cottage stood for the Satanic Space is delusion. . . .
> (36:16-20, E137)

Like Milton, Ololon appears to Blake at a particular point in fallen space and time, but the passage in which this is affirmed also admits the inadequacy of this location, for such space "is delusion." Moreover, Ololon's descent, like Milton's, calls forth and provokes an answering movement within the body of the world. As a result her descent is carried throughout the six thousand years of creation. The metaphors that Blake uses to describe this are quite startling.

In the moment in which Ololon descends,

> stands a Fountain in a rock
> Of crystal flowing into two Streams, one flows thro Golgonooza
> And thro Beulah to Eden beneath Los's western Wall
> The other flows thro the Aerial Void & all the Churches
> Meeting again in Golgonooza beyond Satans Seat. . . .
> (35:49-53, E136)

The first stream flows thro Golgonooza and Beulah to Eden, while the second passes through the twenty-seven churches of fallen history until it reaches Golgonooza once more. In other words, in the moment of Ololon's descent a fountain rises up to connect, like a gigantic circulatory system, all of

Albion's heavens and earths and hells. An analogous movement is carried out by the Larks, who carry the news of her appearance throughout "all the Twenty-seven Heavens" of the fallen world until they return to the "East Gate of Golgonooza" (35:65, 36:9, E136). These metaphors suggest that, like Milton's, Ololon's descent occurs (in terms of sequential time) in the space between the beginning and end of the fallen world. Secondly, just as Los's continually repeated movement to the time of embodiment can be seen as the pulsating heart of Albion, so Ololon's descent calls forth a movement which suggest both a process of unification and a giant circulatory system.

The world that encloses Milton is of course also that in which Ololon is enclosed. As a result of their respective descents, this world has been embraced and now all that separates them is a thin screen or veil: Milton the Puritan faces Ololon the Virgin. In this encounter time and Eternity, male and female, the individual and the collective, self and other, are on the brink of relationship. Milton stands within his "sleeping Humanity" (38:10, E139). Satan responds to this situation by attempting to re-assert his rule:

> Satan heard! Coming in a cloud, with trumpets & flaming fire
> Saying I am God the judge of all, the living & the dead
> Fall therefore down & worship me.
> (38:50-52, E139)

In the Bard's Song a claim such as this would have drawn forth a judgement of Satan, which would in turn have assimilated the self to Satan's world. Milton specifically eschews this course of action. He says:

> Satan! my Spectre! I know my power thee to annihilate
> And be a greater in thy place, & be thy Tabernacle
> A covering for thee to do thy will, till one greater comes
> And smites me as I smote thee & becomes my covering.
> (38:29-32, E139)

Rather than judging Satan, Milton has embraced the world in which he is enclosed and from this position he is now able to cast off Satan in a movement of self annihilation. He therefore continues:

> Such are the Laws of thy false Heavns! but Laws of Eternity
> Are not such: know thou: I come to Self Annihilation
> Such are the Laws of Eternity that each shall mutually
> Annihilate himself for others good, as I for thee[.]
> . . . .
> I come to discover before Heavn & Hell the Self righteousness

> In all its Hypocritic turpitude, opening to every eye
> These wonders of Satans holiness shewing to the Earth
> The Idol Virtues of the Natural Heart, & Satans Seat
> Explore in all its Selfish Natural Virtue & put off
> In Self annihilation all that is not of God alone:
> To put off Self & all I have ever & ever Amen. . . .
> (38:34-36, 43-49, E139)

In the first Book of Milton, Ololon descends as a direct result of Milton's descent. She has, therefore, not heard the Bard's Song and, as a result, when she sees the world beneath her she responds with amazement (34:49-35:18, E134-35). It is only at the close of Milton that she recognizes the part that she plays in this world, and this recognition of Error allows her to move forward into embrace:

> & now remembrance
> Returns upon us! are we Contraries O Milton, Thou & I
> O Immortal! how were we led to War the Wars of Death
> Is this the Void Outside of Existence, which if enterd into
> Becomes a Womb? & is this the Death Couch of Albion
> Thou goest to Eternal Death & all must go with thee
>
> So saying, the Virgin divided Six-fold & with a shriek
> Dolorous that ran thro all Creation a Double Six-fold Wonder!
> Away from Ololon she divided & fled into the depths
> Of Miltons Shadow as a Dove upon the stormy Sea.
> (41:34-42:6, E143)

Milton and Ololon now stand face to face, and in this encounter the entire world is seen as Christ:

> Then as a Moony Ark Ololon descended to Felphams Vale
> In clouds of blood, in streams of gore, with dreadful thunderings
> Into the Fires of Intellect that rejoic'd in Felphams Vale
> Around the Starry Eight: with one accord the Starry Eight became
> One Man Jesus the Saviour. wonderful! round his limbs
> The Clouds of Ololon folded as a Garment dipped in blood
> Written within & without in woven letters: & the Writing
> Is the Divine Revelation in the Litteral expression:
> A Garment of War, I heard it namd the Woof of Six Thousand
> Years. . . .
> (42:7-15, E143)

The meeting of Ololon and Milton is, as I have argued, not simply a meeting of two individuals. Their separate descents provoke and themselves become part of a corresponding movement within creation itself. Creation, the six thousand year history of fallen time, is now seen no longer as an enclosure, but as a form in which Milton/Blake/Los look out or "thro." It is therefore a form that is animated by hope and expectation, by an eager looking forth "to

see if morning breaks!" This animated form is described by Blake as Christ. Jesus still wears "a Garment dipped in blood," a "Garment of War" (42:12,15, E143), but this will be cast off when Albion arises. It is now that we glimpse the "morning of the grave":

> And I beheld the Twenty-four Cities of Albion
> Arise upon their Thrones to Judge the Nations of the Earth
> And the Immortal Four in whom the Twenty-four appear Four-fold
> Arose around Albions body: Jesus wept & walked forth
> From Felphams Vale clothed in Clouds of blood, to enter into
> Albions Bosom, the bosom of death & the Four surrounded him
> In the Column of Fire in Felphams Vale; then to their mouths the Four
> Applied their Four Trumpets & them sounded to the Four winds. . . .
> (42:16-23, E143)

But at this point there is a surprising reversal. Albion does not wake, our vision of "the morning of the grave" slips from our grasp, and Blake falls back into his corporeal body:

> Terror struck in the Vale I stood at that immortal sound
> My bones trembled. I fell outstretchd upon the path
> A moment, & my Soul returnd into its mortal state
> To Resurrection & Judgment in the Vegetable Body. . . .
> (42:24-27, E143)

In order to understand this fall, we must distinguish Milton's movement towards relationship from the particular kind of transparence associated with symbolism, with which (in books such as Symbol and Truth in Blake's Myth, by Leopold Damrosch)[43] it is often confused.

(12) Rhetoric and truth

In "The Rhetoric of Temporality" Paul de Man writes that towards the "latter half of the eighteenth century" the symbol came to be ranked above other rhetorical figures such as allegory.[44] In this historical change allegory came to appear

> as dryly rational and dogmatic in its reference to a meaning that it does not itself constitute, whereas the symbol is founded on an intimate unity between the image that rises up before the senses and the supersensory totality that the image suggests.[45]

Coleridge, for example, writes that

> the symbol is characterized by the translucence of the special in the individual, or of the general in the special, or of the universal in

> the general; above all by the translucence of the eternal through and in the temporal.[46]

The symbol therefore suggests the possibility of identification or union with the world outside of us and, therefore, an abolition of time. However, as de Man argues, if the symbol's identification can itself be shown to be based on a rhetorical figure, then the symbol can no longer be privileged over other figures. Instead its claims can be seen as a suppression of temporality itself and therefore tantamount to a seduction by illusion.[47] In this context what is immediately striking about Blake's poetry is that it is not symbolic in Coleridge's sense of the term. Blake does not, in fact, use the word symbol at any point in his oeuvre. Symbol has been replaced by the term, vision.

Where the symbol describes a movement and a transparence of the eternal in the temporal, vision relies upon an openness of the temporal to the eternal. Where symbol suggests a relationship of synecdoche between time and eternity, vision relies on a separation and contrary relationship between the two. Where symbol is a rhetorical figure, vision is a relationship which is taken up to a linguistic or perceptual form. The subject of the symbol is static, while that of vision is moving and fluid. The symbolist is stationary and passive, while the visionary in Blake's sense is active, passionate and engaged in movement. Vision does not deny its temporal base and, therefore, always must place truth at one remove from the self, always outside of our grasp. Vision is, one could almost say, the opposite of symbolism.

Vision is, first of all, a vision of others. In Milton, as we have seen, one of the first results of Milton's change of perspective, or change of relationship to the world, is that the natural world is seen as a creation of Los and his Sons. This sudden animation of what had been a closed and silent world is seen most eloquently in the approach of Ololon. What he had seen as "his Sixfold Emanation scatter'd thro' the deep / In torment!" (2:19-20, E96) becomes a presence that can be encountered and embraced.

If the intention of the poem were to "arrive at the far goal of time, full

knowledge,"[48] or if, as James suggests,

> The achieved clarity of [Blake's] vision is the achievement of form in images that order reality; most specifically it is the establishment of a definite line between the imagination and its enemies,[49]

then quite clearly Blake's fall at the end of Milton is a self conscious admission of the gap which separates rhetoric and truth. The attempt to order reality (without a parallel attempt to open it), the ambition to gain "full knowledge," and the desire to draw "a definite line between the imagination and its enemies" are, however, all characteristics of Satan. It is in Satan's inert world, where the being of that which is is located in human representation, that this gap opens a destructive chasm between self and other. But if the other is alive - if the most fitting metaphor for truth was not the adequation of intellect and thing, but the openness of the self to another that was living - then this same gap becomes the moment in which the autonomy of the other is preserved; it is one pole of the oscillation between openness and closure in which the voice of another can be heard. The "bounding line" of identity is not one that draws a "line between the imagination and its enemies." This is the Satanic project that was deconstructed in the Bard's Song. The "bounding line" of identity is formed when the self casts off the static forms in which it is enclosed.

As I have suggested in my introduction, vision of this kind suggests that our understanding of what Blake means by the Imagination is far from adequate. The capacity to form worlds is quite clearly an important part of Imagination, but by itself it defines the work of Los, not of Jesus. Milton is a poem which urges us to see Imagination not only as a forming power, but as a power of openness, a power of responding to a non-violent appeal.[50] It is only within a definition such as this that we are able to understand why Blake does not identify imagination with Los, but with Christ. In order to Imagine, our constituted worlds must be open to the Reprobate, to those figures who will always remain outside our world.

Vision is, therefore, not the reduction of others to the world of the

self, but a power of opening that world. Vision is not simply a process in which an other is "related to an individual's pattern of experience," nor is it one in which the other becomes part of the individual's character. To define vision in this way is to make it isomorphic with Satan's powers of assimilation and judgement. In vision the world of the self is put at risk; the viewer is also the one that is viewed; and perception locates a world which addresses, and manifests itself to, the self. It is, therefore, not simply a matter of grasping vision, but of being open to its appeal. This can be seen most clearly in the vision of apocalypse with which the poem ends.

It is with regard to the question of apocalypse that a reading of Milton is most fraught with difficulty, for revelation is generally understood as something that appears within a relationship of heteronomy. We conceive of revelation as a voice which issues a command.[51] The recognition that there are others in the world is, therefore, in Hegel's Phenomenology of the Spirit, the beginning of a life and death struggle. One must be master and one must be slave. Derrida is working within Hegel's understanding of the birth of consciousness when he writes that the face as anatomically the most-high,

> the height of the most-high . . . is the origin of space, orienting space through speech and glance, through the face, the chief who commands body and space from above. . . . the god of the armies is the Face.[52]

For Derrida the face is associated with a speech that has the power to assist itself and impose its designs upon the world.

From this point of view the self is closed within its constituted world, and its relationship to others can, therefore, only be warfare: an attempt to assimilate others to the world of the self. But this is precisely the Satanic world that the Bard has deconstructed. This deconstruction enables us to see that what Derrida is describing is not a face, but a mask. The face that appears in Milton's fall is not one that is "the god of the armies", but one that is open; his glance does not issue in a command to obedience, but in an appeal. In Milton Christ is not simply a poem (as James asserts), but a

person clothed in a poem; a prophetic presence who, like Milton, calls Albion to return. It is the power to hear and respond to this appeal that enables the visionary deconstruction of the Bard to be followed by the visionary construction of Jerusalem.

Part Four

Visionary Construction

Chapter Eleven

Los and Jerusalem

> But the question at once arises: how does this conversation which we are, begin? Who accomplishes this naming of the gods? Who lays hold of something permanent in ravenous time and fixes it in the word?
>
> Martin Heidegger[1]

(1) Entering time

At a first glance Jerusalem presents itself as an excellent example of Newtonian and Lockean time. Jerusalem consists of four chapters - one hundred plates and two thousand lines - which are linked in an (almost) invariable chain: each chapter is preceded by a full page engraving; the poem begins and ends with a full page illumination; each chapter is framed by half-page designs, and the written text opens and closes with the word "Jerusalem." Jerusalem is without doubt an extremely "ORDERD RACE" (26, E171).

This description of the poem is of course far from complete, for one of the striking characteristics of Jerusalem is that it seems to have not one but many forms. For example, Jerusalem's orderly race is punctuated by a series of oratorial addresses and therefore it could with equal justice be argued that the overall shape of the poem suggests the time perceived in The Book of Urizen during the time of awaiting and retaining. In The Book of Urizen it was Los's gaze which held and structured Urizen's chaotic death. In Jerusalem it is the particular perspective taken up by the narrator to the various parts of Albion (Public, Jews, Deists and Christians) which similarly structures and orders each chapter.[2] This second view of the poem does not supersede the first. Instead, it seems rather evanescent, for no sooner has one grasped the organizing function that the addresses play in the poem than they recede and the pages become opaque once more. They are merely units in the progression that we first noted. In Jerusalem, one could argue, the

transparence of Milton's apocalypse has been supplanted by opacity. Jerusalem has failed to materialize the promise extended by its prelude.

Before we too hastily endorse this conclusion it is as well to observe that up to this point in our argument we have adopted a relationship to the text which is analogous to that taken up by Milton to time, or by the Sons of Albion to the Bard's Song. We have certainly not entered into the poem in our Imagination (E560). The frontispiece, however, suggests the possibility of a very different relationship to the poem. On this plate we see Los/Blake/the reader - in a movement which is reminiscent of the movement "thro" the text that we traced in The Four Zoas and Milton - stepping across the threshold of a door which appears to give us access to the interior of the poem. Los seems to be poised on the brink of a movement "thro" the text. The epigraph cut into the stone above the door seems to endorse this course of action.[3] It tells the reader that

> There is a Void, outside of Existence, which if enterd into
> Englobes itself & becomes a Womb. . . .
> (1:1-2, E144)

Unfortunately, the plate does not offer an unequivocal means of achieving this goal. Los does not enter the text, for Los, like the reader, is poised between an imminent entry into Jerusalem and a sequential unfolding of the poem which opens out to the right. Erdman writes that a "wind from the opening . . . blows his hair and garments back."[4] In fact, the wind is coming from the direction in which Los is looking. The passage of sequential time blows each present irrevocably into the past and therefore continually defers the moment of embrace. Entry into the city of Jerusalem, like the vision of Christ at the end of Milton, is both now and not yet.

Our first step into the poem (in which our foot is placed across the threshold of Jerusalem's gate) places us in the same position as Los. As we read, we stand with Los/Blake outside the door of the heavenly city (we are quite literally, at each point in the poem, facing Jerusalem); yet the poem itself sweeps us along a sequential path which continually defers our entry into this city. It should therefore be no surprise that our first experience

of the poem gives expression to the tension between what is now and what is not yet, what is present and what is absent, by inducing in the reader an overwhelming sense of vertigo. It is as if one were lost, or as if there were an imminent danger of being swept from a high point. Stuart Curran describes this emotion well. He writes that "though the reader is generally sure of the immediate ground he treads, the path before and after may be swept with mists."[5] Damon describes a more extreme variety of the same experience:

> But though the plot is so simple, Jerusalem is the obscurest of the three epics. Almost all the characters which Blake ever invented live in the subliminal consciousness of this poem. Time and again the depths are stirred and a gush of half-forgotten names emerges for the moment, to be lost immediately in the impenetrable black. . . . To add to the difficulty, biblical characters appear and disappear momentarily with the most unfamiliar gestures. Vainly we try to discover some sequence, some reason, in their actions. . . .[6]

Interestingly, Damon goes on to say that "Obscure as Blake's plot may be, his teachings are never in doubt."[7] We find the same phenomenon in Wicksteed's book on the poem. He writes:

> At a first, a second, and even a third reading the text of Jerusalem without its illustrations is baffling to a degree. Only as one reads it month after month and year after year . . . does one begin to find treasures of terse wisdom, epic grandeur, and occasional gleams of lyrical beauty so widely dispersed throughout its hundred pages as to make the fertile oases spread out more and more into the desert sands and rocks that still intervene.[8]

Like Curran and Damon, Wicksteed attempts to give expression in these lines to an experience of clarity which is nevertheless intertwined with a feeling of confusion.

Swirling clouds of mist, an "impenetrable black" and the inhospitable expanses of a desert are the respective metaphors chosen by these writers to describe a poem which nevertheless induces in its readers a sense of clarity. In the first quotation this clarity is described as a ground which, even if we cannot see in front of us or behind, remains firm. In the second, it takes the form of "biblical characters" and "half-forgotten names" which are disturbing because we cannot place them in a narrative or reasonable context. And in the third, the reader's sense of clarity is described as a "fertile oasis" which stands in the middle of a desert whose shifting sands and

changing contours offer no point from which to take bearings. Given this experience of the poem, a first response is quite frequently to ask with Urizen, "Where shall we take our stand to view the infinite & unbounded" (FZ122:24, E391). Like Los in the frontispiece we seem to be looking in one direction while we are irrevocably drawn in another.

This kind of experience has led Blake criticism to make two closely related critical judgements which have had far reaching consequences for our understanding of Jerusalem. It is agreed, first of all, that the poem in some way disrupts or does away with our everyday ideas of time and narrative. W.H. Stevenson, for example, writes that "Much of Jerusalem . . . is static. It is not a narrative, but a series of pageants."[9] Mitchell argues that "the poem's structure undercuts the whole notion of predictable linear chronology by embodying it as chaos"[10]; and Marks tells us that:

> Jerusalem defines the process of overcoming a fixed, nonhuman view of time. It both presents the struggle to do so dramatically and reflects that struggle in its form.
>
> Jerusalem neither assumes the reality of an objective historical continuum nor itself depends on a narrative progression through time. Every aspect of the poem's composition . . . attempts to transcend spatial and temporal restrains.[11]

Second, given that Jerusalem disrupts our normal ideas of time and narrative sequence, critics have looked for a non-temporal ordering principle for the poem. Damon writes, for example, that "The tale proceeds not by action but by the sequence of ideas."[12] The exact nature of these ideas is, of course, a matter of contention. Erdman writes that "the motif of Jerusalem is peace without vengeance."[13] Marks tells us that "the process by which various figures in the poem overcome selfhood to become fully creative is a central ordering element of Jerusalem,"[14] while Karl Kiralis associates each chapter of the poem with a specific stage in human development.[15]

Other critics attempt to find an external structure which, like the shell of a crustacean, will give the poem a form. For Mellor the "structure of Jerusalem is, of course, fourfold . . . and is organically patterned on the outline of the human body."[16] Joanne Witke suggests that the "formal

principle that defines the poem may be found by comparing the four chapters that comprise the work with the Four Gospels."[17] Rose finds that the poem has a structure which is based on the four Zoas,[18] while Bloom looks to the book of Ezekiel to provide the pattern for the poem's "gradually sharpening antithesis between two forces."[19] Nor does the series of interpretative frameworks which have been proposed for the poem stop at this point. Wittreich suggests Paradise Regained and the book of Revelation as appropriate models for the poem.[20] Paley adds "a seventeenth-century tradition of the structural analysis of Revelation, Handel's Messiah, and possibly Smart's Jubilate Agno."[21]

Other critics delineate atemporal structural patterns within the poem itself. Mitchell sees the poem as a single, static form. He calls it "an encyclopedic anatomy of the world in which the exemplary actions, descriptions, and personae are drawn from the realms of myth, epic, & romance."[22] The poem's "apparent formlessness" is, he says, a characteristic of the genre of anatomy. In Section V of his chapter on Jerusalem in Blake's Composite Art, however, he looks at the chapters of Jerusalem as "clarifications of particular kinds of error."[23] Stuart Curran sees in the poem a variety of structures. If we look closely at Jerusalem, he argues, we find a system of seven interlocking structures.[24] Morton Paley suggests that

> Blake develops Jerusalem in what may best be called, following Mede, a series of synchronisms. Just as Revelation is in Mede's view not a diachronic structure but a synchronous one, so Jerusalem is primarily to be read not for its relatively subordinated story line but for the way in which its inter-related parts explain one another.[25]

And Minna Dostow contends that

> the poem's parts fall into place as pieces of a kaleidoscopic whole complementing and reinforcing one another. Each chapter then turns the kaleidoscope to view the theme in a new way. The pieces recompose themselves in new patterns and seem to reveal new appearances of the whole but are only actualizing those patterns potentially present all along. After the first glimpse, no new element is added to the picture. Further turns and glimpses simply rearrange existing pieces to examine the theme from all sides, going, in turn, through all the possible combinations.[26]

There are two striking features of these accounts of Jerusalem. First,

the sheer number of structures that have been proposed for the poem is nothing short of astonishing. Second, and even more surprisingly, these attempts to delineate a basically atemporal structure for the poem are often divided against themselves and contain the surreptitious and perhaps half unconscious admission that a temporal progression can in fact be discerned in Jerusalem. Mitchell, for example, has no sooner completed his description of Jerusalem as an anatomy than he writes that there are signs that the two middle chapters reflect "a vision of the historical development of consciousness as a movement from masculine to feminine dominance,"[27] and that Jerusalem is a woman with patterns of growth.[28] Similarly, Bloom, Rose, Witke and Kiralis are unwilling to do away completely with temporal progression, even though they argue that the poem is ordered according to a non-progressive and atemporal structure. This leads them into the difficult position where they must describe a movement in stasis, or a progression in a poem which does not move. Bloom writes of "a clear and powerful thematic progression in the fourth chapter" and "in . . . earlier parts of the poem. . . . even though it does away with most narrative progressions and with any kind of a conventional climax."[29] Kiralis argues that in Jerusalem "Blake chose to ignore our earthly patterns for those he considered eternal; he creates space and time 'according to the wonders Divine / Of Human Imagination.'"[30] Although Harper claims that "we can assume that the action is mental and chronology meaningless" he is still able to speak of Blake's "epic hero" as "the wanderer" who undertakes a journey which "stretches from Ulro to Jerusalem."[31] Marks speaks of the structure of the poem as one which grows out of an "emerging struggle of contraries," however, at the same time she tells us that the "pattern of Jerusalem is not at all one of continuous narrative."[32] Lesnick sharpens this paradox when he writes that "Although Jerusalem continually reiterates and offers variations on a few elements of action and imagery, the narrative may be seen to be somewhat progressive."[33]

Northrop Frye offers what is perhaps the clearest account of Jerusalem's

progressive nature. Jerusalem is "a drama in four acts: a fall, the struggle of men in a fallen world . . . the world's redemption by a divine man in whch eternal life and death achieve a simultaneous triumph, and an apocalypse."[34] Within each chapter, however, Frye's discussion focusses on a "pattern of contrast," and in beginning his discussion of the poem he adopts a procedure which assumes an atemporal structure. The first step is to outline the form, ideas and geography of Jerusalem. He then writes: "If this explanation has sufficiently damaged the tough and prickly shell of Jerusalem, we may proceed to extract the kernel.[35] The same equivocation can be seen in The Continuing City. Despite his contention that "If we are to understand the form of [Jerusalem], we must discover the interrelationships of its parallel acts, its synchrony,"[36] Paley admits that the poem has a plot that "moves as a submarine current producing episodic surface movements."[37]

"A thematic progression" without "narrative progression" or "conventional climax"; not mortal temporality, but eternal temporality; an odyssey in which "chronology" is "meaningless"; a structure which "grows" out of an "emerging struggle of contraries," but which does not impose a pattern of "continuous narrative"; a "somewhat progressive" narrative in a poem which "offers variations on a few elements of action and imagery"; a poem in "four acts" whose geography can be mapped and kernel extracted; a plot which moves as a "submarine current": it is with paradoxes such as these that critics have attempted to deal with a poem which seems to be constructed of atemporal moments (chapters which seem to be organized around some kind of atemporal organizing principle or theme), but which are themselves embedded in a mysterious progression. The reader is confronted with solid, spatially organized chapters and a relatively hard-to-grasp and ephemeral temporal flow. Jerusalem is a physical structure, a city which Los, in the frontispiece, is on the verge of entering. Yet the city is also a woman who, like all women, grows in time.

What is striking about these accounts of Jerusalem is that the experience of the poem that they imply, far from doing away with our everyday

experience and conception of time, closely parallels it. Kant, preceded by writers such as Augustine and followed by philosophers such as Bergson and Heidegger, observes the curious paradox that we measure time by something which seems to have no immediate relationship to it, namely space. Temporal progression is for most of us extremely evanescent; we know that things have a duration, that our lives spread themselves out in time, but if we attempt to think about the nature of time our thoughts, like those of Augustine on this subject, quickly reach an impasse.[38] Time is all pervasive and yet we measure it by the non-temporal: the position of the sun in the sky, or the location of a rotating wand on a flat surface. This phenomenon can be clearly seen in Locke's Essay:

> It is evident to any one who will but observe what passes in his own mind, that there is a train of ideas which constantly succeed one another in his understanding, as long as he is awake. Reflection on these appearances of several ideas one after another in our minds, is that which furnishes us with the idea of succession: and the distance between any parts of that succession, or between the appearance of any two ideas in our minds, is that we call duration.[39]

Our measures of time such as minutes, days, hours and years derive from our observation of regular and recurrent appearances. It can therefore be said that the measures do not refer directly to time, but to the length of void between separate appearances of ideas in our minds. Repeating these "measures of time" gives us, according to Locke, the idea of a past and future. These terms, however, denote no more than the presence of what from this perspective will always remain absent, for, as Locke writes, by this process "we can come to imagine duration, where nothing does really endure or exist; and thus we imagine to-morrow, next year, or seven years hence."[40] Eternity is the repetition to exhaustion of these measures of absence; and finally, "by considering any part" of this expansive nothing, "we come by the idea of what we call time in general."[41] Even Berkeley, although he scoffs at Locke's derivation of the abstract idea of time, agrees that our idea of duration is gained from our experience of the voids between successive appearances:

> For my own part, whenever I attempt to frame a simple idea of Time, abstracted from the succession of ideas in my mind, which flows uniformly and is participated by all beings, I am lost and

> embrangled in inextricable difficulties. I have no notion of it at all . . . Time therefore being nothing, abstracted from the succession of ideas in our minds, it follows that the duration of any finite spirit must be estimated by the number of ideas or actions succeeding each other in that same spirit or mind.[42]

Our experience of Jerusalem and our experience of time are therefore strangely isomorphic. The ordered chapters and lines of Jerusalem and the "succession of ideas" in Locke's mind are both embedded in and give one the sense of a temporal progression, but this temporality is extraordinarily elusive. The ideas which appear to the self give us a sense of clarity, but time itself is a void, a space between appearances, an "impenetrable blackness."

This eclipse of time by space (by a series of appearances to the corporeal self) is itself a phenomenon which seems to depend upon a withdrawal from relationship. Locke's understanding of time is, for example, developed from the perspective of the closeted man. Succession is evident, as he tells us, to anyone who has stepped outside of himself and in this way observed "what passes in his own mind."[43] If time is, in the words of Auden, "Our choice of how to love and Why,"[44] then quite clearly this standpoint reduces the subject of our love (and therefore the substance of temporality) to vanishing point. From this position we are left with a series of appearances to the self rather than with the set of relationships which ground and open time. Northrop Frye describes this moment of withdrawal in "The Road of Excess." He writes:

> Many forms of literature . . . depend on narrative movement in a specific way. That is, they depend for their appeal on the participation of the reader or listener in the narrative as it moves along in time. It is continuity that keeps us turning the pages of a novel, or sitting in a theatre. But there is always something of a summoned-up illusion about such continuity. We may keep reading a novel or attending to a play "to see how it turns out." But once we know how it turns out, and the spell ceases to bind us, we tend to forget the continuity, the very element in the play or novel that enabled us to participate in it.[45]

It is when we no longer participate in a work of art, when it no longer exerts its influence on us (its spell), that we enter the world that is held by the reasoning memory and, as a result, temporality comes to seem an

"illusion." Frye elevates this critical position to a virtue when he writes in the same article that

> there are two kinds of response to a work of literature, especially one that tells a story. The first kind is a participating response in time, moving in measure like a dancer with the rhythm of continuity. It is typically an uncritical, or more accurately a precritical response. We cannot begin criticism, strictly speaking, until we have heard the author out, unless he is a bore, when the critical response starts prematurely and, as we say, we can't get into the book. The second kind of response is thematic, detached, fully conscious, and one which sees and is capable of examining the work as a simultaneous whole. [46]

I certainly do not wish to suggest that we can dispense with the second kind of response. In practice, as Frye himself admits, "these two types of response overlap." Without the possibility of withdrawing from others, the self (and therefore the possibility of relationship) would not exist. Yet in Jerusalem (and in Milton) it is quite clearly the elevation of this position above all others - the apex of the triangle which is characteristic of Satan's world - that makes the poem (and for Milton the progression of fallen time) appear as an impenetrable wall, a surface which hems us in from others. The "detached," "fully conscious" response, which sees the whole work before it, is quite clearly within the provenance of the reasoning memory. A reading of this kind is undertaken from a position implicitly defined by the creator-god who, while remaining apart from time, sees it stretched out beneath him. It is precisely this relationship to texts and to others which Blake's Milton attempts to overcome. So long as we remain in this position the poem is the horizon of our constituted worlds rather than a form that we have embraced. Our arrangement and rearrangements of what is held in our reasoning memory are a way of seeing with Jerusalem, not seeing "thro" it. My account of Jerusalem as a structure which alternates between the time of forgetting and the time of awaiting and retaining is simply one more attempt to order the poem from a perspective which is at one remove from our engagement with it. Moreover, as I shall argue, the poem begins with the affirmation that Jerusalem can only be heard from the position of embrace described in Milton and glimpsed in The Four Zoas.

I am, of course, not saying that the critics I have discussed are somehow wrong about the poem. Far from it; they are correct and their experiences of the poem are paradigmatic. Jerusalem is a poem which is structured, like Lockean time, as a series of appearances to the self. From a position outside of the poem these appearances can be arranged and re-arranged in many different ways. Just as the physical universe can be organized to form a Ptolemaic, Copernican, Newtonian and even an Einsteinian universe, so too Jerusalem can be "ordered" in a startling variety of ways. However, this manipulation of what appears to the self is the work of the Daughters of Albion, rather than of the Imagination. As Los explains in the final chapter of Jerusalem:

> And sometimes the Earth shall roll in the Abyss & sometimes
> Stand in the Center & sometimes stretch flat in the Expanse,
> According to the will of the lovely Daughters of Albion.
> Sometimes it shall assimilate with mighty Golgonooza:
> Touching its summits: & sometimes divided roll apart.
> As a beautiful Veil so these Females shall fold & unfold
> According to their will the outside surface of the Earth
> An outside shadowy Surface superadded to the real Surface;
> Which is unchangeable for ever & ever Amen: so be it!
> (83:40-48, E242)

It is this work of the Daughters which is often confused with the work of the Imagination. Hume, for example, writes that

> Nothing is more free than the imagination of man, and though it cannot exceed that original stock of ideas furnished by the internal and external senses, it has unlimited power of mixing, compounding, separating, and dividing these ideas in all the varieties of fiction and vision.[47]

The number of possible arrangements of these appearances is, like those of the alphabet, almost infinite. However, despite this freedom, in Hume's understanding the labour of the Imagination is confined to a single world. No visionary construction occurs with an imagination of this kind; the imagination is not a power of opening or responding, but a power of manipulation.

It is one of the extraordinary achievements of Blake in Jerusalem to have created a poem which follows so closely some of our most fundamental experiences of time. Having said this, however, the question remains as to

whether this is all that can be said of the poem and of its time. Is there not some way of entering Jerusalem and so glimpsing the temporality which from outside the poem is so evanescent? This question is of more than casual importance, for the hero of the poem is, after all, characterized in Milton as time itself. To say that Los can appear only as space, as Enitharmon, is to resign oneself to the radical impossibility of reading Jerusalem. The concern of the frontispiece with the question of entry into the poem also suggests that there is a perspective which will in some way collapse the distance imposed by the reasoning memory. This possibility is moreover the subject matter of Milton, Jerusalem's prelude. A reading of the latter poem should quite clearly begin from the embrace and vision of Christ described by the former. Most tantalizing, however, is the narrator's claim in the preface to the fourth chapter that he has given us the end of a golden string. All we need to do is to

> wind it into a ball:
> It will lead you in at Heavens gate,
> Built in Jerusalems wall.
> (77, E231)

The most immediate referent for this passage is the line of text which leads us to the fourth chapter. If we are to see "thro" the window of Jerusalem then quite clearly we must follow the temporal unfolding of the poem. We must focus on our participation in the text. The lines quoted from the preface to the fourth chapter suggest that this path will lead, from within the body of Lockean time, to the perimeter of the world, to the gate that in the frontispiece opens to Jerusalem.

This is, in fact, far from an extraordinary proposal. To see "thro" the windows of Jerusalem we must first move from a position apart from it to one which engages with it in dialogue. It is in encounter that the poem will be opened, that our closed worlds will be ruptured. This is nothing more nor less than to read the poem. I am, of course, not refusing to theorize or form structures on the basis of my experience. I am, however, arguing that if we are to adopt the position to the text suggested by Milton's descent in

Milton, and eschew the god-like position above the text adopted by the Sons of Albion, then any account of Jerusalem must be anchored in a reading of that poem. There must be a dialectic between the powers of retention and attention which, as I have argued in my chapter on The Book of Urizen, characterize the reading process. Such a dialectic is, of course, not easily achieved. The level of its difficulty is suggested by the struggle of Los in Jerusalem to ensure that his Spectre works alternately with him. This implies, therefore, that our critical efforts will not consist of a pure, unmediated attentiveness to what is given in the present of reading Jerusalem; instead, they will consist of a struggle, and at times an uneven one, between a reading located in attentiveness to the reader's encounter with the text as it unfolds and one which tries (with the reasoning memory) to organize and make sense of that present. Our hope is that, as with Blake confronted by Leviathan in the Memorable Fancy of The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, this embrace of the chaos and frightening disorder of the text, with its vertigo and dizzy shifts in time and perspective, will in the end lead us to Jerusalem's gate. The beginning of any account of Jerusalem cannot be an attempt to extract the poem's kernel, nor can it be a search for "treasures of terse wisdom, epic grandeur, and occasional gleams of lyrical beauty"; it must be the act of taking up a position, with Los, in front of the poem.

(2) An expanding vision

The opening lines of Jerusalem seem, at first glance, to offer the reader an elegant and obvious ordering principle for the poem.[48] Blake writes:

> Of the Sleep of Ulro! and of the passage through
> Eternal Death! and of the awaking to Eternal Life.
>
> This theme calls me in sleep night after night, & ev'ry morn
> Awakes me at sun-rise, then I see the Saviour over me
> Spreading his beams of love, & dictating the words of this mild song.
> (4:1-5, E146)

This theme, however, has a number of rather surprising characteristics. When

Hume talks of a theme he is referring to something which is very well behaved and which will allow him to master it. For Hume a theme is an organizing principle that allows him to order the impressions that he has at his disposal:

> In all compositions of genius . . . it is requisite that the writer have some plan or object; and though he may be hurried from this plan by the vehemence of thought, as in an ode, or drop it carelessly, as in an epistle or essay, there must appear some aim or intention in his first setting out, if not in the composition of the whole work. A production without design would resemble more the ravings of a madman than the sober efforts of genius and learning.[49]

Blake's theme is a much more unruly affair. It is not an organizing principle which the author or the reader could possess and then use to order a mass of otherwise inert material. There is, instead, an extraordinary degree of relationship and mutual determination between the two terms. The theme, rather than being possessed by Blake, presents <u>itself</u> to him every night. For Hume the theme appears as a result of some determination by the author, while for Blake it emerges and speaks from a realm which is outside Blake's constituted world. Hume's inert world (whether that of impressions and ideas, or the material universe) has been displaced by a universe which is clearly vocal. The world speaks to Blake and it is the melody, rhythm and content of this voice which is his theme.

What is more, rather than Blake developing the theme (into the work of <u>Jerusalem</u>, for example) it is, at least in the first instance, the theme that develops him. The sources of cognition and motivation for the poet are therefore as much outside the self as inside: the theme not only speaks of the passage from sleep to waking, but seems to be able to inspire a parallel movement in its audience.

Blake must, of course, listen to, and himself embrace, the words that he hears, and he must do this in a way which makes them his own; nevertheless, it is the manner in which the theme poses Blake as a question which draws him from sleep to waking and into the presence of Christ. The call that the poet records in these opening lines is therefore a call in the sense of a <u>vocation</u>. It must be listened to and embraced by the individual, but to the

extent that this is done the individual is led out of him/herself and into his/her calling. In these lines the primacy of Locke's simple ideas is called into question. The primary and recurrent material of history and experience is now a call.

Even with these qualifications it is important to affirm that this theme is not the organizing principle of the poem. The entire process described in the first five lines is, strictly speaking, antecedent to Jerusalem. It tells us of the ground upon which Jerusalem stands, the conditions under which the Saviour's voice, who dictates the poem itself, is heard. The theme calls Blake only in sleep; during the day it is the Saviour who is heard and it is the Saviour who dictates the mild song called Jerusalem.

The point at which the vision of Jerusalem appears is, therefore, the moment in which one has listened to the theme and under its influence woken from sleep to the voice of the Saviour. Jerusalem appears in a moment of vision. In saying this it is important to recognize that this awakening and its attendant vision occurs within the fallen world. The diurnal cycles of day and night which make up the ontic world still continue, for the awakening is not finally achieved and the voice of the Saviour is not heard once and for all; instead, Blake must wake again and again to the Saviour's voice. As Blake writes:

> Man is born a Spectre or Satan & is altogether an Evil, & requires a New Selfhood continually & must continually be changed into his direct Contrary.
>
> (52, E200)

It is at this point of rebirth that the Saviour is seen and heard and the "mild song" of Jerusalem is dictated. We can therefore say that, rather than beginning with the outline of a principle which will organize the material at the disposal of the poet, Jerusalem opens with a description of the particular engagement with and comportment towards others in which the poem can be heard.

The referent for the "theme" mentioned in the opening lines of Jerusalem is, therefore, not Jerusalem itself, but The Four Zoas and Milton. The

subject of The Four Zoas is quite clearly a vision or theme which is heard in sleep, for it is a dream of nine Nights. Moreover, its theme is precisely the one outlined in the opening lines of Jerusalem, for it tells us of the Fall that brought existence into "the sleep of Ulro" (Nights one to three), "the passage through" the "Eternal Death" of fallen history (Nights four to six), and of the awakening to Eternal Life (Nights seven to nine). The process of awakening that is glimpsed in The Four Zoas is, of course, fully elaborated in Milton. In both poems awakening results in a vision of the Saviour. In The Four Zoas Los is able to see "the Lamb of God / Clothed in Luvahs robes of blood descending to redeem" (86:44-45, E355), and at the end of Milton "the Starry Eight became / One Man Jesus the Saviour. wonderful!" (42:10-11, E143). In other words, it is at the apex of The Four Zoas and Milton, in a vision of Christ's call to us, that Jerusalem begins:

> Awake! awake O sleeper of the land of shadows, wake! expand!
> I am in you and you in me, mutual in love divine:
> Fibres of love from man to man thro Albions pleasant land.
> In all the dark Atlantic vale down from the hills of Surrey
> A black water accumulates, return Albion! return!
> (4:6-10, E146)

Blake writes in "A Vision of the Last Judgement" that "All Things are comprehended in their Eternal Forms in the Divine body of the Saviour the True Vine of Eternity" (E555). A vision of Christ is therefore a vision of the relationships which underlie and make possible life itself.

In the fallen world, however, reality is constituted in a relationship of withdrawal. As I have argued in previous chapters, to withdraw is not an act which can be completed once and for all; it must be continually repeated, for in order to escape others one must withdraw even from the very fact of withdrawal. One way of picturing this is to say that, for a person in the state of withdrawal, Christ is always solicitous, always calling, and that withdrawal is a constant turning away from his presence. The vision of Christ in Jerusalem, therefore, modulates into a vision of this relationship between a call and the refusal to hear. The constitutive relationship which founds the fallen world, and from which fallen time opens out, is that between the

caring call of Christ and the continual withdrawal of Albion:

> I am not a God afar off, I am a brother and friend;
> Within your bosoms I reside, and you reside in me:
> Lo! we are One; forgiving all Evil; Not seeking recompense!
> Ye are my members O ye sleepers of Beulah, land of Shades!
>
> But the perturbed man away turns down the valleys dark;
> [Saying. We are not One: we are Many, thou most simulative]
> Phantom of the over heated brain! shadow of immortality!
> . . .
> Jerusalem is not! her daughters are indefinite:
> By demonstration, man alone can live, and not by faith.
> My mountains are my own, and I will keep them to myself!
> The Malvern and the Cheviot, the Wolds Plinlimmon & Snowdon
> Are mine. here will I build my Laws of Moral Virtue!
> Humanity shall be no more: but war & princedom & victory!
> (4:18-24, 27-32, E146-47)

In the first lines of the poem we discovered the particular relationship and moment in which the vision of Jerusalem appeared to the narrator. These lines have now opened into a vision of humanity's comportment in the world. There is an interesting relationship between these two foundations, for while the narrator's particular perspective in the world opens, and in a certain sense constitutes, the time and space in which Christ can appear, it is evident that the relationships which are revealed in this way ground and make possible the narrator's position in the world. It is the relationships of call and withdrawal, enacted, respectively, in the persons of Jesus and Albion, which underlie the world of day and night in which Blake is situated. The relationship between the individual and the whole is here one of mutual determination. As Merleau-Ponty writes in Signs:

> The world is inseparable from the subject, but from a subject who is nothing but a project of the world; and the subject is inseparable from the world, but from a world which he himself projects.[50]

In poems such as The Book of Urizen and The Four Zoas the horror of withdrawal was to some extent kept at a distance from the narrator. This is because in ontic time the Fall is something which is observed from a distance. In the time of embodiment, however, one perceives the relationships which found and open the ontic world. The fall is, therefore, not something that occurs in the distant past, but a phenomenon which is ever present. The movement of withdrawal on the part of Albion therefore has a startlingly

present reality:

> The banks of the Thames are clouded! the ancient porches of Albion are
> Darken'd! they are drawn thro' unbounded space, scatter'd upon
> The Void in incoherent despair! Cambridge & Oxford & London,
> Are driven among the starry Wheels, rent away and dissipated,
> In Chasms & Abysses of sorrow, enlarg'd without dimension, terrible[.]
> Albions mountains run with blood, the cries of war & of tumult
> Resound into the unbounded night, every Human perfection
> Of mountain & river & city, are small & wither'd & darken'd
> Cam is a little stream! Ely is almost swallowd up!
> (5:1-9, E147)

In the everyday world in which we live, the founding structures of the world cannot be seen. Locke's closeted man, for example, sees the outline of the closet and not the relationships which bring the world of the closet into being. It is only in the vision achieved in embodiment, or awakening, that we hear the call of the Saviour and see the withdrawal of Albion. It is important to see that this vision does not do away with the caverned world; in fact, it is the basis of it. The narrator must live in the everyday world, but from within this space he is able to see the withdrawal of Albion from the call of Christ, which is its foundation. This is why Blake's friends are astonished at him. They live, with Blake, in the fallen world, but are unable to see the ontological ground of that world. For Blake, however, the theme has become a call that wakes him, and so allows him to hear the voice of Christ, in response to which he must act:

> Trembling I sit day and night, my friends are astonish'd at me.
> Yet they forgive my wanderings, I rest not from my great task!
> To open the Eternal Worlds, to open the immortal Eyes
> Of Man inwards into the Worlds of Thought: into Eternity
> Ever expanding in the Bosom of God. the Human Imagination. . . .
> (5:16-20, E147)

The vision of ontological or foundational time does not stop at this point; instead, it expands in what is at first an extremely disconcerting fashion. The narrator's description of the task that now lies ahead of him makes mention of a number of names and places - Golgonooza, Entuthon, Scofield, Kox, Kotope and so on - which resist any easy assimilation to what has preceded them. The vision itself follows a similar course and modulates into what seems to be an extremely condensed map of the world:

> Scofield! Kox, Kotope and Bowen, revolve most mightily upon
> The Furnace of Los: before the eastern gate bending their fury.
> They war, to destroy the Furnaces, to desolate Golgonooza:
> And to devour the Sleeping Humanity of Albion in rage & hunger.
> They revolve into the Furnaces Southward & are driven forth Northward
> Divided into Male and Female forms time after time.
> From these Twelve all the Families of England spread abroad.
>
> The Male is a Furnace of beryll; the Female is a golden Loom;
> I behold them and their rushing fires overwhelm my Soul,
> In Londons darkness; and my tears fall day and night,
> Upon the Emanations of Albions Sons! the Daughters of Albion
> Names anciently rememberd, but now contemn'd as fictions!
> Although in every bosom they controll our Vegetative powers.
>
> These are united into Tirzah and her Sisters, on Mount Gilead,
> Cambel & Gwendolen & Conwenna & Cordella & Ignoge.
> And these united into Rahab in the Covering Cherub on Euphrates
> Gwiniverra & Gwinefred, & Gonoril1 & Sabrina beautiful,
> Estrild, Mehetabel & Ragan, lovely Daughters of Albion
> They are the beautiful Emanations of the Twelve Sons of Albion. . . .
> (5:27-45, E147-48)

In the following lines we hear of Vala, Jerusalem, the work of "Beulahs lovely Daughters" and a war by "Abstract Philosophy . . . against Imagination."

The basic import of these lines is fairly clear. It can be seen as a rough map of the world that is opened in the time of Albion's withdrawal from Christ. For Albion to withdraw is for him to be fragmented and divide into male and female powers: the whole man becomes his warring sons and daughters. Nevertheless, much of the fifth plate of Jerusalem requires a detailed knowledge of earlier poems, or of later parts of Jerusalem, in order to make sense. The reader is presented with the brute fact of the attempts by Kox and his brothers to destroy the "Furnace of Los" and "desolate Golgonooza" and "devour the Sleeping Humanity of Albion." Similarly, the plight of Jerusalem and Vala is described without any real orienting context. Doubtless it is the effect of passages such as these which leads a critic like Northrop Frye to write that "the initial impression" of the poem is "of a harsh, crabbed and strident poem," a "dehydrated epic" in which Blake's symbols "had become a kind of ideographic alphabet and had thereby lost much of their immediacy."[51] However, for this reader at least, these opening pages of Jerusalem certainly do not lack immediacy. The struggles which are described are all too present.

They seem to contain a fury which threatens the reader him/herself. The lack of orienting context only heightens this emotion. The kernel of truth in Frye's comments can, however, be seen if we define the immediate as that which can be readily assimilated to the constituted world of the self. Rather than this kind of immediacy, the opening pages of Jerusalem confront readers (in a way which is entirely appropriate for a vision of Christ and Albion) with a force that bumps up against us, moves us with the force of powerful emotions, and yet remains outside of our grasp.

It is, in fact, extremely difficult to capture this experience within the confines of discursive prose. The world in which we write orderly prose, the comfortable everyday world in which we live, has been torn open by a movement which brings us into the presence of Christ and his call. This rupture of the ontic world does not give us an idea or even an insight which, strictly speaking, we could appropriate for ourselves; instead, we see a person whose call is directed to the whole of humanity. The world in which we once walked so confidently is now animated, and we are displaced from its centre. What is more, the ground which once seemed so solid and secure can now be seen to be founded on the withdrawal of Albion from the call of Christ. To "enter into these Images" is to experience an extreme dizziness and vertigo. The ground beneath our feet is itself without foundation. The world is "drawn thro' unbounded space, scatter'd upon / The Void in incoherent despair! . . . rent away and dissipated, / In Chasms & Abysses of sorrow" (5:2-5, E147). Our everyday world is a world of loss.

Before we proceed any further into Jerusalem it is, quite clearly, important to understand in more detail part of what Blake means by vision, and it is to this discussion that we must now turn.

(3) Vision

In the twentieth century it is without doubt easier to accept Blake's observation that vision is "infected" (E563) by the weak visions of time and

space than it is to feel comfortable with his companion belief that in vision we see more clearly than we do with our mortal eyes:

> The Prophets describe what they saw in Vision as real and existing men whom they saw with their imaginative and immortal organs; the Apostles the same; the clearer the organ the more distinct the object. A Spirit and a Vision are not, as the modern philosophy supposes, a cloudy vapour or a nothing: they are organized and minutely articulated beyond all that the mortal and perishing nature can produce. He who does not imagine in stronger and better lineaments, and in stronger and better light than his perishing mortal eye can see does not imagine at all. The painter of this work asserts that all his imaginations appear to him infinitely more perfect and more minutely organized than any thing seen by his mortal eye.
>
> (DC E541-2)

In attempting to understand what Blake means in passages such as this we must be careful not to confuse a clarity which is gained through the assimilation of one's subject matter to the perspectives of the self with the clarity that is a result of vision. In the above passage Blake's metaphor for what is seen in vision is that of "real and existing men." Vision, therefore, has the uncomfortable ability to speak back, to refuse one's outline, to simply walk away and refuse dialogue, and most importantly, it can even be wrong. The person who experiences such a vision may well feel that it is a corrosive and unsettling force.

A particularly clear depiction of the difference between these two kinds of clarity is shown in the drawing known as "A Vision."[52] If the page is a paradigmatic instance of the forms with which we attempt to order the world around us, a two dimensional surface in which we attempt to box and so re-present reality, then quite clearly this vision is inaccessible to the series of pages/boxes with which we attempt to encompass it. The figure writing at the table, the light of vision, and the figure seen in vision, all are, from the perspective of the viewer, almost lost. There is something both frustrating and disconcerting about our inability to reach their conference. As we continue to look at the picture this feeling can develop into one of giddiness and vertigo, for the frames and receding corridor which lie in front of us are always about to become a cavity which opens beneath us. In these moments we perhaps gain a glimpse of what it is to see "thro" the

window of our eyes and not with them; in this moment we fall into the unsettling presence of vision.[53] Vision is therefore, for Blake, as much given to, as structured by, the individual. As he writes in a poem which he sent to Thomas Butts on the 22nd of November 1802, "Now I a fourfold vision see / And a fourfold vision is given to me" (E722).

Something of this sense of a vision which is "given" is continually demanded of the reader by the first chapter of Jerusalem. As I have argued, the poem begins in a moment of awakening in which the closure of sleep is punctured. At this precise point, we hear the voice of Christ and observe the withdrawal of Albion; moreover, we feel the presence of their interaction in our world and our solitude. Nevertheless, in the opening lines of the poem we are able to grasp this interaction only in an intuitive or pre-reflective way. If we focus on this moment, however, what was at first only intuitively grasped becomes more minutely articulated. The vision of Christ's call is supplemented by a vision of Albion's response. This vision itself expands to show the presence of this relationship beneath the entire fallen world. Then the circle of vision itself expands and becomes a map of the world of withdrawal; instead of the relationship between Albion and Jesus we now see the results of it, the world in which it is embodied.

It is difficult to find an adequate metaphor for this expansion. It is in some ways as if a stone has been thrown into a pool of water. After the initial commotion a ripple appears which gradually expands until it reaches the edge of the pool. At the point of impact the shape of the ripple is quite clear; however, in the moments immediately following this event the ripple gradually grows larger and larger. As a result the form that was first only glimpsed is, after some time, seen in great detail. The movement of the ripple and its centre are, nevertheless, always defined by the point of impact between stone and water; and the circle that reaches the river banks is an elaboration, an expansion, of the original circle, not something that supersedes or surpasses it. Similarly, in the moment of vision in which the calm of sleep is broken and Christ's call to Albion in withdrawal is heard,

we gain, in an unarticulated state, the shape and form of the entire first chapter and, indeed, of the whole poem. The chapter develops as if it were an expanding circle which, while always being defined by the original vision, expands and so articulates and clarifies that vision. Paul Ricoeur writes in The Symbolism of Evil that "The beginning is not what one finds first; the point of departure must be reached, it must be won."[54] Similarly, as I shall argue, it is only at the end of the first chapter of Jerusalem, and then again at the end of the poem, that we grasp its opening lines in full clarity.

Albion's withdrawal from the Saviour immediately places him in the time of loss. As in The Four Zoas, this is now the ground of the fallen world. To have a vision of the Saviour is to see Albion withdrawing from his call; to see Albion is to see in a preliminary way the shape of the fallen world; to focus our attention on this world is to see Los, for as we have seen in previous poems, the fallen world is retained only as a result of the relationship which Los sustains with Albion-in-withdrawal. For this reason the vision now turns to Los.

(4) The vision of Los, his Spectre and his Emanation

In Jerusalem, as in previous poems, Los is a prophetic blacksmith who sustains a relationship with Albion-in-withdrawal. In the opening vision, for example, we see Los standing at his forge waiting for the return of Albion. Later in the first chapter he maintains that

> the time will arrive,
> When all Albions injuries shall cease, and when we shall
> Embrace him tenfold bright, rising from his tomb in immortality.
> (7:54-56, E150)

In Jerusalem Los is therefore called "the friend of Albion who most lov'd him" (35:12, E181). Los describes the task of maintaining a relationship to Albion-in-withdrawal in extraordinary terms:

> I saw terrified; I took the sighs & tears, & bitter groans:
> I lifted them into my Furnaces; to form the spiritual sword.

> That lays open the hidden heart: I drew forth the pang
> Of sorrow red hot: I workd it on my resolute anvil:
> I heated it in the flames of Hand, & Hyle, & Coban. . . .
> (9:17-21, E152)

Los's prophetic work involves an attempt to retain the reality - the sighs, groans and pangs - of withdrawal. If he were not to fulfil this task, the fallen world would dissolve and Albion would vanish. Moreover, in retaining this reality he forms a spiritual sword, a prophetic weapon, which is able to confront Albion with the reality of withdrawal and so call him to return. It is for this reason that Los must, as in The Four Zoas, establish a world of loss.

Los's relationship with Albion-in-withdrawal is not without personal cost. Our first glimpse of him reveals a figure who is under extraordinary external pressure: "Scofield! Kox, Kotope and Bowen" bend "their fury" (5:27,28 E147) against him. Their activity is, of course, an attempt - parallel to that conducted by Urizen in The Four Zoas - to assimilate Los (loss) and in this way to become blind to the foundation of their world. This external pressure is accompanied by an excruciating internal division:

> Los heard her lamentations in the deeps afar! his tears fall
> Incessant before the Furnaces, and his Emanation divided in pain,
> Eastward toward the Starry Wheels. But Westward, a black Horror,
> His spectre driv'n by the Starry Wheels of Albions sons, black and
> Opake divided from his back; he labours and he mourns!
> (5:66-6:2, E148)

Los's division in this chapter differs from apparently similar divisons in The Book of Urizen and The Four Zoas in a number of ways. Most important of these differences is that the fragmentation of Los is portrayed as an event that occurs in every day (each morning Blake awakens to his vision of Christ-Albion-Los). The fragmentation of Los is, within the framework of ontological time, an ongoing event which takes place beneath each moment of the fallen world.

The Spectre appears at the point of withdrawal from others. It is precisely when Albion turns his "back to the Divine Vision" that "his Spectrous Chaos before his face appeard: an Unformed Memory" (29[33]:1-2, E174). In withdrawal Albion, like Locke's human understanding, can see no more

than what his memory is able to retain of past encounters. As we have seen in The Book of Urizen and The Four Zoas, withdrawal therefore results in the domination of the active power by the Spectre.

Plate 29[33] gives a striking example of what this change means. For the person in the state of withdrawal, reality is reduced to that which is able to appear within the constituted world of the self. The "Human Form . . . Divine," for example, now becomes a "Worm seventy inches long" (29[33]:5-6, E175): it is elongated in the order of its successive appearances to the self. Similarly, the identity of this worm is defined as "a fortuitous concourse of memories accumulated & lost,"[55] because the present of encounter, in which the self may find its true nature, has been lost. As in Locke's account of personal identity, the self is now no more than the faculty which accumulates, and then loses, memories.

Los, of course, does not himself withdraw from Albion. Nevertheless, he finds himself in a position which is analogous to that of Albion-in-withdrawal: the other has withdrawn and Los is therefore left in solitude. As in The Book of Urizen (cf. plates 10, 11 and 13), each moment of attentiveness to the plight of Albion must result in the elaboration of a closed world because there is no other to meet Los's embrace. It is this duality in the work of Los which produces the hiatus in his being. Los is, by default, continually torn back from relationship and thrown into a world held by his Spectre. On the one hand he awaits the return of Albion; on the other hand this very process divides the Spectre from him, for in order to do this Los is always engaged in building a closed world. This situation and division is, of course, one that we have encountered in previous chapters. In Jerusalem it is given added cogency and clarity by the elaboration of the Spectre into a complex and striking figure. One of the decisive features of this elaboration is the now explicit association of the Spectre with the Lockean reason that retains and then manipulates simple ideas in order to produce knowledge.

The Spectre, as Blake tells us in Jerusalem, is

> the Reasoning Power in Man; & when separated
> From Imagination, & closing itself as in steel, in a Ratio
> Of the Things of Memory. It thence frames Laws & Moralitites
> To destroy Imagination! the Divine Body, by Martydoms & Wars.
> (74:10-13, E229)

The "Reasoning Power" is, however, given a number of other titles. It is, for example, identified as Los's "Pride & Self-righteousness" (8:30, E151) because, like Locke's human understanding, it first retains that which appears to the self, and then proceeds to frame "Laws & Moralities" from these appearances. The Spectre is also described as a being who entertains "Uncircumcised pretences to Chastity" which "must be cut in sunder!" (8:32, E151). This appellation refers to the "Ratio / Of the Things of Memory" within which the Spectre encloses itself. The Spectre pretends to be chaste by denying the primordiality of encounter with others. The Simple Ideas, or "Things of Memory," upon which Locke and the Spectre build their "reasonable" worlds are, of course, dependent upon the particular relationship to others in which they appear. This relationship, however, cannot appear so long as they close themselves away from others. In the terms of Blake's metaphor, Locke and the Spectre are uncircumcised: the veil of flesh which walls them in must be cut away.

Many of the characteristics of the Spectre and of his relationship to Los can be seen in the illumination to plate six, where this figure appears with large bat-like wings which roof Los in. The Spectre appears because Los has stopped working at his forge and, instead, looks over his shoulder. The implication is that by looking backwards he has stopped facing Albion. This is perhaps why Blake writes that the "Spectrous Dead" dwell in "the back & loins" (29[33]:4, E174): it is only by turning away from relationship that the Spectre divides from the active power and can be seen as a separate part of the personality. In this same illumination, Los's hammer has become an erect phallus. The transformation is quite revealing. In working at his furnaces the hammer is a tool which forges relationship with others. When he ceases work, however, the hammer becomes a symbol of lust (Los adopts a position which suggests masturbation rather than intercourse). In this second

position others are present only within the economy of the self. Los is, in this moment, enclosed within the "Ratio / Of the Things of Memory" which is formed by the Reasoning Power.

The Spectre, as he himself recognizes, is always outside of life. In the terms of Locke's analogy, he exists within a closet where the light of encounter reaches him only as a pale reflection. The Spectre is "all reversed & for ever dead," and his recognition of this fact is expressed in an intensely moving speech:

> now is my grief at worst: incapable of being
> Surpassed: but every moment it accumulates more & more
> It continues accumulating to eternity! the joys of God advance
> For he is Righteous: he is not a Being of Pity & Compassion
> He cannot feel Distress: he feeds on Sacrifice & Offering:
> Delighting in cries & tears & clothed in holiness & solitude
> But my griefs advance also, for ever & ever without end
> O that I could cease to be! Despair! I am Despair
>
> . . . Life lives on my
> Consuming: & the Almighty hath made me his Contrary
> To be all evil, all reversed & for ever dead: knowing
> And seeing life, yet living not; how can I then behold
> And not tremble; how can I be beheld & not abhorrd. . . .
> (10:44-51, 55-59, E153-54)

The Spectre is indeed despair, for his being never reaches the present of life.[56] At the moment in which Los opens the closed world of the self he is transformed, but, in the fallen world at least, only into another memory of life that must be consumed.

The Spectre is a highly ambiguous character. In Eternity, as I have argued in a previous chapter, the Spectre is necessary in order to retain the ground against which the leap of the active power towards others is defined. In the fallen world this figure has a role to play which is just as crucial, for, given the absence of Albion, the Spectre must retain the world in which Los stands. If the reasoning memory did not retain the shape of Los's relationship with Albion then the entire world would dissolve. This interdependence means that Los must continually subdue the Spectre to his will. In a sequential narrative this event would occur at a particular place and time. In the vision of ontological time which composes the first chapter of Jerusalem, it is seen as an ongoing struggle and tension because it forms

the very foundation of the world in which we live. The struggle between Los and the Spectre is similar in certain respects to the activity in which the system of language is yoked again and again to the openness and intentionality of speech. Los must force the Spectre to retain the shape of his encounter with others. Los therefore cries:

> Obey my voice & never deviate from my will
> And I will be merciful to thee: be thou invisible to all
> To whom I make thee invisible, but chief to my own Children
> O Spectre of Urthona: Reason not against their dear approach
> Nor them obstruct with thy temptations of doubt & despair
> O Shame O strong & mighty Shame I break thy brazen fetters
> If thou refuse, thy present torments will seem southern breezes
> To what thou shalt endure if thou obey not my great will.
> (10:29-36, E153)

The struggle between Los and the Spectre creates an oscillation between enclosure and openness, opacity and transparence. This means that life itself, as I have argued in my discussion of The Book of Urizen and of the vision of nature which ends the first book of Milton, is formed in the tension between openness and closure; but now, in the vision of ontological time which composes the first chapter of Jerusalem, this oscillation can be clearly seen to be a result of the stuggle between Los and his Spectre.

Los is, of course, also subject to a second division in which Enitharmon divides away from him. This is described in terms which are reminiscent of The Book of Urizen:

> yet still she divided away
> In gnawing pain from Los's bosom in the deadly Night;
> First as a red Globe of blood trembling beneath his bosom[.]
> Suspended over her he hung: he infolded her in his garments
> Of wool: he hid her from the Spectre, in shame & confusion of
> Face; in terrors & pains of Hell & Eternal Death, the
> Trembling Globe shot forth Self-living & Los howld over it:
> Feeding it with his groans & tears day & night without ceasing:
> And the Spectrous Darkness from his back divided in temptations,
> And in grinding agonies in threats! stiflings! & direful strugglings.
> (17:49-58, E162)

In my discussion of The Book of Urizen I described the division of Enitharmon from Los in terms of a bridge which suddenly lost one of its supports. Similarly, in this passage the shape of Los's world, which once was the site for a movement towards others, is now projected into the void. The Spectre and Los now struggle with each other for possession of the body of

the fallen world. Los's attempt to bend the Spectre to his will is implicitly an attempt to ensure that the passive power gives body to Albion-in-withdrawal. On the other hand, the Spectre struggles with Los in the hope that he will be able to make the world formed by Enitharmon into a closet.

Perhaps the most stiking part of Blake's vision of Los, Enitharmon and the Spectre is the recognition that in retaining the world of withdrawal he is giving form to Albion's withdrawal. When his Sons and Daughters appear from out of his furnaces they are all astonished that Los should give a body to Vala rather than Jerusalem:

> Why wilt thou give to her a Body whose life is but a Shade?
> Her joy and love, a shade: a shade of sweet repose:
> But animated and vegetated, she is a devouring worm. . . .
> (12:1-3, E155)

We will discuss Vala later in this chapter; however, at this stage it can be said that Vala is the outer form or surface of Albion-in-withdrawal. Los gives form to Vala because he is giving form to the world of withdrawal. This is why the Spectre asserts that Los's friendship to Albion assists Albion's Daughters and Sons:

> Wilt thou still go on to destruction?
> Till thy life is all taken away by this deceitful Friendship?
> He drinks thee up like water! like wine he pours thee
> Into his tuns: thy Daughters are trodden in his vintage
> He makes thy Sons the trampling of his bulls, they are plow'd
> And harrowd for his profit, lo! thy stolen Emanation
> Is his garden of pleasure!
> (7:9-15, E149)

Enitharmon is Albion's garden of pleasure because the outline of the world of Los (loss) gives form and body to Albion's withdrawal. The body of Los is in the fallen world the body of Albion. This is also why Enitharmon divides "Eastward toward the Starry Wheels" of Albion's sons (5:68, E148).

Los recognizes the danger and ambivalence of what he is doing. He describes himself as a "horror and an astonishment" (8:18, E151) and as he works at his furnace he sees the "soft affections / Condense beneath [his] hammer into forms of cruelty" (9:26-27, E152). Despite this ambivalence he retains the form of the world of withdrawal in the hope that Albion will recognize his error and so cast it off. Perhaps the most striking description

of Los's strategy is contained on plate 12:

> I saw the finger of God go forth
> Upon my Furnaces, from within the Wheels of Albions Sons:
> Fixing their Systems, permanent: by mathematic power
> Giving a body to Falshood that it may be cast off for ever.
> With Demonstrative Science piercing Apollyon with his own bow!
> (12:10-14, E155)

The world that is created in this way also contains the possibility of openness. One of the major effects of Los's work and of his struggle with his Spectre is the production of the spaces of Erin:

> Then Erin came forth from the Furnaces, & all the Daughters of Beulah
> Came from the Furnaces, by Los's mighty power for Jerusalems
> Sake: walking up and down among the Spaces of Erin:
> And the Sons and Daughters of Los came forth in perfection lovely!
> And the Spaces of Erin reach'd from the starry heighth, to the starry
> depth. . . .
> (11:8-12, E154)

Erin arises as a result of Los's attempt to remain in relationship with Albion, subdue his Spectre, and so claim his body as his own. In other words, Erin appears in the time of embodiment. As Damon helpfully suggests, Erin is the body[57]; or, perhaps more accurately, Erin is the body that has been embraced. As we found in Milton, it is in the time of embodiment that others - the Sons and Daughters of Los and the Daughters of Beulah - are able to appear. Los's work has opened within the sequential time of Ulro a time of "meeting" and "loving embrace." The shape of this world, with its extraordinary oscillations between the Spectre and Los, openness and closure, opacity and transparence, is the city of Golgonooza. It is to this city that the vision now extends.

(5) An Urn of Beulah

Golgonooza, as James Bogan and Thomas Altizer tell us, is often referred to as the "City of Art."[58] It is seen as an imaginative and human construction in the midst of a fallen world. Wicksteed writes, for example, that "Golgonooza is the construction we build by aid of Imagination to orientate our progress through this harsh and dangerous world."[59] Similarly,

Northrop Frye writes that

> All imaginative and creative acts, being eternal, go to build up a permanent structure, which Blake calls Golgonooza, above time, and, when this structure is finished, nature, its scaffolding, will be knocked away and man will live in it.[60]

However, where Blake does speak of Golgonooza and Art, he does so in a way which severely qualifies the comprehensiveness of this appellation. Golgonooza is, we are told in Milton, not called Art, but "Art and Manufacture" (24[26]:50, E120), and although a certain amount of manufacturing goes into art, the second term clearly connotes a relatively unsavoury activity which by definition would seem to be excluded from the permanent structure of which Frye speaks. Milton also suggests that it is, in fact, only mortals who give Golgonooza this name and that Eternals might call it something quite different. In Milton Blake writes that Los is called time by mortals, but in this instance we are told to what extent this is true. Los is indeed time, but mortals see this figure as an old man, whereas he is in fact always in the spring of youth. It is not that mortals are wrong, but that they severely limit Los's actual power and vigour. Similarly, in calling Golgonooza the city of art, it is not that critics are wrong, but that the normal meaning of this term does not do justice to the function and extent of this city. Rather than beginning a discussion of Golgonooza with the names it is called, it would seem to be more appropriate to have a look at its foundations and at the soil on which it stands.

The first chapter of Jerusalem gives us two major sites on which Golgonooza is built. The first is mentioned on plate 10 where we learn that Los builds Golgonooza while he is standing in London (line 17, E153). London is, quite obviously, a city in time and space; and, more particularly, it is a city in which Blake lived and worked for much of his life. However, to say no more than this is to deal only with surfaces. The streets of London are built upon, perhaps even embody, a wide-ranging dissolution. As I have observed, beneath the everyday world the narrator discovers a drama in which "Cambridge & Oxford & London . . . Are . . . rent away & dissipated" (5:3-4, E147). In the second chapter London is given a more specific role in this

global dissolution: London is a willing victim of Albion's withdrawal:

> I behold London; a Human awful wonder of God!
> He says: Return, Albion, return! I give myself for thee:
> My Streets are my, Ideas of Imagination.
> Awake Albion, awake! and let us awake up together.
> My Houses are Thoughts: my Inhabitants; Affections,
> The children of my thoughts, walking within my blood-vessels,
> Shut from my nervous form which sleeps upon the verge of Beulah
> In dreams of darkness, while my vegetating blood in veiny pipes,
> Rolls dreadful thro' the Furnaces of Los, and the Mills of Satan.
> For Albions sake, and for Jerusalem thy Emanation
> I give myself, and these my brethren give themselves for
> Albion. . . .
>
> (34[38]:29-39, E180)

The very shape and spatial organization of London embodies and expresses a person who has entered the furnaces of privation and separated himself from his human form in order to attempt to recall Albion. Golgonooza is therefore built on the site of the victim, or martyr. The second location amplifies this reading:

> What are those golden builders doing? where was the burying-place
> Of soft Ethinthus? near Tyburns fatal Tree? is that
> Mild Zions hills most ancient promontory; near mournful
> Ever weeping Paddington? is that Calvary and Golgotha?
> Becoming a building of pity and compassion? Lo!
> The stones are pity, and the bricks, well wrought affections:
> Enameld with love & kindness, & the tiles engraven gold
> Labour of merciful hands: the beams & rafters are forgiveness:
> The mortar & cement of the work, tears of honesty: the nails,
> And the screws & iron braces, are well wrought blandishments,
> And well contrived words, firm fixing, never forgotten,
> Always comforting the remembrance: the floors, humility,
> The cielings, devotion: the hearths, thanksgiving. . . .
>
> (12:25-37, E155)

In this extraordinary passage, with an apparent lack of regard for geography, Blake locates Golgonooza in both Israel and England. As Frye notes, in Jerusalem Blake draws a series of historical and geographical parallels between English and Biblical geography and history. On the one hand the geography of the Holy Land is simply "superimposed on England," and on the other Blake is drawing a series of parallels between English and biblical history.[61] This parallelism is a powerful tool for it allows Blake to read English history in biblical terms (and vice versa), and at the same time it assists in the construction of a space where events and places are located according to their spiritual significance rather than their spatio-temporal

location. In this instance it allows Blake to add depth to the original location of Golgonooza in London by drawing together a series of places which have associations with the victims of oppression. Ethinthus was one of the daughters of Los and Enitharmon and, as Damon tells us, she represents the "mortal flesh."[62] Tyburn was the site of London's gallows, Paddington was a slum district of London (until 1811 when new houses were built),[63] and Calvary and Golgotha are names for the place where Christ was crucified. At the point where the flesh is buried, the victim is sacrificed and where the innocent suffer, the narrator of this passage witnesses an extraordinary transformation. The change is so great that he must ask in a tone of astonishment and bewilderment where Ethinthus is buried? Can it possibly have been "near Tyburns fatal Tree?" "Zion was originally the rocky scarp on the southern end of the ridge between the Kidron and Tyropoeon valleys in Jerusalem . . . and in Christian times was taken as a type of heaven";[64] and yet this promontory is now seen near Paddington. Even Calvary and Golgotha are in the process of being transformed. The presence of a "building of pity and compassion" in such a place would indeed be astonishing, however, rather than simply building on this soil, Golgonooza's "golden builders" seem to be transforming the event and reality of Calvary and Golgotha into a work of love. Golgonooza is a structure that is built in an attempt to turn the fact of suffering and the triumph of the forces of state and church opppression into a building of compassion.

Golgonooza therefore embodies Los's efforts, as poet and prophet, to forge "the sighs & tears, & bitter groans" of suffering into "the spiritual sword. / That lays open the hidden heart" (9:17, 18-19, E152). If he is to achieve this end, it is the very substance of withdrawal that must be transformed. It is important to note, however, that this activity does not precede or even follow the construction of the fallen world, but is coterminous with it. If Los did not stand in London, and if his builders were not at Golgotha to give privation a form and to "bring the sons & Daughters of Jerusalem to be / The Sons & Daughters of Los," then all life would cease,

for it is Los's care for Albion that grounds the fallen world. Golgonooza is the locale that Los's relationship to Albion-in-withdrawal opens and the form that it takes. Golgonooza is, therefore, more than a city of art built within the fallen world, or inside the scaffolding of nature, for its streets, houses and inhabitants, express and embody the shape and result of Los's relationship with Albion in his absence. The extended account of the city which is given on plates 12 to 14 is therefore one more clarification and expansion of the vision that we have been tracing. In order to follow the movement of this vision, we must learn how to orient ourselves within the spaces of this city.

(6) Inside Golgonooza

We map our position in the fallen world on a two-dimensional grid which extends along axes running north-south and east-west. In Golgonooza place is determined according to a very different system. The four points of the compass which orient the visitor to this city are described as the circumference, zenith, nadir and center. These coordinates map out the comportment of a three-dimensional, sentient body, for each direction is a sense or a faculty of a man:

> And the Eyes are the South, and the Nostrils are the East.
> And the Tongue is the West, and the Ear is the North.
> (12:59-60, E156)

Blake describes each point of the compass, and therefore each sense of the man, as a face which looks towards, and opens, one of the "Four Worlds of Humanity / In every Man." In the fallen world we perhaps tend to think of our senses as organs for assimilating or registering what exists outside ourselves. The senses of the whole man, however, are described as faces: Noses, Eyes, Tongue and Ear are the organs through which we face, and are able to form relationships with, others. To orient oneself in Golgonooza, therefore, one must see its spaces as a human body. This being should not be imagined as a corporeal self, for each point of the compass and each faculty

of Man is fourfold and forms an animated being. Golgonooza is, therefore, a world of relationship, of care and compassion, where we reside within each other.

In Eternity the geography of Golgonooza is replaced by the shifting and living form of a dynamic interaction. Towards the end of Jerusalem Blake describes this form:

> And every Man stood Fourfold each Four Faces had. One to the West
> One toward the East One to the South One to the North. . . .
>
> South stood the Nerves of the Eye. East in Rivers of bliss the Nerves of the
> Expansive Nostrils West, flowd the Parent Sense the Tongue. North stood
> The labyrinthine Ear. Circumscribing & Circumcising the excrementitious
> Husk & Covering into Vacuum evaporating revealing the lineaments of Man
> Driving outward the Body of Death in an Eternal Death & Resurrection . . .
>
> The Four Living Creatures Chariots of Humanity Divine Incomprehensible
> In beautiful Paradises expand These are the Four Rivers of Paradise
> And the Four Faces of Humanity fronting the Four Cardinal Points
> Of Heaven going forward forward irresistible from Eternity to Eternity. . . .
>
> (98:12-13, 16-20, 24-27, E257)

Despite the obvious similarities in geography and imagery, Golgonooza is by comparison with this expansive and expanding body, strangely inert. The enjambed lines and the sentences which gradually increase in length throughout this passage provide a striking contrast to the Golgonooza vision, where lines are on the whole self-contained, the city is described in a regular periodic fashion, and a plethora of colons, semi-colons and fullstops retard any sense of onward motion. Golgonooza is stationary because it embodies and is a result of Los's relationship to Albion-in-withdrawal.

To briefly recap our argument: Los's work at his forge and his struggle with his Spectre establishes a world which is at least potentially fourfold. One-fold vision is that of the Spectre closed within his constituted world. Such vision uncovers a world of Ulro. However, to the extent that Los is able to bend the Spectre to his will, he is embodied and a two-fold world of generation is opened in the fallen world. Embodiment and generation allow the

three-fold spaces of Erin and Beulah to appear. Erin is seen as a person because although the self is still closed within its cavern it is now able to see and relate to others. The world formed by Los's friendship to Albion can, by an extension of this argument, be seen as holding the possibility of four-fold existence because the wall of our constituted worlds is all that keeps us from the wars of life eternal and the world of Eden. Los gives form to Albion-in-withdrawal as the six thousand year history of fallen time. This world seems "Infinite to those within" (M10:9, E104), but for the strong traveller it can be seen as "one infinite plane" (M15:32, E109) or veil, which separates us from Eternity. If this veil could be cast off, we would re-enter the world of Eden. It is this possibility which Blake glimpses at the end of Milton. Because Golgonooza is the spiritual form of the world formed by Los, it gives physical shape to these possibilities.

Los's city is fourfold, gates open to all levels of existence, and it forms a body which is potentially able to engage in relationship; however, one of the dimensions of this city and this body is closed:

> Fourfold the Sons of Los in their divisions: and fourfold,
> The great City of Golgonooza: fourfold toward the north
> And toward the south fourfold, & fourfold toward the east & west
> Each within other toward the four points: that toward
> Eden, and that toward the World of Generation,
> And that toward Beulah, and that toward Ulro:
> Ulro is the space of the terrible starry wheels of Albions sons:
> But that toward Eden is walled up, till time of renovation:
> Yet it is perfect in its building, ornaments & perfection.
> (12:45-53, E156)

Eden is beyond the western gate and is associated with the circumference. This is closed in the fallen world because Albion has withdrawn and therefore there is no other to meet Los's embrace. The self cannot leave its closet, nor can it make the "spring of eternal life." The circumference cannot be escaped: rather than being the ground for a leap it has become the outer bound of our world.

If the fourth gate of Golgonooza could be opened, then Golgonooza would give way to the movement and dynamism of Eden, and this interaction would be spatialized as the city of liberty, which Blake calls Jerusalem. This

transformation is, unfortunately, not as easy as it might seem. Frye writes that when Golgonooza is complete it will be the "total created achievement of Albion, Jerusalem,"[65] and in the passage quoted at the beginning of this section he suggests that once complete it is merely a matter of knocking away the scaffolding of nature and entering the city. Similarly, Bogan writes that when Golgonooza is complete it "will be the emanation or total created achievement of Albion, Jerusalem."[66] In drawing this close correspondence (and ultimate equation) between Golgonooza and Jerusalem, Frye and Bogan seem to be confusing the "eternal" timelessness of art with the wars of life eternal. Golgonooza is a permanent structure, but it is permanent only within the context of the fallen world. There is no suggestion that this city will be the shape, or even the site, of the wars of life Eternal.

Golgonooza is the city of the prophet; it embodies the comportment that Los adopts towards Albion-in-withdrawal. It is a relationship (four faces which look toward the world of humanity) and yet, in the absence of Albion, it is an enclosure. As the spiritual London, and as the shape of ontological time, Golgonooza is always, in a certain sense, complete. Even the gate towards Eden which is walled up is described as "perfect in its building, ornaments & perfection" (12:53, E156). Golgonooza is described as rising and falling (rather than progressing towards Eternity) because it is the very shape of Los's attentiveness to Albion-in-withdrawal and this attentiveness must be assayed again and again. Golgonooza falls in the moment in which Los is enclosed by his constituted world; it rises in the return of Los to his forge. The time which progresses and accumulates is part of ontic, not ontological time, for the linear progression of the former is opened by the latter. Golgonooza is therefore an appropriate place for a being who is not described in Milton as a time which progresses and accumulates but as one that is in "eternal youth" (24[26]:69, E121). The spaces of Golgonooza, itself the form and the result of Los's openness to Albion-in-withdrawal, form the ground for the entire expanse of the fallen world.

The apocalypse in which Eden will appear therefore occurs not when

Golgonooza is completed but when the fourth gate is opened and the circumference becomes the ground for a leap into Eternity. Even at this point regeneration will occur only on the condition that there is an other to meet the self. In fallen history the fourth gate remains closed, not because of any lack of completion, but because it is surrounded on all sides by disintegration and chaos:

> Around Golgonooza lies the land of death eternal; a Land
> Of pain and misery and despair and ever brooding melancholy:
> . . . .
> There is the Cave; the Rock; the Tree; the Lake of Udan Adan;
> The Forest, and the Marsh, and the Pits of bitumen deadly:
> The Rocks of solid fire: the Ice valleys: the Plains
> Of burning sand: the rivers, cataract & Lakes of Fire:
> The Islands of the fiery Lakes: the Trees of Malice: Revenge:
> And black Anxiety; and the Cities of the Salamandrine men. . . .
> (13:30-31, 38-43, E157)

Golgonooza is a bastion and defence against these forces of dissolution. It is constructed by Los in order to prevent the collapse of the world, and its gates are each protected by "sixty-four thousand" Genii, Gnomes, Nymphs and Fairies (13:26-29, E157).

In many respects Golgonooza's fourfold structure is shaped like a mandala, and for James Bogan and Kathleen Raine this similarity offers a means of understanding the city's powers.[67] Bogan writes that

> the mandala is a specific for the disintegration that has beset Albion. . . . The unity once possessed has been lost, and must now be found again, and the mandala is a means to that recovery. . . . the building of the Golgonooza mandala stands as a bastion of dynamic order amidst the widespread collapse in Albion's soul. . . . "The Mandala is essentially a vehicle for concentrating the mind so that it may pass beyond its usual fetters," as Arguelles points out. Thus Blake constructs an engine for the bursting of "mind forg'd manacles" in the reader and thereby for Albion himself.[68]

In developing his case, Bogan writes of the relationship between Golgonooza and "the land of death eternal" - the inside and the outside of the mandala - in terms of a struggle between conscious and unconscious forces. He writes (quoting Eliade)

> that outside the sacred circle of the mandala dwell "evil spirits and demons, forces of chaos . . . maleficent forces . . .'spirits of the desert' who attempt to return 'forms' to the amorphous state from which they originated."

He continues,

> To defend against these forces the ancient magic practice is to draw a spell-binding circle. Jung reminds us that "the same procedure has been used since olden times to set a place apart as holy and inviolable . . . a protected temenos, a taboo area where [one is] able to meet the unconscious." The walled city of Golgonooza is such a temenos. Each gate of the city is at one of the cardinal points, facing an area Tucci describes as "all that lies outside our consciousness which is beyond our control . . . always rioting about in a dark, confused struggle."[69]

This is a helpful analogy; however, its applicability must be qualified on a number of counts. First, Golgonooza is formed in an attempt to open a relationship with Albion, and by a being who hopes that Albion will return as an other to whom he can relate. The demons and forces of chaos are, in Blake's account of Golgonooza, fragments of Albion, Los's friend. Second, the "Land / Of pain and misery and despair and ever brooding melancholy" which surrounds Golgonooza is not unconscious, but conscious. The prophet is not pre-eminently engaged in a struggle with his unconscious, but with his community and his public. It is because Golgonooza is directed towards Albion that the narrator is willing to describe a relationship between this city and the world of death eternal which traditional proponents of the mandala would be loathe to admit. The outline of the mandala rescues form and order from chaos; however, at the same time it negatively defines the chaos which surrounds it. As I have argued in previous chapters, Los's construction of a bastion against the forces of disintegration has the effect of giving form to these same forces. Without this outline they, and Albion, would fall into non-entity. This same ambivalence can be seen in Golgonooza. For example, "the abstract Voids between the Stars are the Satanic Wheels" (13:37, E157), but they have a form and are therefore visible because they are negatively defined by Los's universe.

Golgonooza forms the figure to the ground of "death eternal," which surrounds it on all sides. In fact, Blake goes so far as to suggest not merely that the figure of the Stars forms the Voids, but that the reverse is true and that in a certain sense the Voids "form" the "Mundane Shell" of the visible universe:

> A Concave Earth wondrous, Chasmal, Abyssal, Incoherent!
> Forming the Mundane Shell: above; beneath: on all sides surrounding
> Golgonooza. . . .
> (13:53-55, E157)

Golgonooza is therefore, like Los and the work that he undertakes, itself made ambivalent by the support it unavoidably lends (in the process of giving form to Albion-in-withdrawal) to the world of withdrawal. Some of the smaller cities of Golgonooza are

> The Looms & Mills & Prisons & Work-houses of Og & Anak:
> The Amalekite: the Canaanite: the Moabite: the Egyptian. . . .
> (13:57-58, E157)

The form of the Eastern gate is taken from

> the Wheels of Albions sons; as cogs
> Are formd in a wheel, to fit the cogs of the adverse wheel . . .
> (13:13-14, E156),

and here we find many of the things which characterized the "land of death eternal:" "eternal ice, frozen in seven folds / Of forms of death," "The seven diseases of the earth," "forms of war" and "seven generative forms" (13:15-16,17,18,19, E156-7).

In the culmination of the vision of Golgonooza we are given an account of the world which Los surveys as he "walks round the walls" of his city. As a result the interconnection between Golgonooza and the land which surrounds it is made even more self evident. First, Los views within the city of Golgonooza the entire extent of fallen history. He sees:

> all that has existed in the space of six thousand years:
> Permanent, & not lost not lost nor vanishd, & every little act,
> Word, work, & wish, that has existed. . . .
> (13:59-61, E157-58)

This passage, however, goes on to affirm that these events are

> all remaining still
> In those Churches ever consuming & ever building by the Spectres
> Of all the inhabitants of Earth wailing to be Created. . . .
> (13:61-63, E158)

Los then turns his attention to "the Cherub at the Tree of Life . . . the Serpent / Orc" and the condition of all the Zoas and their Emanations. This panoramic view of the fallen world is concluded with the at first surprising statement that "Such are the Buildings of Los! & such are the Woofs of

Enitharmon" (14:15, E158). The present condition of the Zoas, Orc, the Cherub and the Serpent are all a result of the disintegration of Albion. As in The Four Zoas the fall of Albion (and the Zoas) is a fall into the universe of Los and Enitharmon. It is their saving activity which gives a form to the fallen world and, paradoxically, gives substance to their withdrawal. It is in this sense that these characters are "Buildings of Los." Los finally turns to Jerusalem. The construction of the fallen world has created a bastion against further fragmentation; however, because the western gate remains closed, Jerusalem is no more than

> a pale cloud arising from the arms of Beulahs Daughters:
> In Entuthon Benythons deep Vales beneath Golgonooza.
> (14:33-34, E158)

Golgonooza is like the "Urns of Beulah" (11:2, E154). It is a funeral Urn which houses beings who have withdrawn from relationship. Although it must be described as a space of loss and privation, it is also a building of compassion: it embodies Los's struggles with his Spectre and Los's solicitude for Albion. It is an Urn which gives form to the relationships which ground life in the fallen world. It is this last characteristic of the city which ensures that it also provides an outline for what would otherwise lack definition. Golgonooza is a city which gives a form to both Albion-in-withdrawal and to Vala and at the same time holds open the possibility of regeneration. Los's city is, therefore, a city of art and manufacture only if these terms are taken in a sense which far surpasses that intended by mortals. Golgonooza is not an aesthetic object, but a structure which embodies an engagement and relationship with Albion. It is prophetic art which preserves the very possibility of life by establishing the outline of identity in the midst of dissolution. The art that it represents is the work of the titan Los, and it underlies all of existence. It is a city of manufacturing in the sense that this work is done only by assimilating the raw material represented by Albion-in-withdrawal to the world of Los and Enitharmon, and because, at the same time, it establishes the real centre of

manufacturing: the wheels and cogs of Satan.

This account of Golgonooza seems at first to describe a city which is some distance from the Golgonoozas that are described in The Four Zoas. In the earlier poem, Golgonooza was described first as a defensive, self-enclosing structure, and then as a building of compassion and love. Similarly, in The Book of Urizen, although Golgonooza is not mentioned by name, the world built by Los is seen first as a means of remaining in relationship with Albion and then as a self-enclosing world. Both of these aspects are, of course, features of Golgonooza in Jerusalem, but in this poem they are treated as cotemporaneous aspects of a single city. This difference is once again because in Jerusalem we are concerned with a vision of ontological time. In a poem which is ordered according to the linear succession of sequential time, openness and closure, or the rise and the fall of Golgonooza, must be described at different points in the poem's narrative. In a vision of ontological time, however, we can see that Los's relationship to Albion in his absence opens both of these possibilities. From this perspective we can see that the two Golgonoozas of The Four Zoas are in fact different manifestations in ontic time of the same city.

(7) "SUCH VISIONS HAVE APPEARD TO ME AS I MY ORDERED RACE HAVE RUN": Los and Blake, Golgonooza and London

Los's panoramic view of Golgonooza ends with a striking change of focus. In previous plates we have seen what "He views" and beholds (13:56; 14:2,16,31, E157 & 158). Now the text seems to turn itself inside out; the reader discovers that Los's vision is also Blake's "awful Vision" (c f. 14:30-15:5, E158-59). Throughout this plate it is repeated again and again that it is now Blake who sees (15:6,8,21,30) and Blake who turns his eyes towards the objects of vision (15:14). This change of perspective places a not inconsiderable stress on the poem's sequential movement, for it brings the expanding vision that we have been tracing back to its ground in the

moment of awakening in which Christ dictates the "mild song" of Jerusalem to Blake. In so doing it makes us aware of the extraordinary tension that exists in this song between vision and the narrative account of that vision, between what is dictated by Christ and what is given form by Blake.

In the opening lines of Jerusalem Blake awoke from sleep and, as a result, was given a vision of the relationships which formed the ground of his identity and of the world in which he lived. However, the call of Christ and the withdrawal of Albion are not, properly speaking, events which can be confined to a moment of ontic time. As I have argued, vision is predicated upon an opening of the world of the self. Moreover, Albion and Jesus are giant figures whose bulk extends across all of fallen history. Yet the vision in which they appear is "given" to a person who is swept along "in the tide of time." The vision of what structures time must be given form and elaborated within time and in a sequential narrative. This is in some respects analogous to the situation in Milton where Blake and "all men on Earth" see "the vast breach of Miltons descent" and yet do not know that it is Milton who has descended,

> for man cannot know
> What passes in his members till periods of Space & Time
> Reveal the secrets of Eternity. . . .
> (21[23]:8-10, E115)

It is only in the course of time that Milton's descent is revealed. In Jerusalem the gradual elaboration of Blake's vision can be traced in the gradually expanding circle which moves from Jesus to Albion, to Los and his Spectre, and then to Golgonooza. It can also be seen by comparing plate fifteen with plate 4. On the later plate the opening vision has become more detailed and more complex. Blake is now able to see Albion's withdrawal as a sleep, and to perceive the division into Emanation and Spectre which is a result of this withdrawal. Moreover, after the elaboration of the initial vision which is contained in the intervening plates, Blake is able to see all of time "existing" before him:

> I see the Four-fold Man. The Humanity in deadly sleep
> And its fallen Emanation. The Spectre & its cruel Shadow.

> I see the Past, Present & Future, existing all at once
> Before me. . . .
>
> (15:6-9, E159)

In the opening plates Blake saw the division and fragmentation that Albion's withdrawal caused in England. Now, he sees the same process at work beneath all of Europe. Where he first was able to do no more than glimpse Los in his world (5:27-33, E147-8), he is now able to see Los "raging round his Anvil / Of death: forming an Ax of gold" (15:21-22, E159) and his sons "cutting the Fibres from Albions hills" (15:23, E159). The initial glimpse of the time which structures his world allowed Blake to grasp clearly his own situation (5:1-15, E147), but now we hear of figures such as Reuben, Noah, Satan and Adam who take part in a much wider drama.

One way of interpreting this elaboration of vision would be to describe it in terms of a gradual appropriation of vision to the perspectives of the self. On one level this clearly does occur, for, as I have argued, the reader of Jerusalem passes along a linear path which strikingly resembles Lockean time. From this point of view, vision is caught within the orderly, sequential progression of what appears to the closeted self. Vision has been closed within the world of the self and the moment of awakening with which the poem began has been left far behind.

Yet such an account would do small justice to the poem. The expansion of vision which I have described is not something which is captured by ontic time. While sustaining a complex and intricate relationship with that time, Blake's vision seems to expand behind or between its intervals. Rather than simply progressing from A to B, Blake's vision of Christ and Albion expands to include the whole visible world. Moreover, the vision described on plate 15, far from being confined to the ontic moment between plates 14 and 16, takes us back to the very same moment of awakening in which the poem began. It forces us to take seriously Blake's contention that in the moment of awakening with which the poem begins Christ dictates the "mild song" called Jerusalem, or in other words, that the poem itself can be seen and heard in this visionary moment. It is not simply, as Morton Paley

suggests, that "Blake's 'I' is . . . presented synchronously as the narrator of synchronous events,"[70] but that the constant return of the poem to the perspective of the visionary moment with which the poem begins underlines that Jerusalem is a visionary construction or elaboration of that vision. The visionary narrator of Jerusalem can see "Past, Present & Future, existing all at once" because he can see Albion/Jesus, not because he is able to hold the entire poem within the purview of his gaze.

A reading of Jerusalem must therefore progress on two levels. On the one hand it is possible to read it as a simple narrative which is held in the reasoning memory. In this reading vision is merely that which began the sequence and is now lost in primordial and inaccessible time. From this perspective an interpretation of Jerusalem involves an attempt to order what the reasoning memory has retained of Jerusalem. It is, however, also possible to read it in a radically different way. Jerusalem attempts to wake us from the slumber of ontic time by returning this time to its ground. To take up the relationship to the text described in Jerusalem's opening plates is to discern, between the intervals of the poem's onward movement, an expansive vision. For the reader it is therefore quite literally true that "SUCH VISIONS HAVE APPEARD TO ME AS I MY ORDERED RACE HAVE RUN." The vision of Christ/Albion underlies the whole poem and all of time. The sudden shift of focus in plate fifteen, from Los to Blake, underlines that the poem is vision; it calls us to "see thro" the text rather than with it. The poem, like time itself according to Blake, is therefore a divine analogy. It creates a figure of the relationships which hold between ontic, sequential and ontological time, between the world of the corporeal, closeted self, and the world of vision. On the one hand readers can simply read Jerusalem as a series of appearances which are held and retained by the self. On the other hand, reading the poem as an "Allegory addressed to the intellectual powers," they can return this series of appearances to their ground. In this second reading ontic time becomes ontological time, for the poem's linear sequence is now opened - it is as if we can see "thro" the text to the interaction

between the giant figures of Christ and Albion. In this second reading Jerusalem becomes a visionary construction.

Before proceeding with our argument it is important to affirm that the relationship between vision and its temporal elaboration is not at all a hierarchical one. It is true that the necessity for Blake to elaborate sequentially the moment in which Jerusalem appears introduces a gap between that elaboration and vision; however, this gap does not imply that there is a relationship of heteronomy between the two, that the latter is necessarily no more than a second hand version of the first, or that we can describe one as a "phantom" generated by the other. In the poem itself the linear narration and the series of expanding circles contradict each other's frame of reference, and yet they are in a relationship of mutual dependence.

The relationship between vision and temporal elaboration can be seen in the lines which follow on from Blake's claim to be able to see "Past, Present & Future, existing all at once." Blake writes:

> O Divine Spirit sustain me on thy wings!
> That I may awake Albion from his long & cold repose.
> For Bacon & Newton sheathd in dismal steel, their terrors hang
> Like iron scourges over Albion, Reasonings like vast Serpents
> Infold around my limbs, bruising my minute articulations. . . .
> (15:9-13, E159)

Blake's elaboration of his vision in a temporal form is quite clearly a "minute articulation": it is an attempt to articulate in physical and temporal form a vision which cannot be contained in this form. His articulations are "minute" in two ways: first, they are composed of a series of minute physical forms (words, lines, illuminations, paragraphs, pages); and second, these forms are ordered by a temporal spacing. The word "articulate" means to express, and so give an appropriate form to something which would otherwise remain mute and inchoate. Articulation thus implies both that something is given to the person who articulates, and that the latter does not articulate what is given in a neutral fashion, but is himself involved in giving it body and form. The person who articulates, therefore, shapes what is to be articulated. To "articulate" therefore also means to link together

(without merging or identifying) two separate things. In this understanding the narration of the poem has a crucially important role to play in relationship to vision. It is only in Blake's "minute articulations" (which yoke time and Eternity) that this vision achieves expression and, therefore, it is only as a result of "the productions of time" that Albion can be confronted with the reality of his withdrawal.

However, the creation of a narrative of this kind inevitably opens the possibility that readers will forget its ground in vision - that they will regress from the time of awaiting and retaining to the time of memory - and that as a result they will simply see the poem as a "vast Serpent": a series of repeated motifs, themes and so on which progress to the end of the poem. To a large extent this possibility cannot be avoided, for to elaborate vision sequentially is to give form to a force which moves in the opposite direction to vision. In Blake's striking description of this phenomenon, it is to be surrounded by "Reasonings like vast Serpents." This is why Blake prays, at the beginning of the passage quoted above, that the "Divine Spirit sustain" him on its wings. It is only by being lifted up out of ontic time (in the visionary stance described in Milton and alluded to in the opening lines of Jerusalem) that Blake is able to return Newtonian and Lockean time to its ground. This is a position which Blake and the reader must take up again and again.

The latter half of plate 15 offers the reader a rather different example of this interaction between what is formed by Blake and what is given in vision. Blake writes:

> I see in deadly fear in London Los raging round his Anvil
> Of death: forming an Ax of gold: the Four Sons of Los
> Stand round him cutting the Fibres from Albions hills
> That Albions Sons may roll apart over the Nations
> While Reuben enroots his brethren in the narrow Canaanite
> From the Limit Noah to the Limit Abram in whose Loins
> Reuben in his Twelve-fold majesty & beauty shall take refuge
> As Abraham flees from Chaldea shaking his goary locks. . . .
> (15:21-28, E159)

At this point, however, Blake seems to slip up in the order of his exposition. He interrupts himself with the reminder that "first Albion must

sleep, divided from the Nations" (15:29, E159). Hazard Adams writes that

> the reminder that Albion must sleep should be seen as an intrusive admonition to create within a mythic mode of apprehension, where Blake is seeing things directly. . . .[71]

Adams defines myth in opposition to anti-myth. The latter uses language "to point outward towards things," while the former establishes "a world of words."[72] In the passage from Jerusalem quoted above, Blake is, therefore, mythologizing the world. As Adams writes, "In the fall into history that the poem reports . . . Albion must sleep," however,

> to put Albion falling to sleep on the first plate and simply to go on from it would have given too much status to a linearity that must be continually undercut in order that externalization or pointing to may be wholly avoided or at least avoided as much as the "stubborn structure of the Language" will allow.[73]

Adams is, in a certain sense, correct, for part of a poet's task must be to create a "world of words." The "intrusion" on plate 15 can be said to draw attention to the constitutive work carried out by Blake in this regard. Adams' opposition is, however, fundamentally misleading, for both myth and anti-myth locate the self at the centre of the world. In the former, the self points outwards to the world that it has constituted; it treats the world as an object for a subject. In the latter, the self creates a world with the aid of an imagination that resembles that described by Hume; the world is now a construction by the subject. By contrast, Jerusalem begins in a moment in which the world constituted by the self has been opened. The poem is "dictated" and therefore given to Blake. In this moment the world is neither a web of words, nor an object lying at one remove from the self. It is a living and speaking person to whom Blake can talk and respond. As I have argued in the previous chapter, vision does not attempt to collapse the gap between self and other, time and Eternity, but affirms it. Vision exists in the contrary relationship between self and other. It is for this reason that, in Jerusalem, vision and sequential elaboration, the vision of ontological time and the constitutive work of Blake in elaborating that vision, are in a relationship of mutual dependence. Blake's intrusive admonition, "But first Albion must sleep," implies a necessity imposed by the time and space of the

fallen world; but it also suggests the force of what is given, for if Christ's song is to be articulated, then "first Albion must sleep."

This kind of interdependence can be seen in the relationships which exist between Blake and Los, and Golgonooza and London. Although Los forges the ground on which London stands, it is also true to say that Los stands in London forging this ground (10:17, E153). Similarly, although all temporal things can be seen in Los's halls (13:59, E157), we must also affirm that Los's halls are filled with things that are formed on earth: Los preserves "every little act, / Word, work, & wish, that has existed" (13:60-61, E157-8). Perhaps the clearest statement of the influence of Golgonooza on time, and one which has provoked the suggestion that Golgonooza is a realm of ideal Platonic forms, is that contained on plate 16. Blake writes:

> All things acted on Earth are seen in the bright Sculptures of
> Los's Halls & every Age renews its powers from these Works
> With every pathetic story possible to happen from Hate or
> Wayward Love & every sorrow & distress is carved here
> Every Affinity of Parents Marriages & Friendships are here
> In all their various combinations wrought with wondrous Art
> All that can happen to Man in his pilgrimage of seventy years. . . .
> (16:61-67, E161)

Even this passage, however, reveals a curious dependence of Golgonooza on time. "All things acted on Earth" are not determined by, but "seen" in, the "Sculptures of Los's Halls." This verb leaves the question of where they originate quite open. The sculptures contain "every . . . story possible to happen" because they embody the ontological time of the fallen world. As such they open the site and context of our human freedom. The ground of our life is formed by the relationships between Los, Albion and Christ; however, the figure we cut in this ground is established by the relationships that we take up to others.

We can therefore say that it is only at this point of the vision that we clearly see the outline of identity of the world formed in the withdrawal of Albion from Christ. This outline is formed in the relationship which exists between Blake and Los, London and Golgonooza. This vision is, of course, not static. Los must return again and again into relationship with Albion, and

Blake must awake to Christ each morning. The account of Blake's role in the elaboration of what is given is, therefore, followed by a return to Los's divisions and his contentions with his Spectre. The spaces of Golgonooza exist in the relationship between these two figures.

In the previous section we spoke of a centre of vision which passed from Albion to Los and then to Golgonooza. The modulation in plate 15 from Los to Blake underlines the fact that there is a second centre to this vision. The circles that we have been tracing have a centre in the people who are watching them: the narrator, the poet and the reader. It is in the contrary relationship between the vision that is given and the vision of Blake (and the reader), between Albion, Los and Christ on the one hand, and the beings who exist in linear time on the other hand, that Jerusalem is forged.

(8) Negative space: the world of Vala.

Our vision of Golgonooza and the outline of identity allows a very different clarification and expansion to occur. When a ripple expands to a certain point, the observer's focus often changes and he/she is able to see the negative space that has co-determined that form. Similarly, the completion of the vision of Golgonooza and of the outline of identity allows the ground to this figure (the negative space out of which it emerges) to be seen. This is the "orbed Void" described on plate 18:

> From every-one of the Four Regions of Human Majesty,
> There is an Outside spread Without, & an Outside spread Within
> Beyond the Outline of Identity both ways, which meet in One:
> An orbed Void of doubt, despair, hunger, & thirst & sorrow.
> Here the Twelve Sons of Albion, join'd in dark Assembly. . . .
> (18:1-5, E162)

We have, of course, seen the land of death eternal from within Golgonooza, but now we are actually surrounded by the voices and conflicts of this world. In this space the contention between Los and his Spectre is replaced by that between Vala, Jerusalem and Albion. Early in the first chapter we saw Los walking "round the walls" of Golgonooza "night and day." From this new

perspective we see him "roofd in from Eternity in Albions Cliffs" (19:33, E164).

Prior to this, Blake's vision has progressed from the withdrawal of Albion to Los's struggle with his Spectre, and then to Golgonooza. For the reader this expansion of vision produces the feeling that a form is being elaborated out of chaos. The climax of this expansion is, of course, the delineation of the outline of identity which we have discussed above. In the vision of negative space which follows on from this point there seems to be, by contrast, a slow contraction or regression. We move from the Sons of Albion and the world that they hope to build (18:1-43, E162-163) to a description of Albion's external condition (18:44-19:16, E163-64), to an account of Albion's internal or psychological state and his flight "inward among the currents of his rivers" (19:17-39, E164), and then to the contentions between Albion, Vala and Jerusalem (which are the substance - both cause and result - of this withdrawal). Finally we see Albion utter his "last words" (23:26, E168) and "die" in the arms of Christ (24:60, E170). We move from what is nearest to the outline of identity and Golgonooza (the Sons who war mightily against the world of Los) to what is evanescent and out of Los's grasp (Jerusalem and Albion). In previous plates we watched the poem slowly elaborate the shape of the relationship between Albion and Christ. Now the poem progressively dismantles the world of the Sons of Albion until we are able to see the relationships which underlie and support it.

For the reader these plates are extraordinarily moving; for the critic they pose certain problems, not least of which is the difficulty of describing, without becoming prolix, a phenomenon before one perceives its ground. For this reason we will, in the course of our discussion of the kingdom formed by the Sons of Albion, digress from the narrative order of the poem and introduce material which properly should appear later in our exposition.

The negative space which lies outside the outline of identity is

where the Sons of Albion attempt "To murder their own Souls, to build a Kingdom among the Dead" (18:9, E163). They hope to create Babylon - a world where the self attempts to devour and absorb others. Perhaps the most significant features of this world are the appearances in its spaces of Vala as "Nature" and as the founder of Babylon (18:29,30, E163), and of Jerusalem as "The Shadow of delusions!" (18:11, E163) and the "Harlot-Sister" (18:30, E163). Vala achieves her power over Jerusalem because Albion is close to death. Already,

> His Children exil'd from his breast pass to and fro before him
> His birds are silent on his hills, flocks die beneath his branches
> His tents are fall'n! his trumpets, and the sweet sound of his harp
> Are silent on his clouded hills, that belch forth storms & fire.
> (19:1-4, E163-4)

However, this state of being (and the wars fostered by Hand and Hyle) represents the surface effect of a very complex phenomenon. As the vision contracts, our gaze moves from the surface of the "land of death eternal" to its interior.

The Sons rage against Albion and declare their loyalty to Vala because Albion is "self-exiled from the face of light & shine of morning" (19:13, E164). To withdraw is to deny relationship and, as I have argued, to enter a world constituted by the Spectre. Albion's Sons are collectively his Spectres and therefore it is this withdrawal that gives them power to "gormandize / The Human majesty and beauty of the Twentyfour" (19:23-4, E164). As the vision continues to contract we therefore find Albion fleeing "inward":

> Albions Circumference was clos'd: his Center began darkning
> Into the Night of Beulah, and the Moon of Beulah rose
> Clouded with storms: Los his strong Guard walkd round beneath the Moon
> And Albion fled inward among the currents of his rivers.
> (19:36-39, E164)

As in The Four Zoas, this withdrawal is caused by (and results in) the separation of the male and female powers.[74] As Albion flees inward he, therefore, comes across Jerusalem and Vala (19:40-42, E164), who attempt "to melt his giant beauty" (19:47, E165).[75] As the vision contracts once more, we hear in detail the contentions between Vala, Jerusalem and Albion.

The relationships between these three figures is rather complex. In Eternity Vala and Jerusalem are part of Brittannia, the wife of Albion, but Jerusalem is also the Emanation of Albion and the bride of Christ, while Vala is given to Albion as a bride. Vala is also the wife, Emanation and daughter of Luvah. Luvah is love in general and sexual love in particular. He is a figure of eros, or sexual desire, rather than agape (which in Blake's oeuvre is represented by Christ). Frosch writes, for example, that "The activity of Luvah is a search for sheer pleasure, his energy comprehending desire, affection, beauty, and love;" when he operates apart from the other Zoas "his quest becomes one of a pure & almost frantic self-gratification."[76] In the fallen world Vala and Jerusalem fall apart from Albion and from each other.

Desire proceeds because of a lack; it is an attempt to fill in something that is missing and in this way complete the self. The result of desire is paradoxically a completed self, a sense of the self's unity. It should therefore be no surprise that Luvah's Emanation, wife and daughter is Vala. Desire results in a veil interposing itself between lover and beloved. This is why a person possessed by love is often described as blind: the lover is the veiler. In Eternity Luvah is therefore characterized as a weaver who fabricates the veil or outline of the constituted world of the self (95:17, E255). In the fallen world Vala is herself described as a being who is formed by the Spectres of Albion. In other words she is the veil of simple ideas (the outline of the closet) which Locke interposes between self and other.

Eternity is clearly a place of plenitude and for this reason Luvah is described as "the gentlest mildest Zoa" (24:52, E170).[77] However, life in the fallen world is founded on privation and Luvah therefore becomes a force and energy which continually drives towards a now unreachable completeness. Here Luvah is Orc (see, for example, FZ78:30-39, E354). In Eternity desire is part of the whole man and, therefore, Vala is complemented by Jerusalem, who is the form of Albion's love and openness to others and (for this reason) Albion's Emanation. To the extent that Albion opens his world to others,

Jerusalem gives access to Christ. In the terms of Blake's primarily sexual metaphor, one can therefore say that Jerusalem is the bride of Christ. Each act of relationship depends in part on desire and it is, therefore, effected by Luvah and Vala. This allows us to say two things: first, that Vala is a bride of Albion - even though this being is at the same time an Emanation, wife and daughter of Luvah; second, that Albion's bride in Eternity is, properly speaking, both Vala and Jerusalem.

In the fallen world that we see in Blake's vision of "death eternal," this situation has been radically altered because Albion has killed Luvah (22:31, E168) in order to make Vala his sole possession. Desire is for this reason no longer an identity within the whole man, but appears within his Spectre. For Albion-in-withdrawal desire has become a Narcissistic love; he now embraces the shape of the self which is retained by the Spectre. Similarly, Jerusalem appears only within Vala, the outline of the self. Albion says in horror:

> For I see Luvah whom I slew. I behold him in my Spectre
> As I behold Jerusalem in thee O Vala dark and cold. . . .
> (22:31-32, E168)

This retention by the Spectre of the outline of desire, of the form of the self (Vala), results in the disintegration of Jerusalem. Vala becomes an iron band which now encloses Albion:

> Art thou Vala? replied Albion, image of my repose
> O how I tremble! how my members pour down milky fear!
> A dewy garment covers me all over, all manhood is gone!
> At thy word & at thy look death enrobes me about
> From head to feet, a garment of death & eternal fear
> Is not that Sun thy husband & that Moon thy glimmering Veil?
> Are not the Stars of heaven thy Children! art thou not Babylon?
> Art thou Nature Mother of all! is Jerusalem thy Daughter
> Why have thou elevate inward: O dweller of outward chambers
> From grot & cave beneath the Moon dim region of death
> Where I laid my Plow in the hot noon, where my hot team fed
> Where implements of War are forged, the Plow to go over the Nations
> In pain girding me round like a rib of iron in heaven!
> (30[34]:2-14, E176)

In this fallen world Vala is, as Albion perceives, the form of the world established by Los and Enitharmon. She is, in fact, married to Los (the sun), while Enitharmon (the moon) gives substance to her veil (line 7). Jerusalem

is now seen as a harlot because she suggests a realm where relationship opposes and deconstructs the fixed moralities and codes of Vala.

Emblematic of the contentions that arise between these three figures in the fallen world is Albion's response to the suggestion of forgiveness. Jerusalem says to Vala:

> O Vala what is Sin? that thou shudderest and weepest
> At sight of thy once lov'd Jerusalem! What is Sin but a little
> Error & fault that is soon forgiven; but mercy is not a Sin
> Nor pity nor love nor kind forgiveness! O! if I have Sinned
> Forgive & pity me! O! unfold thy Veil in mercy & love . . .
> (20:22-26, E165),

and she asks Albion:

> Why should Punishment Weave the Veil with Iron Wheels of War
> When Forgiveness might it Weave with Wings of Cherubim. . . .
> (22:34-5, E168)

To forgive, however, is to be no longer in the power of Vala. It is no longer to attempt to raise an ethics on the ground of nature, but to allow the other to return. In withdrawal Albion cannot believe this; he responds to Jerusalem and Vala with a lamentation over his own culpability. He persists in judging himself and others:

> O Vala! O Jerusalem! do you delight in my groans
> You O lovely forms, you have prepared my death-cup:
> The disease of Shame covers me from head to feet: I have no hope
> Every boil upon my body is a separate & deadly Sin.
> . . . .
> All is Eternal Death unless you can weave a chaste
> Body over an unchaste Mind! Vala! O that thou wert pure!
> (21:1-4, 11-12, E166)

To forgive would be for Albion to leave his constituted world and face the other whom he has injured. Instead, Albion decides to follow the less difficult path, of death. Less difficult, because it is merely a further step along the path of withdrawal. We therefore see Albion bear "the Veil whole away" and hear him utter "his last words" (23:20,26, E168). Finally we see him announce his death:

> If God was Merciful this could not be: O Lamb of God
> Thou art a delusion and Jerusalem is my Sin! O my Children
> I have educated you in the crucifying cruelties of Demonstration
> Till you have assum'd the Providence of God & slain your Father
> Dost thou appear before me who liest dead in Luvahs Sepulcher

> Dost thou forgive me! thou who wast Dead & art Alive?
> Look not so merciful upon me O thou Slain Lamb of God
> I die! I die in thy arms tho Hope is banishd from me.
> (24:53-60, E170)

It is this picture of Albion retreating into death even as Christ embraces him which closes Blake's vision of "the land of death eternal." At the same time it takes us back to the very beginning of the poem where we heard Christ affirm that he was in Albion's bosom and Albion was in his, and saw Albion turn "away . . . down the valleys dark" from a Christ he thought was a "Phantom of the over heated brain!" Blake's vision of ontological time is therefore complete. We can follow its dilation to the outline of identity and then watch it contract back to the moment in which Blake awakes from sleep. The form of this vision is seen, it is important to add, "as we our ordered race have run."

The ontological time of the fallen world is therefore made up of both the positive space created in Los's friendship to Albion and the negative space which is opened by Albion's withdrawal. The fallen world therefore oscillates between Calvary and Auschwitz, Franz Josef Jägerstätter and Hitler. This is why the opening chapter of Jerusalem is addressed to the Public. It is in the space and time which is opened by the ontological time of Los that history charts its course. It is in this space that there unfolds a string which will lead us back to Jerusalem.

Chapter Twelve

Beginning

> The last years of the eighteenth century are broken by a discontinuity similar to that which destroyed Renaissance thought . . . a discontinuity as enigmatic in its principle, in its original rupture, as that which separates the Paracelsian circles from the Cartesian order. Where did this unexpected mobility of epistemological arrangement suddenly come from . . . ? How is it that thought detaches itself from the squares it inhabited before . . . ? What event, what law do they obey, these mutations that suddenly decide that things are no longer perceived, described, expressed, characterized, classified, and known in the same way . . . ? For an archaeology of knowledge, this profound breach in the expanse of continuities, though it must be analysed, and minutely so, cannot be 'explained' or even summed up in a single word. . . . Only thought re-apprehending itself at the root of its own history could provide a foundation, entirely free of doubt, for what the solitary truth of this event was in itself.
>
> Michel Foucault[1]

(1) Two kinds of time

There is, as Foucault suggests, something enigmatic about the moments in which a culture, or discursive space, is founded or transformed. Many writers speak of an analogous difficulty in philosophy, where beginnings are peculiarly elusive.[2] Part of the reason for this difficulty is, no doubt, that we limit our world "To the Time & Space fixed by the Corporeal Vegetative Eye" (VLJ, E563); we see only the Lockean time that is constituted by the reasoning memory. There are two reasons why from this perspective the question of origins must remain particularly elusive. First, for the Vegetative Man time appears as "a very Aged Man" (VLJ, E563). The birth of this being lies on the far side of what our memory can retain and is, therefore, out of reach. Second, sequential time appears only within the space opened by ontological time and this latter time is not accessible to the reasoning memory. Its appearance in vision, as we have seen in Milton and

the first chapter of Jerusalem, depends upon a looking "thro" the bounds established by the reasoning memory. Foucault writes that we would be able to understand the ruptures and transitions in history only if "thought" could re-apprehend "itself at the root of its own history." An inability to make this radical move is why philosophy fails again and again to find an origin which is without presuppositions; why Urizen's attempts in The Four Zoas to fathom the length and breadth of his world end in failure; and why the narrator's efforts in The Book of Urizen to trace the origin of our world end in the delineation of a circle which turns around the still point of the self.

Yet it is precisely this kind of re-apprehension that Blake is attempting to describe in the first chapter of Jerusalem. The time elaborated on these plates is ontological time. It is akin to the time that the poet measures in "Four Quartets": "time not our time . . . a time / Older than the time of chronometers,[3] or that which is described by Heidegger when he writes of "the moment when time opens out and extends."[4] It is because the ontological time described in the first chapter of Jerusalem is the moment from which the time of the fallen world "opens out and extends" that it is only at the end of this chapter that we see sequential time appear:

> Thundring the Veil rushes from his hand Vegetating Knot by Knot, Day by Day, Night by Night; loud roll the indignant Atlantic Waves & the Erythrean, turning up the bottoms of the Deeps. . . . (24:61-63, E170)

This is also why it is only in the second chapter of Jerusalem that the poem turns to the question of beginnings. The preface to this chapter addresses the Jews:

> Your Ancestors derived their origin from Abraham, Heber, Shem, and Noah, who were Druids: as the Druid Temples (which are the Patriarchal Pillars & Oak Groves) over the whole Earth witness to this day.
>
> You have a tradition, that Man anciently containd in his mighty limbs all things in Heaven & Earth: this you recieved from the Druids.
>
> "But now the Starry Heavens are fled from the mighty limbs of Albion"

> Albion was the Parent of the Druids; & in his Chaotic State of Sleep Satan & Adam & the whole World was Created by the Elohim. (27, E171)

In speaking of ontological time as the ground of sequential time it is important not to confuse it with the ground or first premise that Urizen is attempting to discover. Urizen hopes to reach a point outside of history where "self sustaining" (FZ72:24, E349) he can, like the Augustinian God, survey the totality of the universe. Such a position is clearly not reached in a vision of ontological time, for this beginning does not establish a zero point beyond which there is nothing. Blake himself writes that

> Many suppose that before [Adam] <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 (VLJ, E563)

The moment of ontological time which lies beneath our history is itself a part of the history of Eternity and, therefore, far from being a point outside of existence it is a moment in the spring of eternal life. It is, however, a moment which has become fixed and motionless. We can therefore locate two very different histories. One is the fixed and repetitive cycle of fallen history which moves from Adam to Luther and remains within the ontological time of loss. The other is a history of liberty in which ontological time is transformed.

One can also say that Urizen's quest is, as the phrase "self sustaining" suggests, the project of an individual subject. In Jerusalem, however, the narrator's vision of ontological time is attained at the precise point that the closed world of the self is punctured. The precondition for this vision, therefore, is a radical de-centring of the self. As I have argued, the identity of Los and Albion is formed in relationship with each other, and in relationship with mortals. As Blake writes in the preface to the first chapter: "We who dwell on Earth can do nothing of ourselves, every thing is conducted by Spirits, no less than Digestion or Sleep" (3, E145). There is no recourse in this line to either a transcendental subject or the psychological activity of a mortal self, for the Spirits can no more than

mortals do anything of themselves. Instead, the word "conducted" suggests a world where events appear in a relationship akin to that by which a conductor gives form to the music played by a number of disparate individuals; or an aqueduct conducts water to a destination. For the individual self ontological time is therefore what is, in a fundamental sense, always out of his/her grasp. It can be seen only in a vision which, by displacing the authority of the vegetative self and puncturing its world, makes its search for an origin within sequential time appear both irrelevant and misconceived.

The poem's description of ontological time allows it now to handle sequential time and the question of a beginning with a striking fluidity and profundity. If the ontic time of the Vegetated Man were our only reference point, then the fragmentation of Albion and his separation from Jerusalem would mean that she was no longer the Emanation of Albion. Politics would have no other reference point than this fact, or the "once was" of memory. This history of the fallen world, where the Starry Heavens <u>have</u> fled from the whole man and Jerusalem is separated from Albion, is, however, located within a time which, while it forms the ground for this history, also permits a counter movement towards relationship. The sculptures of Los's halls exist in the tension between the wheel of Religion and the call of Christ. Against the fragmentation of the fallen world, for example, where "the Starry Heavens are fled from the mighty Limbs of Albion," Blake is therefore able to affirm that "Jerusalem was & is the Emanation of the Giant Albion" and that the "Inhabitants of Earth" (despite their obvious fragmentation) are united "in One Religion" (E171). We can therefore say that for so long as Los retains the form of the fallen world "Jerusalem was and is the Emanation of . . . Albion."

In terms of ontological time, history is not a chain of events which we passively observe but something which concerns us in our very being. The inhabitants of the Earth are, indeed, united in one religion, for it is Christ in the person of Los who establishes the form of the fallen world;

however, we are also united in our identity as fallen and warring fragments of Albion. Each point in the earth's history is determined by which sculpture in Los's halls is embraced and which path is taken. As Blake writes:

> The Wicked will turn it to Wickedness, the Righteous to Righteousness. Amen! Huzza! Selah! "All things Begin & End in Albions Ancient Druid Rocky Shore."
>
> (E171)

The relationship between ontological and sequential times is, perhaps, most strikingly evident in the lyric which forms the bulk of the preface to the second chapter. The poem begins in the past tense with an assertion that "The fields from Islington to Marybone / To Primrose Hill and Saint Johns Wood" (1-2, E171) were once the site of Jerusalem, and that England was a land where the woman Jerusalem, Christ, and Jerusalem's chidren could all be seen. Our consternation at these claims is increased by the third verse. Without warning the poem changes to the present tense and its narrator confidently reports the presence of Jerusalem in today's England:

> She walks upon our meadows green:
> The Lamb of God walks by her side:
> And every English Child is seen,
> Children of Jesus & his Bride,
>
> Forgiving trespasses and sins
> Lest Babylon with cruel Og,
> With Moral & Self-righteous Law
> Should Crucify in Satans Synagogue!
>
> (27:17-24, E172)

The unease generated by these lines is heightened in the following lines where we see, apparently in the same time and space as the immediately antecedent verses, a number of Builders at work reconstructing a city (Golgonooza) on the site of a "mighty Ruin." This ruin turns out to be what is left of Jerusalem, for the poem now recounts a history in which Albion withdraws, his Spectre appears, Jerusalem falls and is born in a land far from the fields of Albion, the world is torn by warfare and violence, and the Human Form becomes a mortal worm. We have, therefore, two parallel accounts of the relationship between, and nature of, the past and the present. In the first Jerusalem was and is still seen on Albion's fields. In the second, Jerusalem was once seen in England, but now it is separated from Albion by a

vast distance.

Within the time and space of the vegetative man these accounts contradict each other and we must choose between them; however, the poem indicates in a number of places that the different realities that they suggest exist in the same world. The "golden Builders," for example, work in England where Jerusalem can still be seen. Similarly, the account of the fall of Albion and the withering up of "Jerusalems Gates" (line 51) ends with words which bring us back to the first account. Jerusalem is no more, Albion has been fragmented, but what was, still is:

> The Divine Vision still was seen
> Still was the Human Form, Divine
> Weeping in weak & mortal clay
> O Jesus still the Form was thine.
>
> And thine the Human Face & thine
> The Human Hands & Feet & Breath
> Entering thro' the Gates of Birth
> And passing thro' the Gates of Death. . . .
> (27:57-64, E173)

These different realities and opposing trajectories structure the ontological time of the fallen world and, therefore, place us immediately in a situation of choice.

The present in which we exist as mortals is therefore forged in the intersection between these competing claims and realities. In being bound in this way we receive the freedom to elaborate a history. In the ontological time of loss, Blake, for example, stands at the point of intersection between withdrawal and embrace. He is not simply the person who wakes to the presence of Christ, but the person who falls once more into sleep, the individual who - as he admits in this poem - slew Jesus (65-66, E173). It is for this reason that the account of fallen history is followed by lines in which Blake announces his vocation for the third time. The first occurred immediately after his initial glimpse of ontological time and the second after the positive form and space held by Los had been elaborated. He is able to reaffirm it once again, with a perhaps deepened sense of what such a vocation implies, after the entire vision of chapter one and the preface's reiteration

in brief of that vision have been completed. A decision such as this forges a path (in sequential time) through the space opened by ontological time.

Blake's vision of ontological time allows him to see the Fall not as something which occurred in the distant past, but as something which is occurring in every moment. Despite the fact that he stands in the "tide of Time," Blake's commitment can therefore be not to a memory of what has been but to present reality:

> Come to my arms & never more
> Depart; but dwell for ever here:
> Create my Spirit to thy Love:
> Subdue my Spectre to thy Fear.
>
> Spectre of Albion! warlike Fiend!
> In clouds of blood & ruin roll'd:
> I here reclaim thee as my own
> My Selfhood! Satan! armd in gold. . . .
>
> In my Exchanges every Land
> Shall walk, & mine in every Land,
> Mutual shall build Jerusalem:
> Both heart in heart & hand in hand.
> (27:69-76, 85-88, E173)

(2) Beginning

The history recounted in the second chapter of Jerusalem begins not with the first but the second moment of time; it is preceded by the ontological time from which it "opens out and extends." It therefore begins in situ:

> Every ornament of perfection, and every labour of love,
> In all the Garden of Eden, & in all the golden mountains
> Was become an envied horror, and a remembrance of jealousy:
> And every Act a Crime, and Albion the punisher & judge.
> (28:1-4, E174)

In the lines which follow this passage we hear Albion speaking from his "secret seat" (28:5, E174) and watch his Spectre, Satan, appear before his face (29[33]:1-28, E175). We also hear a conversation between Vala and Albion (29[33]:29-30[34]:16, E176) and listen to Los as he stands before his forge (30[34]:17-42, E176-77). The opening plates therefore recall the relationships which we saw in the first chapter. The lines in which the position of Los with regard to Albion is described, for example, closely

parallel passages in the first chapter. This parallelism is inevitable in a world where sequential and ontological time depend upon each other. However, these opening lines differ radically from the first chapter because the situation that they describe is given a precise location in sequential time. The second chapter will deal with sequential rather than ontological time:

> Los stood at his Anvil: he heard the contentions of Vala
> He heavd his thundring Bellows upon the valleys of Middlesex
> He opend his Furnaces before Vala, then Albion frownd in anger
> On his Rock: ere yet the Starry Heavens were fled away
> From his awful Members. . . .
> (30[34]:17-21, E176)

The beginning of the history which is traced within the time opened by Los's friendship to Albion-in-withdrawal is prior to the flight of the "Starry Heavens." At this stage in the history of withdrawal, Albion is still able to see, and feel angry about, the work of Los. In ontological time Blake sees:

> The Humanity in deadly sleep
> And its fallen Emanation. The Spectre & its cruel Shadow . . .
> (15:6-7, E159),

and the past, present and future existing before him all at once. In sequential time we see the first event of this history and we can trace a path from the turning away in anger of Albion from Los to their eventual reunion.

At the very beginning of sequential time, on the edge of the world opened by the ontological time of loss, Los attempts to give form to Albion and in this way confront him with his actions. This attempt by the Eternal Prophet to awaken Albion is described as the progressive binding of Reuben and the subsequent sending of him across the Jordan. Reuben's identity is never described at great length; instead, the reader is presented with a plethora of associations, names and brief definitions. We are forced to piece together our image of him in a way which, as we shall see, is entirely appropriate for this character.

Damon writes that Reuben symbolizes the "average sensuous man" and he quotes Louis Ginzberg who translates his name as "See the normal man."[5] Reuben's biblical identity strengthens this suggestion for he is "the founder

of the eldest of the twelve tribes of Israel. Reuben therefore stands for all of the tribes and, in Blake's cosmography, for all mankind. His name, "the normal man," is, however, meant in an ironic sense for Reuben stands for the members of Albion when they have been torn from relationship. In Jerusalem he is for this reason characterized as a homeless wanderer, whose voice can be heard "from street to street / In all the cities of the Nations Paris Madrid Amsterdam" (84:13-14, E243).

It is important to note that these descriptions of Reuben refer to his identity after he has been bound by Los. At the moment of Albion's withdrawal, Reuben simply goes to sleep:

> Reuben slept in Bashan like one dead in the valley
> Cut off from Albions mountains & from all the Earths summits
> Between Succoth & Zaretan beside the Stone of Bohan. . . .
> (30[34]:43-45, E177)

The withdrawal of the whole man is ipso facto the precipitation of his members into the solipsism of sleep. Bashan is the land on "the northern part of Palestine east of the Jordan"; Succoth and Zaretan were cities in this region. The clay ground which separates these two cities once "furnished the materials for the casting of the metal ornaments to adorn Solomon's Temple."[6] The location of the slumbering Reuben is therefore strikingly apt. In Eternity the "average man" gives form to the giant Albion in a manner which is analogous to the way in which the clay found in the land between Succoth and Zaretan was used to form the ornaments for Solomon's temple. When Albion withdraws, however, Albion's body fragments and sinks back into silent and formless clay. Reuben is cut off from Albion and closed in a "deathlike sleep."

The biblical Reuben is, in addition to being the founder of the eldest tribe of Israel, "the eldest son of Jacob," who was "dispossessed because he seduced his father's concubine, Bilhah."[7] In Blake's terms this story suggests that Reuben has been dominated by the female will. Where Albion attempts to appropriate the Emanation of a portion of his being and make it the whole, Reuben seduces his father's wife. Reuben and Albion therefore both

regulate their desire with reference to a female figure and, as a result, withdraw from a more universal identity (symbolized in the biblical story by Reuben's birthright) to one which is centred on themselves alone. This same dynamic is also suggested in the identification of Reuben as Merlin. In the Morte dé Arthur Merlin's love for the Lady of the Lake results in his enclosure in a cave.[8] Merlin is, like the biblical and Blakean Reuben, separated from the whole man and reduced to an isolated self because he has been dominated by the female will.

Los responds to Albion's withdrawal and the separation of Bashan and Reuben from Canaan and the mountains of Albion, by giving form to the "average man." First Reuben's nostrils are bent "down to the Earth" (30[34]:47, E177); then his eyes are rolled "into two narrow circles" (30[34]:53, E177); his tongue is folded "Between Lips of mire & clay" (32[36]:6, E178); and finally his ear is bent "in a spiral circle outward" (32[36]:13, E178). The binding of Reuben is, of course, a prophetic and not an aesthetic activity. Los is attempting to awaken Albion to his plight and in order to do this he gives form to Albion's withdrawal. The narrow circles of the eye, the nose bent to the ground, the ear bent outwards and the tongue closed in a cavern of clay, all establish the outline of the caverned and fragmented man.

As each sense is formed and bound, Los sends Reuben across the river Jordan to Canaan in order to confront Albion with his error. Los is, unfortunately, doing the right thing at the wrong time. The land of Canaan has become "the land of the Hittite" and a place where the children of Jerusalem are slain. Albion has no intention of returning to relationship. He is now called the Canaanite only because he is dominated by the females of the land. With this kind of audience Los's prophetic activity has startling results:

> every-one that saw him
> Fled! they fled at his horrible Form: they hid in caves
> And dens, they looked on one-another & became what they beheld. . . .
> (30[34]:48-50, E177)

Northrop Frye writes that the clause "They became what they beheld" refers to

> the familiar doctrine that we see the world as monstrous because our minds are contorted. And the creation of Reuben fills those who see it with horror or ridicule because the natural man, a life proceeding to death, is to the visionary eye the nightmare life-in-death that thicks man's blood with cold. Even for us, who are used to it, there is no more terrifying vision than a ghost, or spectre, a human form at once dead and alive.[9]

In fact, Reuben fills the inhabitants of Canaan with horror, not because he represents the Spectre while they possess the visionary eye, but because his appearance confronts them with the reality of their situation. It is only in their response to Reuben that the Canaanites are transformed. They "become what they behold" because they try <u>not</u> to behold him and consequently retreat into caves and dens. In other words, it is by not looking at Reuben, by denying the reality of their own condition, that the people of Canaan take on Reuben's "horrible Form." The word 'behold' therefore refers not simply to Reuben but to their fellows as well ("they looked on one-another"), who are now also closed within the cavern of the self. Rather than arguing, with Karl Kiralis, that as a "Vegetative Man" Reuben was "not ready for the Promised Land" and that this is why he decides "to remain on the east side of the Jordan,"[10] we can say that Reuben returns to Bashan because the inhabitants of Canaan are not ready to embrace him.

The failure of Los's attempts to awaken Albion places the Divine Family well within the ontological time of loss. They must now determine how best to respond to Albion's withdrawal. There are, unfortunately, only two possible responses: ridicule or concern; wrath or love. Amongst the Eternal ones, for example, some merely give expression to a sense of scandal. They argue that the members of Albion are now "Vegetable only fit for burning" (32[36]:48, E179). Others in "Great Eternity" attempt to understand Albion's world of withdrawal and they look forward to the time of his redemption when "Length Bredth Highth again Obey the Divine Vision Hallelujah" (32:56, E179). Los gives expression to the first response on plate 33[37] when he steps "forth from the Divine Family" (33[37]:1, E179) and speaks in wrath to Albion. It is important to see that his anger is quite justified, for Los is (as a result

of Albion's withdrawal) beginning to feel the painful division that we observed in the first chapter. In addition, Los must bear the brunt of Albion's wrath:

> I feel my Spectre rising upon me! Albion! arouze thyself!
> Why dost thou thunder with frozen Spectrous wrath against us?
> (33[37]:2-3, E179)

This response, however, threatens to cut all bonds of relationship; it encloses Los within his constituted world, and it serves to make Albion more indignant and even less receptive to the voice of others. Its potential fruit is, therefore, complete annihilation:

> So Los spoke: But when he saw blue death in Albions feet,
> Again he join'd the Divine Body, following merciful;
> While Albion fled more indignant! revengeful covering
> His face and bosom with petrific hardness, and his hands
> And feet, lest any should enter his bosom & embrace
> His hidden heart. . . .
> (33[37]:10-34[38]:3, E179)

When Los sees the effects of his anger he takes up the second response and returns to the "Divine Body." Here can be found the presence of Christ:

> but mild the Saviour follow'd him,
> Displaying the Eternal Vision! the Divine Similitude!
> In loves and tears of brothers, sisters, sons, fathers, and friends
> Which if Man ceases to behold, he ceases to exist. . . .
> (34[38]:10-13, E179-80)

In facing Albion, Los (and the Divine Family) is continually keeping before him the call of relationship, which is the Eternal Vision and the voice and presence of Christ.

This second response also has undesirable consequences, for to follow Albion as he withdraws is to enter, step by step, the world of withdrawal. This is what occurs to Albion's "brothers, sisters, sons, fathers, and friends." London, for example, finds that as a result of his friendship to Albion his blood is now "vegetating" and rolling "dreadful thro' the Furnaces of Los, and the Mills of Satan" (34[38]:36,37, E180). At its most extreme the attempt to remain in relationship with one who has withdrawn is to suffer martyrdom and death, to give one's life in the hope of reaching the tyrant. It is, however, only in self-giving such as this that the very ground upon which we stand is formed, the Divine Vision is sustained, and Los is able to

find a ground on which to build Golgonooza.

(3) A sequential chain

The next steps in the sequential history of withdrawal are Albion's arrival at and then his passage though "the Gate of Los" (35[39]:11, E181). Albion is, at this point, still able to speak to Los, and Los is "not yet infected with the Error & Illusion" (35[39]:27, E181). Albion's steps backwards into withdrawal are met by a movement of his friends forwards. The four Zoas and "the Twenty-four" come to his side, and "the Divine Family" and "Jesus the Saviour" appear (36[40]:45-7, E182). This movement towards Albion nevertheless occurs within the space and time of withdrawal. To remain with Albion is to become a victim of his laws and to enter the world of Los and Enitharmon. Selsey's friendship with Albion, for example, induces him to allow himself "to be call'd the son of Los the terrible vision" (36[40]:52, E182), and Winchester permits his Emanations

> to be call'd Enitharmons daughters, and be born
> In vegetable mould: created by the Hammer and Loom
> In Bowlahoola & Allamanda where the Dead wail night & day.
> (36[40]:55-57, E183)

At this point in sequential time Los is able to see the "Twenty-eight" (the four Zoas and the twenty four cities) in "Deaths dark caves . . . in deep humiliation / And tortures of self condemnation" (37[41]:23-25, E183), and he can see the Zoas

> Drinking the shuddering fears & loves of Albions Families
> Destroying by selfish affections the things that they most admire
> Drinking & eating, & pitying & weeping, as at a trajic scene.
> The soul drinks murder & revenge, & applauds its own holiness . . .
> (37[41]:27-30, E183),

but he cannot clearly see that there is no other possibility open to these beings. The Zoas cry:

> If we are wrathful Albion will destroy Jerusalem with rooty Groves
> If we are merciful, ourselves must suffer destruction on his Oaks!
> (38[43]:8-9, E184)

Their confession of helplessness makes Los angry. Unlike the Zoas, Los is

able to see that God will act only in their own persons; however, he is nevertheless unable to formulate an adequate alternative to the Zoas' passivity:

> Then Los grew furious raging: Why stand we here trembling around
> Calling on God for help; and not ourselves in whom God dwells
> Stretching a hand to save the falling Man: are we not Four
> Beholding Albion upon the Precipice ready to fall into Non-
> Entity. . . .
> (38:12-15, E184-85)

His response at this point in the history of withdrawal is simply not to "endure this thing!" (38[43]:71, E186). He attempts, with the aid of the Zoas whom he has roused from inactivity with a passionate declamation of the world that is being brought into existence (38[43]:12-79, E184-86), to carry Albion "back / Against his will thro Los's Gate to Eden" (39[44]:2-3, E186). One must admit that this response is better than the Zoas' passivity; however, to hope that kind violence will induce Albion to return is misguided. Los is attempting to bend Albion to <u>his</u> will, and the result is a further step into the world of withdrawal. The ocean which separates Albion from freedom now becomes

> a boundless Ocean bottomless,
> Of grey obscurity, filld with clouds & rocks & whirling waters
> And Albions Sons ascending & descending in the horrid Void.
> (39[44]:15-17, E186)

All of the responses of the friends of Albion to his withdrawal have brought them closer to "the Ulro." They are now on the point of becoming "Sexual, & . . . Created, and Vegetated, and Born" (39[44]:22, E186); in other words, of being reduced to loss. "Feeling the damps of death," the friends therefore,

> with one accord delegated Los
> Conjuring him by the Highest that he should Watch over them
> Till Jesus shall appear: & they gave their power to Los
> Naming him the Spirit of Prophecy, calling him Elijah
>
> Strucken with Albions disease they become what they behold;
> They assimilate with Albion in pity & compassion;
> Their Emanations return not: their Spectres rage in the Deep
> The Slumbers of Death came over them around the Couch of Death
> Before the Gate of Los & in the depths of Non Entity
> Among the Furnaces of Los: among the Oaks of Albion.
> (39[44]:28-37, E187)

At this distance from relationship we hear the voice of Bath who, "faint as the voice of the Dead in the House of Death" (39[44]:44, E187), asks Oxford to try once more to reach Albion.[11] Albion, however, simply cannot hear either Oxford or Bath (40[45]:35, E188).

All of the twenty-eight now embrace "Eternal Death" and so enter the world of Los and Enitharmon, "for Albions sake" (40[45]:39, E188). Lincoln, Durham and Carlisle become "Councellors of Los" (41[46]:5, E188), Ely becomes a "Scribe of Los" (41[46]:6, E188), Oxford faints (41[46]:17, E188) and the world of Eternity is reduced to the confrontation between the righteousness of Albion and the righteousness, justice and mercy of Los (pl.42, E189-91). The penultimate moment in this history of withdrawal is the appearance of the "Divine Vision" as a Sun (43[29]:1, E191), which "inclosd the Human Family" (43[29]:27, E191). Humanity has now entered the world built by Los and Enitharmon. It remains only for Los to take his lamp and explore the inert mass that Albion has become, and for Albion to utter his last words.

(4) Narrative and vision

The eclipse of the divine family by the sun of the fallen world brings Albion to a point of almost complete collapse. The only people to escape this catastrophe are "the Emanation of Los & his / Spectre" (44[30]:1-2, E193), who are able to survive because they collectively retain the shape of Albion in withdrawal: Albion's friends, family, valleys, cities and fields have been reduced to the shape of loss that is held by this pair. They are called fugitives because, in order to compete his withdrawal, Albion must withdraw from the reality of his actions. His anger is, therefore, now directed against the reality held by these figures and, for this reason, against them as well. After giving an account of Albion's collapse, Enitharmon and the Spectre are embraced by Los (44[30]:16-17, E193). This embrace completes the outline of the fallen world.

In a traditional narrative this development would indicate some kind of

terminus from which readers could look back and survey the entire expanse of the history that has been narrated. They would retain this history as a consecutive series of appearances, and their ability to do this would perhaps generate a feeling that the story had been mastered or assimilated. There is, indeed, a temptation to do this in a discussion of the second chapter of Jerusalem, for the narrative that I have traced can be supplemented by a host of details which support the reader's sense of a fluid and engaging narrative progression. For example, Albion's regression into a state of withdrawal can be elaborated at some length. First he merely speaks "from his secret seat" (28:5, E174), but as he steps further and further away from relationship and is forced to spend more of his energy in retreating from the reality of his actions, he becomes more animated. He frowns "in anger" (30[34]:19, E176) and later flees "more indignant" and "revengeful" (33[37]:12, E179), and on plate 42 he sends Hand and Hyle to sieze Los (42:47, E190). The terminus of these increasingly desperate responses is the collapse described by the two fugitives and the announcement by Albion that "Hope is banish'd from me" (47:18, E196). Similarly, there is throughout the second chapter a slowly dawning realization of Albion's plight and a corresponding commitment to Albion on the part of the Divine Family. One can note a progression from the event in which a world of withdrawal appears, to Los's prophetic activity, and then to the gradual realization that if Albion is to be saved from Eternal death his friends and family must remain in relationship with him, even if the price of sustaining this bond is martyrdom and death. To concentrate on this progression alone would mean, however, that we were focussing our attention on ontic and not sequential time. Moreover, the terminus of this narrative is the occasion for a far-reaching disturbance to the history that we have been tracing. We can see the nature of this disturbance on plate 42.

The confrontation between Albion and Los which is described on this plate takes the reader further into sequential time. Anger and revenge have now turned into open combat. However, the account of this development

concludes with lines which introduce a curious dislocation into the history that we have been following:

> And Los drew his Seven Furnaces around Albions Altars
> And as Albion built his frozen Altars, Los built the Mundane Shell,
> In the Four Regions of Humanity East & West & North & South,
> Till Norwood & Finchley & Blackheath & Hounslow, coverd the whole Earth.
> This is the Net & Veil of Vala, among the Souls of the Dead.
> (42:77-81, E190-91)

The conjunction with which this passage begins suggests that the lines which follow will tell us of an act which is coterminous with, or consequent to, the conflict between Los and Albion. The second line of this passage, however, refers to the construction of Albion's Altars and the Mundane Shell, both of which are activities which began well before this point in the poem. In this chapter Albion began to build his Altars on the very first plate (28:21, E174), while the construction of the Mundane Shell appeared to be complete in ontological time (13:53-54, E157). Or, to take another example, "The Net & Veil of Vala" cannot be reduced to something which can be built at a particular point in history, because it is the very shape of the temporal and spatial world which is held and given form by Los. In these lines sequential time opens to reveal a relationship with a process which underlies all of time, with ontological time.

This opening is not, of course, limited to these lines. Throughout the second chapter the sequential narrative is continually subverted by lines which introduce a tension between the time of the "vegetative Man" (in which the poem unfolds) and the time of vision. The binding of Reuben is, for example, not a simple event which occurs within a linear history, but one which helps to build the space in which this history is unfolded. We are told that Los rages for "Sixty Winters" in the "Divisions of Reuben," and that this activity builds "the Moon of Ulro, plank by plank & rib by rib" (32[36]:4-5, E178). More dramatically, on plate 34[38] the poet affirms that all of the events of sequential time are present to him. When the Divine Family display the "Divine Similitude" to Albion, Blake asserts that he sees "them in the Vision of God upon my pleasant valleys" (34[38]:28, E180).

Similarly, London does not give himself for Albion at some point in the past, but in the moment in which Blake wakes from sleep:

> So spoke London, immortal Guardian! I heard in Lambeths shades:
> In Felpham I heard and saw the Visions of Albion
> I write in South Molton Street, what I both see and hear
> In regions of Humanity, in Londons opening streets.
> (34[38]:40-43, E180)

The history narrated in the second chapter opens again and again to ontological time in order to exhort the reader to adopt the stance of vision. As I have argued, Albion-in-withdrawal is given form as the six thousand year history of the fallen world. This means that he can be described as a single form (the subject of the first chapter) and as a six thousand year sequential history (the subject of the second, third and fourth chapters). These two descriptions are not mutually exclusive. For example, when an individual experiences the death of a friend he enters a time of loss. This time can be described as a state and as a sequential history, for the entry into the ontological time of loss opens a sequential time which, beginning from the event of loss, traces a path from the struggle against recognizing the fact of loss, to anger at the person who has died, to acceptance of and then a final reconciliation to the fact of loss. The ontological time of loss and the sequential history of loss clearly emerge in relationship with each other. This series of stages and emotions maps the very shape and body of the time of loss. Similarly, Albion-in-withdrawal exists along the dimensions of both ontological and sequential time. This is why in the first chapter of Jerusalem Golgonooza was described as a structure with a temporal extension. It contains "all that has existed in the space of six thousand years" (13:59, E157). However, in order to see this interrelationship we must see "thro" the surface of the text; we must understand that Jerusalem is an "Allegory addressed to the Intellectual Powers."

A discussion of the first and second chapters of Jerusalem is therefore in the unenviable position of having to describe a relationship between two things which are both subject and object of any sentence which adequately describes the relationship between them. The sequential form of the book and,

indeed, of all exposition and discourse, means that a vision of relationship can be described only against the grain of the language. It is, on the one hand, true (as I have maintained) that ontological time forms the space within which the events of sequential time are traced. At the end of the first chapter, for example, we see the intervals of sequential time vegetate "Knot by / Knot, Day by Day, Night by Night" (24:61-62, E170). However, on the other hand, it is also true that the events of sequential time form the space of ontological time. This is why there are events described in the second chapter which could radically alter the texture of ontological time. On plate 36, for example, the fall of Albion away from the time of loss and into "the torments of Eternal Death" (25, E182) is averted only by an event in sequential history. Sequential time and ontological time emerge in relationship with each other; together they form the body of Albion-in-withdrawal.

To go no further than the recognition of the dependence of sequential and ontological time on each other is still to do scant justice to the extraordinary lines quoted above. The narrator asserts that the voice of London can be heard in his present, just as in lines twenty seven and twenty eight of the same plate he sees "the Divine Family follow Albion" not in the distant past but in the "Vision of God upon" his "pleasant valleys." These lines take the reader back to the beginning of the chapter and of the poem, to a moment of vision which does not need to be recollected because it can be found in the present. They suggest that all of the events of sequential time can be seen and heard (along with those of ontological time) "in regions of Humanity, in Londons opening streets." What Blake sees and hears in the present and in the past are the "Visions of Albion" of which London and the sequential history of the second chapter are a part.

In the time and space of the "Vegetative Man" we are being carried on in an ordered race of time (our reading of the poem, for example, has advanced almost to the half-way mark); however, in vision we wake with Blake (whether standing in "the fields from Islington to Marybone," "in London's opening

streets," in Felpham, Lambeth, South Molton Street, the "pleasant valleys," or in the unspecified location in the opening lines of the poem, to a vision of the whole man. This is because in vision the closed world of the self is punctured and, rather than seeing time as Lockean time, we are able to see it as the body of a single man: in vision we see and hear "In regions of Humanity." This body, although spatialized and temporalized by Los as the six thousand year extent of fallen history, is a moment in the eternal life of Albion, albeit a moment in which he has become enclosed. The attempt by Los and the Divine Family to follow Albion, although located in the second chapter of Jerusalem, is, in vision, coterminous with Christ's call to Albion at the beginning of the first chapter. Reading against the grain of the poem's onward movement (or, perhaps more accurately, seeing "thro" the text) we find a single centre, a moment of vision in which we stand before the whole man.

There is, of course, no suggestion that the time and space opened by the vegetative man are not real. Instead, the poem is attempting to describe the complex interrelationship which exists between what I have called ontic, sequential and ontological time. The reader is still standing with Blake in the moment of awakening, and before Jerusalem's gate; however, the vicissitudes of fallen perception mean that we must report this vision by foregrounding first one and then another of its aspects. In chapter one we saw the shape of ontological time; in chapter two begins a sequential history. In vision these two chapters and their subjects describe the shape of a single moment.

(5) One history, or two?

Perhaps the most severe disturbance to the time and space of the "Vegetative Man" occurs as a result of the rearrangement of the second chapter in the third and fourth of the five copies of Jerusalem that Blake printed. In this second ordering the terminus of the history that we have been recounting becomes its beginning: the collapse of Albion, the flight of

the Spectre and the Emanation to Los, and the exploration of Albion's interior begin the chapter. "How can the terminus of a sequence be its beginning?," one is tempted to complain. It would seem a much less disturbing rearrangement if we could argue that Blake had changed his mind about the "proper" ordering of the chapter, but the fifth extant copy printed by Blake reverts to the order of the first and the second. The second chapter of Jerusalem insists on turning on itself and making its ending its beginning. The problem is made even more intriguing by the appropriateness of both orderings. In reading copies A, B and E, the escape of the fugitives from the debacle of Albion's collapse and the subsequent solidification of his body is a very convincing conclusion to his withdrawal. However, when one turns to copies C and D, the same events seem to provide a very satisfying and, indeed, powerful beginning. This flexibility of beginning and end, far from being inexplicable or merely arbitrary, is a result of the relationship between ontological and sequential time.[12]

Albion's withdrawal from relationship immediately places him in the ontological time and space of withdrawal. He is therefore immediately placed inside a world of loss. The "spiritual" or ontological form of this world is described in the expanding circles of the first chapter of Jerusalem. The shape or outer surface of this world is held by Enitharmon and the Spectre of Urthona.

From the perspective of the "Vegetative Man," we view the world held by Enitharmon and the Spectre both as a physical space in which we exist and as a "tide of Time" which flows from creation to apocalypse. But if the relationship between ontological time and sequential time (the relationship between the withdrawal of Albion from Christ and the six thousand year history in which this withdrawal is spatialized and temporalized) is one of mutual determination, then we can say that while it is true that the history recounted in the second chapter leads us to the world of loss, it is equally true to argue that this latter world precedes the movement of sequential time. In vision we glimpse this expanse of time and space as the body of a

single being. In other words, in vision the world that is given outline in the embrace between the Spectre and Enitharmon can be seen to be present in the moment in which the history of withdrawal begins, and can be seen to be present in the moment in which that history is completed. This is why, for example, in copies A, B and D the solidified and static form which Los explores at the end of the chapter is in fact present at the beginning. Before this solidified form has been discovered in the narrative, Albion describes himself as "a barren Land" (29:16, E174) and the narrator describes the condensation of the "hills & valleys" of Albion's members into "solid rocks." Albion is covered with snow and ice (28:13, E172) and locked within "an endless labyrinth of woe" (28:19, E172).

Within the constraints of story-telling within the fallen world, this relationship between ontological and sequential time generates two quite distinct narratives. In the first, sequential time builds and establishes the space of withdrawal; in the second, sequential history is traced within the terrain opened by Albion's withdrawal. For the poet who attempts to elaborate this vision within the fallen world, this produces something of a quandary. It would seem that he/she must choose between the first or the second arrangement, but to do so is to assimilate the world held by the Spectre and Enitharmon to the dimensions of ontic time. Blake's alternate orderings of the second chapter of Jerusalem (and the suggestion that even within individual copies the beginning and the end of the chapter can be reversed) is an attempt to overcome this dilemma. They suggest that the solidified body of Albion (the world held in Los's embrace of the Spectre and of Enitharmon) underlies all of time. The alternate orderings of the second chapter underline that Jerusalem is vision. The poem exhorts us to look "thro" the linear surface of the poem to the moment of vision with which the poem begins.

Perhaps the most interesting example of Blake's "Allegory" can be seen in the radical differences between the account of the relationship between

Los and the Spectre given in the first chapter, and that given in the second. In the first chapter the Spectre is called a host of unpleasant names. In the second chapter he is described in a very different fashion. We are told, in fact, that Los's Spectre "is named Urthona" (44[30]:4, E193) and that he, with Enitharmon, is worthy of praise and capable of considerable insight:

> Being not irritated by insult bearing insulting benevolences
> They percieved that corporeal friends are spiritual enemies
> They saw the Sexual Religion in its embryon Uncircumcision
> And the Divine hand was upon them bearing them thro darkness
> Back safe to their Humanity as doves to their windows:
> Therefore the Sons of Eden praise Urthonas Spectre in Songs
> Because he kept the Divine Vision in time of trouble.
> (44[30]:9-15, E193)

In ontological time we witnessed the painful division of the Spectre and Emanation from Los; yet in the second chapter the Spectre and Emanation seem to have a radically different aetiology and, rather than dividing from Los, they are embraced and taken in by him (44[30]:16-17, E193). We will consider the question of aetiology first.[13]

On plate 44 the Spectre is called "Urthonas Spectre" (44[30]:14, E193) as well as Los's Spectre (44[30]:1-2, E193). Enitharmon is described as the Emanation of Los (44[30]:1, E193); however, to the extent that Los is himself Urthona in the state of loss, she quite clearly bears some relationship to this prelapsarian figure. Enitharmon and the Spectre can therefore be said to trace their line of descent back to a fallen and an unfallen Zoa.

In earlier poems this double origin was a feature of the lineage of both Enitharmon and the Spectre. In The Book of Urizen, for example, Enitharmon divides from Los while he is within the fallen world; however, Los is in this poem the name of a prelapsarian identity and this gives Enitharmon a history which leads from the unfallen world. Similarly, in The Four Zoas the Spectre and Enitharmon seem at first glance to be fragments of the unfallen Zoa, Urthona. Enitharmon, for example, was seen, according to the testimony of various characters, in a time prior to the birth of Los, while the Spectre personally traces his history back to Urthona. However, in Night the Fourth there is the suggestion that the Spectre has fallen from Los, and in the same

night we see Enitharmon, although separated from him and herself the object of his desire, divide from him:

> O how Los howld at the rending asunder all the fibres rent
> Where Enitharmon joind to his left side in griding pain. . . .
> (49:7-8, E332)

In the same Night Blake has a note to "Bring in here the Globe of Blood as in the B of Urizen" (E833) and this once again suggests that Enitharmon is born as a result of the division of Los.

In The Four Zoas the Spectre, Enitharmon and Los are fragments of Urthona. However, the fact that Los is the ontological reality of the fallen world and, therefore, a living being and a modality of Urthona establishes a ground and a centre of cohesion for these fragments. As I have argued, the precarious unity which is established in this way outlines the body of Dark Urthona: the fourth Zoa in the state of withdrawal and fragmentation. We can therefore trace in The Four Zoas, in the narrative itself and in the various accounts of the Fall which are given, a movement of Enitharmon and the Spectre to Los. This configuration of fragments is, nevertheless, extremely unstable and is for this reason characterized by a continual process of division: the fallen world is always in the process of falling apart. This is, as I have argued, why the Spectre and Enitharmon have a double history in The Four Zoas. In Jerusalem this same situation is repeated, but with a very different emphasis.

In its basic form The Four Zoas is a sequential history: it moves from the Fall to the fallen world to apocalypse. It is therefore an excellent vehicle for foregrounding the division of the Spectre and Enitharmon from Urthona. Their division from Los is, within this particular poem, more difficult to describe because it forms the ground of the world in which sequential accounts of the Fall are recited; indeed, it is what makes a narrative such as that recounted in The Four Zoas possible. Where The Four Zoas does include an account of this division (as if it were attempting to give us a glimpse of the ground which set the limits to its own possibilities) it must become paradoxical and contradictory.

By contrast, Jerusalem begins from a moment of vision. In the first chapter this allows us to see the ontological time and shape of the entire fallen world. From this perspective the actual fall of the Spectre, Los and Enitharmon from Urthona is clearly of no importance. Within the fallen world what is of paramount importance is the division of the Spectre and Enitharmon from Los. In the second chapter the situation is very different, for we read a sequential account of the Fall. As a result we see Urthona enter the modality of Los, and the Spectre and Enitharmon approach and then enter the bosom of Los. From the perspective of sequential time we can see that "the Sons of Eden praise Urthonas Spectre in Songs" because he retains the shape of Albion-in-withdrawal (he holds before Albion the shape of Eternity - life-in-renewal with the Saviour) and in this way keeps "the Divine Vision in time of Trouble." Unlike the sons of Albion he is "not irritated by insult" and is able to bear "insulting benevolences" because he is the shape of Albion's withdrawal. (The passage quoted above in fact suggests that the Spectre and the Emanation are themselves "bearing insulting benevolences".) They are also able to see "that corporeal friends are spiritual enemies" because although Albion's actions give form to their world, he is nevertheless opposed to their existence. They must become fugitives lest they also fall victim to his laws and are assimilated.

The saving work of the Spectre does not mean that he is no longer a deadly threat to Los. He is still Los's "Pride & Self-righteousness" because the Spectre and the Emanation form the outline of Los's achievements, his prophetic art. There is therefore the temptation for Los to remain within the world that he has created rather than open again and again to Albion. Los must embrace this saving demon if he is to live at all, suffer the continual division of the Spectre from his side and, at the same time, bend the Spectre to his will in an attempt to force him to retain the form of his openness to Albion-in-withdrawal. We can therefore say that the division recounted in the first chapter presumes the embrace and unification which is described in the second. The narrative of the second chapter returns once again to its

beginning and a circle is formed in which ontological and sequential time can be seen as the shape of a single moment. The fallen world is composed of both division and embrace.[14]

(6) Vision

Blake's description of a moment of vision in which the events of history stand forth and become present as the body or physical shape of Albion-in-withdrawal is not completely unprecedented.[15] The author of Acts, for example, writes in chapter 17, verse 28, that in Christ "we live, and move, and have our being; as certain of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring." In Revelation 1:8 this Christ who resides within our bosoms appears to St. John and claims that he contains in his person the entire expanse of fallen history: "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending . . . which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." Although Christian mystics and visionaries have not always seen history as constituting the body of Christ, on numerous occasions they have claimed that in vision all of history is present before them. Juliana of Norwich writes of a vision in which the world appeared as a hazelnut within her hand.[16] Thomas Traherne claims in his Meditations that

> You never Enjoy the World aright, till the Sea it self floweth in your Veins, till you are Clothed with the Heavens, and Crowned with the Stars . . . ,[17]

and Henry Vaughan writes:

> I saw Eternity the other night
> Like a great Ring of pure and endless light,
> All calm, as it was bright,
> And round beneath it, Time in hours, days, years
> Driven by the spheres
> Like a vast shadow moved, in which the world
> And all her train were hurled. . . .[18]

The most important effect of Blake's visionary perception of the world is to allow him to displace the time and space of the Lockean, closeted man. The time and space of the reasoning memory can be displaced by a time in

which all of the events of time, "every little act, / Word, work, & wish" (13:60-61, E157-8), are present. As Los triumphantly tells Albion:

> There is a limit of Opakeness, and a limit of Contraction;
> In every Individual Man, and the limit of Opakeness,
> Is named Satan: and the limit of Contraction is named Adam. . . .
> But there is no Limit of Expansion! there is no Limit of Translucence.
> In the bosom of Man for ever from eternity to eternity.
> (42:29-31, 35-6, E189)

We can understand what Blake is saying in these lines if we distinguish between two very different kinds of truth.

From within the confines of the closet, truth can only be a correspondence between our ideas and the world which lies outside. As Heidegger points out, however, such a correspondence depends upon a prior showing; it depends upon the relationship which the world and the self have taken up to each other. For the Greeks truth was therefore "alētheia, that is, the revealing of beings"[19] or "the unconcealedness of beings."[20] This unconcealedness is not simply achieved; instead, there is a constant strife between concealment and openness:

> Truth is un-truth, insofar as there belongs to it the reservoir of the not-yet-revealed, the un-covered, in the sense of concealment. . . . Truth essentially occurs as such in the opposition of lighting and double concealing. Truth is the primal strife in which, always in some particular way, the open region is won within which everything stands. . . .[21]

In Blake's oeuvre the "unconcealedness of beings" and the "open region . . . in which everything stands" are reached in the moment of vision; however, this does not simply abolish the concealment which occurs as a result of the Fall. Human life exists in the space which is opened by the struggle between openness and withdrawal, between Albion and Los, Los and the Spectre. This struggle can be seen in the necessity for Blake to wake again and again to vision. Similarly, it can be glimpsed in the tension in Jerusalem between the linear Jerusalem that unfolds in ontic time and the Jerusalem that we glimpse lying at one remove from this time, between linear time and the sequential (visionary) time that forms the body of ontological time. Readers are in the same position as Los, for they must follow the course of the poem and retain its form in their reasoning memory and, at the same time, keep their

attention focussed on the moment of vision. We stand between openness and withdrawal, vision and the closet of the "Vegetative Man," concealment and unconcealment. The present, the point at which the linear narrative of the second chapter now arrives, is forged in the space between these two realities.

Chapter Thirteen

The Geography of the Present

> See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil . . . I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live.
>
> Deuteronomy 30:15,19.

(1) All and nothing

We normally think of the present as a moment of time which is pressed between the competing claims of the past and future. The present in this sense can be simply defined as the now; however, its position at the point of fracture between the continents of what has been and what is to come already prefigures the difficulty experienced in any attempt to grasp this fleeting phantom. We glance at our watch and observe that it is now fifteen minutes past eleven, but even as it is announced this now has been displaced by another; it has vanished in the stream of time. In fact, as Heidegger points out, when we talk of the now we mean not one but a series of such moments, each self-contained and separate from the others, which are extended in a sequential chain.[1] It is the sequence of such moments which makes up Newtonian or Lockean time: the past is a series of nows which are present in memory, while the future is made up of those which are present in the mode of anticipation. We can therefore say that our perception of the present as the now brings with it a linear, sequential chain of moments in which it is placed. Quite clearly this sequence, like the "train of ideas which constantly succeed each other"[2] in our minds, is held and given form by the reasoning memory.

The present can, however, be understood in a second sense, and one which is at the very least equi-primordial with the first. In this second understanding the present is taken to mean simply that which is present. The

sun, the moon, the sky, Los, Albion, London and, indeed, even our sense of time as a progression of nows, are all present. The present is a pastiche or a chorus of different presences, a manifold of beings who are all turned towards us and are all soliciting our attention. Literary forms such as narrative are strikingly inadequate to this time, for there is no perspective from which this present could be ordered without fragmenting and diminishing what presents itself as a seamless totality.

The present as the now is held and structured by the individual. In this second present, however, the organizing principle is displaced from the individual to the world which precedes and supports him. The closest approximation that we have to this time is that offered by dance. In watching a dance we observe a manifold of dancers who all solicit our attention. We do not extract from this multiplicity and watch one figure to the exclusion of all others; instead, the dance is constituted in the relationship between the dancers and their various appeals. It is true, of course, that the steps of the dance unfold in serial progression; however, it is not this sequence in itself which forms the totality of the dance. When we respond to dance we perceive it as a rhythmic whole, a body, in which each dancer and each step have their appropriate weight. It is the interconnection and interpenetration of steps and of dancers that produces the experience which is present to us.[3]

It would, however, be wrong to choose too quickly between these different presents. Even in this brief description it is clear that dance, even as it foregrounds the relationships which hold between the various dancers and their movements, depends upon a sequential progression in order to be elaborated. The present in this sense has its own direction and its own canny logic which give it a particular trajectory and a movement with respect to the past and the future. Similarly, the evanescent now suggests, although it is not foregrounded, a dance of presences. The oscillation between these two poles, and the tension between them, is characteristic of the present in which we live. We live in a moment which is always on the verge of vanishing and yet which, at certain times, can almost overwhelm us with the richness

and clarity of its manifold appeals. In the first understanding we have a wheel turning another wheel, one present inevitably bringing a second into our purview. In the second we have a series of interlocking presences (depicted by Blake on plate 22), which all face and solicit the reader's attention. We are caught in a present which is on the one hand established by our reasoning memory and yet which is, on the other hand, the site of all encounters with others. The third chapter of Jerusalem takes us into this contradictory realm.

(2) Rahab and Los: withdrawal and fragmentation

In the previous chapter each plate was linked to the next by syntax and by a largely uninterrupted narrative progression. The illuminations were similarly woven into this progression. The first ten plates of the third chapter of Jerusalem are by contrast broken into discrete elements. The reader finds, for example, that narrative and syntactical links between these elements are either non-existent or slight and that the illuminations are to some extent freed from the cloth of the text. The poem now moves with the logic of dance or music and for this reason the individual dancers are clearly delineated.

The first and, from her perspective, the dominating feature of the present is "Vala dressed as Rahab,"[4] who appears in the upper half of plate 53. From the vantage point of her throne, this figure surveys the entire extent of the third chapter. Vala is, of course, a fitting conclusion to the history narrated in the previous chapter, for in withdrawing from relationship Albion enters a world in which he is dominated by the passive power.

The history which results in the reign of Vala/Rahab is also a history of the various attempts to recall Albion. The lower half of the plate

therefore goes on to detail the result in the present of this redemptive history. It is interesting to observe the subtle transmutation that occurs to this history as it arrives at this plate. The process of withdrawal has now become a fact which is simply and even brutally present. Albion is no longer engaged in the process of withdrawal; he has withdrawn and therefore Los now weeps "vehemently" over his fate (53:2, E202). In the previous chapter Los had not yet been "infected with the Error & Illusion" (35[39]:27, E181). On this plate "the roots of Albions Tree" have "enterd the Soul of Los" (53:4, E202). Similarly, the "Twentyfour Friends of Albion" and the "awful Four" (53:22, E203) are now lying on their couches and the "Giant forms" of "the Children of Los" are "time after time" condensed into "Nations & Peoples & Tongues" (53:7-8, E202). The work of Los and the sufferings of Albion's friends now open the space of Generation (53:27-28, E203). In the present we therefore see, ranged against the power and sovereignty of Rahab, the saving work and the sufferings of Los. This first element of the dance therefore pits Rahab against Los; the state of withdrawal which Albion has entered is juxtaposed with the form established by Los:

> Here on the banks of the Thames, Los builded Golgonooza,
> Outside of the Gates of the Human Heart, beneath Beulah
> In the midst of the rocks of the Altars of Albion. In fears
> He builded it, in rage & in fury. It is the Spiritual Fourfold
> London: continually building & continually decaying desolate!
> In eternal labours: loud the Furnaces & loud the Anvils
> Of Death thunder incessant around the flaming Couches of
> The Twentyfour Friends of Albion and round the awful Four. . . .
> (53:15-22, E203)

This fundamental antagonism between Los and Rahab does not appear in a vacuum. The site of their antagonism is, of course, the inert body of the fallen man, which is located at the nadir of his fall from Eternity. The body and history of the fallen man underlies, and is therefore part of, what is present. They are, however, a much less dominating or intense presence than Los and Rahab. The history of the Fall and the condition of Albion are for this reason described in extraordinary brevity. This rather complex element is detailed in the following plate.

In the first five lines of plate 54 we glimpse the Eternity from which Albion fell. In the next three lines the fact of Albion's fall is narrated. The poem then takes another six lines to describe Albion's present condition:

> The silent broodings of deadly revenge springing from the
> All powerful parental affection, fills Albion from head to foot
> Seeing his Sons assimilate with Luvah, bound in the bonds
> Of spiritual Hate, from which springs Sexual Love as iron chains:
> He tosses like a cloud outstretchd among Jerusalems Ruins
> Which overspread all the Earth, he groans among his ruind
> porches. . . .
>
> (54:9-14, E203)

Each of these passages is separated from its neighbours by double spacing. The second and the third are also divided by a line of birds which seem to separate Eternity and the Fall from the fallen condition. The first and the third are in the present tense because they are present realities, while the second is narrated in the past tense because it is a fact which has occurred and is therefore present in the fallen world in the modality of memory. The illumination which follows this tripartite division summarizes Albion's condition. He has rolled himself into a globe and can no longer see the myriads of Eternity which surround him. Eternity and Albion are separated by the fact of enclosure.

The strong rectangular design and firm defining lines of the illumination entitled "This World" seems to check the descent from Eternity to the fallen world. In the lines which follow, Albion does not fall into non-entity; instead, we see the internal conflicts which characterize a world in which the individual is "bound in the bonds / Of spiritual Hate, from which springs Sexual Love as iron chains" (54:11-12, E203). In the following lines we see the Spectre rise over Albion and hear his claims to be God. Albion responds to his presumption by attempting to draw England back into his bosom and away from the power of the Spectre. This cannot be done because in withdrawal his Emanation is continually separating from him. As a result his Emanation becomes the long Serpent of the temporally extended fallen world. Under these lines, in the lowest portion of the plate, we see Albion's four Zoas, who are apparently closed within the ground. Lines 15-32 and the

illumination of the Zoas therefore provide the reader with an anatomy of the state of withdrawal that Albion has reached. At the same time these final elements take part in a movement which threatens to breach the equilibium established by "This World" and which hopes to draw Eternity itself into its orbit.

The account of the Spectre's speech to Albion and the latter's response is in part narrated in the first person; however, the lines which frame this passage locate this interaction in the past. In other words, in the fallen world what has always already occurred is the domination of Albion by the Spectre. It is this event which leads us to the present in which Albion is "bound in the bonds / Of spiritual Hate." This event produces a movement which proceeds from the bottom of the page to the top, from the fragmentation of Albion depicted at the bottom of the plate and the consequent assumption of power by the Spectre, to the outline of "This World." The globe in which Reason, Desire, Pity and Wrath have been separated from each other is in fact the very shape of the present and of the world that is held by the Spectre. The globe forms the apex of a triangle whose feet stand in the bottom corners of the plate; it forms the uppermost point of a movement which threatens to push aside the myriads of Eternity and assimilate what is at this moment out of its reach: the realities which exist beyond the line of birds, within the space of Eternity. The regression of Albion from Eternity is therefore met by the ascent of the Spectre; his fragmentation is coterminous with the retaining work of the reasoning memory. "This World," the present in which we all exist, stands at the intersection of this regression and this ascent. The pasts which lead to this point are contained in the present in the same way that a comet retains a link with the fiery tail which marks the path back from the comet to the sun. It is important to note that "This World" is also the site of the conflict between Los and Rahab which was introduced in the previous plate. At this point in the dance we can see the present as a struggle between these two figures which is enacted at the point where Albion's regression and the Spectre's assent intersect.

(3) The inhabitants of Eternity and the Fall

On the following plate the poem's perspective changes quite abruptly and the reader's attention is directed to the response of "those who disregard all Mortal Things" (55:1, E204) to the fall of Albion. From within the fallen world it is true that Albion's fall appears to have always already occurred and therefore, from this perspective, that a response that was cotemporaneous with this event could not be an element in the present. In previous chapters, however, I have argued that the six thousand years of fallen history defines the shape of Albion-in-withdrawal. Within the frame of reference of this history, Albion has withdrawn, but for the inhabitants of Eternity the fall of Albion (and therefore the full extent of fallen history) is the moment (in our time, six thousand years long) of Albion's withdrawal. The response of these beings to Albion's withdrawal is therefore present to each moment of fallen history.

"Those who disregard all Mortal Things" are the inhabitants of Eden rather than Beulah. Beulah is created as a "rest" from the wars of "Great Eternity" (FZ5:29, E303). Within this space the inhabitants of Eternity are able to enter the season of winter. By contrast, the population of Eden use the outline of their worlds not as a refuge but as the ground for a leap towards others. As a result of this activity their constituted worlds are always in a state of flux. As Urizen remarks in The Book of Urizen, they live in a world of "unquenchable burnings" (4:13, E71).

It is therefore a sign of the extraordinary nature of Albion's withdrawal that even these beings are in danger of being drawn after him. The sight of "a Mighty-One / Among the Flowers of Beulah still retain his awful strength" (55:1-2, E204) is so disturbing that a number check their movements and are tempted to descend and see what has occurred:

> They wonderd; checking their wild flames & Many gathering
> Together into an Assembly; they said, let us go down
> And see these changes!
>
> (55:3-5, E204)

To follow Albion is, as we have seen, to become enclosed in the fallen world. Even to look at Albion-in-withdrawal necessitates a moderation of the Eternals' flames. This is the argument of a second group who say:

> If you do so prepare
> For being driven from our fields, what have we to do with the Dead?
> To be their inferiors or superiors we equally abhor;
> Superior, none we know: inferior none: all equal share
> Divine Benevolence & joy, for the Eternal Man
> Walketh among us, calling us his Brothers & his Friends. . . .
> (55:5-10, E204)

This same group then goes on to argue that the "Veil which Satan puts between Eve & Adam" (55:11, E204) has been forbidden by "the Eternal Man." In the fallen world this kind of argument would generally be resolved by discussion and then rational agreement that one or other of the positions was correct. In Eden a third group suggests that a collective decision be reached by allowing "him who only Is" to make a decision (55:17-18, E204).

To allow such a force or being to adjudicate is nothing less than to renounce all dogma and to enter a most profound dialogue. The word dialogue, of course, does not adequately describe what subsequently occurs, for a dialogue implies an openness between two relatively well-defined positions. The inhabitants of Eden solve the dispute by "Mental Warfare" in the course of which they allow the very texture of their world to be thrown into question, in the apparent belief that in this openness truth will appear. This "dialogue" is immediately a mental and physical act:

> So saying, an eternal deed was done: in fiery flames
> The Universal Conc[l]ave raged, such thunderous sounds as never
> Were sounded from a mortal cloud, nor on Mount Sinai old
> Nor in Havilah where the Cherub rolld his redounding flame.
>
> Loud! loud! the Mountains lifted up their voices, loud the Forests
> Rivers thunderd against their banks, loud Winds furious fought
> Cities & Nations contended in fires & clouds & tempests.
> The Seas raisd up their voices & lifted their hands on high
> The Stars in their courses fought. the Sun! Moon! Heaven! Earth.
> Contending for Albion & for Jerusalem his Emanation
> And for Shiloh, the Emanation of France & for lovely Vala.
> (55:19-29, E204)

The result of this warfare is not unanimity and certainly not dissolution in a general will. Nor is it a simple acceptance of one position. Instead, the inhabitants of Eden reach a majority decision which is related to and yet

transcends both the desire to see "these changes" in Albion and the knowledge that they must in some way keep themselves separate from Albion's vortex. They decide on a "Separation," but one which keeps open the possibility of a return, by Albion, to Eternity and, at the same time, ensures that the divine will be able to reach into the depths of hell.

The inhabitants of Eden enact this decision by preserving "the Human Organs":

> Let the Human Organs be kept in their perfect Integrity
> At will Contracting into Worms, or Expanding into Gods
> And then behold! what are these Ulro Visions of Chastity[!]
> Then as the moss upon the tree: or dust upon the plow:
> Or as the sweat upon the labouring shoulder: or as the chaff
> Of the wheat-floor or as the dregs of the sweet wine-press
> Such are these Ulro visions. . . .
>
> (55:36-42, E205)

The words which make up this passage curb the Tygers of Eternity "with golden bits & bridles of silver & ivory" and in this way direct the energy that gives them movement and life (55:35, E205).

The preservation of the "Human Organs" parallels the formation of "the Two Limits, Satan and Adam, / In Albions bosom" (31[35]:1-2, E177); it establishes a world which has a "limit of Opakeness, and a limit of Contraction," but no "Limit of Expansion!" and "no Limit of Translucence" (42:29,35, E189). The formation of these limits is an event which can be said to occur within each moment of history (and therefore within the present) because it is an act carried out from Eternity. The inhabitants of Eden respond to Albion as a "whole man"; they are not themselves enclosed within the limits they establish or lost within the "tide of Time." This can be seen in the next step that is taken by these figures.

This work of preservation is the necessary precondition for the naming of the "Seven Eyes of God." The "Eyes of God" define a progression which traverses the distance between the worms and the gods, from Lucifer to Jesus; they therefore provide the means by which time and Eternity can meet again. All of these eyes are present to the inhabitants of Eden: "Lucifer, Molech,

Elohim, Shadai, Pahad, Jehovah, Jesus" (55:32, E205), all appear before their eyes. It is only the eighth eye, the one which permits Albion to re-enter Eternity, that remains hidden in Albion's forests. The Edenic Assembly have provided limits to Albion's fall, but until he returns they can only see him as an inert globe. For those of us caught in the "tide of Time," Albion is elongated into a linear history; for the inhabitants of Eden he appears as the globe depicted on the previous plate. Fallen history is therefore intersected by an act of creation which gives it form. As a result, each moment of the expanse which stretches from Lucifer to Jesus is charged with an extraordinary surplus and excess.

The decision by "those who disregard all Mortal things" to set limits to the Fall is an import event; however, by itself it is of no avail. The inhabitants of Eden are drawing a line around Albion and in this way attempting to give him definition, but the line of identity exists only within relationship and Albion is continually withdrawing from any such thing. It is as if one side of a line which we had drawn was being continually erased. Such a procedure would, of course, even if the erasure proceeded in extraordinarily small increments, quickly reduce the line to nothingness. The Eternals need a person within the fallen world who is able to give Albion form. Plate 55 therefore concludes with the question of "Who will go forth for us! & Who shall we send before our face?" (55:69, E205).

In moving from this plate to the next there is a sudden and almost dizzy change of perspective. Rather than standing with the Eternals as they survey the expanse of Albion-in-withdrawal, we now enter the heat of a particular struggle in a single moment of fallen time. For the reader this creates the feeling of moving down through a funnel, of passing from a wide and open expanse to a place of narrow passage. The first plate fills time with an extraordinary surplus; the second fills the moment with the particularity that in the fallen world attends all realms of the existential. The dislocation caused by this transition is heightened by the clear denomination

of the second plate as a response to the former. The plates face each other, both lack all but marginal illumination, and the first word of the second locates it in the temporal moment immediately following the Edenic call. This is, of course, not to suggest that this is the only moment in fallen time in which the inhabitants of Eden are answered. The Edenic call is to each moment of fallen time. In the midst of Albion's fall, in the heart of the present, we can therefore always hear a voice calling to us to respond. The cry for a being to "go forth for us!" is a constant element in the fallen world; it is our response which must rise again and again to meet it.

The particular moment in which we observe Los's response to the Edenic Assembly is the present, the present of Blake's own day. The principal antagonists in this time are the Deists, to whom the third chapter of Jerusalem is addressed. This time is, however, considerably less determinate than one would at first imagine it to be. Although the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century is undoubtedly the primary temporal referent, the present is in fact all time that follows the history recounted in the second chapter. The present is in this sense the span of the fallen world that exists between the completion of Albion's fall and his regeneration. This is why in the preface to this chapter Blake can write that

> Every Religion that Preaches Vengeance for Sin is the Religion of the Enemy & Avenger; and not the Forgiver of Sin, and their God is Satan, Named by the Divine Name Your Religion O Deists: Deism, is the Worship of the God of this World by the means of what you call Natural Religion and Natural Philosophy, and of Natural Morality or Self-Righteousness, the Selfish Virtues of the Natural Heart. This was the Religion of the Pharisees who murderd Jesus. Deism is the same & ends in the same.
>
> (E201)

The motivating forces behind this time and religion are the female powers, the Daughters of Albion in particular, who give substance to the form which is the ground for "Natural Religion," "Natural Philosophy" and "Natural Morality." This gives us a further means of locating the present of this chapter,[5] for the female powers achieve supremacy when Albion's fall is completed and the power of the Spectre is assured.

To briefly recap the argument we have advanced in previous chapters: in

the process of withdrawal it is initially the Spectre who overtly struggles with the active power and with Los. As this struggle proceeds a world is precipitated in which the active power is enclosed. This universe is held in the hermaphroditic embrace between the Spectre and the Emanation. When this process begins it appears that it is the Spectre who is in control; however, to the extent that he gains power over Albion it is the Daughters that achieve supremacy. The Spectre's power is limited to the retention and manipulation of what is and, therefore, as the Fall proceeds it appears that the power that retains the world is himself determined by what he has retained. The female gains in power to the precise extent that the Spectre is able to gain dominion over the active power. In the third chapter we now stand with Los in a world where the female has power over the male from cradle to grave (56:3-4, E206): it is the physical and passive form of the world which now determines the active power:

> This World is all a Cradle for the erred wandering Phantom:
> Rock'd by Year, Month, Day & Hour; and every two Moments
> Between, dwells a Daughter of Beulah, to feed the Human
> Vegetable. . . .
>
> (56:8-10, E206)

From the perspective of the figures who weave the cradle of the natural world and the flesh of the body, their work encloses nothing more than a "Worm" and a "Clod of Clay." When Los asks them where the creatures which they have now "enwoven with so much tears & care" (56:23, E206) were found, they can recollect no more than a sense of loss:

> O it was lost for ever! and we found it not: it came
> And wept at our wintry Door: Look! look! behold! Gwendolen
> Is become a Clod of Clay! Merlin is a Worm of the Valley!
>
> (56:26-28, E206)

In this present, Los's response to the Edenic assembly is realized as a complex struggle against the force of enclosure represented by the Daughters of Albion. This is evocatively described as a dialectic between the songs and utterances of Los and those of the Daughters. Los cannot simply reject the Daughters for the form of the fallen world is a "Cradle" and a "Garment" for "the Human Vegetable." Instead, he adopts a relationship to them which is in

many ways similar to the one he holds with his Spectre. After the first interchange Los asserts that the Daughters must obey his command. The form of the fallen world holds the form of Albion-in-withdrawal; it is therefore a crucial component in the work of Albion's watchman (56:31, E206).

The Daughters are less than eager to comply with Los's wishes. They reply by telling him that they

> tremble at the light therefore: hiding fearful
> The Divine Vision with Curtain & Veil & fleshly Tabernacle. . . .
> (56:39-40, E206)

The Daughters tremble because to obey Los's dictate is to open the possibility that Albion will return. They realize, like Enitharmon at the end of the fourth chapter, that the regeneration of the active power will radically alter the world in which they gain their power. Los replies to their response "swift as the rattling thunder upon the mountains":

> Look back into the Church Paul! Look! Three Women around
> The Cross! O Albion why didst thou a Female Will Create?
> (56:42-43, E206)

There are at least three ways of reading the exhortation in line forty-two. The Church Paul, as Bloom notes, is one of the churches in the cycle from Adam to Luther. However, as Damon notes, the same phrase could refer to St. Paul's in London[6] and the exhortation could be addressed to all those present in this city. Equally plausible is the possibility that the phrase is directed to Paul himself, who is being exhorted to look back into the Christian church which he is helping to found. There is, in fact, no real need to choose between these possibilities. Whether Los is addressing the historical Paul, the inhabitants of London and England, or the beings who live in the church which Blake called Paul, the import of Los's cry is the same. Los is attempting to draw our attention to the forces of enclosure which are always already turning our visions of others into dogma. Paul and the church called Paul are archetypal examples of the enclosure that invariably follows a particular appearance of the divine. The same process can, of course, be found in the London of Blake's (or our own) day. It is this call, and the movement away from enclosure and towards relationship that

it implies, which forms the substance of Los's response to the call of "those who disregard all Mortal Things." It is in this prophetic work of Los - in his struggle with the Daughters and his attempt to make them obey his dictate - that the call for a being who "will go forth for us" is answered.

The relationships between the presences delineated in the first four plates of this chapter are both intimate and complex. The opposition between Los and Rahab, which stands as the terminus of the history recounted in the second chapter, exists at the point of intersection between the fall of Albion into withdrawal and the Spectre's ascent to power. The point of intersection, "This World," is itself defined by the response of "those who disregard all Mortal Things" to Albion's withdrawal and Los's response to their call. There is, however, still one important strand of the present which has not entered the dance.

In the previous chapter we observed the process in which Albion's family and friends gave their lives for him. Their martyrdom resulted in the formation of a ground for fallen life. It is therefore not surprising that the fifth plate of this chapter goes on to detail the presence of this ground in the time of Deism. The cities of "Bath & Canterbury & York & Edinburgh" still raise their voices, but we can now no longer hear what they are saying. In the present their eloquence has been drowned by the surging waters of the Atlantic ocean, which separates Albion from freedom (America). The Ocean weeps over the death of his own children (57:5-6, E207).[7] The voices of Albion's friends have not been heeded and for this reason their now muted cry is juxtaposed with a brief account of the Fall and of the "Wonder" experienced by "all in Eternity!" as "the Divine Vision" opens "The Center into an Expanse" (57:12-18, E207).

The illumination upon which the text for this plate has been superimposed, however, subtly contradicts the completeness (if not the accuracy) of this description. The voices of the friends of Albion have, indeed, been muted, but the gift of their lives has turned the rocky globe of

destiny (which we saw on plate 57) into a "soft green earth with cities and churches"[8] and on this ground, thanks to the work of Los, the Daughters of Albion have become the Daughters of Los, and here they are able to create a world of generation.

Taken together, these presences and the relationships which hold between them form a map which outlines the geography of the present. The time which is delineated in this way is, at first, strangely unfamiliar, because we are all accustomed to describing the present in terms of what is corporeally present; but to limit ourselves to this is to confine ourselves within the world defined by Vala. In these plates Blake has shifted the locus of his description from the material facts of the present to the acts, events and relationships which together form the dance and the place in which the natural, material world is found. Perhaps the most helpful analogy to this sense of the present as the conjuncture and interrelationship of a variety of movements and beings can be gleaned from a reading of Heidegger's essay, "Building Dwelling Thinking." Heidegger writes in this essay that "spaces receive their essential being from locations and not from 'space.'"[9] In other words, the essential being of a particular space is determined by the set of relationships between the beings - in Heidegger's terms, earth, sky, divinities and mortals - that are gathered there. To dwell is to exist in the space opened by the relationship between these different beings.[10] Similarly, to dwell in the present described in the first plates is to experience the dance between Los, Rahab, Albion, the Spectre, "those who disregard all Mortal things" and the friends of Albion. Taken together the relationships between these beings define the axes along which fallen life is elaborated. It now remains for the poem to describe the minute particulars of the present which opens between these axes.

(4) The shape of the present

The next two plates contain a series of short descriptions, definitions

and illuminations which fill in our picture of the present. In most cases the nature of the terrain which is described can be inferred from the axes which have been established in the previous plates. We see, for example, the "Two Contraries War against each other in fury & blood" (58:15, E207); "The Daughters of Albion. divide & unite in jealousy & cruelty" (58:5, E207); "The Inhabitants of Albion" as "their Brain" is "cut round beneath the temples" (58:6-7, E207); and Los as he produces "a World of Generation from the World of Death" (58:18, E207).

The fallen world in which we live is "a Mighty Temple" (58:22, E207) and an "awful Building" (58:21, E207) which, thanks to the efforts of Los, delivers Albion from nonentity. The entire expanse of the fallen world that opens between the axes described on previous plates can therefore be described in relation to Los:

> Canaan is his portico; Jordan is a fountain in his porch;
> A fountain of milk & wine to relieve the traveller:
> Egypt is the eight steps within. Ethiopia supports his pillars;
> Lybia & the Lands unknown. are the ascent without;
> Within is Asia & Greece, ornamented with exquisite art:
> Persia & Media are his halls: his inmost hall is Great Tartary.
> China & India & Siberia are his temples for entertainment
> Poland & Russia & Sweden, his soft retired chambers
> France & Spain & Italy & Denmark & Holland & Germany
> Are the temples among his pillars. Britain is Los's Forge;
> America North & South are his baths of living waters.
> (58:33-43, E208)

However, earlier in this plate we are told that Urizen directs the construction of this "awful Building" and that he is the person "delivering Form out of confusion" (58:21,22, E207). The passage quoted above continues with the assertion that Los's world, the world of the present, is "the Ancient World of Urizen in the Satanic Void" (58:44, E208). Moreover, this same passage describes the world of generation which is created from the body of death by Los as a production which emerges from out of the disintegration of the Zoas and as a result of the efforts of the Spectres of Albion to "Rear their dark Rocks among the Stars of God":

> The Four Zoa's rush around on all sides in dire ruin
> Furious in pride of Selfhood the terrible Spectres of Albion
> Rear their dark Rocks among the Stars of God: stupendous

> Works! A World of Generation continually Creating; out of
> The Hermaphroditic Satanic World of rocky destiny.
> (58:47-51, E208)

The vision of ontological time described in the first chapter and the inclusion of Rahab and Albion-in-withdrawal amongst the elements in the opening plates of this chapter have, of course, to a certain extent prepared us for this characterization of the present. The shape of the fallen world is formed in the relationship between Los and the fallen Albion. On the one hand Los gives form to Albion; on the other hand it is also true that Albion brings Los (loss) into being. The first chapter, as we have argued, was therefore structured around the interaction between Los, Enitharmon and the Spectre on the one hand, and Albion, Vala and Jerusalem on the other. The structure of this passsage in fact reflects the inter-relationship between these two poles of the fallen world quite closely. It moves from the assertion that Urizen is architect of the "Mighty Temple" to a characterization of the fallen world as a building centred on Los. It then suggests that the fallen world belongs to Urizen and that the Spectres of Albion have a part in producing it. Finally it swings back to Los and we see that he has produced his world from Albion's withdrawal:

> For the Veil of Vala which Albion cast into the Atlantic Deep
> To catch the Souls of the Dead: began to Vegetate & Petrify
> Around the Earth of Albion. among the Roots of his Tree
> This Los formed into the Gates & mighty Wall, between the Oak
> Of Weeping & the Palm of Suffering beneath Albions Tomb.
> (59:2-6, E208)

Nevertheless, despite the prefiguration of this passage by earlier passages in the poem, what remains surprising is the prominence of Urizen and the characterization of the fallen world as his "Ancient World." The relationship between Los and Urizen which is suggested by these lines is reminiscent of the account in The Four Zoas of the fall of the Zoas to a universe created by Los and Enitharmon. It is almost as if we have entered a different poem; or as if the leaning tower of Pisa were to be found in Spain rather than Italy. Plate 59 goes on to make this connection with The Four Zoas even more explicit. We now learn that Verulam, London, York and

Edinburgh are the "English names" of the four Zoas (59:14, E208) and we read a brief precis of the history recounted in the earlier poem:

> But when Luvah assumed the World of Urizen Southward
> And Albion was slain upon his Mountains & in his Tent.
> All fell towards the Center, sinking downwards in dire ruin,
> In the South remains a burning Fire: in the East. a Void
> In the West, a World of raging Waters: in the North; solid Darkness
> Unfathomable without end: but in the midst of these
> Is Built eternally the sublime Universe of Los & Enitharmon. . . .
> (59:15-21, E208-9)

This history contrasts strangely with the account of the four Zoas that is given in the second chapter of Jerusalem. It brings us to the same world encountered towards the end of the sixth Night of The Four Zoas, where the Zoas cast forth their "monstrous births" (74:27, E351) around the world of Los and Enitharmon.

The Four Zoas is, as I have argued, able to do no more than suggest the scope of the saving history that opens within its spaces. It is only in Milton that this second history can be elaborated. Jerusalem begins with and is centred on the vision of Christ which is glimpsed in The Four Zoas and is the culmination of Milton. These three poems are, however, not descriptions of radically incommensurate worlds, but of different realities which open within the world of loss. This means that, just as Milton could be glimpsed in The Four Zoas, Milton and The Four Zoas can be glimpsed in Jerusalem. The poem's description of the terrain which opens up along the the axes of the present therefore includes the trace of a narrative which if it were to be elaborated (by falling to sleep rather than waking) would completely disrupt the poem. For the moment this narrative remains in the background and the poem completes its description of the minute particulars of the present:

> Other Daughters of Los, labouring at Looms less fine
> Create the Silk-worm & the Spider & the Catterpiller
> To assist in their most grievous work of pity & compassion
> And others Create the wooly Lamb & the downy Fowl
> To assist in the work: the Lamb bleats: the Sea-fowl cries
> Men understand not the distress & the labour & sorrow
> That in the Interior Worlds is carried on in fear & trembling
> Weaving the shuddring fears & loves of Albions Families
> Thunderous rage the Spindles of iron. & the iron Distaff
> Maddens in the fury of their hands, Weaving in bitter tears
> The Veil of Goats-hair & Purple & Scarlet & fine twined Linen. . . .
> (59:45-55, E209)

With the description of the work undertaken by the daughters of Los, the first movement of the third chapter is almost complete. We stand within, and indeed are part of, a fabric woven out of a manifold of presences and relationships.

(5) Vision

In the preceding plates the poem seemed to check its own movement by breaking into a series of relatively short definitions and descriptions. The voices which characterized the earlier plates of this chapter are resolved into the even voice of the narrator, whose attention moves across the surface design of the fabric which is woven by the Daughters of Los. It is almost as if there were a lull in the poem. This slowing of pace is, however, the prelude for an expansion, almost an explosion, of voice, and for the climax of this section of the third chapter. In the final element of the dance of the present three plates are drawn together and voices other than the narrator's now almost completely predominate. We hear the voices of "the Slaves" singing "the Song of the Lamb . . . in evening time" (60:38, E210); the call of Jerusalem and the response to her call by Christ; and the voices of Mary, Joseph and an Angel. So powerful is this irruption of voice and vision that the fabric which has been described in the preceding plates now seems to take a step backwards and become the background for these voices; it now defines the space in which they resonate. Within the present of the fallen world we are now confronted with voices which give expression to the emotions of both suffering and hope.

Jerusalem is "closd in the Dungeons of Babylon" (60:39, E210) where she sits at

> the Mills, her hair unbound her feet naked
> Cut with the flints: her tears run down, her reason grows like
> The Wheel of Hand. incessant turning day & night without rest
> Insane she raves upon the winds hoarse, inarticulate. . . .
> (60:41-44, E210)

Nevertheless, even from this position she is able to see the form of Christ and hear his voice (60:50-51, E211):

> For thou also sufferest with me altho I behold thee not;
> And altho I sin & blaspheme thy holy name, thou pitiest me;
> Because thou knowest I am deluded by the turning mills.
> And by these visions of pity & love because of Albions death.
> (60:61-64, E211)

Christ responds to her affirmation by drawing her attention to the figures of "Joseph & Mary," who appear in "the Visions of Elohim Jehovah" (61:1, E211). Jehovah is a type of the Urizenic god, while the Elohim are associated with the creation of this world and therefore with Los. We can therefore say that Christ is drawing her attention to something which is perceived within the very fabric of the fallen world, a possibility which appears within the world formed by Los and Urizen. Jerusalem does not see Mary and Joseph in the joy of the annunciation, or in rapt wonder at the mystery of a virgin birth, but in the midst of an argument which follows on from Mary's infidelity. Joseph is at first angry, but this anger subsides into forgiveness:

> Ah my Mary: said Joseph: weeping over & embracing her closely in
> His arms: Doth he forgive Jerusalem & not exact Purity from her who is
> Polluted. I heard his voice in my sleep & his Angel in my dream:
> Saying, Doth Jehovah Forgive a Debt only on condition that it shall
> Be Payed? Doth he Forgive Pollution only on conditions of Purity
> That Debt is not Forgiven! That Pollution is not Forgiven
> Such is the Forgiveness of the Gods, the Moral Virtues of the
> Heathen, whose tender Mercies are Cruelty. But Jehovahs Salvation
> Is without Money & without Price, in the Continual Forgiveness of Sins
> In the Perpetual Mutual Sacrifice in Great Eternity! for behold!
> There is none that liveth & Sinneth not! And this is the Covenant
> Of Jehovah: If you Forgive one-another, so shall Jehovah Forgive You:
> That He Himself may Dwell among You. Fear not then to take
> To thee Mary thy Wife, for she is with Child by the Holy Ghost. . . .
> (61:14-27, E211-212)

Melanie Bandy argues that the we should understand the Holy Ghost to be the libidinal energy which belongs to Mary. She writes that "In this act, because she followed her energies, Mary was truly with child by the Holy Ghost."[11] In Blake's <u>oeuvre</u>, however, the Holy Ghost is never simply associated with energy. In the preface to the fourth chapter of <u>Jerusalem</u> - a preface which exhorts us "to abstain from fleshly desires that we may lose no time from the Work of the Lord" - Blake associates the Holy Spirit with "an Intellectual Fountain" (E231), and on plate 91 Los informs us that the "Genius" of each man "is the Holy Ghost in Man" (91:9, E251). In Blake's

annotations to Thornton we read that in Heaven the Holy Ghost is called by the name of Jesus (E668).

The whole thrust of this passage is not that Mary has done nothing wrong and that therefore there is no need for forgiveness, but that from Joseph's perspective she is "impure." It matters little whether one believes that adultery is a sin or not. The point at issue here is that, for Joseph, Mary has sinned against the laws that he has adopted. If Mary had not sinned, then there would clearly be no need to speak to Joseph of forgiveness. The assertion, by the Angel, that Mary is with child by the Holy Spirit in fact follows on from the argument that "Jehovahs Salvation / Is . . . in the continual Forgiveness of sins" and from the contention that the covenant that Jehovah makes with the fallen world is "If you Forgive one-another, so shall Jehovah Forgive You." It is, as I have argued in my discussion of Milton and The Four Zoas, in the time of embrace (and therefore forgiveness) that the closed world of the self is punctured and one attains an openness in which God can dwell. This is nothing less than the fissure in which - as we have seen in Milton and The Four Zoas - Christ is born into the fallen world. It is in this sense that it is true to say that Mary is "with Child by the Holy Ghost" (61:27, E212). It is in Joseph's forgiveness of Mary (and one could say, Mary's forgiveness of Joseph for his anger) that the child born of the adulterous woman becomes the Christ child. In the final line of the above passage, "then" is the crucial word. Jehovah's covenant means that wherever there is forgiveness of sins God will dwell amongst us and Christ will be born into the fallen world.

The result of Joseph's forgiveness is a reintegration of male and female powers: he is no longer closed within a world formed by a fixed morality and in which his Emanation is an elusive object of desire; instead, Mary becomes a world which he is able to embrace:

> Then Mary burst forth into a Song! she flowed like a River of
> Many Streams in the arms of Joseph & gave forth her tears of joy
> Like many waters, and Emanating into gardens & palaces upon
> Euphrates & to forests & floods & animals wild & tame from

> Gihon to Hiddekel, & to corn fields & villages & inhabitants
> Upon Pison & Arnon & Jordan.
> (61:28-33, E212)

This extraordinary reversal opens out to the reader, almost like a flower, from the fabric elaborated in the previous plates; it grows towards us from out of the spaces of the present. However, what is equally present to fallen humanity is the gap which separates the reality of vision from fallen reality. As Jerusalem's vision proceeds, it turns to this second reality: we see Christ crucified, Jerusalem herself faint "over the Cross & Sepulcher," and Rome and Europe adopt the religion of the Druids. The vision is therefore reduced to the very condition of the person to whom it is appearing. At this point the vision turns outward and addresses Jerusalem. Christ says: "Repose on me till the morning of the Grave. I am thy life" (62:1, E212).

The vision of Joseph and Mary puts Jerusalem in an extraordinary position. She responds, both as a figure within the vision and a person to whom the vision is addressed, by saying that she can see the "Body of death" and the "Spiritual Risen Body" (62:13,14, E213): <u>both</u> are realities. She is even able to believe that she will see God in her flesh (62:16, E213), but she does not know the path that will lead to this event. Christ's reply does not (for the moment) close this gap, but it opens within the present the force of hope. The present is itself a call to live the life that opens out in the tension between vision and the fallen world:

> Jesus replied. I am the Resurrection & the Life.
> I Die & pass the limits of possibility, as it appears
> To individual perception. Luvah must be Created
> And Vala; for I cannot leave them in the gnawing Grave.
> But will prepare a way for my banished-ones to return
> Come now with me into the villages. walk thro all the cities.
> Tho thou art taken to prison & judgement, starved in the streets
> I will command the cloud to give thee food & the hard rock
> To flow with milk & wine, tho thou seest me not a season
> Even a long season & a hard journey & a howling wilderness!
> Tho Valas cloud hide thee & Luvahs fires follow thee!
> Only believe & trust in me, Lo. I am always with thee!
> (62:18-29, E213)

Hope in this sense is not a "transfiguring glow superimposed upon a darkened existence"; it does "not strive after things that have 'no place,' but after

things that have 'no place as yet' but can acquire one."[12] Hope, as Paul Ricoeur writes in "Freedom in the Light of Hope,"

> effects an irruption into a closed order; it opens up a career for existence and history. Passion for the possible, mission and exodus, denial of the reality of death, response of superabundance of meaning to the abundance of non-sense - these are so many signs of the new creation whose novelty catches us, in the strict sense, unawares. Hope, in its springing forth, is "aporetic," not by reason of lack of meaning but by excess of meaning.[13]

Hope is, however, experienced against the background of, and can itself be concealed by, the "closed order" of the fallen world. The world oscillates between hope and despair, openness and closure, transparence and opacity. This can be seen quite clearly in the contrast between the passage which opens and the passage which closes the three plates discussed above.

In the lines which begin plate 60 we see

> The clouds of Albions Druid Temples rage in the eastern heaven
> While Los sat terrified beholding Albions Spectre who is Luvah. . . .
> (60:1-2, E209)

In this instance, however, closure gives way to vision, for from

> within the Furnaces the Divine Vision appeard
> On Albions hills: often walking from the Furnaces in clouds
> And flames among the Druid Temples & the Starry Wheels. . . .
> (60:5-7, E210)

For the reader this disclosure is paralleled by the emergence of the vision of Mary and Joseph in the following plates. However, in the lines which close plate 62 there is an inverse movement. It begins with the assertion that "Los beheld the Divine Vision among the flames of the Furnaces" and that for this reason "he lived & breathed in hope" (62:35-36, E213); however, it goes on to detail the loss of this vision:

> but his tears fell incessant
> Because his Children were closd from him apart: & Enitharmon
> Dividing in fierce pain: also the Vision of God was closd in clouds
> Of Albions Spectres, that Los in despair oft sat, & often ponderd
> On Death Eternal in fierce shudders upon the mountains of Albion
> Walking: & in the vales in howlings fierce, then to his Anvils
> Turning, anew began his labours, tho in terrible pains!
> (62:36-42, E213)

Like Blake at the beginning of the poem, Los must wake again and again to vision; he must begin his labours "anew" because the world (as we have seen

in our vision of ontological time) is composed of a movement towards relationship and a movement towards closure. Just as Blake is overwhelmed by the "rushing fires" that he sees in "Londons darkness," so too the world that is formed in the dance of the present, and the vision of hope that is engendered by this world, are threatened by the rushing fires of enclosure. The present, like ontological time, is composed of two radically different movements and tendencies.

The exact point of fracture between these two tendencies can be seen on plate 62, where a giant figure, "Albion's Spectre who is Luvah," arises behind the text and threatens to cast it (and the vision that it holds) aside. The figure at the base of this plate is both Blake and the reader, who are now confonted with a hiatus which opens before them in the very texture and structure of the present. The dance of the present and the vision which it allows exist alongside a present in which the world is moving towards disintegration. In place of a dance of presences and a flowering of vision, we now see a sequential history of fragmentation which gathers momentum as it moves from the past towards the future. The iron links of this progression now permeate the poem. The plates are linked in a linear progression. The illuminations show us images of bondage and constriction. A serpent winds itself around the head of Luvah on plate 62 and around the body of a woman on plate 63. On plate 65 a chain has been drawn along the full length of the plate. At the base of plate 67 a man lies chained to the ground and a line of vegetation, "part of the Polypus which covers all the earth," stretches along the length of plates 66, 69 and 71. A less extended growth can be seen in the margins of plates 67 and 68. The present, as I have argued at the beginning of this chapter, is not merely a manifold of presences, but a linear sequence of "nows" which are held by the Spectre. In this sense the present is an instant in thrall to the overwhelming bulk of the past and the future. It is to this present that the poem now turns.

(6) A second now

The history that is recollected (and therefore appears within) this second present begins with an extremely condensed version of the events which initiate the Fall. In the opening lines it appears that Albion has already begun the process of withdrawal, for we are told that "Jehovah stood among the Druids in the Valley of Annandale" and that the "Four Zoas . . . tremble before the Spectre" (63:1-3, E213). In the following lines we learn that Luvah slew Tharmas (the Zoa of unity) and that Albion responded to this event by bringing him "To Justice in his own City of Paris" (63:6, E214). This event provoked the vengeance of Vala (63:7-8 E214), and resulted in the division of Reuben (63:12, E214) and the closure of life within a static form.

> The Cities & Villages of Albion became Rock & Sand Unhumanized
> The Druid Sons of Albion & the Heavens a Void around unfathomable
> No Human Form but Sexual & a little weeping Infant pale reflected
> Multitudinous in the Looking Glass of Enitharmon, on all sides
> Around in the clouds of the Female, on Albions Cliffs of the
> Dead. . . .
>
> (63:18-22, E214)

At the time of the Fall Los was able to see all of these events, but he thought that they were no more than a vision of the <u>possibility</u> of withdrawal which is attendant upon the entry of a person into Beulah. Los therefore put aside what he had seen "in the Looking-Glass of Enitharmon" (63:38, E214).[14] Even when Los saw "in Vala's hand the Druid Knife of Revenge & the Poison Cup / Of Jealousy" (63:39-40, E214), he still thought that it was "a Poetic Vision of the Atmospheres." He only realized that something rather different had occurred when Canaan rolled apart from Albion and, as we have seen in more detail in the second chapter, when Reuben fled among the Caverns of Albion (63:41-44, E215).

We have, in the course of a single plate, covered an extraordinary amount of ground. This brevity is to be expected at this stage of a linear history. The events narrated on plate 63 are present in the fallen world in two ways. First, like all beginnings, they are present in the dim reaches of

memory. They are the almost forgotten prime cause which sets the chain of fallen time and history in motion. Second, they delineate a line of force which determines the present. We can therefore say that the history that appears in the present is both a construct created by the historian from what his/her reasoning memory is able to retain, and a line of force which determines the world in which the historian stands. This recension of the myth of the Fall, for example, is coloured by the events of Blake's own time. As Erdman argues, the judgement of Luvah by Albion "means that Albion and his league of robbers deny the legitimacy of revolutionary governments, in France and elsewhere, and have set about restoring 'the Lewis's and Fredericks: who alone are [war's] causes and its actors'."[15] Clearly, the narrative recited on plate 63 cannot be reduced to a political allegory; nevertheless, the contemporary reference enables us to see the Fall acting in the events of Blake's own time, and to observe that the tone and emphasis of this narrative is in part determined by the position in history of its author. In the history which follows, there is an interesting interaction between these two senses of the word history.

The present in which Blake stands is a time in which the Female Will has gained an awesome power and Deism, as the preface tells us, teaches Natural Religion and Natural Virtue. This is why the narrative jumped first to Los's initial response to the withdrawal of Albion and now takes a second leap to the appearance before Los of "All the Daughters of Albion" as Vala and the vegetation of Vala in the Looms of Enitharmon (64:6-11, E215). From within the time of Deism, the warfare of the Sons of Albion against Los, the efforts of Albion's family to recall him, the solicitation of the Divine Vision and the construction of limits by "those who disregard all mortal Things" are all invisible. A history which made events such as these its landmarks would at best be seen as irrational, unsubstantiated, or subversive, for Deism constructs a history which attempts to suppress any challenge to its own hegemony.

The vegetation of Vala is, however, not simply an element in

recollection; it is present in a second and, perhaps, more fundamental way. The vegetation of Vala forms part of a sequential chain which leads to the present. It is therefore present in our world as a material force. This can be seen in the next step of this history, where Vala is embraced by the Spectre. This event results in the formation of the shell of the fallen world:

> A dark Hermaphrodite they stood frowning upon Londons River
> And the Distaff & Spindle in the hands of Vala with the Flax of
> Human Miseries turnd fierce with the Lives of Men along the Valley
> As Reuben fled before the Daughters of Albion Taxing the
> Nations. . . .
>
> (64:31-34, E215)

Although this event has occurred in the past, it quite obviously (like the vegetation of Vala) determines, and is therefore a presence within, the present. The line of force which passes from withdrawal to Vala, to the vegetation of Vala, and then to the embrace of Vala by the Spectre, sets bounds to the fallen world. The contrast here with the dance of the other present is quite striking. Earlier in this chapter we described a series of presences which solicited our attention. Here we have a sequential progression, a sequence of cogs, in which we have become weird marionettes, puppets who are subject to a force which lies outside of our control. As we move further into this section of the poem, this progression gains an inexorable force and ponderous momentum.

The embrace of Vala and the Spectre founds the world of moral righteousness which will henceforth determine the behaviour of humanity. The immediate result of this event is therefore the death of Luvah. The malefactor has been judged by and become a victim of the moral order. This event is not something which is concluded in the past; instead, the death of Luvah is present throughout the six thousand years of fallen history:

> They vote the death of Luvah, & they naild him to Albions Tree in Bath:
> They staind him with poisonous blue, they inwove him in cruel roots
> To die a death of Six thousand years bound round with vegetation
> The sun was black & the moon rolld a useless globe thro Britain!
>
> (65:8-11, E216)

The song which is sung by the "Spectre Sons of Albion round Luvahs Stone of Trial" (65:56, E217) describes an event which has taken place in the past, but the world which this event brings into being and which the Spectres celebrate is clearly present:

> This is no warbling brook, nor shadow of a mirtle tree:
> But blood and wounds and dismal cries, and shadows of the oak:
> And hearts laid open to the light, by the broad grizly sword:
> And bowels hid in hammerd steel rip'd quivering on the ground.
> Call forth thy smiles of soft deceit: call forth thy cloudy tears:
> We hear thy sighs in trumpets shrill when morn shall blood renew.
> (65:50-55, E217)

Similarly, the death of Luvah brings in a very present reality, for it marks the time when the Sons of Urizen leave "the plow & harrow" and take up "the chariot of war & the battle-ax" (65:12,14, E216) and when "the Arts of Life" are changed into "the Arts of Death" (65:16, E216). The vegetation of Vala and her embrace with the Spectre are events which have occurred in the past; however, they are present to us as forces which determine the structure of our world. This is why in this history we can see the present prefigured in the past. The line from the past to the present can be seen most clearly in the fate of the Spectre Sons of Albion.

(7) The Hand of Vala

From the perspective of the "Spectre Sons of Albion," it is Luvah who has pitted his strength against the unity imposed by Albion and consequently caused them to be separated from their humanity. One could find parallels to the plight of these figures throughout fallen time[16]:

> We were carried away in thousands from London; & in tens
> Of thousands from Westminster & Marybone in ships closd up:
> Chaind hand & foot, compelld to fight under the iron whips
> Of our captains; fearing our officers more than the enemy.
> (65:33-36, E216-7)

At the first opportunity the victims therefore take vengeance on Luvah. This response achieves the opposite of what they had intended:

> Astonishd: terrified & in pain & torment. Sudden they behold
> Their own Parent the Emanation of their murderd Enemy
> Become their Emanation and their Temple and Tabernacle

They knew not. this Vala was their beloved Mother Vala Albions Wife.

Terrified at the sight of the Victim: at his distorted sinews!
The tremblings of Vala vibrate thro' the limbs of Albions Sons:
While they rejoice over Luvah in mockery & bitter scorn:
Sudden they become like what they behold in howlings & deadly pain.
Spasms smite their features, sinews & limbs: pale they look on one another.
They turn, contorted: their iron necks bend unwilling towards
Luvah: their lips tremble: their muscular fibres are crampd & smitten
They become like what they behold!
(65:68-79, E217-8)

The separation of the Spectre Sons from their humanity means that they are no longer part of a world which emerges in relationship; instead, like the reasoning memory, they must form a world by the assimilation of others. As Blake writes: "a Spectre has no Emanation but what he imbibes from decieving / A Victim!" (65:59-60, E217). In political terms this takes the form of imperialism. Rather than recognizing that Luvah's revolt is at the very least codetermined by the imposition of a fixed order by Albion, they attempt to appropriate the world of Luvah. We therefore see the Spectre Sons "Drinking" Luvah's "Emanation in intoxicating bliss" (65:58, E217). Luvah has become "the Victim of the Spectres of Albion" (66:15, E218). For Luvah and for Albion the attempt to assimilate the world to their own perspective resulted in enclosure within the world of their own desires. For both figures Vala (along with the Spectre) therefore became the regent of their world. Similarly, the judgement of Luvah by the Spectre Sons encloses them in a world which is bounded by their own desires. This is why they find, to their astonishment, that Vala is now their Emanation. The Spectre Sons are themselves enclosed within the world bounded by Vala and as a result they themselves become her victims. Their bodies are therefore irresistibly drawn towards the plight of Luvah (the victim). In this complex reworking of the Oedipus myth, the Spectre Sons simply do not realize that they are themselves born from Albion's fragmentation - that "this Vala was their beloved Mother Vala Albions Wife" (65:71, E217). They are therefore unable to see that to attempt to reduce Luvah to their perspective (to possess his fallen Emanation) is for them to be enclosed by Vala.

The vengeance taken by the Spectre Sons repeats the structure of withdrawal implicit in Luvah's murder of Tharmas and Albion's judgement of Luvah. In each case it results in entry into the state of Satan:

> Satan is the State of Death, & not a Human existence
> But Luvah is named Satan, because he has enterd that State
> A World where Man is by Nature the enemy of Man. . . .
> (49:67-69, E199)

In this state Luvah, human desire, is enclosed within its own perimeters. All who take vengeance or assimilate the world to their perspectives take up this position in which apparent mastery is quickly superseded by enclosure and domination by the female. The world established by the Spectre Sons is therefore "A building of eternal death" and at its heart we find Vala "turning the iron Spindle of destruction" (66:9-10, E218).

It is now the Daughters of Albion who "sit naked upon the Stone of trial" (66:19, E218) and mock the victim,

> Saying: Behold
> The King of Canaan whose are seven hundred chariots of iron!
> They take off his vesture whole with their Knives of flint:
> But they cut asunder his inner garments: searching with
> Their cruel fingers for his heart, & they enter in pomp,
> In many tears; & there they erect a temple & an altar. . . .
> (66:24-29, E218)

All those who see these things become like Luvah. "Amidst delights of revenge" (66:39, E218) they take on the form of Vala and are enclosed within the cavern of the self. The Divine Vision becomes no more than "a globe of blood wandering distant in an unknown night" (66:44, E219) and humanity becomes a formless Polypus, a mass of individuals

> By Invisible Hatreds adjoind, they seem remote and separate
> From each other; and yet are a Mighty Polypus in the Deep!
> As the Misletoe grows on the Oak, so Albions Tree on Eternity: Lo!
> He who will not comingle in Love, must be adjoind by Hate. . . .
> (66:53-56, E219)

It is these "Invisible Hatreds" that link the portions of this history and make it a force which determines the present. As a result of this history "The Human form began to be alterd by the Daughters of Albion / And the perceptions to be dissipated into the Indefinite" (66:46-47, E219):

> The Stars flee remote: the heaven is iron, the earth is sulphur,
> And all the mountains & hills shrink up like a withering gourd,

> As the Senses of Men shrink together under the Knife of flint,
> In the hands of Albions Daughters, among the Druid Temples.
> By those who drink their blood & the blood of their Covenant. . . .
> (66:81-67:1, E219-20)

(8) The climax

As the first movement of the third chapter reached its climax, it seemed to disrupt its own progression. The manifold of presences was suddenly ruptured by the twin forces of vision and hope. The second movement of this chapter also ends with an expansion, but of a very different kind. The narrative that we have been following has described a progression which moves from the murder of Tharmas by Luvah and Albion's subsequent judgement of Luvah, to Vala's hermaphoditic embrace with Luvah, through the vengeance taken by the Spectre Sons of Albion and its results, to the reduction of the world to "a Mighty Polypus in the Deep!" Throughout this history we can see Vala extend her iron hand. The judgement of Luvah by Albion results in the vegetation of Vala, which is in turn the precondition for Vala's embrace of the Spectre and the consequent fabrication of the doxa or nature of the fallen world. The vengeance of the Spectre Sons assimilates them to her world and the same transformation is effected amongst all those who are party to revenge.

This history that is recounted on these plates tells us, therefore, of a gradual accretion of life to Vala. One can see its progress as being analogous to a trickle of water which turns into a stream and then into a raging torrent. Vala extends her power until all of life has become a Polypus. The climax of this history is reached on plates 67-69 in which we see an extraordinary expansion of her power. At this point the entire world is structured by the Daughters of Albion and the male power is no more than a growth from the female. The narrative seems to pick up speed, events are described in greater detail and the poem generates the feeling that a gigantic force is looming over the present. The vision of plates 60-62 has

now been almost entirely eclipsed by this counter movement.

The account of the climax of Vala's power begins with the creation of a "Double Female" (67:3, E220). In previous plates the Daughters of Albion have centred in Vala, but now they congregate as Rahab and Tirzah. This intensification of female power results in the extension of the "Great Polypus of Generation" until it covers "the earth" (67:34, E220). These developments bring us to the world described in the preface to this chapter. They take us to the edge of Blake's present, where nature, as the passive power, has achieved dominion over the active powers. As Basil Willey writes:

> 'Nature' has been a controlling idea in Western throught ever since antiquity, but it has probably never been so universally active as it was from the Renaissance to the end of the eighteenth century. Nature was the grand alternative to all that man had made of man; upon her solid ground therefore - upon the tabula rasa prepared by the true philosophy - must all the religion, the ethics, the politics, the law, and the art of the future be constructed.[17]

In this century nature was the corner stone of both revolution and reaction.[18] Blake calls this philosophy "the Atheistical Epicurean Philosophy of Albions Tree" and in so doing he indicates that it has its genesis within the very being of fallen man. The power of the female in the eighteenth century is not an aberration within fallen history; in fact, the roots of Vala's power can be traced back to the acts of murder and judgement which establish the fallen world. This is why a Deist philosophy can be described as Epicurean, for already in the late fourth and early third centuries before the birth of Christ, Epicurus was arguing that "Sensation is infallible" and that it is "our sole ultimate guarantee of truth." The Epicurean philosophy therefore owes allegiance to Vala, for it tends to close humanity within the shell of what appears to the self.[19]

Yet the vehemence of Blake's attack against Deism in the eighteenth century is at times the occasion for some consternation. Basil Willey claims that in this century

> One meets everywhere a sense of relief and escape, relief from the strain of living in a mysterious universe, and escape from the ignorance and barbarism of the Gothic centuries,[20]

and, although Nature is an admittedly ambiguous term, in this climate what

was strongly felt was

> the clarity, the authority, and the universal acceptability of Nature and Nature's laws. The laws of Nature are the laws of reason; they are always and everywhere the same, and like the axioms of mathematics they have only to be presented in order to be acknowledged as just and right by all men. The historic rôle of 'Nature' at this time was to introduce, not further confusion, but its precise oppposites, - peace, concord, toleration, and progress in the affairs of men, and, in poetry and art, perspicuity, order, unity, and proportion.[21]

As a result Bloom, for example, even goes so far as to argue that

> There is not much accuracy, one fears, in Blake's indictment of historical Deism, and indeed by "the Deists" he does not mean Toland, Collins, Tindal and the other controversialists who argued for a religion of Nature against the Anglican orthodoxy of <u>their</u> day (E939).

If Blake were to choose between Anglican orthodoxy and the deism of Toland <u>et al</u>, it is possible that he would have more sympathy with the "devils." Nevertheless, in the poetry after <u>The Book of Urizen</u>, both reaction and revolution are seen to be contained by a single history. To argue for a religion of nature against a more orthodox nature is to repeat the acts of the Spectre Sons of Albion in their struggle against Vala. The argument of nature against nature is, indeed, the paradigmatic form of the dynamism which propels fallen history and invariably turns the revolutionary into the tyrant and then into the new victim. <u>Jerusalem</u> makes the mechanism which animates this history remarkably clear. As the narrator tells us:

> The Twelve Daughters in Rahab & Tirzah have circumscribd the Brain
> Beneath & pierced it thro the midst with a golden pin.
> (67:41-42, E220)

In this condition the human individual is closed within the shell of his constituted world, and therefore animated by sexual desire, by the yearning for a presence which will fill the lack which is the foundation of the psyche. While the self remains under the power of the Daughters, this yearning can never be fulfilled and it is therefore sublimated in warfare:

> I am drunk with unsatiated love
> I must rush again to War: for the Virgin has frownd & refusd. . . .
> (68:62-63, E222)

For the Warriors it seems that the veil which physically and epistemologically surrounds them can be broken only by violence, rape and

warfare: "They cry to one another, 'If you dare rend their Veil with your Spear; you are healed of Love!'" (68:42, E222). As we have seen with regard to the Spectre Sons, an act of violence such as this only places them more firmly than ever within the world of Vala. Deism and all religions of nature are to be opposed because they preclude the entry into relationship which is the foundation of Eternity.

The gradual assimilation of being to the world of the female powers results in the reduction of the male to a single identity:

> Then all the Males combined into One Male & every one
> Became a ravening eating Cancer growing in the Female
> A Polypus of Roots of Reasoning Doubt Despair & Death.
> Going forth & returning from Albions Rocks to Canaan:
> Devouring Jerusalem from every Nation of the Earth.
> (69:1-5, E223)

This giant form is a parody of Albion's humanity, for its unity is not founded on relationship, but on a formless aggregate of individuals. It is a Polypus which stands "at variance with Itself / In all its Members: in eternal torment of love & jealousy" (69:6-7, E223). This "enormous Form" is called "Hand."

We use our hands to touch others, to mould inert matter and so give shape to something, and to perform complex tasks such as eating and drinking. The hand is often expressive of the entire person. In writing we speak of a person's hand and even in speech the hand is often peculiarly expressive of the speaker's intentions. The hand which is described on plates 69 and 70 is, by contrast, one which pits itself against the whole person. It is no longer a vehicle of expression, nor does it exist in a contrary relationship with the individual; instead, it is animated by a will directed against Albion: Hand is "Plotting to devour Albions Body of Humanity & Love" (70:9, E224). Hand is the excess of the calculating spirit which Shelley claims was developing in the eighteenth century at the expense of the poetic.[22] The capacities of Hand are truly extraordinary, but they are divorced from humanity. Instead of a single head, Hand is composed of three who are in perpetual argument:

> Such Form the aggregate of the Twelve Sons of Albion took; & such
> Their appearance when combind: but often by birth-pangs & loud groans
> They divide to Twelve: the key-bones & the chest dividing in pain
> Disclose a hideous orifice; thence issuing the Giant-brood
> Arise as the smoke of the furnace, shaking the rocks from sea to sea.
> And there they combine into Three Forms, named Bacon & Newton & Locke,
> In the Oak Groves of Albion which overspread all the Earth.
> (70:10-16, E224)

For such a creature truth consists in the agreement and disagreement of ideas, which are in turn based on the material that is on hand. Hand appears as a force in his own right, but within his heart is hidden Rahab-Vala. He is in fact a "Cancer growing in the Female" (69:2, E223).[23]

The description of the genesis of the giant form of Hand brings us to the now in which we live. The events of the history that we have been tracing are present in recollection and in the touch of Vala's iron hand which stretches along the lines of this history to determine the bounds of the world in which we live. This history is closed and the present reached with the announcement that "The Starry Heavens all were fled from the mighty limbs of Albion" (70:32, E224).

(9) The geography of the present

In the first two movements of the third chapter of Jerusalem the present is defined in radically contradictory terms. It is a manifold of presences which solicit our attention and structure the world, and it is a space which is determined by a linear history. It is, however, possible to describe the present in a third way. The dance of presences and the fallen history are themselves made possible by the ground that is established by Los. We can describe this ground in two ways: positively, by describing the relationships which compose it, and negatively, by an account of what this world once was. One could say, perhaps, that this third description of the present is the interior shape of the present that is composed of both the dance of presences and the iron history of Vala.

The third movement of the third chapter of Jerusalem therefore begins

with a long and detailed account of the prelapsarian names and locations of "Albions Twelve Sons, & of his Twelve Daughters" (71:10, E225). This world of relationship has been destroyed; it exists in this context only as a negative determinant of the present:

> But now Albion is darkened & Jerusalem lies in ruins:
> Above the Mountains of Albion, above the head of Los.
> (71:54-5, E226)

The present of the fallen world can now be located in relationship to Los. Los's position beneath the ruins of Jerusalem and the "darkened" Albion is not unexpected, for in the second chapter we saw the "Family Divine" delegate their powers to Los,

> Conjuring him by the Highest that he should Watch over them
> Till Jesus shall appear. . . .
> (39[44]:29-30, E187)

Nevertheless, his position with regard to Albion has changed significantly from that described in the second chapter. From this point in time his attempts to recall Albion can be seen as a failure; in fact, the situation has become so dire that he fears that a direct appeal will cause Albion to turn completely from the Divine Vision:

> And Los shouted with ceaseless shoutings & his tears poured down
> His immortal cheeks, rearing his hands to heaven for aid Divine!
> But he spoke not to Albion: fearing lest Albion should turn his Back
> Against the Divine Vision: & fall over the Precipice of Eternal Death.
> But he receded before Albion & before Vala weaving the Veil
> With the iron shuttle of War among the rooted Oaks of Albion. . . .
> (71:56-61, E226)

Nevertheless, it is only though Los's attentiveness to Albion-in-withdrawal that Albion and Vala are saved from the "fall over the Precipice of Eternal Death." As we have seen in previous chapters, Los's world emerges in relationship with Albion and Vala.

In the next plate we learn of the four - "Rintrah & Palamabron & Theotormon & Bromion" (72:11, E226) - who help Los guard the four walls of Jerusalem. The poem then turns to an enumeration of the different counties of Ireland, which form the "Land of Erin" (72:27, E227). Erin is a space of embodiment and therefore a space of meeting. In this locale, as we have

argued in the first chapter, we can be open to the call and the solicitations of others: we can hear and touch and feel. The Thirty-two Counties of Ireland (and therefore the Land of Erin) are centred

> in London & in Golgonooza. from whence
> They are Created continually East & West & North & South
> And from them are Created all the Nations of the Earth
> Europe & Asia & Africa & America, in fury Fourfold!
> (72:28-31, E227)

These plates therefore assert that Los grounds two quite contradictory movements. He supports the linear unfolding of Vala by remaining attentive to Albion, and he creates, as a manifold of cotemporaneous presences, the Land of Erin and "all the Nations of the Earth."

For the reader this recognition that Los grounds two such radically divergent movements results in a sudden and startling reorientation. Previously we have seen the present as a time which is divided between a linear history and a dance of presences. It is now affirmed that it is Los who grounds both the dance of the present and the unfolding might of Vala. It is in Los that these two movements gain being. Vala and Erin, contraction and expansion, enclosure in the world of the self and the embrace of others, are different moments of the world formed by Los and Enitharmon. As Blake writes:

> And the Four Gates of Los surround the Universe Within and
> Without; & whatever is visible in the Vegetable Earth, the same
> Is visible in the Mundane Shell; reversd in mountain & vale. . . .
> (72:45-7, E227)

We have, of course, already seen the part that Los and his daughters play in the dance of the present and glimpsed his horrified reaction to the consolidation of Vala's power; however, Los is also present in a more fundamental sense. It is Los's relationship with Albion in ontological time (which was described in detail in the first chapter of Jerusalem) which opens both of these aspects of fallen existence. Los creates a world which, by providing a limit to the Fall, gives form to Vala. On the other hand, this same world opens the possibility of resurrection and regeneration described in plates 60-62. The best description of this duality in Los's world is

contained on plate 73:

> Where Luvahs World of Opakeness grew to a period: It
> Became a Limit, a Rocky hardness without form & void
> Accumulating without end: here Los. who is of the Elohim
> Opens the Furnaces of affliction in the Emanation
> Fixing The Sexual into an ever-prolific Generation
> Naming the Limit of Opakeness Satan & the Limit of Contraction
> Adam, who is Peleg & Joktan: & Esau & Jacob: & Saul & David. . . .
> (73:22-28, E228)

Luvah's world is given form by Los. At the same time "the Kings & Nobles of the Earth & all their Glories," which are "Created by Rahab & Tirzah in Ulro," are preserved from "Eternal Death" and so given existence in the world that Los creates around them (73:38-40, E228-9). Los gives form to Vala by providing limits to the Fall, but this work is complemented by the turning of Los again and again to Albion. The passage quoted above continues:

> Voltaire insinuates that these Limits are the cruel work of God
> Mocking the Remover of Limits & the Resurrection of the Dead
> Setting up Kings in wrath: in holiness of Natural Religion
> Which Los with his mighty Hammer demolishes time on time
> In miracles & wonders in the Four-fold Desart of Albion
> Permanently Creating to be in Time Reveald & Demolishd. . . .
> (73:29-34, E228)

There is one more change of perspective which the chapter demands of the reader. The vision of Los as the ground of the present of the fallen world is itself the precondition for a further reorientation. In the penultimate plate the reader seems to begin on yet another history, this time exceptionally condensed, of the Fall. Before this account has proceeded very far it is interrupted by the narrator who suddenly speaks in the first person:

> Teach me O Holy Spirit the Testimony of Jesus! let me
> Comprehend wonderous things out of the Divine Law
> I behold Babylon in the opening Street of London, I behold
> Jerusalem in ruins wandering about from house to house
> This I behold the shudderings of death attend my steps
> I walk up and down in Six Thousand Years: their Events are present
> before me
> To tell how Los in grief & anger, whirling round his Hammer on high
> Drave the Sons & Daughters of Albion from their ancient
> mountains. . . .
> (74:14-21, E229)

This passage completes our picture of the present. On the one hand this time in which we live contains a dance of presences which solicit our attention; on the other hand, we can discern Vala's iron hand and cruel necessities

which turn their force on the present. Both of these presences are grounded in the universe established by Los and which provides the overall shape of the present. From the point of view of vision, however, there is a fourth present: all the events of six thousand years are present to Blake. This extraordinary claim radically resituates the reader.

During the course of our discussion of the third chapter of Jerusalem, we have simply observed the unfolding of the three elements which make up the present. In the process we have, perhaps, been drifting away from the moment of vision. As the chapter closes, we are recalled to the point at which the poem began. The delineation of Los as the ground of the present demanded that we see dance and linear history as aspects of a single existence. The claim that all of the events of history are present to the narrator demands that we see the now that has been the predominant concern of this chapter as a portion of the whole man. We are in this way taken back to the very beginning of the poem, to the opening streets of London, in which Blake woke to his vision of Albion/Christ. In other words, in vision we are still standing in the moment in which the poem begins. The sequential history narrated in the second and third chapter forms the shape of ontological time. Together, ontological and sequential time form the body of Albion-in-withdrawal and, as we shall argue in the next chapter, the body of Christ. It is only in the fallen world and within the limitations imposed by the materials of the fallen world that the vision of Albion/Christ must be represented in a linear fashion. It is the moment of awakening with which the poem begins which allows the narrator to walk up and down in history. In the lines which follow we see him perform this task with an extraordinary confidence and elan.

In ontological time we saw the relationship of Los to Albion as a structure which extended along the entire length of fallen time. Within this structure Los walks up and down and in this way remains in relationship with each fragment of the fallen and now spatially extended Albion. It is this history, made permanent by Los, which is seen by the narrator. The Twenty-

seven heavens of "Rahab Babylon the Great" (75:1, E230)

> Appear in strong delusive light of Time & Space drawn out
> In shadowy pomp by the Eternal Prophet created evermore
>
> For Los in Six Thousand Years walks up & down continually
> That not one Moment of Time be lost & every revolution
> Of Space he makes permanent in Bowlahoola & Cathedron.
> (75:5-9, E230)

In support of this claim the narrator details this history from Adam to Luther and describes the action of Jesus who,

> breaking thro' the Central Zones of Death & Hell
> Opens Eternity in Time & Space; triumphant in Mercy. . . .
> (76:21-22, E231)

Once again the reader can see the duality of the fallen world. Humanity is caught within an endless cycle of time (stretching from Adam to Luther) which, nevertheless, contains the possibility of regeneration:

> Thus are the Heavens formd by Los within the Mundane Shell
> And where Luther ends Adam beings again in Eternal Circle
> To awake the Prisoners of Death; to bring Albion again
> With Luvah into light eternal, in his eternal day.
> (76:23-26, E231)

This possibility of regeneration has not been embraced and so the chapter concludes with a reiteration of the statement that "now the Starry Heavens are fled from the mighty limbs of Albion" (76:27, E231). The narrator and the reader of Jerusalem exist in a present in which vision calls us to "Awake!," "expand!" and in which we are swept along in a sequential progression away from the point at which this voice is heard.

Chapter Fourteen

Winding the Golden String into a Ball

How can his knowledge protect his desire for truth from
illusion?
How can he wait without idols to worship, without
Their overwhelming persuasion that somewhere, over the
high hill,
Under the roots of the oak, in the depths of the sea,
Is a womb or a tomb wherein he may halt to express some
attainment?

W.H. Auden[1]

(1) The golden string

In the first lines of the preface to the fourth chapter the cries of the Spectre Sons, and the voices of Vala, Rahab, Los and Hand, are replaced by a simple, almost childlike voice offering the reader "the end of a golden string." All that we need to do, this voice affirms, is to "wind it into a ball" and it will lead us "in at Heavens gate, / Built in Jerusalems wall" (77, E231). As if to confirm that such a course of action is possible a small figure is drawn at the top of this plate who is rolling a string into a ball. The "end" that is being offered to the reader is on one level readily identified.[2] It is the fourth chapter, the end of the ontic and sequential progression that we have been following, the future which stands at the end of the line stretching from the past and through the present. It is also the "end" of the line of force unfolded by Vala and, by analogy, the end of the lives (collective and individual) of the worm of sixty winters. The location of "Heavens gate" and the "wall" in which it can be found is also quite clear. By following the poem's progression backwards, by winding the sequential, linear string of words into a ball, we arrive back at the frontispiece and stand with Los before the gate built in the "wall" of the poem. This return would radically alter our position with regard to the doorway depicted on this plate, for our entry would no longer be deferred by

the sequential unfolding of the poem and of time; instead, by winding the string of time into a ball we would return along the lines, and yet against the current, of that force which forbids us entry. The entry of Los and the reader into Jerusalem (and thus into heaven) could therefore be effected and it would indeed be true, as the preface to this chapter affirms, that "Hell is opend to Heaven" (77:34, E233).

Although the string offered to the reader can be readily identified, the means by which we are to turn and wind it into a ball is certainly not clear. Each attempt of the will to move the self against the current of time can meet only with failure, for such a course of action is itself a regression and withdrawal. The attempts of Los to draw Albion back against his will to the point where he began, for example, extend the space of Ulro:

> every little particle of light & air, became Opake
> Black & immense; a Rock of difficulty & a Cliff
> Of black despair; that the immortal Wings labourd against
> Cliff after cliff, & over Valleys of despair & death. . . .
> (39[44]:10-13, E186)

The reader who attempts to read Jerusalem backwards experiences a similar difficulty. The words become "Black & immense," "a Rock of difficulty" which cannot be traversed. There is no path back through time to an innocence which has not encountered experience. Yet the path back to Jerusalem's gate must be discovered if we are to enter this city and embrace Albion. And the path that leads to this point does seem to be in some way backwards "thro" the text, for the figure whom we see winding up a length of string is walking against the current of the text.

A similar course is suggested in the poem printed on the same plate. Blake tells us of a vision in which he sees

> a flame of fire, even as a Wheel
> Of fire surrounding all the heavens: it went
> From west to east against the current of
> Creation & devourd all things in its loud
> Fury & thundering course round heaven & earth
> By it the Sun was rolld into an orb:
> By it the Moon faded into a globe,
> Travelling thro the night: for from its dire
> And restless fury, Man himself shrunk up
> Into a little root a fathom long.
> (77:2-11, E232)

If one faces north, the east is to the right and the west to the left. If these directions are transposed onto the poem we can say that with respect to the reader, the book is to the north, the last pages of the book are to the east and the beginning is the west. The movement of our reading therefore passes "from the west to the east." It moves against the current of / Creation." To say that the movement of the poem and, by analogy, the movement of time, is "against the current of Creation" is at first a little baffling. Surely the movement of creation <u>is</u> from beginning to end, from youth to old age, from the past to the future. In arguing this point, however, we refer only to the time that is perceived by the caverned man. It is humanity's withdrawal, and the consequent reduction of reality to what can be perceived by the self, that transforms the individual into a worm sixty winters long, reduces time to the sequence of what has appeared to the self, generates fallen history, and continually postpones our entry into Jerusalem. The course of this time does not outline the current of creation, although it is grounded in Los's world, but the process of fragmentation. The current of creation flows from Los to Albion, from contraction and despair to expansion and hope. This is the movement initiated by Jesus, who

> is the bright Preacher of Life
> Creating Nature from this fiery Law,
> By self-denial & forgiveness of Sin.
> (77:21-23, E232)

Unfortunately, although passages such as this support the suggestion that there is a pathway that leads in some way back through the poem, they do not tell us <u>how</u> this can be done. The reader has been offered the end of a string which stretches from his/her current position to the point that he/she has been trying to reach, but (even though he/she once stood at the other end of this string and has followed its course from west to east, there seems to be no way of retracing his/her steps, of moving from east to west, and in this way entering Jerusalem's gate. It is as if the reader has been confronted with a Zen koan and in order to pass beyond it he/she must change his/her orientation.[3] Till this occurs we are (like Los) in the same plight

as the bird depicted on plate 78. We are an Icarus without wings, a Daedalus who cannot pick up the string that lies at his feet. From this melancholy position the rising sun (seen on the left of the illumination) can only be seen as a sun setting far in the west.[4]

A Zen master would, perhaps, point out at this stage of our discussion that the question of how to wind the "golden string" into a ball is a little premature. We cannot hope to accomplish this task until we have the "end" of the string in our hands. The beaked figure is, in fact, looking in the wrong direction. We must, first of all, pick up the "end" ourselves; we must turn to the fourth and final chapter of Jerusalem.

(2) The close of history

The fourth chapter begins with a continuation of the history which stretches from the withdrawal of Albion (second chapter) to the state entered as a result of that withdrawal (third chapter). It details the trajectory taken by this history as it passes into the future. This future is not described in the mode of possibility, nor is it proclaimed as the future predicted by the "honest man" as he gazes at the present; instead, it is a history which is placed in the narrator's past. This tense is appropriate because the final chapter of Jerusalem details a history which the narrator has seen in vision and which he is therefore able to announce as having already occurred. This time is a portion of the temporally and spatially extended body of Albion-in-withdrawal.

The ability of the narrator to see "past, present and future existing all at once" does not imply a philosophy of fatalism. The present is determined in the sense that limits to the possible are set by Albion's fall. We are all immersed within a time and space which predates us; we are hurried on in the "tide" of a time which extends on either side of our individual lives. However, within this time mortals are radically free. Free, because within the possibilities opened by this time we are able to choose the course

of our life. Radically free, because regeneration is a member of the set of options opened by the fallen world.

The fourth chapter begins by locating the poem's readers within the moment of history that they have reached. Now, "The Spectres of Albions Twelve Sons" attempt to "devour" the sleeping body of Albion (78:1-3, E233), their armies "surround the Forty-two Gates of Erin," they give the name of Rahab to "their Mother Vala" and elevate her to a position from which she has "power over the Earth" (78:12-16, E233-34). This attenuation of the power of Vala brings Jerusalem to the verge of non-existence:

> Disorganizd; an evanescent shade, scarce seen or heard among
> Her childrens Druid Temples. . . .
> (78:28-9, E234)

The world summarized by the opening plate gains moving expression in the voice of Jerusalem - heard from within "the darkness of Philisthea" (78:30, E234) - as she laments over the condition to which she and Albion have been reduced:

> My brother & my father are no more! God hath forsaken me
> The arrows of the Almighty pour upon me & my children
> I have sinned and am an outcast from the Divine Presence!
> My tents are fall'n! my pillars are in ruins! my children dashd
> Upon Egypts iron floors, & the marble pavements of Assyria;
> I melt my soul in reasonings among the towers of Heshbon;
> Mount Zion is become a cruel rock & no more dew
> Nor rain: no more the spring of the rock appears: but cold
> Hard & obdurate are the furrows of the mountain of wine & oil:
> The mountain of blessing is itself a curse & an astonishment. . . .
> (78:31-79:7, E234)

At the climax of this speech Jerusalem addresses herself directly to Vala and asks her to say why her

> shuttles
> Drop with the gore of the slain; why Euphrates is red with blood
> Wherefore in dreadful majesty & beauty outside appears
> Thy Masculine from thy Feminine hardening against the heavens
> To devour the Human!
> (79:68-72, E236)

Vala's reply to this question is a striking instance of an attempt to validate the present order by offering a (highly selective) account of the past. Vala is, of course, inextricably involved in the Fall. She forms the veil that separates self from other and therefore she is involved in any struggle

of one against another. Vala's history attempts to diminish this role. For example, we are told that it is Luvah who initially commands her "to murder Albion / In unreviving Death," (80:16-17, E236), but we do not hear what Vala's response was to this request. Instead, Vala describes a struggle between Luvah and Albion. Quite clearly Vala must have participated in this struggle, for at its conclusion both she and Luvah are dead. Vala, nevertheless, while admitting that there were two corpses, claims to have revived both bodies to life in her bosom (80:20, E236). This event involves a complete inversion of the personality, for now the active power emerges from the passive. In previous chapters we have seen how this phenomenon resulted in the death of the whole man; similarly, at this point in Vala's narrative she tells us that Luvah framed a knife and placed it in "his daughters hand!" (80:23, E236). Vala speaks of Luvah's daughter as if she were someone separate from herself and she does not tell us that the knife is offered as a means of fulfilling her father's demand that she "murder Albion." Instead, after observing, with some measure of shock and guilt, that a death of this kind "was never known / Before in Albions land" (80:23-4, E236), she tells Jerusalem that she keeps Albion in this state so that he does not return and kill Luvah:

> But I Vala, Luvahs daughter, keep his body embalmd in moral laws
> With spices of sweet odours of lovely jealous stupefaction:
> Within my bosom, lest he arise to life & slay my Luvah
> Pity me then O Lamb of God! O Jesus pity me!
> Come into Luvahs Tents, and seek not to revive the Dead!
> (80:27-31, E236)

Vala's fear is not really that Albion might return and kill Luvah, for as her narrative has already implied this event would only increase her own power. The real danger is that Albion could return in response to the call of Christ, and a return of this kind would remove both Albion and Luvah from the dynamic in which Vala gains her strength. Vala's lamentations are therefore an attempt to describe to Jerusalem why what is, must be; and they are a strategy designed to entice forgiveness itself into "Luvahs Tents" (80:31, E236). Far from implying any conversion in Vala herself (as Bloom

suggests)[5] Vala's "lamenting songs" (80:8, E236) are an integral part of her work. As she sings, a body is woven for "Jerusalem . . . according to her will" (80:35, E237). Moreover, her songs produce in Los the emotions of both anger and pity (80:41, E237).

Vala's world, despite its appearance of strength, is therefore at one point extraordinarily vulnerable. As Vala admits:

> if once a Delusion be found
> Woman must perish & the Heavens of Heavens remain no more. . . .
> (80:14-15, E236)

Until this occurs Albion is confined beneath the delusion that Vala's veil, the nature constructed by the Daughters of Albion, is reality. Once the contingent nature of this veil been shown, Albion is free once more to enter into relationship. Vala's fear that Albion will return in response to the call of Christ is, however, accompanied by a second and perhaps more immediate danger to the Daughters and to Vala: Vala's power is threatened by the very logic of its own unfolding. In order to understand this threat we must briefly recapitulate our discussion of the mechanism which propels fallen history.

In the course of the history recounted in the previous chapter, we saw the Spectre draw "Vala into his bosom magnificent" (64:25, E215). In this embrace the Spectre seems at first to be the dominant partner, but when the Spectre next enters this history it is as the Spectre Sons of Albion who are born from Vala. We can gloss this phenomenon by observing that the adoption of a creed is an embrace by a male (retaining) power of a passive power. As a result of this embrace the believer is formed by these ideas and he becomes, metaphorically at least, an infant. Locke, for example, begins the Essay with an account of the embrace by his reasoning memory of a particular nature. Once this embrace has been accomplished, however, the initiative swings to the passive power and this nature generates a series of rules for the conduct of life. Locke is born from the nature that he has embraced. Similarly, the

embrace of Vala by the Spectre of Albion means that he is born from Vala.

In being born from Vala, however, the Spectre is formed as a Warrior, a self-enclosed identity who attempts to assimilate others to his perspective. It is therefore inevitable that as he grows in strength he should come to realize that he is enclosed by the Nature that has borne him. In the third chapter, for example, we find that the Spectre Sons of Albion struggle against the being that encloses them. This process in which the children of the Fall oppose a particular nature with another nature is the very stuff of generation. As I have argued, this struggle ensures that a particular nature is overthrown at the expense of becoming assimilated to the overall rule of Vala. Although the struggle against Vala results in her re-instatement, this dynamic means that the Daughters are subject to a continual consummation. The progression from youth to old age, from the Ptolemaic to the Galilean system, from Adam to Luther, all result in the transformation of the cradle of grass woven by the Daughters.

For much of history this consummation does not threaten Vala herself; in fact, it is what ensures that she can remain indefinite. However, at the end of time the situation is rather different. The consummation of particular natures gradually reveals them to be aspects of a single nature, that of Rahab/Vala. Moreover, at this point Vala has assimilated all of existence to her perspective and as a result "the Twelve Daughters of Albion" are united in the "Double Female" called "Rahab & Tirzah" (67:2-3, E220). This global form gives birth to the Spectres as "One Male," which can now be seen as "a ravening eating Cancer growing in the Female" (69:1-2, E223). On this more unified and global level the struggles of earlier levels are repeated, but now the wrath of the Warriors can be directed against Vala herself, and therefore it can potentially threaten the entire world formed by the Daughters.

Given this vulnerablity of the Daughters to Christ and to the Warriors that they weave, their overall strategy is, quite understandably, to remain

indefinite. An indefinite delusion is one which cannot be disproved. This is why almost any "doxa" can appear attractive and seem to represent the truth if it is presented in generalities. Rahab therefore not only resists definition but makes lack of definition an element in the morality that she propounds:

> And Rahab like a dismal & indefinite hovering Cloud
> Refusd to take a definite form. she hoverd over all the Earth
> Calling the definite, sin: defacing every definite form. . . .
> (80:51-53, E237)

There are, fortunately, quite definite limits to how indefinite Rahab can be. On the one hand her power is safeguarded by refusing to accept definite form; on the other hand if her sovereignty is to have any meaning at all she must weave a definite form and in this way herself become definite. The power of Rahab is, it seems, in an inverse relation to her security. As Gwendolen will assert later in the poem: "Men are caught by Love: Woman is caught by Pride" (81:6, E238). It is pride in their own form and power that causes the female delusion to be discovered.

For much of history Rahab is able to remain indefinite because her Daughters take definite form. The change from one world fabricated by the Daughters to the next even gives the impression that we live in an open-ended world; it generates the illusion that we are in some way moving closer to reality. However, behind all of this movement the basic principle which animates all of these "systems" - that of Rahab/Vala and the Female Will - remains indistinct and unformulated. This resolution of the conflict between the desires for security and for power works well for Rahab, but only at the expense of re-introducing the conflict at a different level. If the twelve Daughters who form the figure of Vala were collectively to decide to remain indefinite, then there would be no observable appearance to the self and therefore neither the Daughters nor Rahab could have any power. The Daughters are therefore subject to the consummation that Rahab wishes to avoid. Moreover, as the Daughters collectively form the identity of Vala/Rahab, each

identification of the Daughters is a partial identification of Vala/Rahab. For the Daughters the problem is, given that they must have a definite form, how to keep the identities that they have woven enclosed within their world. Towards the end of time (when the Double Female has been identified as a single form) this question involves not simply their own survival, but the survival of Rahab/Vala as well. This is the dilemma faced by Gwendolen on plates 81 and 82.

Gwendolen is the female counterpart to Hyle and she gives him a form of "self-interest & selfish natural virtue"; she gives him the form of a Warrior:

> she took up in bitter tears his anguishd heart,
> That apparent to all in Eternity, glows like the Sun in the breast:
> She hid it in his ribs & back: she hid his tongue with teeth
> In terrible convulsions pitying & gratified drunk with pity
> Glowing with loveliness before him, becoming apparent
> According to his changes: she roll'd his kidneys round
> Into two irregular forms: and looking on Albions dread Tree,
> She wove two vessels of seed, beautiful as Skiddaws snow;
> Giving them bends of self interest & selfish natural virtue:
> She hid them in his loins; raving he ran among the rocks,
> Compelld into a shape of Moral Virtue against the Lamb.
> The invisible lovely one giving him a form according to
> His Law a form against the Lamb of God opposd to Mercy. . . .
> (80:67-79, E237-38)

The difficulty is that as Gwendolen gives Hyle form (as, for example, a religion or ideology forms its subscribers) so too she is revealed (80:71-72, E237) and therefore herself becomes a target for the wrath of the Warrior that she has created. The question for Gwendolen is therefore, "what shall we do to keep / These awful forms in our soft bands" (80:84-5, E238). Gwendolen's concern is not simply for her own safety, but for the existence of all of the Daughters. She says:

> I have heard Jerusalems groans; from Vala's cries & lamentations
> I gather our eternal fate: Outcasts from life and love:
> Unless we find a way to bind these awful Forms to our
> Embrace we shall perish annihilate, discoverd our Delusions.
> (82:1-4, E239)

To achieve this end Gwendolen proposes a strategy which, she hopes, will make her world deaf to the voice of Christ and proof against the advances of the Warriors.

(3) To bind the infant in the bands of love

Gwendolen attempts to render her delusions secure and "keep" the awful forms in her "soft bands" with the twin forces of fear and desire. On the one hand she punishes all who transgress her moral code. On the other hand she becomes a form that is "perfect in beauty" (81:5, E238). Gwendolen hopes that as a result of this strategy the Warrior will be transformed into a child who cannot leave the side of the mother who has given him birth. Hyle will become totally subservient to the nature that Gwendolen represents.

> Let us look! let us examine! is the Cruel become an Infant
> Or is he still a cruel Warrior? look Sisters, look! O piteous
> I have destroyd Wandring Reuben who strove to bind my Will
> I have stripd off Josephs beautiful integument for my Beloved,
> The Cruel-one of Albion: to clothe him in gems of my Zone
> I have named him Jehovah of Hosts. Humanity is become
> A Weeping Infant in ruind lovely Jerusalems folding Cloud:
> In Heaven Love begets Love! but Fear is the Parent of Earthly Love!
> And he who will not bend to Love must be subdud by Fear. . . .
> (81:8-16, E239)

In its essence this strategy is not new; in the fallen world the passive power always attempts to form a shell which encloses existence. At this point in time, however, when the forms of the Double Female and the Male have been identified, it is possible to envisage a movement on the part of the female which would bring the male in its entirety under the control of the female. If Gwendolen were to be successful then the cycles of generation would be averted: the son would never be able to leave the mother who has given him birth. As Gwendolen exclaims: "the mighty Hyle is become a weeping infant; / Soon shall the Spectres of the Dead follow my weaving threads" (82:8-9, E239).[6]

It is, of course, not enough simply to reduce Hyle to an infant; Gwendolen must entice her other sisters to perform the same feat, for only then will Rahab/Vala be secure from the Warriors and from Christ. Gwendolen therefore fabricates a falsehood which she hopes will draw her sisters to "Babylon on Euphrates" (82:18, E239). This falsehood asserts that Los will

turn away from Albion, leave him desolate, and create a world of surfaces. Gwendolen says to her sisters:

> I heard Enitharmon say to Los: Let the Daughters of Albion
> Be scatterd abroad and let the name of Albion be forgotten:
> Divide them into three; name them Amalek Canaan & Moab:
> Let Albion remain a desolation without an inhabitant:
> And let the Looms of Enitharmon & the Furnaces of Los
> Create Jerusalem, & Babylon & Egypt & Moab & Amalek,
> And Helle & Hesperia & Hindostan & China & Japan.
> (82:22-28, E239)

If Los were to "let the name of Albion be forgotten" and simply create the fallen world, then Golgonooza would fall, for this city is created in the continual turning of Los to Albion. In its place we would have nothing more than the phenomenal world, the world which the Daughters create between the Mundane Shell and the earth. Without foundation this world would dissolve, but the Daughters do not realize this. Gwendolen's falsehood is attractive because it seems to them that if Los accepts that Albion will never return and agrees to let his "name . . . be forgotten," then existence itself would finally be enclosed by the Daughters. Rather than being subject to the vicissitudes of Generation and threatened by the advances of the Warriors and the possible return of Albion and Christ, the Daughters would be able to make their delusions permanent.

So far Gwendolen has spoken only in generalities. The proof of her contentions is, of course, her ability actually to transform Hyle into a harmless infant. Gwendolen claims that Hyle has given her "sweet delight by his torments beneath [her] Veil" (82:39, E240) and that she has fed him with "the fruit of Albions Tree" and "sweet milk" drawn from the "contentions of the mighty for Sacrifice of Captives" (82:40-41, E240). She also claims to have carried him in her womb and nourished him with the milk of her world; however, the being that she has formed is a "Winding Worm" and not an infant. This creature now threatens Gwendolen with an anger and wrath many times more powerful that that of the Warriors:

> So saying: She drew aside her Veil from Mam-Tor to Dovedale
> Discovering her own perfect beauty to the Daughters of Albion
> And Hyle a winding Worm beneath [her Loom upon the scales.

> Hyle was become a winding Worm:] & not a weeping Infant.
> Trembling & pitying she screamed & fled upon the wind:
> Hyle was a winding Worm and herself perfect in beauty:
> The desarts tremble at his wrath: they shrink themselves in fear.
> (82:45-51, E240)

Gwendolen's attempt to reduce humanity to a form which is completely determined by the Daughters quite clearly results in the fabrication of death itself. The limit of opacity established by Eternity at the time of the Fall cannot be overstepped by the Daughters without stepping into the void of non-existence.

The Daughters are attracted by Gwendolen's beauty - Cambel, for example trembles with jealousy (82:52, E240) - because it represents the perfection of their world and powers. However, the evident failure of this beauty to reduce Hyle to an infant leaves them with only one course of action. It is only in the furnaces of Los and within the spaces of Generation that they will be able to reduce the Warriors to infants and so gain respite from their advances. Cambel, for example, is now drawn into the furnaces of Los and there she labours

> To form the mighty form of Hand according to her will.
> In the Furnaces of Los & in the Wine-press treading day & night
> Naked among the human clusters: bringing wine of anguish
> To feed the afflicted in the Furnaces: she minded not
> The raging flames, tho she returnd [consumd day after day
> A redning skeleton in howling woe:] instead of beauty
> Defo[r]mity: she gave her beauty to another: bearing abroad
> Her struggling torment in her iron arms: and like a chain,
> Binding his wrists & ankles with the iron arms of love.
> (82:63-71, E240)

Once again, the phenomenon described here is not new. Throughout fallen history the Daughters have been drawn again and again into the furnaces of Los. What is unprecedented, however, is that the Daughters as a whole, at this point in history, perceive that it is only in Los's furnaces that they can avert death:

> Gwendolen saw the Infant in her siste[r]s arms; she howld
> Over the forests with bitter tears, and over the winding Worm
> Repentant: and she also in the eddying wind of Los's Bellows
> Began her dolorous task of love in the Wine-press of Luvah
> To form the Worm into a form of love by tears & pain.
> The Sisters saw! trembling ran thro their Looms! soften[in]g mild

> Towards London: then they saw the Furna[c]es opend, & in tears
> Began to give their souls away in the Furna[c]es of affliction.
> (82:72-79, E240)

Bloom argues that Los is comforted by the events which occur at this point in the poem because he is able to observe "a genuine change of heart in the camp of the enemy, which is a presage of the greater change to come" (E943). In fact the Daughters have not changed their colours. They are still principally concerned with their own survival and the maintenance of their power. They have entered the furnaces of Los simply because they realize that there is no other way to avoid the "winding Worm" uncovered by Gwendolen. They are therefore still concerned to form an infant who is subservient to their will - Cambel binds the child's "wrists & ankles with the iron arms of love" (82:71, E240) - but they realize that the most efficacious way of doing this is through the furnaces of Generation, and also that they will have to pay a price for their safety. They will not be able to remain "perfect in Beauty," but must themselves enter the world of Generation and give their beauty to others. Los is comforted by this development because the Daughters do not choose the path of death. They are directed, albeit for selfish and, even in their own terms, quite misguided reasons, into the world of Generation. This is why the relief that Los feels because the danger has been averted is followed by a long speech in which he evinces a weariness with his long sojourn in the fallen world.

By entering the furnaces of Los, the Daughters are able to avoid the winding Worm and, for a short period of time, reduce their Warriors to infants. However, as plate 84 makes clear, this stratagem achieves only a postponement of their crisis. In generation they are able to make Hand a child, but this event then becomes the portent of his return as an adult in an ever more frightening form:

> The night falls thick Hand comes from Albion in his strength
> He combines into a Mighty-one the Double Molech & Chemosh
> Marching thro Egypt in his fury the East is pale at his course
> The Nations of India, the Wild Tartar that never knew Man
> Starts from his lofty places & casts down his tents & flees away
> But we woo him all the night in songs. . . .
> (84:20-25, E243)

(4) A form for the fallen world

The birth and rebirth of the Warriors in ever more powerful and threatening forms precipitates yet another change in strategy on the part of the Daughters. They now call on Los for help:

> O Los come forth O Los
> Divide us from these terrors & give us power them to subdue
> Arise upon thy Watches let us see thy Globe of fire
> On Albions Rocks & let thy voice be heard upon Euphrates.
> (84:25-8, E243)

Once again it is important to see that this call does not represent a change of heart, for as the Daughters sing "in lamentation" they unite "into One / With Rahab as she turnd the iron Spindle of destruction" (84:29-30, E243). The Daughters hope that Los will offer them a means of finally gaining victory over their Spectre Sons.

The invocation of Los is accompanied by an embrace of the falsehood uttered on plate 82 by Gwendolen:

> Terrified at the Sons of Albion they took the Falshood which
> Gwendolen hid in her left hand. it grew &, grew till it
> Became a Space & an Allegory around the Winding Worm
> They namd it Canaan & built for it a tender Moon. . . .
> (84:31-85:2, E243)

This represents a striking change within the fallen world. As I have argued in previous chapters, there are two worlds within the universe of loss. The first, Golgonooza, is built by Los. The second is built by the Daughters (and held by the Sons) of Albion. Although they exist within the same ontological time, these worlds have radically different tendencies. The first is the spiritual London, Golgonooza, while the second, Babylon, is founded on moral virtue. Politics would, of course, be a lot simpler if Los could simply reject the world fabricated by the Daughters; unfortunately, this world establishes a garment, a body and a cradle for Albion-in-withdrawal. In order to remain in relationship with Albion, Los must continually demand that the Daughters obey his will; the indefinite world of death must be given a form in the forge of friendship. At a number of places in Jerusalem we have seen Los attempting to check the momentum of this world of death and open it to

Albion (cf. 56:41-43, E206). And in the second chapter Erin exhorts the Daughters of Beulah to

> Remove from Albion, far remove these terrible surfaces.
> They are beginning to form Heavens & Hells in immense
> Circles: the Hells for food to the Heavens: food of torment,
> Food of despair. . . .
>
> (49:60-63, E199)

By calling on Los the Daughters suddenly eliminate the distance between surface and substance, and as a result the gap which separates them from the Daughters of Los is removed. The Daughters still weave a shadowy surface superadded to the real surface, but this surface is now congruent with that formed by Los. This is why the call to Los is accompanied by Gwendolen's falsehood. The Daughters call Los, not because they have been suddenly converted to a religion of compassion, but because they believe that Los intends to turn from Albion, leave him without an inhabitant, and in the place of Golgonooza create a world of enclosure. If he were to accomplish this reversal Los would become the foundation for the world fabricated by the Daughters. The substance of the fallen world would be swallowed up by its surface.

This development is at first rather shocking in its uncompromising judgement of the systems with which we order and structure our lives. As we pass from one of the worlds fabricated by the Daughters to the next (from the Copernican to the Newtonian or Einsteinian universe) we often have the sense that our conceptual grasp of the world is becoming more and more refined. It is, however, only in the failure of these philosophies, in the moments in which they become congruent with loss, when the absurdities of their claims to be able to enclose the world within their bounds become manifest, that we see their ontological reality, which is loss. It is our own failure to communicate, or realize our own potentialities or ideals, that figures forth for us the shape of our own fallen identities.

The invocation of Los and the embrace of Gwendolen's falsehood therefore has the effect of fabricating a body of loss. Albion's surface, his body, now assumes the shape of loss/Los. This is why the land of Canaan - the physical

not the spiritual promised land - now appears around the winding Worm. Now death itself has a body and a shape; Albion is no longer encased in the shifting (and therefore mysterious) natures which are fabricated by the Daughters; instead he is clothed in the shape of loss, which is his reality.

(5) Winding the body of Albion into a ball

The conjunction of the form fabricated by the Daughters of Albion and the world constructed by Los seems to be a rather puzzling event. We have argued that in withdrawal, at the very beginning of fallen time, Albion enters the time and space of loss; yet this world is precisely the one to which the daughters are reduced as they call to Los for assistance and embrace Gwendolen's falsehood. In order to understand the relationship between the beginning and the end of fallen time we must keep in mind the two directions in which the text is pulling us. From the perspective of the reasoning memory Generation is perceived as a linear progression which passes from the past to the future. In vision, however, history is seen as the shape of Albion-in-withdrawal. In fact, sequential history is the temporal extension given to Albion-in-withdrawal. At the end of fallen history, therefore, we do not really have any more than we began with: "All things Begin & End in Albions Ancient Druid Rocky Shore." At the end of the third chapter the narrator tells us that

> Where Luvahs World of Opakeness grew to a period: It
> Became a Limit, A Rocky hardness without form & void
> Accumulating without end: here Los. who is of the Elohim
> Opens the Furnaces of affliction in the Emanation
> Fixing the Sexual into an ever-prolific Generation. . . .
> (73:22-26, E228)

But "Luvahs World of Opakeness" grows "to a period" in both the first and the last moments of time.

From the perspective of ontic time the end of time is simply the last "now" in a long succession of such instants. In vision this last moment can be seen to complete the form of Albion-in-withdrawal and, therefore, to return

us to the beginning of the poem and the beginning of the time of withdrawal. In the fourth chapter of Jerusalem, "Luvahs World" once more draws "to a period" and Los must open the furnaces of affliction. Los smiles at this development because the completed form of Albion-in-withdrawal represents the completion of his own form (that of loss) and he is therefore able to glimpse Enitharmon. Hoping that he will be able to embrace her once more he again extends the form of Albion-in-withdrawal into a six thousand year history:

> Los smild with joy thinking on Enitharmon & he brought
> Reuben from his twelvefold wandrings & led him into it
> Planting the Seeds of the Twelve Tribes & Moses & David
> And gave a Time & Revolution to the Space Six Thousand Years
> He calld it Divine Analogy, for in Beulah the Feminine
> Emanations Create Space. the Masculine Create Time, & plant
> The Seeds of beauty in the Space: listning to their lamentation. . . .
> (85:3-9, E243)

In the course of this six thousand years the Daughters will once again weave a shadowy surface superadded to the real surface, and in this history Reuben will be scattered; but at this stage in the poem (at the very end and beginning of time), when the form of Albion-in-withdrawal is completed and reaffirmed by Los, the scattered fragments of Albion have a form or container in which they can be put. Albion therefore has a form which can, as we shall see, be the ground for a movement into Eternity. The tomb can be a womb (as the lines from the frontispiece affirm); the fallen world can become the shell which is put off by the growth of the seed. The world of loss can be seen as a "Divine Analogy" of the spaces created by the Daughters of Beulah. Both are spaces which form the ground for a return to the "Wars of Life Eternal." The recognition that the line of fallen time forms a circle, and that this circle is the outline of Albion-in-withdrawal, is the moment in which the reader sees the long line of Jerusalem (the poem, the city and the woman) wound into a ball. Fallen time and space have become a womb for Albion. This new development is celebrated by Los in the "Song of Los, the Song that he sings on his Watch" (85:21, E244).

The Book of Los ends with the fabrication by Los of "a Human Illusion / In darkness and deep clouds involvd" (5:56-7, E94). Similarly, The Song of

Los encloses the history of America and Europe in an eternal circle. By contrast, although the form which now encloses Albion is still a production of loss, Los can now see within its spaces the Emanation of Albion, Jerusalem:

> O lovely mild Jerusalem! O Shiloh of Mount Ephraim!
> I see thy Gates of precious stones: thy Walls of gold & silver
> Thou art the soft reflected Image of the Sleeping Man . . .
>
> I see thy Form O lovely mild Jerusalem, Wingd with Six Wings
> In the opacous Bosom of the Sleeper, lovely Three-fold
> In Head & Heart & Reins, three Universes of love & beauty. . . .
> (85:22-24, 86:1-3, E244)

In previous plates we have seen Jerusalem only as she exists within the dungeons and under the power of Vala. Now, with the completion of the tomb/womb in which Albion is enclosed, we are able to see her "Form." Jerusalem, as I have argued, can be seen as vision itself, as a sequential history which is anchored in vision, and as an "orderd race" which is held in the reasoning memory. Rather than being mutually exclusive, these "levels" make up the whole poem. Jerusalem is similarly layered: she includes the reality of vision, for she has "Gates of pearl" which reflect "Eternity" (86:4-5, E244); her spaces retain a relationship with their ground, for her "Wings form a "canopy" in which Eternity dwells (86:9-10, E244); and, finally, she is a form in which "the Spectres" of her "Dead" can be seen. As the Emanation of Albion Jerusalem/Jerusalem is, like the fallen world, "Three-fold / In Head & Heart & Reins" (86:2-3, E244). Jerusalem is therefore a city/Emanation/poem which is open, and it holds within its spaces the possibility of change. As Los testifies:

> I see the River of Life & Tree of Life
> I see the New Jerusalem descending out of Heaven
> Between thy Wings of gold & silver featherd immortal
> Clear as the rainbow, as the cloud of the Suns tabernacle. . . .
> (86:18-21, E244-45)

Nevertheless, as the presence in her form of the "Spectres" of her "Dead" suggests, Jerusalem/Jerusalem is inextricably involved with the fallen world. The tension between transparence and opacity, the vision of Jerusalem and the rush of time which draws us apart from her, can be seen at this point in the

poem as well. At the beginning of his song Los must exhort the Daughters to refrain from building "an Earthly Kingdom" (the syntax of lines 27-32 suggest that this call is addressed to Jerusalem/Jerusalem as well), and the Song itself is an exhortation to Jerusalem to "Come forth" from Babylon (85:30,32, E244). Jerusalem/Jerusalem exists in the midst of a movement towards disintegration. The epiphany of Jerusalem as the body of the fallen world and the Emanation of Albion is therefore followed by the vision of this same body as the Anti-christ.

(6) Winding the body of Los into a ball

The completion of the body of Albion-in-withdrawal is at the same time the completion of the body and Emanation of Los. On plate 85 Los had a premonition of this event, but now as Los's work draws to a close his Emanation, Enitharmon, divides completely from him (86:50-87:2, E245-6). This separation is the prelude to an attempt by Enitharmon to gain power over Los. As with the Daughters of Albion Enitharmon's power is threatened by Los's friendship with Albion, for it is in the crucible of this relationship that Christ appears. Her power is also threatened by Los's capacity to create new forms for the fallen world. Enitharmon therefore attempts to enclose Los within the form of the fallen world, and when he suggests that she can work alternate with him she replies:

> No! I will sieze thy Fibres & weave
> Them: not as thou wilt but as I will, for I will Create
> A round Womb beneath my bosom lest I also be overwoven
> With Love; be thou assured I never will be thy slave
> Let Mans delight be Love; but Womans delight be Pride
> In Eden our loves were the same here they are opposite
> I have Loves of my own I will weave them in Albions Spectre. . . .
> (87:12-18, E246)

If Enitharmon were to be successful and the passive power could determine the identity of the active, then Los's world would become opaque and the relationship that Los has up to this point sustained with Albion-in-withdrawal would be lost. This would mean that Christ himself would be in thrall to

Enitharmon and the Daughters of Albion, for it is only in Los's openness to Albion that the Divine Vision appears within the fallen world. Enitharmon's strategy to achieve this end resembles that adopted by the Daughters of Albion. By enforcing a strict moral code she hopes to be able to ensure that the female is never embraced and, therefore, that the bounds of the given are not breached. Enitharmon confidently asserts:

> This is Womans World, nor need she any
> Spectre to defend her from Man. I will Create secret places
> And the masculine names of the places Merlin & Arthur
> A triple Female Tabernacle for Moral Law I weave
> That he who loves Jesus may loathe terrified Female love
> Till God himself become a Male subservient to the Female.
> (88:16-21, E247)

Enitharmon, however, is herself the form of the universe of Los. In framing a moral code of this kind, and refusing Los's embrace, she gives clear and precise definition to this world. Enitharmon's fabrication of a form which encloses Los therefore works against her intentions, for (by creating a "Female Womb") it outlines a body for Los. Moreover, as I have argued, the space of Canaan and the "Allegoric Night," which now surround Albion-in-withdrawal, are produced when the world woven by the Daughters of Albion coincides with that created by Los. In giving concrete expression to the form of Los, Enitharmon is in fact completing the definition of this space and this night. The "Allegoric Night" now stretches throughout the fallen universe, and Enitharmon is portrayed, paradoxically, as a mother who sustains Los:

> O perverse to thyself, contrarious
> To thy own purposes; for when she began to weave
> Shooting out in sweet pleasure her bosom in milky Love
> Flowd into the aching fibres of Los. yet contending against him
> In pride sending his Fibres over to her objects of jealousy
> In the little lovely Allegoric Night of Albions Daughters
> Which stretchd abroad, expanding east & west & north & south
> Thro' all the World of Erin & of Los & all their Children. . . .
> (88:26-33, E247)

We can therefore say that the delineation of Enitharmon as a separate identity and her attempt to enclose Los within a single form winds the body of Los into a ball.

The completion of the body of Los and of the body of Albion-in-

withdrawal results in the consolidation of Albion's error. As I have argued in my discussion of the first chapter of Jerusalem, the form of the fallen world exists in the interaction between the world of death eternal and the world of Golgonooza, between the Daughters of Albion and the Daughters of Los, surface and substance, body and spirit. As a result of the developments discussed above - the coincidence of the world woven by the Daughters and that created by Los; the completion of the form of Albion-in-withdrawal; and the completion of the world of Los - the fallen world gains a single, rigid form. Error has now been consolidated.

One can imagine this form as the outline of a world, or as a horizon, which is shared (although they stand on opposite sides) by both Albion and Los. This extraordinary body is the very form of withdrawal and is therefore what now keeps Albion and Los apart. It is, in other words, a Covering Cherub which closes Los and Albion apart from relationship and therefore from Eden:

> Tho divided by the Cross & Nails & Thorns & Spear
> In cruelties of Rahab & Tirzah[,] permanent endure
> A terrible indefinite Hermaphroditic form
> A Wine-press of Love & Wrath double Hermaph[r]oditic
> Twelvefold in Allegoric pomp in selfish holiness
> The Pharisaion, the Grammateis, the Presbuterion,
> The Archiereus, the Iereus, the Saddusaion, double
> Each withoutside of the other, covering eastern heaven
>
> Thus was the Covering Cherub reveald majestic image
> Of Selfhood, Body put off, the Antichrist accursed
> Coverd with precious stones, a Human Dragon terrible
> And bright, stretchd over Europe & Asia gorgeous
> In three nights he devourd the rejected corse of death. . . .
> (89:1-13, E248)

One of the striking features of these events (the appearance of the Daughters' "Allegoric Night," the separation of Enitharmon and the consolidation of Error in the Covering Cherub) is that they seem to occur in the first and last moments of fallen history. The appearance of Enitharmon as a "Globe of blood" which trembles beneath Los's bosom suggests the similar division in The Book of Urizen which was the prelude to Los's enclosure in his own remembered world and which was the precondition for the construction of a world of loss. When Enitharmon is completely separated, she and Los

appear "like two Infants," who wander away from Enion in the desert (86:62-63, E246). This, and the terrible struggle between them for dominance which ensues (86:63-64, E246), recalls the very first appearance of Los and Enitharmon in the world that is precipitated in The Four Zoas as a result of the Fall. In the passage quoted above, the Covering Cherub stands between Albion/Los and Eden. The linear narrative therefore locates his appearance at the very end of time, but the image itself suggests the Covering Cherub that stands at the beginning of time and banishes Adam and Eve to a fallen history. Immediately before these lines, we read that at this point in history

> The Four Zoa's in all their faded majesty burst out in fury
> And fire. Jerusalem took the Cup which foamd in Vala's hand
> Like the red Sun upon the mountains in the bloody day
> Upon the Hermaphroditic Wine-presses of Love & Wrath.
> (88:55-58, E247)

It is as if Vala, Jerusalem and the Zoas are about to repeat the events of the Fall once again. The same phenomenon can be seen in the plates which follow on from the appearance of the Covering Cherub. Plate 90, for example, includes the description of an event which occurs at the very beginning of time:

> The Feminine separates from the Masculine & both from Man,
> Ceasing to be His Emanations, Life to Themselves assuming!
> And while they circumscribe his Brain, & while they circumscribe
> His Heart, & while they circumscribe his Loins! a Veil & Net
> Of Veins of red Blood grows around them like a scarlet robe.
>
> . . . that no more the Masculine mingles
> With the Feminine. but the Sublime is shut out from the Pathos
> In howling torment, to build stone walls of separation, compelling
> The Pathos, to weave curtains of hiding secresy from the torment.
> (90:1-5, 10-13, E249)

On this plate we also hear once again of how "the Twelve Sons / Of Albion drank & imbibed the Life & eternal Form of Luvah" and Reuben is cut apart by Hand "and double Boadicea" (86:16-17, 23-25, E249-50).

In terms of ontic time the appearance of Canaan, the separation of Enitharmon from Los and the appearance of the Covering Cherub occur in the last moments of that time. In the vision of Jerusalem, however, they can be seen to complete the form of Albion-in-withdrawal. Los extends the withdrawal

of Albion into a history of six thousand years duration, but the completion of this history merely gives temporal/spatial form to the moment of withdrawal. The completion of fallen history brings us back to its beginning. We can also say that the last moment of time is the first moment of history in a second sense. This end and beginning returns us to a moment which, were it not for Los, would plunge Albion into eternal death. In order to preserve the body of Albion-in-withdrawal, the last moment of fallen time must be followed by the extension of Albion-in-withdrawal once again. The history of the fallen world moves in eternal cycle from Adam to Luther. The end and beginning of the vision of Jerusalem describe the limits of the six thousand year body of fallen history which preserves the form of Albion-in-withdrawal. They define the outline of the vision which opens from the first plate of the poem.

(7) Winding the body of the world into a ball

Albion and Los are now face to face. The body of the fallen world (and the body of the poem) can be described as the body of Los, Enitharmon; the Emanation of Albion, Jerusalem; and the Covering Cherub which keeps Los and Albion apart from each other and closes Eternity off from them. The situation is similar to that described by Rilke in the poem from The Book of Hours beginning, "You, neighbour God, if sometime in the night." Los and Albion, like Rilke's poet and God, are neighbours:

> Between us there is but a narrow wall,
> and by sheer chance; for it would take
> merely a call from your lips or from mine
> to break it down. . . .[7]

On the one hand, the body of the fallen world gives definition to both Los and Albion-in-withdrawal; on the other hand, it is the necessary ground of Los's openness to Albion-in-withdrawal. Moreover, as Christ is manifest in the fallen world in Los's relationship to Albion-in-his-absence, it is in

this body that Christ himself is born. Christ must be born (as Los tells Enitharmon in the eighth Night of The Four Zoas) "as a Man / Is born on Earth . . . of Fair Jerusalem / In mysterys woven mantle & in the Robes of Luvah" (104:33-35, E378). Christ is therefore born as a child of Vala (the form of the fallen world) and as the husband of Jerusalem. As Jerusalem exclaims in the third chapter of the poem:

> And wilt thou become my Husband O my Lord & Saviour?
> Shall Vala bring thee forth! shall the Chaste be ashamed also?
> I see the Maternal line, I behold the Seed of the Woman!
> Cainah, & Ada & Zillah & Naamah Wife of Noah.
> Shuahs daughter & Tamar & Rahab the Canaanites:
> Ruth the Moabite & Bathsheba of the daughters of Heth
> Naamah the Ammonite, Zibeah the Philistine, & Mary
> These are the Daughters of Vala, Mother of the Body of death
> But I thy Magdalen behold thy Spiritual Risen Body
> Shall Albion arise? I know he shall arise at the Last Day!
> (62:6-15, E213)

From within a linear narrative Christ appears at a particular point in history. In vision, however, Christ can be seen as the Alpha and Omega of history. It is within Los's relationship to Albion in his absence that Christ is born, but this relationship is conducted across the full extent of fallen history. Christ therefore is at the heart of fallen time and, as I have argued, at the very centre of the vision of Jerusalem. History itself is the body which Christ has assumed in order to cast off. This is why Generation can be described as both the "[Image] of regeneration" and the point where the dead desire to place the "Abomination of Desolation":

> Pity must join together those whom wrath has torn in sunder,
> And the Religion of Generation which was meant for the destruction
> Of Jerusalem, become her covering, till the time of the End.
> O holy Generation! [Image] of regeneration!
> O point of mutual forgiveness between Enemies!
> Birthplace of the Lamb of God incomprehensible!
> The Dead despise & scorn thee, & cast thee out as accursed:
> Seeing the Lamb of God in thy gardens & thy palaces:
> Where they desire to place the Abomination of Desolation.
> (7:62-70, E150)

If Generation is to be the "point of mutual forgiveness between Enemies," Los must remain in relationship with Albion. In previous plates he has refused the allurements of the Daughters of Albion. It is now the Spectre who

attempts to lead Los away from Albion.

The completion of the fallen world gives the Spectre an alphabet of forms with which he can perform the most astonishing mental gymnastics:

> The Spectre builded stupendous Works, taking the Starry Heavens
> Like to a curtain & folding them according to his will
> Repeating the Smaragdine Table of Hermes to draw Los down
> Into the Indefinite, refusing to believe without demonstration[.]
> Los reads the Stars of Albion! the Spectre reads the Voids
> Between the Stars. . . .
>
> (91:32-37, E251)

At this point in time the Spectre is able to confront Los's hope for what is not yet (the return of Albion) with the force and persuasiveness of what <u>is</u> (the fallen world). It is, of course, quite clear that all this activity remains within the world of Los; the Spectre is able to fold the "Starry Heavens . . . according to his will," but he is unable to leave the fallen world. This is of no real concern to the Spectre for, by drawing Los into the "Indefinite," he hopes to circumscribe the possibility of Albion's return and so render this world impregnable. In fact, it is the very concreteness of his world that he hopes will draw Los away from Albion. From the perspective of the reasoning memory the contest between what is and what is not yet must result in the victory of the visible over the invisible, and of the material reality of the present condition over the spiritual reality of what could be.

Part of the Spectre's persuasiveness resides in his ability to draw an apparent correspondence between the knowledge formed as a result of his manipulation of the veil of what <u>is</u> and the eternal realities. This claim is similar to Locke's claim to be able to generate the complex ideas of eternity and infinity by the arrangement and rearrangement of the simple ideas which appear to the self. If this is so then humanity can and should remain within the secure environment of what is. God is a God of nature, of the present, and he is an apologist for what is. One can see a testimony to the persuasiveness of such claims in the extraordinary popularity of Locke in the eighteenth century, and in the hold that philosophies such as behaviourism, empiricism and phenomenology have had on the human imagination in the

twentieth century.

By contrast, Los affirms that "he who wishes to see a Vision; a perfect Whole / Must see it in its Minute Particulars" and, moreover, that "every / Particular is a Man; a Divine Member of the Divine Jesus" (91:20-21, 29-30, E177). In other words, we must see "thro" the constituted world of the self. Paradoxically, it is the Spectre's knowledge that is indefinite, for it is founded on the data available to the reasoning memory. It is vision that appears in definite outline because it is vision of others. The Spectre reads the voids between the Stars of Albion because he is laminating his system onto the world. Los, by contrast, reads the Stars of Albion because he uses the world that he has created in order to open to Albion.

Los deals with the temptation posed by the Spectre by "subduing" his own self and unbinding the eye and ear of the Spectre (91:44-46, E252). Los does not identify himself with nature, yet he does not destroy it. Instead, the nature held by the Spectre is radically displaced. The images which Blake uses to convey the extremity of this displacement are quite striking:

> Then he sent forth the Spectre all his pyramids were grains
> Of sand & his pillars: dust on the flys wing: & his starry
> Heavens; a moth of gold & silver mocking his anxious grasp
> Thus Los alterd his Spectre & every Ratio of his Reason
> He alterd time after time, with dire pain & many tears
> Till he had completely divided him into a separate space.
> (91:47-52, E252)

As the result of Los's wounding of his self, the pyramid, with its secret chamber and impregnable walls, becomes a grain of sand. The form designed to convey the individual with all his wealth into the land beyond death therefore becomes an object which is both subject to the forces of mortality and is itself their agent. The pillars which once held up the roof of the Spectre's world are now merely dust on an instrument designed for flight. And the "Starry Heavens" which the Spectre could fold and unfold according to his will are now outside his grasp.

With the Spectre divided into a separate space the fallen world can be seen as the ground for an appeal by Los (and Christ in Los) to Albion-in-

withdrawal. The poem therefore returns to its beginning, for this appeal (which can be heard on plate 96) is nothing less than the appeal which we saw on the opening plates of the poem. What remained implicit in the original vision has, however, at this point in the poem been elaborated. We can now see both Christ and Albion as giant figures which stretch across the full extent of time. The moment of Albion's withdrawal can be seen as the six thousand year history given form by Los. It is this history which gives a body to the moment of withdrawal and so opens the possibility of Albion's return.

The world now stands, as Enitharmon recognizes, on the verge of regeneration:

> The Poets Song draws to its period & Enitharmon is no more.
> For if he be that Albion I can never weave him in my Looms
> But when he touches the first fibrous thread, like filmy dew
> My Looms will be no more & I annihilate vanish for ever
> Then thou wilt Create another Female according to thy Will.
> (92:8-12, E252)

Albion can, however, not simply arise, for the body which Los and Christ face is nothing more than a body of death, an inert body of Clay. It is now, therefore, that an event occurs which once again can be located in the first and last moment of time. With the completion of the body of Albion-in-withdrawal, life is breathed into this body of clay and Albion and Brittannia are able to arise. It is important to remember that this moment is not the instant of regeneration. It is, instead, merely the moment in which life is given to the inert body of Albion-in-withdrawal. In this moment Los is seen simply as "the Great Spectre Los" who has preserved the form of Albion-in-withdrawal. As a result of this awakening, Albion (like Blake in the opening plate of the poem) is able to see in Los the call of Christ. However, while he remains within his fallen body this vision is threatened (just as it is on a mortal level) by the world of the self. As Albion says:

> O Lord what can I do! my Selfhood cruel
> Marches against thee deceitful from Sinai & from Edom
> Into the Wilderness of Judah to meet thee in his pride

> I behold the Visions of my deadly Sleep of Six Thousand Years
> Dazling around thy skirts like a Serpent of precious stones & gold
> I know it is my Self: O my Divine Creator & Redeemer. . . .
> (96:8-13, E255)

This moment is therefore one of extreme danger. As Christ propounds the need for forgiveness, brotherhood and, in Albion's words, the "Mysterious / Offering of Self for Another" (96:20-21, E256), the Covering Cherub overshadows them (96:18, E255) and then comes between them (96:29, E256). This is, however, the catalyst for an extraordinary reversal.[8] The closed and static form of the self is breached by a movement towards others:

> Albion stood in terror: not for himself but for his Friend
> Divine, & Self was lost in the contemplation of faith
> And wonder at the Divine Mercy & at Los's sublime honour
>
> Do I sleep amidst danger to Friends! O my Cities & Counties
> Do you sleep! rouze up! rouze up. Eternal Death is abroad
>
> So Albion spoke & threw himself into the Furnaces of affliction
> All was a Vision, all a Dream: the Furnaces became
> Fountains of Living Waters flowing from the Humanity Divine
> And all the Cities of Albion rose from their Slumbers. . . .
> (96:30-38, E256)

The world of the self is now inverted and, rather than being the horizon of the world, it becomes the ground for the expansive life of Eternity. The world of Los and Enitharmon is no longer the horizon of what is, but the ground for a movement into relationship. At this point in the poem we see the possibility implicit in the opening vision of Christ's call to Albion-in-withdrawal: Albion's return and regeneration. In the apocalypse which follows it is as if the structures of the self have been turned inside out. Rather than a closet, each Man has "Four Faces" (98:12, E257); the ear is no longer a "whirlpool fierce to draw creations in (BT6:17, E6), but an organ which circumscribes and circumcises "the excrementitious / Husk & Covering into Vacuum" and drives "outward the Body of Death in an Eternal Death & Resurrection" (98:18-20, E257). The solitary ruminations of the caverned man have been replaced with visionary conversation:

> And they conversed together in Visionary forms dramatic which bright
> Redounded from their Tongues in thunderous majesty, in Visions
> In new Expanses, creating exemplars of Memory and of Intellect

> Creating Space, Creating Time according to the wonders Divine
> Of Human Imagination. . . .
>
> (98:28-32, E257-58)

With this vision of apocalypse Jerusalem, and the vision seen by Blake as he wakes each morning, is completed.

(8) Ending

Northrop Frye argues that in Jerusalem the reader is not prepared for the apocalypse that occurs at the end of the fourth chapter:

> we find in Jerusalem almost no working-up of climax. Most of the fourth part is given over to defining the Antichrist, and as we continue to read about him, we discover that we are on our way toward an apocalypse, which flashes on us only in the very last plates of the poem. Blake seems to mark his crisis only as it is frequently marked in music, by an intensification of the original theme. We look back to see where the reversal of perspective occurred, but find nothing very tangible, and after so much churning, the mere silent appearance of the expected butter may seem almost an anticlimax.[9]

His opinion is echoed by numerous critics of the poem, although not necessarily with the same negative judgement. WJ.T. Mitchell writes that "If we read back into the preceding episodes to find the event that has made the difference, we find only ambiguous signals, not efficient causes."[10] Similarly, W.H. Stevenson writes that "the round [of Jerusalem] is endless, and a deus ex machina is required to stop it."[11]

It is true, of course, that Albion's awakening depends upon the breath of the Divine, that his decision to enter the furnaces of affliction is freely taken and therefore not causally determined, and that Christ's appearance represents the irruption in time of a force which proceeds from beyond its perimeter. Nevertheless, to compare the apocalypse of Jerusalem to the appearance of butter in cream, or to say that it is grounded in a "leap of faith in the present moment", is profoundly misleading.

The apocalypse of Jerusalem details the point of encounter between Christ and Albion, Los and Albion, the eternal and the temporal, Albion and Brittannia, and Albion and his members. This encounter is not described solely

as the result of the work in time of Los, nor could it be, for it depends in part upon the movement of others (Albion, Christ etc.). Bultmann writes that

> Man has to be free from himself or to become free from himself. But man cannot get such freedom by his own will and strength, for in such effort he would remain "the old man"; he can only receive this freedom as a gift.[12]

In Jerusalem this "gift" is given by others and it therefore cannot be predicted, nor can the moment of its appearance be determined in advance. Yet the apocalypse of Jerusalem is an encounter for which Los, and the entire poem, has been preparing the necessary, even if not the sufficent, conditions. In ontic time it is true that apocalypse appears at the very moment that Error is consolidated and the Anti-Christ appears. From this perspective it does indeed seem that regeneration bears no relationship to the history that precedes it, but, in vision, apocalypse can be seen to be an event which occurs throughout the six thousand year extent of the fallen body of Albion. From the perspective of vision, therefore, the entire poem has prepared for this event by delineating, in tireless detail, the body of fallen time which makes the leap of Albion's regeneration possible.

An apocalypse of this kind offers a series of conceptual difficulties to the critic. Eschatology is traditionally called

> the 'doctrine of the last things' or the 'doctrine of the end' By these last things were meant events which will one day break upon man, history and the world at the end of time.[13]

But Albion is the six thousand year extent of fallen history and therefore his regeneration bears a relationship to each moment of time. When Albion awakes, for example, all of time is gathered into his body: he sees his "deadly Sleep of Six Thousand Years . . . like a Serpent of precious stones & gold" and confesses that this form is his "Self" (96:11-13, E255). We must say that rather than occurring at the end of time apocalypse is enacted in each moment of the fallen world. How are we to characterize this relationship of apocalypse to the moments of fallen time?

From the perspective of ontic time the apocalypse is "now" and "not

yet." It is interesting to note that Christ speaks of the coming of the kingdom of God in similar terms. In Luke chapter 17:20-37, for example, he speaks of a kingdom which is both present and which approaches us from the imminent future.[14] This choice of tense clearly creates a series of vexing problems for interpretation. Norman Perrin writes, for example that "The question to be raised . . . is . . . whether it is legitimate to think of Jesus' use of Kingdom of God in terms of "present" and "future" at all."[15] In Jerusalem this paradox appears because of the tension between vision and the perspective of the closeted self. For the closeted self time seems to vanish into an unreachable past and an unfathomable future. What exists is only what is present to the self. Love is "love to the existent and the like" (philia).[16] For Blake, however, the linear expanse of fallen time is the body of the whole man, and similarly each moment of the time of an individual's life, although perceived by the reasoning memory as a worm sixty winters long, forms part of his identity. Vision sees this extensive body of humanity as a single identity and, moreover, as a moment in the life of Albion that has been frozen. This provokes an expansion of love to include that which is not present to the closeted self. Love becomes agape: "love to the non-existent, love to the unlike, the unworthy, the worthless, to the lost, the transient and the dead."[17] Vision is therefore able to see in the "now" both the fact of enclosure and the possibility of regeneration, indeed, the reality of regeneration. The fallen world closes the self within a dull round of six thousand years duration and so postpones regeneration: the apocalypse is "not yet." But this round is a moment in the life of Albion, and therefore apocalypse and regeneration can be pictured as crowding in on all sides of the fleeting moment of withdrawal. The reality of apocalypse is "now." On the one hand "Error or Creation will be Burned Up . . . the Moment Men cease to behold it" (VLJ E565). On the other hand "Man is born a Spectre or Satan & is altogether an Evil, & requires a New Selfhood continually & must continually be changed into his direct Contrary" (E200). In casting off the enclosure of

the self a last judgement passes upon the self, but this event must be repeated again and again, for the apocalypse is "not yet."

The apocalypse of Jerusalem is, therefore, strikingly different from the accounts of this event which are usually advanced. Frye writes that as

> All things have proceeded from a divine Man, the body of Jesus, and will be reabsorbed into him . . . the total vision of life must have a circular form.[18]

After quoting this passage, M.H. Abrams goes on to observe that

> Blake's redemption is thus figured as a circling back of divided man to his original wholeness; he breaks out of his ceaseless round of wandering in what Blake calls "the circle of Destiny" - the cyclical recurrences of pagan history - into a "Resurrection to Unity" which is the full and final closure of the Christian design of history.[19]

It is important to add, however, that this return does not outline the form of a closed circle. Frye writes that it is the "spark of illumination" between the "closing anode" and the "opening cathode" of the Bible (and by implication of time itself) that stimulates "the imagination to the effort of comprehension which recreates instead of passively following the outline of a vision."[20] Abrams phrases the same idea in a more prosaic style. He writes that

> Like his German contemporaries, Blake views the course of human history and the normative individual life as a return which is also a "progression."[21]

This return is not a regression to "an early stage of simple and easeful 'nature' which lacks conflict because it lacks differentiation and complexity", but

> the reachievement of a unity which has been earned by unceasing effort and which is, in Blake's term, an "organized" unity, an equilibrium of opponent forces which preserves all the products and powers of intellection and culture.[22]

Deen is working within this view of apocalypse when he writes that in Jerusalem

> paradise comes . . . as the regained and unfolded origin, the original good. . . . Briefly and theologically, we may describe the shape of time as circular . . . But in poetry - in a long poem - time can be no more than spiral. Whether or not the middle transmits a causal force to the end, it serves, and remains, as a way to the end.

> . . . The form of time in Jerusalem is spiral: revolutionary, and, if only by implication, evolutionary as well.[23]

These accounts, however, sidestep what is distinctive about the Blakean apocalypse. In the eschatology of The Four Zoas and of Jerusalem, the reintegration of the scattered fragments of Albion, the comprehension in an "'organized' unity" of the whole man, and the completion of Golgonooza, form no more than the prelude to apocalypse. They represent, in essence, the consolidation of Error; the completion and comprehension of the nothingness of withdrawal. The poem's return to the beginning of time does not discover "the regained and unfolded origin, the original good," but the act by which form and substance are given to the nothingness of Albion-in-withdrawal. This body is certainly not the city in which the Redeemed Man will dwell.

The spiral proposed by Frye, Abrams and Deen traces its course around the line of fallen history. It does not break free from this ground. By contrast Blake suggests a return which lifts the entire body of time back to a position in which Albion, his members, Christ, and Brittannia exist in relationship with each other. The apocalypse of Jerusalem seems to occur at right angles to the apocalypse described by Deen, Frye and Abrams. At first this argument seems to merely transpose the apocalypse described by Abrams et al onto a different level. However, although the movement from time to Eternity, and from contraction to expansion, does describe a return to the ground of being (Christ), it is important to observe that this return is very different from that described by the critics whom I have cited.

Blake writes in the penultimate lines of the poem:

> All Human Forms identified even Tree Metal Earth & Stone. all
> Human Forms identified, living going forth & returning wearied
> Into the Planetary lives of Years Months Days & Hours reposing
> And then Awaking into his Bosom in the Life of Immortality.
> (99:1-4, E258)

The "Planetary lives of Years Months days & Hours," to which all Human Forms return when "wearied," form the circular, self-enclosing shape of a seed in which one can "repose." In the moment of awakening (of vision) the shape of

this world is comprehended, but rather than being the New Jerusalem this world (which is in essence the total form of all human culture and achievement) becomes the ground for a movement into relationship. This is a second return, but unlike the first it does not lead us to a closed world. To awake in Christ's "Bosom in the Life of Immortality" is not to return with full comprehension to a unity "which preserves all the products . . . of intellection and culture," but to return to the openness to others in which all life has its being. The first return is to a closed and static state; the second is a return to an openness which allows the self to enter into relationship with and so be moved by others. This apocalypse is therefore not one which can be held in consciousness, or comprehended as an article in a creed; the complete comprehension of what <u>is</u> must be in fact the last moment of <u>fallen</u> time. Apocalypse involves the rupture of this certainty, and the casting off of the shell of what is and what has been achieved, or constructed, in order to enter into embrace (and Mental Warfare) with what lies outside of these bounds. Apocalypse is an opening of the world of the self, and an opening of history. The contrary relationship between openness and closure on the one hand, and the waking from sleep into the bosom of the Saviour on the other, therefore produces a movement which, rather than being a spiral threaded around the line of fallen time, is a vertical movement, of the whole man, away from this time. In a spiral the forces of openness and closure are (as in fallen time) temporally separated from one another. In Blake's apocalypse the contraries face each other and can engage in mental warfare.

To argue with Mellor that the apocalypse of <u>Jerusalem</u> can be compared to "the instantaneous illumination of a finally understood truth,"[24] is therefore profoundly misleading. The apocalypse of <u>Jerusalem</u> opens the self to what has <u>not</u> been understood, and it opens the present to both the past and the future. The last lines of the poem are quite emphatic about this point. As the poem ends, the first person narrator returns, but now it is to

affirm that the vision has receded. The apocalypse of Jerusalem is now located in the past rather than the present; it has slipped out of our grasp. For both the fallen and unfallen selves, the moment of awakening must be reached again and again. The closure and opacity of the self must be changed into its direct contrary.

I am not of course suggesting that Blake's apocalypse ushers in a world in which the self has no part. Pure openness is, of course, itself a form of closure, for without his Minute Particulars the whole Man would lose definition. The active peace and brotherhood of the Wars of Life Eternal is attained only in the contrary relationship between both openness and closure, the sublime and the beautiful. Eternal life is one in which there is both sleep and awakening, movement out and return. "All Human Forms" are identified in the sense that in this constant movement they can be seen as members of a single body and as discrete, particular individuals who can be distinguished from one another. This is the subject of the illumination to plate 100.

This final plate of the poem seems to contain two contradictory movements. On the one hand the plate itself "faces back into the work."[25] From this perspective the poem has become a serpent temple, a vast surface which still closes us off from Albion. All we see of the poem (now it has closed and we have left the moment of vision) is the surface of Jerusalem, the shape of the poem that has been retained by the reasoning memory. This form is retained in the relationship between the Spectre of Los and his Emanation. The former is seen on this plate with his back turned towards us. He is moving away from Los and towards the serpent temple, carrying a form which suggests the material, earthly sun. The latter, standing on the right hand side of the plate, has similarly turned her back to the reader. She is unfolding the veil of the night sky over the "moon-ark of Generation."[26] The world of the self would therefore seem to be quite intact. However, there has been a major rearrangement of forces within this world. On plate 6 Los turned

away from the reader, and the Spectre formed a roof which closed Los within the world of the self. By contrast, on this final plate the world held by the Spectre and the Emanation is the ground for a movement forward. Los now faces the reader. The fallen form of Jerusalem/Jerusalem no longer forms the horizon of the self; instead it is the ground for a movement into relationship. This movement is that in which Christ can be seen in Los. It is interesting to note that this plate is turned at right angles to the ones which precede it. Los is stepping forth in a movement which proceeds both at right angles to the linear movement of Jerusalem and which takes him back against the stream of the poem to the doorway seen in its opening plates. It is this casting off of the world of the self which Jerusalem now exhorts the reader to attempt. It is the poem itself, the very vehicle which has taken us to this point, which now must be cast off. The poem must be not the horizon of our world but the ground for a leap into relationship. It is in this constant casting off of the world of the self that we are able to elaborate a history of freedom.

Chapter 15

Los and Jesus

> & the Divine Countenance shone
> In Golgonooza Looking down the Daughters of Beulah saw
> With joy the bright Light & in it a Human form
> And knew he was the Saviour Even Jesus & they worshipped
>
> Astonishd Comforted Delighted in notes of Rapturous Extacy
> All Beulah stood astonishd Looking down to Eternal Death
> They saw the Saviour beyond the Pit of death & destruction
> (FZ100:7-13, E372)

The books produced by Urizen are solid massy things which are written in solitude (BU4:33, E72) and which are part of an attempt to reduce the multiple realities of the world to a single, univocal voice and a single perspective. They represent an attempt to "box the entire compass of the imagination in an orderly sequence." By contrast, Blake admits that the form and subject matter of his Grand Poem, rather than being dependent upon the self alone, are given in part by others. The Four Zoas and Milton rely upon the good offices of the "Daughters of Beulah" (FZ4:3, E301 & M2:1-2, E96), while Jerusalem is dictated by Christ. Rather than prescribing a single meaning, Blake's Grand Poem is an allegory designed to rouse "the faculties to act" (E702). Moreover, The Four Zoas, Milton and Jerusalem do not pretend to be able to contain life within their bounds. Rather than attempting to reduce the world to a single perspective, these poems carefully define the position from which they speak and the particular relationship to the world in which their visions appear. Blake's Grand Poem is concerned to open the world created by the self (of which it is a member) to others. Los says in Jerusalem:

> I must Create a System, or be enslav'd by another Mans
> I will not Reason & Compare: my business is to Create. . . .
> (10:20-21, E153)

But this creation is a a way of "Striving with Systems" so that "Individuals" might be delivered "from those Systems" (11:5, E154). Blake's Poem therefore

embraces a wide variety of voices and realities; it stubbornly refuses to be reduced to the static beauty of a Urizenic text. Nevertheless, although The Four Zoas, Milton and Jerusalem cannot be reduced to a single perspective, these poems are not incommensurate. As I have argued, the three poems give us different perspectives, or windows, on the same world.

The relationship between the members of Blake's Grand Poem can be described in a number of ways. First, they represent different voices and different visions of the fallen world which are embraced by the whole poem. Second, these poems open from one to the next. As such they describe the very movement and texture of conversion and regeneration, with all of the dramatic shifts in perspective and orientation which these terms suggest. Christ's call to Albion to leave his closed world closely parallels the poet's attempt in The Four Zoas to induce his readers to change their comportment within the world in such a way that the vision of Milton, and then the vision of Jerusalem, can be seen. Third, the members of Blake's Grand Poem bear a relationship to each other and to the whole poem which is analogous to the relationship of Christ to Albion: "Within your bosoms I reside, and you reside in me" (4:19, E146). This does not mean that the one has assimilated the other, but that their relationship is such that the one lies within reach and embrace of the other. The Four Zoas does not engulf Milton; but it does contain "windows" which open onto it.

This richly textured Poem does not simply describe a world which somehow exists "out there," for it outlines the different levels and possiblities of the world created by Los and Enitharmon; or, to phrase this in a different way: Blake's Grand Poem is in a sense the body (the Emanation) of Los. Most discussions of Los proceed along a linear path and note the changes in Blake's conception of this figure as his oeuvre proceeds.[1] However, one of the major thrusts of the poems that I have been discussing is that the linear time which appears to the closeted man is not the only or in fact the most fundamental experience of time. It therefore offers us only a partial view of

Los. It is important to see that The Four Zoas, Milton and Jerusalem each describes different aspects of Los.

From the perspective of sleep, Los creates and is himself enclosed within the linear time described in The Book of Urizen and The Four Zoas. He is, like Urizen, a worm elongated into a winter which is six thousand years long. Los is demiurge and fallen creator; he is a figure of flesh who must be born, whose world must be elaborated, and who must come to realize that the world in which he is domiciled is his creation. However, from the perspective of embrace, a very different Los can be seen. Los is now the eternal watchman and prophet. He is the ever apparent Elias, who is able to open within the spaces of his creation and of his body a movement which continually opens the world of loss to others. Finally, in the time of awaking, the six thousand years of fallen history can be seen as a visionary construction which sustains a relationship to Albion-in-withdrawal. It is important to recognize that demiurge, watchman, and visionary prophet coexist with one another. As I have argued, the Los of The Book of Urizen and of the early Nights of The Four Zoas can still be seen in Milton and Jerusalem. Los, like Albion, is a figure who is extended throughout a six thousand year history; yet he is one man. Los forms the horizon of the fallen world; however, Los's embrace of the "creation" that hems us in, and his continual opening of it to Albion-in-withdrawal, changes the prison into a seed. It is in this reversal, enacted by the "new" Los within the body of the "old," that Los becomes Sol and we reach the very limits of the fallen world. It is at this point that Los appears in the similitude of Christ.

The appearance of Christ within the fallen world represents the raison d'être of Los's prophetic work. It also defines the furthest reach of the fallen world and the point beyond which the Eternal Prophet is no longer Los. In Blake's oeuvre Christ is the ground of life and the body in which all things are embraced. In "A Vision of the Last Judgement," for example, we read that

> All Things are comprehended in their Eternal Forms in the Divine body of the Saviour the True Vine of Eternity The Human Imagination (E555)

Similarly, in Jerusalem Blake writes that "every / Particular is a Man; a Divine Member of the Divine Jesus" (91:29-30, E251), and in Milton the "Seven Angels of the Presence" (32:2, E131) affirm that "The Imagination is not a State: it is the Human Existence itself" (32:32, E132). Christ himself tells Jerusalem that he is her life (J62:1, E212). Yet the figure of Christ in Blake's oeuvre, and the way in which he forms a ground which comprehends all particulars, is quite difficult to define.

Damrosch describes Christ as "a single, living, and loving Universal"[2] and he compares Christ's role in Blake's poetry with that of God in Cusanus' theology. He writes that in Cusanus'

> most famous work, Of Learned Ignorance, the correspondence of microcosm and macroscosm is much more than metaphorical. "In each individual the universe is by contraction . . . what the particular individual is; and every individual in the universe is the universe, though the universe is in each individual in a different way and each thing is in the universe in a different way." With this literal and complete interpenetration of microcosm and macrocosm, Cusanus seeks to reconcile Plato and Aristotle and to show that although universals exist only in particulars, the particulars in turn exist in an ultimate order that subsumes them and gives them life.[3]

Damrosch argues that for Blake this "ultimate order" is Christ.

It is true that each particular is a member of Jesus, but the relationship between Christ and his members is not one in which there is an interpenetration of this precise kind: the individual is not the universe and the universe is not in each individual in the way described by Cusanus. A view such as this is in fact adopted by the Spectre on plate 91 as part of a strategy to keep Los within the world that he has constituted. The "Smaragdine Table of Hermes," repeated by the Spectre in order to "draw Los down / Into the Indefinite" (91:34-5, E251), also announces that "What is below is like that which is above, and what is above is like that which is below, to perform the miracle of the one thing."[4] As I have suggested, Blake is concerned with vision, not with symbolism, and with opening the world of

the self to others, rather than affirming that the other appears within the world of the self. The word "comprehended" does not simply suggest that Christ contains or encompasses "All Things," but that in Christ each thing is understood and preserved in its individuality. It is of course true that Christ in Jerusalem affirms that "I am in you and you in me, mutual in love divine" (4:7, E146), but this "interpenetration" is one in which, as Christ tells us, he is "a brother and friend." This characterization of Christ suggests that the appropriate relationship between the individual and Christ, or Albion and Christ, is not the decipherment of the signs of the universal in the particular, but dialogue and vision.

Damrosch writes as if Christ were fully inherent in the particulars of the constituted world of the self. He asserts, for example, that it "is necessary for Blake that the symbols be directly apprehended as true and that the universals which they express be fully inherent in them."[5] By contrast, in the opening plates of Jerusalem Christ forms a voice which appears in the moment of awakening and which introduces a surplus or excess which resonates within the hitherto closed world of the self. The brother is seen and heard when he is embraced, and when the closed world of the self is breached. A discussion of Christ in Blake's oeuvre must therefore work with a new model of the relationship between time and Eternity, and Christ and Albion.

Christ appears in The Four Zoas, Milton and Jerusalem at the precise point that self and other, time and Eternity, male and female, enter into relationship. In The Four Zoas he is seen as Los and Enitharmon embrace the different fragments of Albion; in Milton he appears where Milton and Ololon, time and Eternity, are on the verge of embrace; and in Jerusalem he is seen and heard in the attentiveness of Los to Albion-in-withdrawal. Conversely, when Albion withdraws into the enclosure of the self, he loses sight of the Divine Vision. It seems that movement into relationship opens the space in which Christ appears and in which he resides. In the fallen world the physical body and the body politic are given order and coherence by the

imposition of a particular set of laws on their members. Self and other, as I have argued with regard to the Bard's Song of Milton, are held in a triangular relationship in which the apex is Satan. The divine body of Jesus the Imagination appears by contrast in the very moment in which the world of the self is cast off. Christ himself is therefore seen in the casting off of enclosure and the entry into relationship with another. Christ appears in the moment in which our centre of gravity is displaced from the self.

This is why Christ is characterized in Blake's oeuvre as an iconoclast and breaker of limits. In Milton we are told that Jesus has torn and "now shall wholly purge away with Fire" the "Sexual Garments" which hide "the Human Lineaments as with an Ark & Curtains" (41:25-27, E142-43); in Jerusalem Christ is characterized as a person who rends "the Infernal Veil . . . & the whole Druid Law removes away" (69:38-39, E223), and later in the same poem he is described as a person who

> breaking thro' the Central Zones of Death & Hell
> Opens Eternity in Time & Space; triumphant in Mercy. . . .
> (75:21-22, E231)

If life is, as I have argued, founded in relationship, then we must define relationship in such a way that it does not become a set of rules or maxims which would merely impose a closed form on life. A world based on relationship is a dynamic affair which is characterized by a continual movement out of the world of the self and into relationship. It is for this reason that Christ is described as the ground of life. Christ is the movement out of enclosure and into relationship (the spring of eternal life) which forms the very basis of life.

Christ is therefore seen whenever individuals move into relationship. He is this movement into relationship, but, it is important to add, he is also the body of relationship. In the first Night of The Four Zoas, for example, when "those in Great Eternity" meet "in the council of God / As one Man" (21:1-2, E310), they appear in two quite different forms. When they contract their Senses "They behold Multitude," but when they expand their senses they

> behold as one
> As One Man all the Universal family & that one Man
> They call Jesus the Christ & they in him & he in them
> Live in Perfect harmony in Eden the land of life
> Consulting as One Man above the Mountain of Snowdon Sublime. . . .
> (21:3-7, E311)

Similarly, in Night the Eighth "All in Great Eternity" meet "in the Council of God / as one Man Even Jesus" (99:1-2, E371), and when the "Twenty-four" join together in Jerusalem to attempt to recall Albion, they appear as one in "A Human Vision! / Human Divine, Jesus the Saviour, blessed for ever and ever" (36[40]:46-7, E182).

It is therefore possible to distinguish between our corporeal body and the spiritual body of Christ which appears in relationship. In the "Laocoön" engraving, for example, Blake distinguishes between "The Divine Body" and "The Natural Man." On the one hand he writes that "What can be Created Can be Destroyed / Adam is only The Natural Man & not the Soul or Imagination," and on the other hand he affirms that "The Eternal Body of Man is The IMAGINATION. / God himself / that is / The Divine Body / . . . [Yeshua] JESUS we are his Members" (E273). This "Eternal Body of Man" is a body of relationship; it is a dynamic, living form which is defined in the movement which circumscribes and circumcises "the excrementitious / Husk & covering into Vacuum evaporating revealing the lineaments of Man / Driving outward the Body of Death in an Eternal Death & / Resurrection" (98:18-20, E257).

One of the most striking claims that Blake makes for the Los's creative work, and for his own work as well, is that this "Divine Body" "manifests itself in his Works of Art (In Eternity All is Vision)" (E273). It is Christ himself who can be glimpsed in, or rather "thro," visionary art. As I have observed in my introduction, a claim such as this should not be confused with a creed that "claims for aesthetic vision the status of revelation, and for the literary sign the capacity to embody this vision concretely and immanently."

In itself the work of the poet/prophet is an enclosure, a system and a creation which must be destroyed if the fallen world is to open to Eternity.

In the movement described in Milton, however, this closed form is embraced and so opened to others; the fallen world becomes a "Visionary form dramatic." Christ is able to appear within "Works of Art" and within Los's "visionary construction" because, by opening these forms to Albion, Los opens relationship within the spaces of the fallen world. For the divine vision to appear and to speak to the fallen man, the self must move to the very edge of the world in which he/she is enclosed; in order to see the sun, the closeted understanding must look out of his/her closet. It is therefore only in Los/Blake's opening of the fallen world that Christ can be heard. It is this inversion of the created world that allows the kerygma to be heard.

We can therefore say that Los's creation, and by implication the "lesser" productions of prophets and poets such as Blake, is important for two closely linked reasons. First it gives a body to Albion-in-withdrawal and in this way consolidates Error. It is this negative task which opens the possibility that Albion will recognize his error and so be moved to cast it off. Second, by maintaining a relationship with Albion and by opening his created world again and again, Los makes it possible for Christ's voice to be heard within the fallen world. In other words, Los creates the body of Error which makes it possible for Christ to be incarnated and born within the body of the fallen world. The incarnation of Christ in the fallen world is the subject of passages in each of the major poems. In The Four Zoas the Sons of Eden cry (after surveying the world that is given form by Los and Enitharmon):

> We now behold the Ends of Beulah & we now behold
> Where Death Eternal is put off Eternally
> Assume the dark Satanic body in the Virgins womb
> O Lamb divin[e] it cannot thee annoy. . . .
> (104:11-14, E377)

In Milton the Bard announces that "the Body of Death" which encloses the Lamb "in hypocritic holiness" is "a Female Tabernacle woven in Cathedrons Looms" (13:25-6, E107), and in the third chapter of Jerusalem the incarnation is the subject of Jerusalem's vision.

The body in which Christ is incarnated is also the body in which he is crucified. The act of calling fallen humanity to a life of relationship defines him as the archetypal Transgressor. He belongs, as the Bard tells us, to the Class of the "Reprobate" and he "was Punish'd as a Transgressor" (13:27, E107). Christ is therefore both Transgressor and Victim, for what cannot be included within the fallen man's single law must be excluded. This is why in Milton Christ is seen with "The Clouds of Ololon folded" around his limbs "as a Garment dipped in blood," and why in The Four Zoas he is seen in the robes of Luvah. On plate 95 of Jerusalem this double role can be seen in the attempt by Albion's Self to overcome Christ by crucifying him:

> Albion said. O Lord what can I do! my Selfhood cruel
> Marches against thee deceitful from Sinai & from Edom
> Into the Wilderness of Judah to meet thee in his pride
> I behold the Visions of my deadly Sleep of Six Thousand Years
> Dazling around thy skirts like a Serpent of precious stones & gold
> I know it is my Self: O my Divine Creator & Redeemer. . . .
> (96:8-13, E255)

Golgonooza (the "deadly Sleep of Six Thousand Years" which is given substance by Los) is itself the new Golgotha, the point at which Christ is cruficied once more.

The appearance of this many-sided figure to Albion in the last plates of Jerusalem brings the fallen world and, indeed, Blake's prophetic art, to a moment of decision. On the one hand the last plates of Jerusalem bring into focus the six thousand year cycle of fallen history, which passes "From west to east against the current of Creation" and devours "all things in its loud / Fury & thundering course" (77:4-6, E232). This is the "Wheel of Religion" (77:13, E232), which judges Christ to be a malefactor and sentences him to death. On the other hand, in these plates Christ opens the closed world of death and judgement to a world of relationship. He therefore holds open the possibility of resurrection. As he says to Jerusalem:

> I am the Resurrection & the Life.
> I Die & pass the limits of possibility, as it appears
> To individual perception.
> (62:18-20, E213)

Christ gives himself to be cruficied not to pay a debt but to call us to

leave our closed worlds.

In the first lines of Jerusalem, Albion responded to Christ's call by affirming that he was not "One" but "Many" and by judging Christ to be no more than a "Phantom of the over heated brain! shadow of immortality" (4:23-4, E146). At the end of Jerusalem substantially the same call appears, but it now draws forth a very different response. This change is effected through the poet/prophet's work. In the opening plates of Jerusalem we see Albion simply turning away. In the world in which he is entering there is no reality other than his own dreams. At the end of Jerusalem, however, a body has been given by Los (and Blake) to Albion-in-withdrawal and therefore to his error. It is this which enables Albion to rise from his slumber and be confronted with the error into which he has fallen. At this point in the poem, the shape of Los's attentiveness to Albion-in-withdral and, therefore, the outline of Christ are complete. Rather than appearing merely as a Phantom, Christ now can be seen as a brother and a friend. Plates 95 and 96, however, do not present a still-life or motionless tableau. Instead, Christ and Los are threatened by the very form and raison d'être of Albion's fallen identity. On the one hand Albion can vividly see his own role in the fabrication of the Covering Cherub which threatens to destroy Los and Jesus; on the other hand he can also clearly see and hear the call of Los and Jesus. It is finally their faithfulness and friendship, embodied in Jerusalem and in the body of the fallen world, that causes the startling reversal of lines 30-33:

> Albion stood in terror: not for himself but for his Friend
> Divine, & Self was lost in the contemplation of faith
> And wonder at the Divine Mercy & at Los's sublime honour. . . .
> (96:30-32, E256)

It is this radical change of comportment, and the leap which follows, that renders the abyss of the fallen world "a Vision" and "a Dream" (96:36, E256). Albion's world is now opened to others and as a result

> the Furnaces became
> Fountains of Living Waters flowing from the Humanity Divine
> And all the Cities of Albion rose from their Slumbers, and All

> The Sons & Daughters of Albion on soft clouds Waking from Sleep
> Soon all around remote the Heavens burnt with flaming fires. . . .
> (96:36-40, E256)

This reversal suggests that the power which forms the ground for Albion's eternal life is outside the self. As Blake writes in "A Vision of the Last Judgement," "Eternal Things" all spring from

> the Divine Humanity All beams from him [<Because> as he himself has said All dwells in him] He is the Bread & the Wine he is the Water of Life. . . .
> (VLJ, E561)

This does not mean that the individual is simply moulded by Christ. In the opening plates of Jerusalem and in the passage quoted above, the relationship is reciprocal. Christ dwells in us and we dwell in him. However, in this conception the world-forming imagination of the individual and of Albion is displaced from the centre of the universe.

In Blake's oeuvre the autonomous imagination of the Romantics is subject to a visionary deconstruction with the result that in Los it is transformed into a process of visionary construction. The term Imagination is, however, reserved for the limit breaking call of Christ. Imagination in this sense is a person who leads us outside of ourselves and into relationship. In Blake's oeuvre identity is formed in relationship and therefore we can also say that the Imagination is a person who, by calling us outside of ourselves, forms us. To be formed by Christ is to allow the Spectrous world of the self to be moved by the call of another and so to allow one's own being to be recast. It is to turn the forms held in the memory into "Visionary forms dramatic." This is a labour which we are always only just beginning.

Appendix

Blake's Zoas

Critical commentary on Blake's Zoas displays two quite contradictory tendencies. On the one hand the Zoas are identified by Damon, Bloom, Frye and others as the four "living creatures around the throne or chariot of God, described by Ezekiel and John."[1] Bloom writes:

> "Zoas" is Blake's own coinage, from the Greek for "beasts" in Revelation 4:6, where "four beasts full of eyes before and behind" surround the throne of God. These beasts are derived from the "four living creatures" that "had the likeness of a man" in Ezekiel's vision of the Chariot of God.[2]

However, on the other hand there is a tendency to make sense of the Zoas by closely identifying them with psychological faculties. Bloom writes that the encounters of The Four Zoas are "utterly within the self,"[3] Paley argues that "The reality of these four 'Zoas' . . . is explicitly psychological,"[4] and recently Gallant and George have applied modern depth psychology (Jungian and Freudian respectively) to an elucidation of these figures.[5] Yet the poem itself seems to make any reduction to the dimensions of a psychology of the individual problematic.

On the first page of The Four Zoas Blake wrote:

> Four Mighty Ones are in every Man: a Perfect Unity
> Cannot Exist. but from the Universal Brotherhood of Eden
> The Universal Man.
>
> (3:4-6, E300-301)

Later in the same Night, Los says to Enitharmon:

> Tho 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
> Thou neer shalt leave this cold expanse where watry Tharmas
> mourns. . . .
>
> (11:15-18, E306)

The first passage suggest that the four mighty ones are in both man and Man. The latter figure is Albion, or the Universal Man. He is the being formed by relationship. One could say that he is analogous to a synchronic network of

relationships except that Albion is also alive and therefore has his own history and dynamism. The second passage is more difficult to interpret. Los gives two "places" for himself and Enitharmon. He lives in the Brain of Man and in the "cold expanse where watry Tharmas mourns." Nevertheless it is clear that in these lines Los is speaking of individual and collective being. Los and Enitharmon live in man and Man.

The Zoas bear a certain similarity to the Eternals. In The Book of Urizen the Eternals found their life in time. Their struggles therefore helped to form and were themselves formed by the temporal world. In reading The Book of Urizen it was therefore necessary to keep these twin perspectives in view. In this way the poem challenged the notion that time and Eternity are mutually exclusive and, at the same time, provided us with terms to describe a conflict which was related to and yet transcended the perspective imposed by the isolated selves of the fallen world.

The difficulty with the Eternals is that they are themselves isolated individuals and so the problem of the self arises at a newer and more complex level. In The Book of Urizen Eternity is founded on relationship, but there is no way to show that these relationships do not merely constituted a Gesellshaft, where individuals gather into a community for private and egoistic reasons.

From the beginning of The Four Zoas it is clear that the Zoas are embedded in a more complex and all inclusive network of relationship. The Zoas live in man and Man and therefore find their lives in temporal beings and in Albion. They therefore exist in the spaces between particular and collective identities. In other words they allow us to imagine relationship itself. Thus, when the Zoas enter in relationship, Albion rises from his couch of death and individual and universal man are in harmony; when they draw apart all of the individuals of the world flee from Albion's loins and Albion dies:

> Albion gave his loud death groan The Atlantic Mountains trembled
> Aloft the Moon fled with a cry the Sun with streams of blood

> From Albion Loins fled all Peoples and Nations of the Earth. . . .
> (25:9-11, E314)

In The Four Zoas, therefore, the Zoas decisively undercut any separation between time and Eternity, and at the same time constitute the relationship between particular and universal identities, between individuals and Albion. We can therefore see in Blake's choice of protagonists for this poem a far reaching qualification of the perspective of the isolated self.

The clearest and most startling description of the Zoas comes in Night Nine of The Four Zoas, in a vision of the "four Wonders of the Almighty":

> The Cloud is Blood dazling upon the heavens & in the cloud
> Above upon its volumes is beheld a thone & a pavement
> Of precious stones. surrounded by twenty four venerable patriarchs
> And these again surrounded by four Wonders of the Almighty
> Incomprehensible. pervading all amidst & round about
> Fourfold each in the other reflected they are named Life's in Eternity
> Four Starry Universes going forward from Eternity to Eternity. . . .
> (123:33-39, E393)

This passage takes us through a giddy series of perspectives. In the Cloud are a throne and pavement; around the throne are twenty four patriarchs and around this are the four Zoas. These Zoas not only surround the patriarchs, they are "pervading all amidst & round about," and in addition they are "Fourfold each in the other reflected." These all pervasive Wonders are given a curious name: they are "Life's in Eternity." They are the "in Eternity" belonging to life. So extraordinary is this formulation that it is easy to dilute in an attempt at paraphrase. The Zoas are not life's path or way into Eternity, but the "in Eternity" belonging to life, or, to use a parallel and equally plausible reading of this line, they are "Life is in Eternity." In this lines Blake is using an assertion as a name in order to stress that the relationships represented by the Zoas are immediately the possession of and entry into Eternity.

It is clear that any reading of The Four Zoas must begin from a conception of the Zoas as our own faculties. In a first reading it is almost impossible not to see them as love, touch, reason and prophecy. However, the poem itself pushes us from this point to the contemplation of figures who,

although they may not invalidate this identification for a limited or first reading, nevertheless far transcend this reference pont. Love, touch, reason and prophecy may help to form Luvah, Tharmas, Urizen and Urthona but, as is indicated by the names themselves, the beings that finally emerge from within the context of the poem are much more than this. The Zoas in fact exemplify the interaction between strength and clarity which forms the poem. As "the four beasts" which surround the throne of the Almighty, they suggest something that "hurries us on with an irresistible force." However, they are also individual faculties about which we can attain a degree of clarity. Discussion of the Zoas must attempt to place itself within rather than mitigate this tension.

Notes

Introduction

1 G.E. Bentley, Jr., ed., William Blake: the Critical Heritage (London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975), p.69.

2 Ibid., p.182.

3 Raymond Lister, "W.B. Yeats as an Editor of William Blake," Blake Studies, supp. to vol. 1 (1968-69), 123-38; p.136.

4 Margaret Rudd, Organiz'd Innocence (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1956), p.22.

5 Ibid., p.23.

6 Kathleen Raine, Blake and Tradition, The A.W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts (1962), (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), I, p. xxviii. See also George Mills Harper, The Neoplatonism of William Blake (Chapel Hill: The Univ. of North Carolina Press, and London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1961).

7 David V. Erdman, Blake: Prophet Against Empire (1954; rev. ed. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton. Univ. Press, 1969), p.xii.

8 Northrop Frye, Fearful Symmetry: A Study of William Blake (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1947), p.417.

9 All references to Blake's poetry and prose are taken from the newly revised edition of The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake, ed. David V. Erdman, commentary by Harold Bloom (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1982) and will be inserted parenthetically in the text. All citations of full-plate illustrations in Blake's illuminated poems refer to David V. Erdman, The Illuminated Blake (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1974).

10 Paul Ricoeur, "What is a Text? Explanation and Interpretation," in Mythic-Symbolic Language and Philosophical Anthropology, by David M. Rasmussen (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971), pp.135-150; p.144.

11 Ricoeur contrasts a hermeneutics of suspicion with a hermeneutics of belief. See Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation, trans. Denis Savage (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1970). He writes:

> According to the one pole, hermeneutics is understood as the manifestation and restoration of a meaning addressed to me in the manner of a message, a proclamation, or as is sometimes said, a kerygma; according to the other pole, it is understood as a demystification, as a reduction of illusion . . . From the beginning we must consider this double possibility: this tension, this extreme polarity, is the truest expression of our "modernity." The situation in which language today finds itself comprises this double possibility, this double solicitation and urgency: on the one hand, purify discourse of its excrescences, liquidate the idols, go from

> drunkenness to sobriety, realize our state of poverty once and for all; on the other hand, use the most "nihilistic," destructive, iconoclastic movement so as to let speak what once, what each time, was said, when meaning appeared anew, when meaning was at its fullest (p.27).

The two terms are discussed in more detail on pp.28-36 of the same book.

12 Quoted by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, trans., Of Grammatology, by Jacques Derrida (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1976), p.xxvi.

13 The word "other" is often capitalized in contemporary philosophical, literary and psychoanalytic writings. I have not followed this convention because it suggests a more abstract and impersonal "other" than I wish to invoke here. For Blake, the "other" is always a person: in Eternity even Rocks, Clouds and Mountains are vocal (FZ71:4, E148), and in the apocalypse at the end of Jerusalem "even Tree Metal Earth & Stone" are seen to have "Human Forms" (99:1, E258).

I have refrained from capitalizing the word "self" because to do so invokes the concept of the Jungian Self. A notion such as this is obviously very different from what Blake means by this word.

14 Hans-Georg Gadamer, Philosophical Hermeneutics, trans. and ed. David E. Linge (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1977), p.9.

15 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, The Prose of the World, ed. Claude Lefort, trans. John O'Neill (Evanston: North Western Univ. Press, 1973), p.13.

16 Quoted by Richard C. McCleary, trans., Signs, by Maurice Merleau-Ponty (Evanston: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1964), p.xiv.

17 Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Biographia Literaria, ed. James Engell and W. Jackson Bate, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, and Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1983), in The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, ed. Kathleen Coburn, Bollingen Series 75, VII:i, p.304.

18 Frye, Fearful Symmetry, p.19.

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid., p.30.

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid., p.412.

23 Ibid., p.26.

24 Ibid., p.27.

25 Ibid., p.26.

26 The following list is far from exhaustive. I will have cause to quote numerous other examples of this phenomenon in the argument that follows.

27 Hazard Adams, Blake and Yeats: The Contrary Vision (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 1955), p.24.

28 Harold Bloom, Blake's Apocalypse: A Study in Poetic Argument (London: Victor Gollancz, 1963), p.281.

29 Edward J. Rose, "The Gate of Los: Vision and Symbol in Blake," Texas Studies in Literature and Language, 20 (1978), pp.1-14; p.6. Rose writes in "The Symbolism of the Opened Center and Poetic Theory in Blake's Jerusalem," Studies in English Literature: 1500-1900, 5 (1965), pp.587-606, that "Self-fulfillment is the interior self-explosion into eternity; it is the opening of a centre" (p.601).

30 Robert F. Gleckner, The Piper and the Bard: A Study of William Blake (Detroit: Wayne State Univ. Press, 1959), p.54.

31 Morris Eaves, "The Title-page of The Book of Urizen," in William Blake: Essays in Honour of Sir Geoffrey Keynes, ed. Morton D. Paley and Michael Phillips (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), pp.225-230; p.229.

32 W.J.T. Mitchell, Blake's Composite Art: A Study of the Illuminated Poetry (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1978), p.136.

33 Daniel Stempel, "Blake, Foucault, and the Classical Episteme," PMLA 96 (1981), 388-407; p.405.

34 Anne K. Mellor, Blake's Human Form Divine (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1974), p.325.

35 Melanie F. Bandy, Mind Forged Manacles: Evil in the Poetry of Blake and Shelley, (Univ., Alabama: Univ. of Alabama Press, 1981) p.24.

36 David E. James, Written Within and Without: A Study of Blake's 'Milton', Europaische Hochschulschriften, Series 14 (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1978), p.67.

37 Harald A. Kittel, "The Book of Urizen and An Essay Concerning Human Understanding," in Interpreting Blake, ed. Michael Phillips (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1978), pp.111-44; p.114.

38 Morton D. Paley, Energy and the Imagination: A Study of the Development of Blake's Thought (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1970), p.260.

39 Leonard W. Deen, Conversing in Paradise: Poetic Genius and Identity-as Community in Blake's Los (Columbia: Univ. of Missouri Press, 1983), p.20.

40 Minna Doskow, William Blake's 'Jerusalem' (Rutherford, Madison, Teaneck, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson Press, 1982), p.168.

41 In Blake criticism, Los and Jesus are often confused. See, for example, Cecil Anthony Abrahams, William Blake's Fourfold Man (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag Herbert Grundmann, 1978), p.33; Mitchell, Blake's Composite Art, p.35; Paley, Energy and the Imagination, pp.143,200.

42 Paul de Mann, "Intentional Structure of the Romantic Image," in Romanticism and Consciousness: Essays in Criticism, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: W.W. Norton, 1970), pp.65-77; p.69.

43 Tilottama Rajan, Dark Interpreter: The Discourse of Romanticism (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1980), p.15.

44 Ibid., p.94.

45 Frye, Fearful Symmetry, p.21.

46 Ibid., pp.14-15.

47 Hazard Adams, "Blake, Jerusalem, and Symbolic Form," Blake Studies, 7 (1975), 143-166, p.145.

48 Leopold Damrosch, Jr., Symbol and Truth in Blake's Myth (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1980), p.247.

49 Alexandre Kojève, Introduction to the Reading of Hegel: Lectures on the 'Phenomenology of Spirit' assembled by Raymond Queneau, ed. Allan Bloom, trans. James H. Nichols, Jr. (New York: Basic Books, 1969), pp.8-9.

50 John Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, ed. Alexander Campbell Fraser, (1894; rpt. New York: Dover, 1959), I, pp.211-212.

51 Ibid., I, pp.121-122.

52 Ibid., II, p.167.

53 Ibid., I, pp.164-165.

54 Alexander Koyré, Newtonian Studies (London: Chapman and Hall, 1965), pp.3-24; p.23.

55 Quoted by Arthur Johnson, ed, The Advancement of Learning and New Atlantis, by Francis Bacon (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), p.vii.

56 Jacques Derrida, Speech and Phenomena: And Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs, trans. David B. Allison (Evanston: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1973), p.6.

57 Ibid., pp.6-7.

58 Ferdinand de Saussure, Course in General Linguistics, ed. Charles Bally, Albert Sechehaye and Albert Reidlinge, trans. Wade Baskin (1959; revd. ed. Glasgow: Fontana, 1974), p.120.

59 Michael Ryan, Marxism and Deconstruction: A Critical Articulation (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1984), p.14.

60 For a discussion of this term see Jacques Derrida, "Differance," in Speech and Phenomena, pp.129-160.

61 Ryan, Marxism and Deconstruction, p.11.

62 Derrida, Speech and Phenomena, p.104.

63 Ibid.

64 Ibid.

65 As I shall argue in a later chapter, this ground should not be confused with the ground that Urizen searches for in The Book of Urizen and The Four Zoas. It is, of course, also very different to the first ground, or set of axioms, sought by philosophy.

66 See, for example, Abrahams, William Blake's Four Fold Man, pp.1 and 22; Adams, "Blake, Jerusalem, and Symbolic Form," p.166; Mark Bracher, Being Form'd: Thinking Through Blake's 'Milton' (Barrytown, N.Y.: Station Hill Press, 1985), p.1; Damrosch, Symbol and Truth in Blake's Myth, p.30; Frosch, The Awakening of Albion: The Renovation of the Body in the Poetry of William Blake, (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 1974) p.27 and pp.106-107; James, Written Within and Without, p.67; Mitchell, Blake's Composite Art, pp.217-18; Paley, Energy and the Imagination, pp.169 and 258;

67 Frye, Fearful Symmetry, p.19.

68 Henry Crabb Robinson, The Diary of Henry Crabb Robinson: An Abridgement, ed. Derek Hudson (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1967), p.87.

69 For a discussion of the differences between Hebraism and Classicism see Murray Roston, Prophet and Poet: The Bible and the Growth of Romanticism (London: Faber and Faber, 1965), pp.15-41.

70 Jacques Derrida, "Violence and Metaphysics," in Writing and Difference, trans. Alan Bass (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), pp.79-153; p.153.

71 Stuart Curran, "The Structures of Jerusalem," in Blake's Sublime Allegory: Essays on 'The Four Zoas,' 'Milton' and 'Jerusalem', ed. Stuart Curran and Joseph Anthony Wittreich, Jr. (Madison, Wisconsin: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1973), pp.329-46; p.329.

Chapter One

1 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, The Social Contract and Discourses, trans. G.D.H. Cole, trans. revd. J.H. Brumfitt and John C. Hall (London: J.M. Dent, 1973), p.175.

2 Kay Parkhurst Easson and Roger R. Easson, eds, William Blake: The Book of Urizen (London: Thames and Hudson, 1979), p.67.

3 Bloom, Blake's Apocalypse, p.164.

4 Frye, Fearful Symmetry, p.209.

5 George Steiner, After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1975), p.57.

6 Mitchell, Blake's Composite Art, p.108.

7 Bloom, Blake's Apocalypse, p.164.

8 Harper, The Neoplatonism of William Blake, pp.203-18.

9 Paley, Energy and the Imagination, p.61.

10 Mircea Eliade, Images and Symbols: Studies in Religious Symbolism, trans. Philip Mairet (London: Harvill Press, 1961), p.57.

11 Ibid., p.58.

12 Roland Barthes, Image, Music, Text, trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), p.165.

13 Mitchell, Blake's Composite Art, pp.108, 137-64.

14 Karl Kroeber, "Graphic-Poetic Structuring in Blake's Book of Urizen," Blake Studies, 3 (1970), 7-18; p.17.

15 Harald Kittel, "The Book of Urizen and An Essay Concerning Human Understanding," in Interpreting Blake, p.128.

16 Robert E. Simmons, "Urizen: The Symmetry of Fear," in Blake's Visionary Forms Dramatic, ed. David V. Erdman and John E. Grant (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1970), pp. 146-73; p.146.

17 Damrosch, Symbol and Truth, p.353.

18 Ibid., p.352.

19 Susan Fox, Poetic Form in Blake's 'Milton' (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1976), p.53.

20 Simmons, "The Symmetry of Fear," p.146.

21 Ibid., p.161.

22 Bloom, Blake's Apocalypse, pp.165-68; Frye, Fearful Symmetry, p.254; E.D. Hirsch, Jr., Innocence and Experience: An Introduction to Blake (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1964), pp.73-81; Leslie Tannenbaum, Biblical Tradition in Blake's Early Prophecies: The Great Code of Art (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1982).

23 Mitchell, Blake's Composite Art, p.108.

24 Tannenbaum, Biblical Tradition, p.203.

25 Clark Emery, Introd., The Book of Urizen, by William Blake (Florida: Univ. of Miami Press, 1966), pp.21,24.

26 Paley, Energy and the Imagination, p.67.

27 Damon, William Blake, p.116.

28 Peter Fisher, The Valley of Vision: Blake as Prophet and Revolutionary (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1961), p.192.

29 Raine, Blake and Tradition, II, p.61.

30 Locke, An Essay, I, p.246.

31 Robert Southey, "Roderick," in Poems of Robert Southey, ed. Maurice H. Fitzgerald (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1909), p.302.

32 Paley, Energy and the Imagination, p.67.

33 N.E.D.

34 Aurelius Augustinus, St. Augustine's Confessions, Engl. trans. William Watts (1631; rev. ed. London: Heinemann, and New York: Macmillan, 1912), II, p.253; Ecclesiastes 3:1-8; Bergson develops this kind of

distinction in a number of works. It is most succinctly expressed in An Introduction to Metaphysics, trans. T.E. Hulme (London: Macmillan, 1913).

35 Rainer Maria Rilke, Duino Elegies, Engl. trans. J.B. Leishman and Stephen Spender (1939; paperback ed. London: Chatto and Windus, 1975), p.27. A similar idea is expressed by St. John of the Cross in The Ascent of Mount Carmel. See The Collected Works of St John of the Cross, trans. Kieran Kavanaugh and Otilio Rodriguez (Washington: ICS Publications, 1979), pp.65-292; pp.74-77.

36 Frye, Fearful Symmetry, p.254; Tannenbaum, Biblical Tradition, p.203.

37 This is the title of the first volume of Gerhard von Rad's Old Testament Theology, trans. D.M.G. Stalker (London: S.C.M. Press, 1975).

38 Frank Kermode, The Genesis of Secrecy: On the Interpretation of Narrative (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1979), p.18.

39 Raine writes in Blake and Tradition that the name Urizen derives from the Greek word meaning "'to bound' or 'limit,' 'with the cognate form Uranus, signifying Lord of the Firmament, or that first self-imposed set of bounds'" (II, p.56). However, even without this derivation, the name Urizen suggests that he is a horizon. (Urizen is, of course, also "your reason.")

40 Martin Heidegger, Being and Time, trans. John Macquarie and Edward Robinson (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1962), p.460.

41 In the following chapters I will use the term "sequential time" to refer to a time that is characterized by both awaiting and retaining. "Chronological time," on the other hand, I will use to refer to a time that is merely held in the "Reasoning Memory." The former is reduced to the latter when Los enters the time of memory.

42 The distinction between the ontic and the ontological is taken from Being and Time. In the following argument I use the word ontic to refer to the superficial, or external, dimension of beings. From this perspective the beings that one encounters in the world are merely objects. I use the term ontological, however, to refer to "the state of Being that is constitutive for those entities that exist" (Being and Time, p.33). William J. Richardson, S.J., in Heidegger: Through Phenomenolgy to Thought, Phaenomenologica, No.13 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1963), distinguishes between "ontic" and "ontological" knowing in the following way. Ontic knowing is the

> Natural knowing that clings to the superficial dimension of the beings it meets, taking them for beings and nothing more . . . On the other hand, Knowing that gathers . . . beings . . . together in terms of what makes them to be such, therefore seizes them in their objectiveness, reality and actuality, sc. as what they are (in their Being) - this is "ontological" knowing (p.343).

43 Stuart Peterfreund, "Blake and Newton: Argument as Art, Argument as Science," Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture, 10 (1981), pp.205-26; p.223n.

44 John Milton, Paradise Lost, in Paradise Lost and Selected Poetry and Prose, ed. Northrop Frye (New York: Rinehart, 1951), Bk. XII, line 554, p.301.

45 Michel Foucault, The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences, a trans. of Les Motes et les choses (1971; rpt. New York: Vintage Books, 1973), p.49.

46 Ibid., p.48.

47 As Symmons observes in "The Symmetry of Fear," Los's plight at this point in the poem resembles that of Narcissus (p.150). However, while this analogy is suggestive and may represent a helpful first approximation, when one attempts to articulate it in any detail the divergences from the Narcissus myth are as striking as the similarities. Enitharmon is not seen on the flat surface of a pool of water, she is born from a "globe of blood." The mood of plate 17 is altogether different from Narcissus's self reflection. In the latter instance Narcissus is beguiled by an insubstantial dream, while in the former case Los is giving birth to a part of himself. The love between Narcissus and his reflection is not consummated, while Los and Enitharmon embrace and give birth to no less than "an enormous race" (20:45, E80). Enitharmon becomes an actual person, Narcissus can find no more than his own reflection. Even the mechanics are different: Enitharmon emerges as a result of Pity (she is even called Pity by the Eternals), while Narcissus' loved one is an optical illusion.

48 The image of a globe should suggest Blake's characterization of Urizen's world as "the dark globe of Urizen." In the absence of an other, relationship has been turned in upon itself and has become a closed world.

49 Jacques Lacan, "The Mirror Stage as formative of the function of the I as revealed in psychoanalytic experience," Ecrits: A Selection, trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Tavistock, 1977), pp.1-7.

50 Karl Marx, "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844: Selections," in The Marx Engels Reader, ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York: Norton, 1972), pp.52-103; p.82.

51 Quoted in Koyré, Newtonian Studies, p.51.

52 Martin Heidegger, "On the Essence of Truth," in Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings, ed. David Farrell Krell (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), pp.117-141; p.122.

54 Ibid., p.119.

55 David Farrell Krell, Intod., "On the Essence of Truth," p.115.

56 Eliade, Images and Symbols, p.58.

57 Erdman, The Illuminated Blake, p.183.

58 W.B. Gallie, Philosophy and the Historical Understanding (London: Chatto and Windus, 1964), p.24.

59 Ibid., p.23.

60 W.J.T. Mitchell, "Poetic and Pictorial Imagination in Blake's The Book of Urizen," in Eighteenth-Century Studies, 3 (1969), p.84. In his more recent publication, Blake's Composite Art, Mitchell is less certain of this identification (p.113). Erdman accepts Mitchell's earlier argument

in The Illuminated Blake, p.183. See also Morris Eaves, "The Title Page of The Book of Urizen," in William Blake: Essays in Honour of Sir Geoffrey Keynes, ed. Morton D. Paley and Michael Phillips (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1973), pp.225-230.

61 Barthes, Image Music Text, pp.98-99.

Chapter Two

1 Paley, Energy and the Imagination, p.29.

2 Martin K. Nurmi, William Blake (London: Hutchinson, 1975), p.82.

3 Erdman, Prophet Against Empire, p.228. Erdman goes on to say that the Daughters can be considered the trades of England.

4 Damon, A Blake Dictionary, p.265.

5 Paley, Energy and the Imagination, p.35.

6 Frye, Fearful Symmetry, p.206.

7 Bloom, Blake's Apocalypse, p.129.

8 Damon, William Blake, p.112.

9 David V. Erdman, "America: New Expanses," in Blake's Visionary Forms Dramatic, ed. David V. Erdman and John E. Grant (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1970), p.112.

10 Paley, Energy and the Imagination, p.61.

11 Howard W. Hinkel, "From Energy and Desire to Eternity: Blake's Visions of the Daughters of Albion," Papers on Language and Literature, 15 (1979), 278-289; p.283.

12 Ibid., p.284.

13 Robert E. Simmons, "The Symmetry of Fear," p.161. See also: Ronald Schleifer, "Simile, Metaphor, and Vision: Blake's Narration of Prophecy in America," Studies in English Literature: 1500-1900, 19 (1979), 569-88; Aileen Ward, "The Forging of Orc: Blake and the Idea of Revolution," Tri-Quarterly, No.23/4 (1972), 204-27.

14 Frye, Fearful Symmetry, p.210.

15 Ibid., pp.207-35.

16 Ibid., p.219.

17 Ibid., p.246.

18 David V. Erdman, "The Symmetries of The Song of Los," Studies in Romanticism, 16 (1977), pp.179-188; p.179.

19 Frye, Fearful Symmetry, p.214. Robert E. Simmons writes in "The Symmetry of Fear" that "The very fact that he [Fuzon] revolts against it

> [Urizen's world] proves the finiteness of his point of view, proves that he is merely the symmetrical other half of the Orc (Fuzon) - Urizen cycle now initiated. He can only imitate Urizen's revolt . . . not create" (pp.160-61).

20 The image in the closing lines of The Book of Los is that of the colour print, "Elohim Creating Adam."

21 Critics who write about Los do not always direct their attention to the Los of the Lambeth prophecies as distinct from the Los of, for example Jerusalem. Nevertheless, in the following pages I have cited a number of critics whose discussion of the general character of Los, or of the poet/prophet as he appears in the later poems, is of interest to, or can be applied to, our present discussion.

22 Edward J. Rose, "Los, Pilgrim of Eternity," in Blake's Sublime Allegory, pp.83-99, calls Los "the watchman of man's mental night or winter, the visionary spirit abroad in the temporal world of mortal men" (p.98).

23 Frosch, The Awakening of Albion, calls Los "the power of human creativity" (p.189n); Edward J. Rose, "Los: Pilgrim of Eternity," writes that "Los is the act of perceiving" (p.83). See also, Leonard W. Deen, Conversing in Paradise, p.20; W.J.T. Mitchell, Blake's Composite Art, p.166.

24 See, for example, Christine Gallant, Blake and the Assimilation of Chaos (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1978), pp.17-18.

25 Erdman, in Prophet Against Empire, writes that Los's name is a pun on loss and that this name suggests man's need for a continual "loss of self" (p.253n); Aaron Fogel, "Pictures of Speech: On Blake's Poetic," Studies in Romanticism, 21 (1982), 217-42, writes that

> Los has "lost" a final s or t partly because he is, among other things, Time, which has no apparent end, and that Enitharmon - (z)enith (h)armon(y) - who is in part space, lacks the apparent points of beginning, middle, and end . . . When we read the recurrent phrase "Los's Hammer," so that the conventional word Loss reappears but with an apostrophe placed inside the word, the idea is that Los is the "owner" or "possessor" of Loss. He is Humanity itself, the Prophet, Loss's redeemer" (p.224)

See also Deen, Conversing in Paradise, p.71; Paley, Energy and the Imagination, p.65. Ronald L. Grimes, The Divine Imagination: William Blake's Major Prophetic Visions (Metuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press, and the American Theological Library Association, 1972), p.95.

26 Paley, Energy and the Imagination, writes that Los

> is at once the unfallen Adam, the alchemical prima materia, and man in possession of the earth. Los, his name in the fallen world, puns on the loss of this possession. But the prelapsarian unity can be regained: Los is an anagram of Sol, and, Bentley points out, "To the physical alchemists Sol stood for gold, the highest form of matter, but according to Boehme, "Sol signifies the word which became Man." (pp.64-65).

Edward J. Rose, "The Spirit of the Bounding Line: Blake's Los," Criticism, 13 (1971), 54-76, writes that

> Los is the visionary eye of a visionary body. . . . The spirit of the "hard," sharp," "wirey," and "bounding line" is Los, and Blake's myth is concerned essentially with asserting that spirit to be the salvation of man and of art. The purpose of this essay, therefore, is to discuss Los as the iconographical word within the word (Blake's prophecies) and as the eye of the body of art (Blake's visual art) that circumscribes and determines the outline of the body which is, in Blake's words,the "Human form Divine" (p.54).

See also, John Beer, Blake's Visionary Universe (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 1969), p.78.

There are, of course, numerous other aetiologies that have been proposed for Los. Frye in "Notes for a Commentary on Milton," in The Divine Vision: Studies in the Poetry and Art of William Blake, ed. Vivian de Sola Pinto (London: Victor Gollancz, 1957) suggests that "A Chaucerian synonym for fame, los or loos, may be the source of the name of Blake's great hero" (pp.100-01). H.M. Margoliouth, William Blake (1961; rpt. Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1967), writes that Los "may be a partial anagram of 'soul'" (pp.15-16); E.B. Murray, "Jerusalem Reversed," Blake Studies, 7 (1974), 11-25, writes that at one point in Jerusalem Los is "referred to by Blake as the giver of the 'Space of Love' . . . where the initial letters perhaps too happily spell his name in reverse by, in fact, spelling 'Sol'" (pp.12-13). See also Daniel Stempel, "Blake, Foucault, and the Classical Episteme," PMLA, 96 (1981), 388-407; p.395.

27 See, for example, Damon, William Blake, p.379; Grimes, The Divine Imagination, p.94.

28 Mitchell, Blake's Composite Art, p.164.

29 Frye, Fearful Symmetry, p.254.

30 Ibid., p.252.

31 Paley, Energy and the Imagination, p.256.

32 Erdman, Prophet Against Empire, pp.330-31.

33 Paley, Energy and the Imagination, p.256. The list of associations evoked by the name "Los" could be greatly expanded. Morton Paley, although writing specifically about the Los of Jerusalem, gives a good catalogue of these associations in The Continuing City (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1984):

> Los is at the same time Old Testament Prophet, New Testament Evangelist, Miltonic Seraph, ancient British Bard, the classical Hephaistos/Vulcan, alchemist, blacksmith, and watchman; and in all these roles he is the Imagination of Humanity . . . (p.234).

He is also "apocalyptic visionary" (p.236) and he resembles "the Shaddai of Bunyan's Holy War, the builder of a city between Time and Eternity" (p.267).

34 Damrosch, Symbol and Truth, p.373.

35 Ibid., pp.373-74.

36 Frye, Fearful Symmetry, p.253.

37 Paul Ricoeur, Freud and Philosophy, pp.15-16.

38 Damon, A Blake Dictionary, p.247.

39 Frye, Fearful Symmetry, p.251.

40 Deen, Conversing in Paradise, p.232.

41 Locke, An Essay, I, pp.142-143.

42 Ernest Tuveson, The Imagination as a Means of Grace: Locke and the Aesthetics of Romanticism (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1960), p.2.

43 Ibid., p.6.

44 Friedrich Nietzsche, The Birth of Tragedy, Or: Hellenism and Pessimism, in Basic Writings of Nietzsche, trans. and ed. Walter Kaufman (New York: The Modern Library, 1968), pp.15-144; p.67.

45 Deen, Conversing in Paradise, p.82.

46 Ibid., p.69.

Chapter Three

1 James K. Baxter, Collected Poems, ed. J.E. Weir (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1979), p.44.

2 Edmund Burke, A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful, ed. J.T. Boulton (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958), pp.57-87.

3 Ibid., p.71.

4 Frye, Fearful Symmetry, p.269.

5 Erdman, Prophet Against Empire, p.294.

6 G.E. Bentley, Jr., ed., 'Vala' or 'The Four Zoas', by William Blake (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), p.166.

7 Erdman, Prophet Against Empire, p.296.

8 Paley, Energy and the Imagination, p.102.

9 The first edition and the revised editions of The Poetry and Prose of William Blake, ed. David V. Erdman, relegate Night the Seventh[b] to the end of the poem. The newly revised edition of 1982 forms the two seventh Nights into a single Night.

10 Bentley, p.165.

11 H.M. Margoliouth, William Blake's 'Vala' (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1956), p.xi.

12 Bloom, Blake's Apocalypse, p.189.

13 Brian Wilkie and Mary Lynn Johnson, Blake's 'Four Zoas': The Design of a Dream (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1978).

14 In the Appendix, entitled "Blake's Zoas," I briefly discuss of some of the problems involved in defining these paradoxical creatures.

15 Bentley, p.191.

16 Ibid., pp.157-166.

17 Ibid., p.164.

18 John Linnel's son, quoted by Bentley, p.156.

19 I except, of course, the erasures of drawings and the inclusion of non-Blakean drawings.

20 The account of The Four Zoas that I offer in the following chapters attempts to describe the form that emerges in the course of an encounter with the poem. It is therefore not an account of the poem which foregrounds the experience of the poem as chaos. Nevertheless, it is important to underline that the form that I describe exists in tension with "terror, chaos and sublimity." To read The Four Zoas is to encounter a poem that seems to flaunt most accepted poetic conventions and to follow a narrative which is in a radical sense unbound. The poem therefore demands that as readers we leave the safety of our constituted worlds. It is only then, and set against the partial disruption of our normal expectations of narrative and poetry, that we are able to see its beauty.

21 In the argument which follows I will have cause to refer to the two Seventh Nights as they stand in The Poetry and Prose of William Blake (rev. ed.; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1970). For ease of reference I will, when referring to the Seventh Nights, give the page number to this edition immediately following on from my parenthetical citation of The Complete Poetry and Prose. I will designate the former, E_2.

22 However, I certainly do not wish to suggest that the semiotic system within which Blake was working and writing did not, in important ways, qualify Blake's depiction of the fallen and unfallen relationship between passive and active powers. There is, in fact, a complex and intricate relationship between the "sexist" terms with which Blake phrases his argument and the implications of that argument. For a much more detailed discussion of the question of Blake's "sexism" see, for example, Susan Fox, "The Female as Metaphor in William Blake's Poetry," Critical Inquiry, 3 (1976-77), 507-19.

23 Locke, An Essay, I, p.309.

24 Alexander Cambell Fraser, ed., An Essay, by John Locke, I, p.309n.

25 Northrop Frye makes this point in Fearful Symmetry, p.75.

26 David Hume, A Treatise of Human Nature, ed. L.A. Selby-Bigge (1888; rpt. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), p.122.

27 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, The Confessions, trans. J.M. Cohen (1953; rpt., London: Penguin, 1970), p.156. For an interesting discussion of an analogous phenomenon see David Riesman, The Lonely Crowd (1950; abrigd. ed. Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1956), pp.34-40.

28 There are complications to this relatively straightforward picture. For example, Urizen and Luvah at first do not seem to have Spectres and the Spectre of Urthona identifies himself as a "Spectre of the Living" (84:40, E360/$E_2$352). I will, however, deal with these complications later in this chapter).

29 Margoliouth makes this point in William Blake's 'Vala', p.159.

30 Albert Camus, The Myth of Sisyphus, trans. Justin O'Brien (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1955), p.22.

31 T.S. Eliot, "The Hollow Men," in Collected Poems: 1909-1962 (1936; rpt. London: Faber and Faber, 1963), p.92.

32 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, The Primacy of Perception: And Other Essays on Phenomenological Psychology, the Philosophy of Art, History and Politics, ed. James M. Edie (Evanston: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1964), pp.116-17.

33 Jean Paul Sartre, Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology, trans. Hazel E. Barnes (London: Methuen, 1957), pp.303-351.

34 Although I am here stressing the identity of Los as loss, I certainly do not wish to deny his other roles and characteristics. Los is loss because he is fallen prophet, blacksmith, and an inverted sun.

Chapter Four

1 Jorge Luis Borges, "The Garden of Forking Paths," in Labyrinths, ed. Donald A. Yates and James E. Irby (1962; augmented ed., New York: New Directions, 1964), p.26.

2 Donald Ault, "Incommensurability and Interconnection in Blake's Anti-Newtonian Text," Studies in Romanticism, 16 (1977), 277-303, p.279.

3 In addition to these accounts we can add the unsettling suggestions that, for example, Enitharmon has appeared to Tharmas at the beginning of Night the First (before she and Los are born), and the appearance of Enitharmon to the Fallen Man on page 10 (in a song which recalls a time before these two creatures were born).

4 Jean Piaget, The Child's Conception of Time, trans. A.J. Pomerans (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), p.205.

5 The maverick appearances of Enitharmon to Tharmas and the Eternal Man before her birth have been a cause of concern to a number of commentators and they have served as a partial proof of the poem's incoherence (Bentley, p.88). As I have argued with regard to Enitharmon's "Song of Death," it is inevitable that at the point of fall Albion will address himself to Enitharmon for she is the passive power associated with Los. Similarly, Enitharmon appears to Tharmas at the time of division because she is in a certain sense the shape of this division. We can also note a difference between the appearance of the space of Los and the gradual reduction of Tharmas and Enion to the reality implied by that space. The consequences of an act are implicit in and contained by that act: Enitharmon is therefore present in this

sense at the very moment of division. Nevertheless, the reality of an act is only realized in time. It is for this reason that Los appears only in fallen time and even Enitharmon must herself be realized in time.

6 The possibility that Urizen has been given Albion's Sceptre of authority in some innocent fashion is discounted by his association with the evening star, Lucifer. Urizen sees "the body of Man pale" (23:11, E313), but a few lines further on we are told that the "golden porches" of the "Human Brain . . . grew pale with his [Urizen's] sickening light" (23:12-13, E313).

7 Mandelstam's poem on Stalin is reprinted in Nadezhda Mandelstam, Hope Against Hope: A Memoir, trans. Max Hayward (New York: Atheneum, 1970), p.13.

8 Although this is the same ontological time there seems to be some degree of change from the first Night. Enion and Tharmas are if anything further apart at this point in the poem and Enion has become no more than a voice. This change occurs because from the reader's perspective it is only now that the trajectories of Urizen, Urthona, Luvah and Tharmas meet in this fragmented discourse. The reader has, perhaps, simply grasped the extremity of the poem's beginning.

Chapter Five

1 Italo Calvino, The Castle of Crossed Destinies (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Javanovich, 1981), p.61.

2 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Ethics, trans. Neville Horton Smith, ed. Eberhard Bethge (New York: Macmillan, 1965), p.18.

3 John Kilgore, "The Order of Nights VIIa and VIIb in Blake's The Four Zoas," Blake: An Illustrated Quarterly, 12 (1978), 107-13; p.109.

4 Ivan Soll, An Introduction to Hegel's Metaphysics (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1969), p.17.

5 Kojéve, Introduction to the Reading of Hegel, p.8.

6 Quoted by Soll, An Introduction, p.21.

7 Benjamin Lee Whorf, Language Thought and Reality: Selected Writings, ed. J.B. Carroll (New York: John Wiley and Sons, and London: Chapman and Hall, 1959).

8 Hannah Arendt, Willing, vol. 2 of The Life of the Mind, (London: Secker and Warburg, 1978), p.16.

9 Ibid., p.68.

10 René Girard, Deceit, Desire and the Novel: Self and Other in Literary Structure, trans. Yvonne Freccero (Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1965), p.12.

11 Hannah Arendt, On Violence (London: Allen Lane, 1970), p.44.

12 See J. Laplanche and J.-B. Pontalis, The Language of Psychoanalysis, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1980), pp.282-287.

13 Ibid., p.283.

14 Kay Parkhurst Easson and Roger R. Easson, eds, The Book of Urizen, by William Blake (London: Thames and Hudson, 1979), pp.71-81.

15 Erdman, p.416-17.

16 John Beer, Blake's Visionary Universe (New York: Barnes and Noble, and Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 1969), p.119.

17 William Shakespeare, King Lear, ed. Ralph E.C. Houghton (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), Act III, scene ii, line 44; p.94.

Chapter Six

1 Czeslaw Milosz, Selected Poems, introd. Kenneth Rexroth, trans. Czeslaw Milosz, et al (New York: Continuum, 1981), p.30.

2 Arendt, Willing, p.32.

3 Ibid., pp.6-7.

4 Quoted by Arendt in Willing, pp.160-61.

5 Arendt, Willing, p.161.

6 Quoted by Arendt in Willing, p.161.

7 Ibid., p.161.

8 Aldous L. Huxley, Brave New World (London: Chatto and Windus, 1932).

9 Mary Lynn Johnson and Brian Wilkie, "The Spectrous Embrace in The Four Zoas, VIIa," Blake: An Illustrated Quarterly, 12 (1978), 100-105; p.100.

10 Frye, Fearful Symmetry, p.298.

11 Quoted in Thomas Merton, Mystics and Zen Masters (New York: Dell, 1961), p.49.

12 See Gandhi on Non-Violence: Selected Texts from Mohandas K. Gandhi's "Nonviolence in Peace and War", ed. Thomas Merton (New York: New Directions, 1965), pp.23-24, 43-50.

13 Frederick Engels, "Introduction to Dialectics of Nature", in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: Selected Works (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1970), pp.352-53.

14 Morton Paley considers this passage an "arbitrary" and "unsatisfactory development" (Energy and the Imagination, p.160). In fact, such a recognition is crucial if Los is to embrace his identity as the ontological reality of the fallen world. Urizen and Orc are in fact both

children of Los. Orc is, of course, born from Enitharmon, while Urizen is given form in the fallen world by Los. To behold Urizen as "an infant / Lovely breathed from Enitharmon" is simply to recognize that it is Los, the ontological reality of the fallen world, that retains the crags and the deeps, the beautiful and the sublime, reaction and revolution.

15 Frye, Fearful Symmetry, pp.298, 299.

16 Paley, Energy and the Imagination, p.159.

17 Ibid., p.161.

Chapter Seven

1 Robert Graves, The Greek Myths (rev. ed., 1960; rpt. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1972), I, p.339.

2 Bloom, Blake's Apocalypse, p.245.

3 Erdman, Prophet Against Empire, p.366.

4 Paley, Energy and the Imagination, p.161.

5 John Kilgore, "The Order of Nights VIIa and VIIb in Blake's The Four Zoas," Blake: An Illustrated Quarterly, 12 (1978), 107-113; p.109.

6 Johnson and Wilkie, Blake's 'Four Zoas', p.239.

7 Margoliouth, Blake's 'Vala', pp.xii-xiii.

8 Bentley, p.162.

9 John Kilgore, "The Order of Nights VIIa and VIIb," 112.

10 Ibid.

11 Andrew Lincoln, "The Revision of the Seventh and Eighth Nights of The Four Zoas," Blake: An Illustrated Quarterly, 12 (1978), 115-133, p.132.

12 Mark Lefebvre, "A Note on the Structural Necessity of Night VIIb," Blake: An Illustrated Quarterly, 12 (1978), p.134.

13 David V. Erdman, "Night the Seventh: The Editorial Problem," Blake: An Illustrated Quarterly, 12 (1978), 135-139; p.136.

14 Middleton Murry, William Blake, The Life and Letters Series, No. 76 (1933; rpt. London: Jonathan Cape, 1936), pp.164-65.

15 Wilkie and Johnson, Blake's 'Four Zoas', pp.159-60.

16 Murry, William Blake, p.165.

17 Martin Luther, Lectures on Romans, ed. and trans. Wilhelm Pauck, The Library of Christian Classics, vol.15 (London: S.C.M. Press, 1961), pp.193-94.

18 Wilkie and Johnson, Blake's 'Four Zoas', p.156.

19 Bonhoeffer, Ethics, pp.17-18.

20 Wilkie and Johnson, Blake's 'Four Zoas', p.192.

21 Damon, A Blake Dictionary, p.134.

Chapter Eight

1 W.H. Auden, Collected Poems, ed. Edward Mendelson (London: Faber and Faber, 1976), p.274.

2 Wilkie and Johnson, Blake's 'Four Zoas', p.212.

3 Paley, Energy and the Imagination, p.164.

4 Daniel Berrigan and Thich Nhat Hanh, The Raft is Not the Shore (Boston: Beacon Press, 1975), pp.59-60.

5 Ibid., p.61.

6 Ibid., p.62.

7 Erdman, Prophet Against Empire, pp.380-81.

8 Wilkie and Johnson, Blake's 'Four Zoas', pp.225,227.

9 Damon, William Blake, p.393.

10 Bloom, Blake's Apocalypse, pp.274-75.

11 Wilkie and Johnson, Blake's 'Four Zoas', p.228.

12 Christine Gallant, Blake and the Assimilation of Chaos (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1978), pp.99-100.

13 Bloom, Blake's Apocalypse, p.278.

Chapter Nine

1 Quoted by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in her introd. to Of Grammatology, by Jacques Derrida (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1976), p.xxvi.

2 Frye, Fearful Symmetry, p.314.

3 Ibid, p.315.

4 Ibid, p.356.

5 Harold Bloom, The Visionary Company (London: Faber and Faber, 1962), p.105. A number of other critics make the same point, amongst them: Frye, Fearful Symmetry, p.323; Thomas Vogler, Preludes to Vision:

The Epic Venture in Blake, Wordsworth, Keats, and Hart Crane (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1971), p.41.

6 Frye, Fearful Symmetry, p.315.

7 Edward J. Rose, "Blake's Milton: The Poet as Poem," Blake Studies 1 (Fall 1968), 16.

8 Rose argues in "The Poet as Poem" that "Blake gave up The Four Zoas as a finished work never to be engraved and illuminated in the highly finished style of the colored copy of Jerusalem," and that he mined and purged "his abandoned inferno for both of his later long poems" (p.17).

9 Wilkie and Johnson make this point in Blake's 'Four Zoas', p.192.

10 Ibid.

11 Derrida, Of Grammatology, p.18. Derrida makes this point in a number of places. In an interview with Henri Ronse, printed in Positions (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1981), pp.3-14, he was asked if his own books did "not form a single Book." He replied:

> In what you call my books, what is first of all put in question is the unity of the book and the unity "book" considered as a perfect totality, with all the implications of such a concept (p.3).

12 Ibid, p.24.

13 That the world is open and cannot be contained within any particular discourse is, of course, one of the important insights of Deconstruction. Michael Ryan, for example, in Marxism and Deconstruction: A Critical Articulation (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1984) writes that

> Deconstruction corrects classical dialectics on two counts: there is no closed totality conceivable by rational thought which is not an effect of a nontotalizable differential system that remains irreducibly open; there is no absolute to guide action which is not historical, that is to say, provisional (p.81).

The point is made in an interesting way by the mathematician, Gödel. See Douglas R. Hofstadter, Gödel, Escher, Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid (1979; rpt. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1980).

14 In Jacques Derrida, Writing and Difference, trans. Alan Bass (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), pp.79-153; p.98.

15 David E. James, Written Within and Without: A Study of Blake's 'Milton' (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1978), p.56. Raymond Dexter Havens gives a fascinating account of Milton's standing in, and influence on, the eighteenth century in The Influence of Milton on English Poetry (New York: Russell and Russell, 1961). Havens observes that "between 1705 and 1800 Paradise Lost was published over a hundred times." By contrast, the Faerie Queene "appeared only seven times in the same period" and there were no more than fifty editions of Shakespeare's plays (pp.4-5).

16 Joseph Anthony Wittreich, Jr., in Angel of Apocalypse: Blake's Idea of Milton (Madison, Wisconsin: Univ. of Wisconsin Press), makes this point. He writes that

> As Blake looked back upon the Milton tradition, upon what Milton wrote and what subsequent generations made of it, he saw a poet who, rather than escaping the anxiety of influence, was doubly afflicted by it. Milton had spent an entire career breaking loose from convention, undermining orthodoxy, and revolutionizing forms to encompass his radically new vision. Now that vision had become bound down by the very system of aesthetics from which he tried to liberate the poet and by the very orthodoxies, political and religious, that he tried to subvert (p.73).

17 There are numerous accounts of Blake's relationship to, and criticisms of, Milton. See, for example: Harold Bloom, Blake's Apocalypse pp.79-82; S. Foster Damon, "Blake and Milton," in The Divine Vision: Studies in the Poetry and Art of William Blake, ed. Vivian De Sola Pinto (London: Victor Gollancz, 1957), pp.89-96; Northrop Frye, Fearful Symmetry, pp.337-9, 352-5; John Howard, Blake's 'Milton' (London: Associated University Presses, 1976), pp.183-188; James, Written Within and Without, pp.67-72; Florence Sandler, "The Iconoclastic Enterprise: Blake's Critique of "Milton's Religion," Blake Studies 5 (Fall 1972), 13-57; Denis Saurat, Blake and Milton (New York: Russell and Russell, 1965); Irene Taylor, "Say First! What Mov'd Blake? Blake's Comus Designs and Milton," in Blake's Sublime Allegory, ed. Stuart Curran and Joseph Anthony Wittreich, Jr. (Maddison, Wisconsin: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1973), pp. 233-258; Joseph Anthony Wittreich, Jr., Angel of Apocalypse: Blake's Idea of Milton; Wittreich, "Opening the Seals: Blake's Epics and the Milton Tradition," in Blake's Sublime Allegory, pp.23-58.

18 Stuart Curran, "The Structures of Jerusalem," in Blake's Sublime Allegory, pp.329-346; p.329.

19 James Rieger, "'The Hem of their Garments': The Bard's Song in Milton," in Blake's Sublime Allegory, pp.259-280; p.259.

20 The text would by Greek, beginning with a π .

21 Susan Fox, Poetic Form in Blake's 'Milton' (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1976), p.29.

22 Howard, Blake's 'Milton', p.265n.

23 Frye, Fearful Symmetry, p.332.

24 Northrop Frye, "Notes for a Commentary on Milton," in The Divine Vision, ed. Vivian De Sola Pinto (London: Victor Gollancz, 1957), p.130.

25 James, Written Within and Without, p.15.

26 Ibid.

27 Fox, Poetic Form, p.58.

28 Ibid., pp.31-32.

29 Ibid., p.29. Fox writes that "although polite rearrangement can minimize the interruption, it cannot dispense with it altogether."

30 James Rieger, "The Hem of their Garments," in Blake's Sublime Allegory, p.273.

31 Mitchell, "Blake's Radical Comedy," in Blake's Sublime Allegory, p.289.

32 Fox, Poetic Form, p.34.

33 Some idea of the global nature of this fall can be gleaned from the Bard's characterization of it as an event which occurs in Albion's mountains and in his tents. This does not imply that the fall consists of two quite separate events, but that Albion's fall occurs throughout the entire extent of a giant form.

34 At this stage of the poem the reader could not, with any degree of certainty, identify these three figures with the Classes of the Elect, the Redeemed, and the Reprobate. A full reading of the Bard's Song would have to trace the series of recognitions by which the reader comes to this understanding. In the interests of brevity, I do not attempt such a task.

35 Damon, A Blake Dictionary, p.413.

36 James, for example, writes in Written Within and Without that

> Everything man has done since the fall has been a repetition of one fundamental error - allowing Satan to occupy the position of the true God, allowing living form to be overcome by mathematic. All the incidents that the bard describes contain at center a conflict between the forces of Los and those of Satan, and in each the satanic elements are triumphant over the fallen imagination (p.18).

Similarly Frye writes in Fearful Symmetry that

> it is the business of the visionary to proclaim the Word of God to a society under the domination of Satan; and the visionary's social position is typically that of an isolated voice crying in the wilderness against the injustice and hypocrisy of the society from which he has sprung (p.336).

See also Mark Bracher, Being Form'd: Thinking Thro Blake's 'Milton' (Barrytown: Station Hill Press, 1985), pp.25-26.

As I shall argue, the distinction between the visionary and society, the Reprobate and the Elect, are not quite as clear cut as these critics suggest.

37 James, Written Within and Without, pp.23-24. James also notes that in Blake's oeuvre the Cherubim can be either divine or Satanic (p.24).

38 Bracher, Being Form'd, pp.25-26.

39 Bracher, in Being Form'd, reads 5:3 as yet one more example of Satan's quid pro quo metaphysics. In fact, the act of embracing sin in order to be able to "put it off" is quite clearly not isomorphic with "the state in which all give an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, in a system of brutal reciprocity" (p.27).

40 The syntax of this passage suggests that it is the song, or the singing of this song, that creates the three Classes.

41 James notes in Written Within and Without that it is unclear as to whether it is "Milton or Charles who is to be 'atoned'?" (p.25). He also observes that Milton and Cromwell could both fit into the class of the Redeemed and into the class of the Reprobate; the fire in Golgonooza

could be either the Great Fire (as Damon argues in A Blake Dictionary, p. 204) or the fire of Los's forge in Golgonooza.

42 See Howard, Blake's 'Milton', p.91.

43 Quoted in "English History," Chamber's Encyclopaedia, 1955 ed., vol.5, p.269.

44 Fox, Poetic Form, p.31. Bracher, in Being Form'd, pp.28-29, makes a similar point.

45 This line is often taken from its context in the poem and read as an allusion to Blake's relationship with Hayley. See, for example, Frye, Fearful Symmetry, p.331.

46 Sigmund Freud, "The 'Uncanny,'" in On Creativity and the Unconscious, ed. Benjamin Nelson (1925; rpt. New York: Harper & Row, 1958), pp.123-24, 129.

47 Edward J. Rose, "Blake's Metaphorical States," Blake Studies 4 (Fall 1971), 9-31.

48 Ibid., pp.21-22.

49 Bracher, Being Form'd, p.xiii.

50 J. Middleton Murry, William Blake (London: Jonathan Cape, 1933), p.213. Cited in Bracher, p.xiv.

51 Bracher, p.22.

52 Ibid., p.32.

53 Ibid., p.24.

54 Ibid., p.22.

55 Ibid., p.49.

56 Despite this identification, Susan Fox argues in Poetic Form that Satan is "a natural soul deluded" (p.51) and that "the fiery light of eternity is denied him" (p.38).

57 I am indebted to Dr. Michael J. Tolley for pointing out that we may see Satan's milling in the Eternal living Process as the organization of a living surface, and for detailing some of the complexities involved in Blake's presentation of the Plow and Harrow as instruments of Harvest.

58 Locke, An Essay, I, p.212.

59 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Ethics, trans. Neville Horton Smith, ed. Eberhard Bethge (1955; rpt. New York: Macmillan, 1978), pp.17-20.

60 I am indebted to Professor J.E. Grant for pointing out to me that, contra Erdman in The Illuminated Blake, p.222, the scene in the lower left hand corner of this illumination is not, at least in the first instance, pastoral; the walker is not a shepherd because his staff does not have a crook; and the rocks are not sheep.

61 Erdman, The Illuminated Blake, p.222.

62 Eve Teitlebaum, "Form as Meaning in Blake's Milton", Blake Studies 2 (Fall 1969), pp.37-64. James writes in Written Within and Without that in this passage "Los supplies a model of successful response to Satan's subterfuge" (p.22).

63 I am indebted to Dr. Michael J. Tolley for this analogy.

64 Erdman, The Illuminated Blake, p.226.

65 Ibid.

66 Martin Heidegger, "The Age of the World View", trans. Marjorie Grene, in Martin Heidegger and the Question of Literature: Towards a Postmodern Literary Hermeneutics, ed. William V. Spanos (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1976), pp.1-15; p.11.

67 Michael Wyschogrod, Kierkegaard and Heidegger: The Ontology of Existence (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1954), p.119.

68 Michel Foucault, The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences (1971; rpt. New York: Vintage Books, 1973), p.313.

69 Leutha's confession is sometimes seen as a turning point in the song (See, for example, Fox, Poetic Form, p.50). In fact, by offering to take Satan's guilt upon her own shoulders, she quite clearly remains within the system of judgement that we have been discussing.

70 Michel Foucault, Madness and Civilization (1965; rpt. New York: Vintage Books, 1973).

71 James, Written Within and Without, p.17.

72 Ibid., p.167.

73 Howard, Blake's 'Milton', pp.16-17.

74 Bracher, Being Form'd, p.69.

75 Ibid. Bracher argues that for Blake the "most important tenet regarding the individual existent is the uniqueness, intrinsicness, and indestructibility of its being." Yet, Bracher continues, in Blake's oeuvre "individual entities are intrinsically and essentially constituted by relationship to one another" (p.5). These observations allow him to distinguish between "ego-consciousness or self-present actuality" (p.105) and "a more fulfilling form of individual being" (p.106) in which "one's being resides in that one has donated to others through all the effects, direct and indirect, which one's unique identify (sic) has had and continues to have in other beings" (p.97). It is of course this second form of individual being which, according to Bracher, finds fulfillment through Milton's act of self-annihilation (p.77).

However, this critique of the enclosed and closeted self is couched in terms which essentially leave the self intact. Bracher, using Whitehead's notion of "objective immortality," affirms merely the mediated (and therefore assimilated and appropriated) presence of others within the world of the self, rather than the necessity for the self to open to others. More seriously, the location of the authentic identity of the self in its mediated presence in others is both to allow the active power of the individual to die and to give ascendancy to the passive power. It is therefore possible to argue that Milton attempts to

describe a movement which is precisely the inverse to that described by Bracher. Bracher argues, for example, that Milton's Emanation

> is the objectified or projected counterpart of his being - i.e., those others or objects (actual or imagined), including the products of his labor, his female companions, and the unactualized situations or objects which conform to or mirror his unique being . . .

It is, according to Bracher, the Emanation that constitutes the

> unique world in which [Milton's] unique identity could exist in total fulfillment . . . It is impossible for his unique individual being to be preserved apart from these unique individual others that provide the occasion or context for Milton's uniqueness to actualize itself. (p.78)

This is true in the sense that it is impossible for Milton's active being to actualize itself apart from his passive power. However, to argue that it is only a particular, or "unique," "projected counterpart of his being" (or even that it is in the possibilities that this particular counterpart "opens for Milton's successors" (p.78)) that Milton will find true fulfillment is almost to outline the mechanics of the Fall. It is to allow the active power to be determined by the passive power. Milton's descent is indeed provoked by the realization that it is in time that his true body can be found. But he does not descend in order to find "total fulfillment" in "the products of his labor" or in "his female companions," but to cast off the closed world in which his body is closed and in this way transform it into a "Living Body" which is capable of transformation.

Chapter Ten

1 Derrida writes in "Violence and Metaphysics," that "If the height of the most-high, as we might be tempted to say, does not belong to space (and this is why the superlative must destroy space as it constructs the metaphor), it is not because it is foreign to space, but because (within) space it is the origin of space, orienting space through speech and glance, through the face, the chief who commands body and space from above" (p.101).

2 See Hans-Georg Gadamer, Philosophical Hermeneutics, trans. and ed. David E. Linge (Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1977), p.9.

3 Mark Bracher, in Being Form'd, offers a very different account of Milton's descent. He writes that

> Milton expects to find renewal in death itself rather than in escape from death: what he fears is not annihilation and Eternal Death, but rather the failure to attain annihilation and Eternal Death. Nor is this death that Milton seeks a temporary state (like Rahab's "Spectre of Sleep") from which one soon returns to life . . . it is rather complete, total, and final annihilation of ego-consciousness or selfhood - that self-presence which we usually assume to constitute our very being. This false identity must, in Milton's view, be totally destroyed by death before one's true individual being can attain fulfillment (p.77).

It is of course quite correct to argue that "Milton expects to find renewal in death," but the "Eternal Death" which Milton seeks cannot simply be equated with the death which in the fallen world seems to be "the final annihilation of ego-consciousness." Milton had, of course, been in heaven for one hundred years when he heard the Bard's Song: measured by fallen time his temporal demise is well in the past. Moreover, if we associate ego-consciousness with the Spectre and the Selfhood, then we must observe that Milton's descent to fallen time is, paradoxically, not an attempt to destroy the Spectre, but to free him and to claim the Spectre's hells as his own (14:30-31, E108). Moreover, Milton retains a force and presence throughout the poem which suggests that he has not completely lost some form of "ego-consciousness" or "self-presence." The figure of "terrible majesty" who, at the end of Milton, demands that Ololon "Obey . . . the Words of the Inspired Man" and, in such clear and moving terms, exhorts her to "wash off the Not Human" is hardly one whose individuality and identity now consists entirely of a mediated presence. Even when Milton tells us that the Spectre "is a false Body: an Incrustation over my Immortal / Spirit; a Selfhood, which must be put off & annihilated alway" (40:35-36, E142), he suggests that the Selfhood must be "put off" not once but again and again ("alway"), and this task is described, in the very next line, as a process by which Milton's "Face" is cleansed by "Self-examination" (my emphasis). It seems that we must attempt to define more clearly what Blake means by "Eternal Death."

In The Book of Urizen, Urizen describes the Eternals' life as one in which they "live in unquenchable burnings." As I have argued, Urizen withdraws from Eternity in an attempt to circumvent these "burnings" by constructing a Selfhood, a closed world "without fluctuation," which will give the self a rigid form. Similarly, in The Four Zoas, each of the Zoas attempt to withdraw into their own constituted worlds. A withdrawal of this kind is, however, for the "Identity" to die. It is the passive power and the Spectre who now determine the shape of the world. We can therefore argue that in Eternity it is the ability of the individual's constituted world, his Emanation or body, to change again and again, that allows the active power to "live in unquenchable burnings."

In the fallen world Milton's body is inert, stationary and separated from him by a wide distance. The bodies of his "Wives" and "Daughters," for example, are "clos'd / In the dark Ulro till the Judgment" (17:4-5, E110). Milton's descent to time is therefore one in which he hopes to once more embrace his Emanation and so become capable of change and transformation. Milton is attempting to reclaim the Spectre's "Hells" as his own so that, being embodied, he can enter into relationship with others and so transform the "Hells" into "Furnaces," into vehicles of his own transformation. It is in this sense that Milton both goes to "Eternal Death" and yet looks "forth for the morning of the grave." Eternal Death refers to the task of putting off, again and again, the fixed forms in which the self is enclosed.

4 John Dominic Crossan, Finding is the First Act: Trove Folktales and Jesus' Treasure Parable, Semeia Supplement 9 (Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, and Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), p.93.

5 Raine, Blake and Tradition, II, p.250. Cited in Erdman, The Illuminated Blake, p.232.

6 Fox, Poetic Form, p.28.

7 See Paul Davies, The Edge of Infinity: Naked Singularities and the Destruction of Spacetime (London: J.M. Dent, 1981). Davies writes that some physicists regard black holes as "the end of space and time - a route out of the universe into nothing that anybody knows. Others regard [them] as the disintegration of the known laws of nature" (p.5).

8 For a more detailed description of Eden, Beulah, Generation and Ulro see: Cecil Anthony Abrahams, William Blake's Fourfold Man (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag Herbert Grundmann, 1978), pp.64-104; Susan Fox, Poetic Form, pp.195-212; Northrop Frye,"Notes for a Commentary on Milton," in The Divine Vision, pp.105-129; John Howard, Blake's 'Milton', pp.33-41;

9 Aurelius Augustine, St. Augustine's Confessions, Engl. trans. William Watts (1631; rev. ed. London: William Heinemann, and New York: Macmillan, 1962). II, pp.235-237.

10 This rather precise description of the Shadow's limits suggests the geography of Paradise Lost. Milton is following a path that resembles the one taken by the historical Milton's Satan. In Blake's poem Milton is attempting to reintegrate all of the portions of the self that were fragmented in Paradise Lost.

11 Donald Ault, Visionary Physics: Blake's Response to Newton (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1974), p.154.

12 The image of the vortex is discussed in: Hazard Adams, Blake and Yeats: The Contrary Vision (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 1955), pp. 104-110; Donald Ault, Visionary Physics, pp.148-60; Kay Parkhurst Easson and Roger R. Easson, eds., Milton, by William Blake (London: Thames and Hudson, 1979), pp.151-152; Susan Fox, Poetic Form, pp.71-72; Thomas R. Frosch, The Awakening of Albion: The Renovation of the Body in the Poetry of William Blake (Ithaca, N.Y., and London: Cornell Univ. Press, 1974), pp.70-81; Frye, Fearful Symmetry, p.350.

13 Mitchell, Blake's Composite Art (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1978), p.70. Mitchell goes on to suggest that for Blake the third force is imagination.

14 Mitchell observes in Blake's Composite Art that in this passage there is a progression through four phases:

> The first phase is the recognition of the object as a world with its own unique laws . . . the second phase is a recognition of the object as something that has relations with things outside itself . . . the third phase is to see it as a "universe" . . . In the fourth phase . . . the object is seen . . . as a human form . . . (pp.71-72).

15 Fox observes in Poetic Form that the "vortex is a condition of fallen humanity" (p.73).

16 Locke, An Essay, I, pp.277-78.

17 For an elaboration of this point see Edith Wyschogrod, Emmanuel Levinas: The Problem of Ethical Metaphysics (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974), p.89.

18 Rudolf Bultmann, "A Reply to the Theses of J. Schniewind," in Kerygma and Myth: A Theological Debate, ed. Hans-Werner Bartsch, trans. Reginald H. Fuller (London: S.P.C.K., 1972), pp.102-23; p.116.

19 Rudolf Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, trans. Kendrick Grobel (1952; rpt. London: S.C.M. Press, 1978), I, p.192.

20 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, The Prose of the World, ed. Claude Lefort, trans. John O'Neill (Evanston: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1973), p.28.

21 Ibid. pp.11-12.

22 Ibid. pp.12.

23 The title-page of copies A and B of Milton describes the poem as "a Poem in 2 Books." In copies C and D we read that it is "a Poem of 12 Books."

24 Joseph Anthony Wittreich, Jr., Angel of Apocalypse: Blake's Idea of Milton (Madison, Wisconsin: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1975), p.11. See also, Frye, Fearful Symmetry, pp.322-323.

25 Richard E. Palmer, Hermeneutics: Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer (Evanston: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1969), p.165.

26 I am indebted to Dr. Michael J. Tolley for pointing out to me the relationship in these lines between the tarsus, revelation, the "black cloud" and Error.

27 Quoted in Martin Heidegger, On the Way to Language, trans. Peter D. Hertz (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), p.136.

28 Palmer, Hermeneutics, p.197.

29 Damon, William Blake, p.179.

30 Harold Fisch, "Blake's Miltonic Moment," in William Blake: Essays for S. Foster Damon, p.52; Frye, Fearful Symmetry, p.337; James, Written Within and Without p.5; W.J.T. Mitchell, "Blake's Radical Comedy: Dramatic Structure as Meaning in Milton," in Blake's Sublime Allegory, ed. Stuart Curran and Joseph Anthony Wittreich, Jr. (Maddison, Wisconsin: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1973), pp. 201-307 (p.307); Edward J. Rose, "Blake's Milton: The Poet as Poem," Blake Studies, 1 (Fall 1968), 16-38: p.37.

31 Fox, Poetic Form, p.18.

32 Erdman, The Illuminated Blake, p.263.

33 Frye observes, in "Notes for a Commentary on Milton," that this episode suggests "Christ's healing the blind man with clay and spittle" (p.134).

34 Mitchell, "Blake's Radical Comedy," p.297.

35 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, The Primacy of Perception, ed. James M. Edie (Evanston: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1964), p.160.

36 Ibid.

37 Jürgen Moltmann, Theology of Hope: On the Ground and the Implications of a Christian Eschatology, trans. James W. Leitch (London: S.C.M. Press, 1967), pp.31-32.

38 Paul Ricoeur, "Narrative Time," Critical Inquiry, 7 (1980) p.173. Ricoeur writes that "Saying 'now' must therefore continually be carried

back to making-present if this abstract representation is to be avoided."

39 Frye, Fearful Symmetry, p.316.

40 Fox, Poetic Form, p.92.

41 Fox would argue, of course, that we should not give any great weight to passages such as this because Ololon is already in the deeps before Milton decides to redeem her. This contention is true only in the sense that Milton is also, in the person of his Spectre, within the deeps before he decides to descend. Time is the body of both Milton and Ololon, the male and the female, and therefore, in order to embrace each other, both must descend from Albion's heaven.

42 Michael J. Tolley, "Blake's Songs of Spring," in William Blake: Essays in Honour of Sir Geoffrey Keynes, ed. Morton D. Paley and Michael Phillips (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1973), pp.96-128; p.126.

43 Leopold Damrosch, Symbol and Truth in Blake's Myth (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1980).

44 Paul de Mann, "The Rhetoric of Temporality," in Interpretation: Theory and Practice, ed. Charles S. Singleton (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1969), pp.173-209; p.173.

45 Ibid, p.174.

46 Ibid., p.177.

47 Ibid., p.191.

48 James Rieger, "The Hem of their Garments," in Blake's Sublime Allegory, pp.259-80; p.279.

49 James, Written Within and Without, p.133.

50 See Paul Ricoeur, "Towards a Hermeneutic of the Idea of Revelation," in Essays on Biblical Interpretation, ed. Lewis S. Mudge (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), pp.73-118; p.117.

51 Ibid., pp.73-74.

52 Derrida, "Violence and Metaphysics," p.101.

Chapter Eleven

1 Martin Heidegger, "Holderlin and the Essence of Poetry," in Existence and Being, ed. Werner Brock (London: Vision Press, 1949), pp.293-315; p.313.

2 For a discussion of the organizing role of the prose prefaces in Jerusalem see James Ferguson, "Prefaces to Jerusalem," in Interpreting Blake, ed. Michael Phillips (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1978), pp.164-195; W.J.T. Mitchell, Blake's Composite Art, pp.185-89; Joanne Witke, "Jerusalem": a Synoptic Poem," Comparative Literature, 22 (1970), 265-78: p.275.

3 The text on this plate was deleted by Blake in all copies of the poem. It exists only in "a proof on which [Blake] outlined the lettering by pen and ink" (E809).

4 Erdman, The Illuminated Blake, p.281. Henry Lesnick, "The Function of Perspective in Blake's Jerusalem," Bulletin of the New York Public Library, 73 (1969), 49-55, agrees that the wind is blowing from the right and that it "appears to be blowing both his long hair and his coat back toward the left" (p.50).

5 Stuart Curran, "The Structures of Jerusalem," in Blake's Sublime Allegory, pp.329-346; p.329.

6 Damon, William Blake, p.185.

7 Ibid., p.195.

8 Joseph Wicksteed, William Blake's Jerusalem, (Boissia, Clairvaux, Jura: Trianon Press, 1953), p.5.

9 W.H. Stevenson, "Blake's Jerusalem," Essays in Criticism, 9 (1959), 254-64; p.259.

10 Mitchell, Blake's Composite Art, p.170.

11 Mollyannne Marks, "Self-Sacrifice: Theme and Image in Jerusalem," Blake Studies, 7 (1974), 27-50, p.48.

12 Damon, A Blake Dictionary, p.210.

13 Erdman, Prophet Against Empire, p.462.

14 Marks, "Self Sacrifice," p.28.

15 Karl Kiralis, "The Theme and Structure of William Blake's Jerusalem," ELH, 23 (1956), 127-143; pp.131-32.

16 Anne K. Mellor, Blake's Human Form Divine (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1974), p.287.

17 Witke, "Jerusalem: A Synoptic Poem," p.266.

18 Edward J. Rose, "The Structure of Blake's Jerusalem," Bucknell Review, 11 (1963), 35-54.

19 Bloom, Blake's Apocalypse p.405. See also, "Blake's Jerusalem: The Bard of Sensibility and the Form of Prophecy," Eighteenth-Century Studies, 4 (1970), 6-20.

20 Joseph Anthony Wittreich, Jr., "Opening the Seals: Blake's Epics and the Milton Tradition," in Blake's Sublime Allegory," pp.48-52. Wittreich writes that

> Blake's epics are . . . poems of many structures rather than poems of a structure. The Four Zoas, Milton, and Jerusalem possess both epic and prophetic structures . . . the epic structures of Milton and Jerusalem derive from Paradise Regained. The prophetic structure of each poem derives from the Book of Revelation, but the immediate precedent for conjoining the structure of prophecy with epic is to be found in Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained (p.49).

For an account of the relationship between Milton and Paradise Regained see "The Mental Pinnacle: Paradise Regained and the Romantic Four-Book epic," by Stuart Curran, in Calm of Mind," ed. Joseph Anthony Wittreich, Jr. (Cleveland and London: Case Western Reserve Univ. 1971), pp.133-62.

21 Morton Paley, The Continuing City (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1984), p.284.

22 Mitchell, Blake's Composite Art, p.174.

23 Ibid., p.176; p.185.

24 Stuart Curran, "The Structures of Jerusalem, in Blake's Sublime Allegory p.339.

25 Paley, The Continuing City, p.303.

26 Minna Doskow, William Blake's 'Jerusalem' (Rutherford, Madison, Teaneck, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson Press, 1982), p.15.

27 Mitchell, Blake's Composite Art, p.189.

28 Ibid., p.192.

29 Bloom, Blake's Apocalypse, p.422.

30 Karl Kiralis, "A Guide to the Intellectual Symbolism of William Blake's Later Prophetic Writings," Criticism, 1 (1959), 190-210; p.200.

31 George Mills Harper, "The Odyssey of the Soul in Blake's Jerusalem, Blake Studies, 5 (1972), 65-80; p.78.

32 Marks, "Self-Sacrifice," p.40.

33 Henry Lesnick, "Narrative Structure and the Antithetical Vision of Jerusalem," in Blake's Visionary Forms Dramatic, p.391.

34 Frye, Fearful Symmetry, p.357.

35 Ibid., p.380.

36 Paley, The Continuing City, p.302.

37 Ibid., p.290.

38 Augustinus, Aurelius, St. Augustine's Confessions, Engl. Trans. William Watts (1631; rev. ed. London: Heinemann, and New York: Macmillan, 1961), II, p.253.

39 Locke, An Essay, I, p.239.

40 Ibid., pp.256.

41 Ibid., p.256.

42 George Berkeley, Principles of Human Knowledge, ed. G.J. Warnock (Glasgow: Fontana, 1962), pp.113-14.

43 Locke, An Essay, p.239.

44 W.H. Auden, "For the Time Being," in Collected Poems, ed. Edward Mendelson (London: Faber and Faber, 1976), p.297.

45 Northrop Frye, "The Road of Excess," in Romanticism and Consciousness: Essays in Criticism, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Norton and Co., 1970), pp.119-132; p.122.

46 Ibid., p.123.

47 David Hume, An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding, in On Human Nature and the Understanding, ed. Antony Flew, (London: Collier Macmillan, 1962), pp.21-163; p.65.

48 See, for example, Minna Doskow, William Blake's 'Jerusalem', p.15.

49 Hume, An Inquiry, p.39.

50 Quoted by Richard C. McCleary, Pref., Signs, by Maurice Merleau-Ponty (Evanston: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1964), p.xv.

51 Frye, Fearful Symmetry, p.359.

52 Reproduced on p.304 of Damrosch, Symbol and Truth.

53 Even after several readings Jerusalem can be experienced as a force which threatens the constituted world of the self. D.J. Sloss and J.P.R. Wallis write in The Prophetic Writings of William Blake (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1926) that

> though there are passages of dramatic force, they are too remote from normal experience and association, and affect us little more than strange violence and overwrought declamation (II, p.107).

Similarly W.J.T. Mitchell writes in Blake's Composite Art that Jerusalem is Blake's most formally exasperating work, the most demanding and least rewarding at an immediate sensuous level of all his illuminated books (p.172); and Brenda S. Webster, in Blake's Prophetic Psychology (London: Macmillan, 1983), tells us that

> honest readers approaching it for the first time are oppressed and confused by the eddying, repetitive quality of the narrative and the mass of 'minute particulars' with which it is constructed (p.272).

Algernon Charles Swinburne, in William Blake: A Critical Essay (London: Chatto & Windus, 1906), asks "where shall any traveller find a rest for feet or eyes in" the "noisy and misty land" of Jerusalem (p.307).

54 Paul Ricoeur, The Symbolism of Evil, trans. Emerson Buchanan (Boston: Beacon, 1967), p.348.

55 Stevenson, in his notes to The Poems of William Blake (London: Longman, 1971), traces this phrase to Cicero's account of "the random atoms of Democritus' theory" (p.682). Paley observes in Energy and the Imagination that "'Fortuitous' is a word employed by both Cudworth and Berkeley against views such as those proposed by the 'Spectrous Chaos'" (p.254).

56 Morton Paley, in "Cowper as Blake's Spectre, Eighteenth-Century Studies, I (1968), 236-52, finds a model for the Spectre in the life of William Cowper. See also Paley, The Continuing City, pp.246-250. Paley writes in the latter work that

The Spectre appropriates not only Cowper's belief that he had been condemned by a God without mercy but also the terrible pathos of his tone, the same sense of desolation and abandonment (p.250).

57 Damon, William Blake, p.190. Kiralis extends this characterization in "A Guide," pp.201-204. Erdman explains the importance at this time of Erin (Ireland) in Blake's symbolism by linking her with "the renewal of the struggle for Ireland's independence" [See Prophet Against Empire, p.482] This association underlines that it is in the spaces of Erin that the possibility of freedom and vision are preserved. See also, Morton Paley, The Continuing City, pp.184-6, 266.

58 Thomas J.J. Altizer, The New Apocalypse: The Radical Christian Vision of William Blake (Michigan State Univ. Press, 1967), p.204; James Bogan, "Blake's City of Golgonooza in Jerusalem: Metaphor and Mandala," Colby Library Quarterly, 17 (1981), 85-98; p.89.

59 Wicksteed, William Blake's 'Jerusalem', p.137.

60 Frye, Fearful Symmetry, p.91.

61 Ibid., p.372-74.

62 Damon, A Blake Dictionary, p.130.

63 Erdman, Prophet Against Empire, p.474.

64 Damon, A Blake Dictionary, p.458.

65 Frye, Fearful Symmetry, p.248.

66 Bogan writes in "Blake's City of Golgonooza" that "Golgonooza is within time, being built by Los towards Eternity. The relation of Golgonooza to Jerusalem is one of growing correspondence" (p.89).

67 Bogan, "Blake's City of Golgonooza", p.91-92; Raine, Blake and Tradition (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), II, pp.264, 272.

68 Bogan, "Blake's City of Golgonooza," pp.92-93.

69 Ibid., p.93.

70 Paley, The Continuing City, p.314.

71 Hazard Adams, "Blake, Jerusalem, and Symbolic Form," Blake Studies, 7 (1975), 143-166; p.157.

72 Ibid., p.146.

73 Ibid., p.157.

74 Paley writes in The Continuing City, that the "death of Albion and the ensuing fragmentation of humanity in Jerusalem is presented as the disastrous result of a primordial sexual encounter" (p.167). This is a widely held view and I do not wish to quarrel with it, except to argue that this encounter occurs at a point which is already quite some distance along the path of the Fall. In discussing the Fall the first thing that must be established is why there are sexes at all. Los, for example, tells Enitharmon that "Sexes must vanish & cease / To be, when Albion arises from his dread repose" (92:13-14, E252). This is not to suggest that there is no sexual activity in Eternity (see, for example,

61:51, E212; 69:43-4, E223); however, as these passages attest, it is very different from that which takes place in the fallen world. The "primordial sexual encounter" which is the subject of 19:40-47 and 20:30-41 must therefore itself be the result of a prior activity. Paley recognizes that Jerusalem recounts events which occur prior to Albion's sexual encounter with Vala. This "anterior myth" is, he argues on page 173 of The Continuing City, "a psychomachia describing man's repression of his sexual passion and its destructive consequences." This is, however, to advance as an explanation the very thing that needs to be explained. It is, as I have argued, withdrawal from relationship, by Albion and Luvah, that fragments the self and sets the scene for the "Torments of love and jealousy in Albion."

75 A full discussion of this passage would have to relate it in detail to the illumination on plate 28. For a discussion of this illumination see Erdman, The Illuminated Blake, p.307; John E. Grant, "Two Flowers in the Garden of Experience," in William Blake: Essays for S. Foster Damon, pp.355-62; Morton Paley, The Continuing City, pp.169-72.

76 Frosch writes in The Awakening of Albion that

> Vala is the outline of our desires projected onto a pedestal outside ourselves and seized, possessed, or worshipped there, while the inner desires continue to go their own way (p.189).

E.B. Murray suggests in "Jerusalem Reversed," Blake Studies, 7 (1974), 11-25, that Vala's name "is a syllabic reversal of Luvah's" (p.13). See also, Morton Paley, The Continuing City, pp.189-96.

77 Jean H. Hagstrum, "Babylon Revisited, or the Story of Luvah and Vala," in Blake's Sublime Allegory, pp.101-118; p.103.

Chapter Twelve

1 Michel Foucault, The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences (1971; rpt. New York: Vintage Books, 1973), pp.217-18.

2 See, for example: Gertrude D. Conway, "Wittgenstein on Foundations," Philosophy Today, 26 (Winter 1982), 332-44; John Dewey, The Quest for Certainty: A Study of the Relation of Knowledge and Action (New York: Anchor, 1929).

3 T.S. Eliot, Collected Poems: 1909-1962 (London: Faber and Faber, 1963), p.206.

4 Heidegger, Existence and Being, p.302.

5 Damon, A Blake Dictionary, p.347. See also Frye, Fearful Symmetry, pp.360-71; Kiralis, "A Guide," pp.197-201; Paley, The Continuing City, pp.270-72; Edward J. Rose, "Blake's Metaphorical States," Blake Studies, 4 (1971), pp.9-31 (p.27).

6 Damon, A Blake Dictionary, pp.37, 389.

7 Kiralis, "A Guide," p.197.

8 Damon writes in William Blake that "Merlin is the Prophet (or Poet) submitted to the Feminine Will. According to the old legends, Merlin was seduced by Nimue, the Lady of the Lake (Matter), who enclosed him forever in a rocky tomb, though he could never wholly die" (p.449).

9 Frye, Fearful Symmetry, p.367-8.

10 Kiralis, "A Guide," p.199.

11 Erdman draws a connection between Bath and the whig, Richard Warner. See, Prophet Against Empire, pp.476-78. For a discussion of the twenty-eight cathedral cities see Damon, William Blake, pp. 186, 450, and A Blake Dictionary, pp.71-74.

12 Morton Paley discusses the alternative arrangements of the second chapter of Jerusalem in The Continuing City, pp.295-302, and reaches a very different conclusion from the one that I advance in this chapter. He writes that Jerusalem's

> two great central myths carry with them a sense of plot, but that plot is a relatively simple one underlying complexly elaborated episodes. The episodes are developed in blocs or segments. Their thematic connection with the controlling myths is usually evident, but their narrative connection with one another is often less so . . . There is a story in Jerusalem, consisting of many episodes, but this diachronic aspect of the work is for the most part subordinated to its synchronic aspect: the interrelationship of themes as manifested in its 'spatial form.' The organizational container reinforces the expectation of a strong narrative line, an expectation which is subverted time after time in the work itself (pp.302,303).

The immediate difficulty with this view of the poem is, first, as I have argued in the previous chapter, that the synchronic aspect of the poem cannot (in this analysis) be distinguished from the "Mathematical Form" that is held by the reasoning memory. On page 307 of The Continuing City Paley anticipates this difficulty. He writes that

> In giving a list of such events as examples of synchronism, I am far from wishing to suppose any Mathematical Form as governing the work. On the contrary, such a list will show that Jerusalem cannot be reduced to a diagram but follows its own internally generated course of development.

This admission would suggest that the "synchronic aspect" of the poem is itself "subverted time after time in the work itself."

More specifically, the points that Paley brings forward to indicate the "non-sequentiality," or relative unimportance, of the narrative order of the second chapter are unconvincing. He writes that "what narrative line there is is distinct in the majority order and broken up in the minority order" (p.302), but the arguments that he advances to support this contention are not persuasive. He writes on page 301, for example, that in the minority order "the Friends are made to reach their lowest point in 42 before they attempt to save Albion" and that from this position "it is scarcely credible that the Friends should try to bear Albion back through Los's gate to Eden or that Oxford should take Bath's leaves from the Tree of life." It is possible to argue, however, that in the minority ordering it is Los who rouzes them from their state of sleep, induces them to assume their waking personalities once more (against the whole tide of the Fall) and so make one more effort to call

Albion. In this ordering, however, the narrative is not non-sequential; it is, if anything, more dramatic. Similarly, Paley argues on the same page that "The dramatic appearance of the Divine Vision like a silent sun is . . . more appropriate after the collapse of the Friends' efforts than it is following 28 in the minority arrangement" and that "Most important, perhaps, moving E to second place among the segments puts Albion hors de combat before he makes major speeches on 29,30,35, and 42." Both of these sequences are, however, appropriate if it is remembered that Albion's withdrawal involves both the entry into a state of loss and a journey in this realm. As I have argued, in terms of ontological time the Divine Sun has set and Albion has fallen at the very beginning of the chapter. The remainder of the chapter therefore traces the movement of Albion within this space and time. On the other hand, from the perspective of sequential time the space of withdrawal is only finally reached when the attempts of others to recall Albion end in failure. These two narratives are, as I have argued, intimately related to each other.

It is important to remember that in the second chapter of Jerusalem we are not dealing with a host of different orderings, but with two, and that in the first, third and fourth chapters the plates exist in invariable order. Moreover, in the final copy of the poem the order of the second chapter of the poem reverts to that of the first, a move which suggests that we should consider carefully Blake's claim that "Every word and every letter is studied and put into its fit place" (E146). One can therefore argue that the sequential ordering of the poem is of paramount importance.

13 Discussion of plates 43 and 44 [29 and 30] is complicated by Blake's conflation of two myths: the messengers of Job's disasters and the return of the dove to Noah. In the interests of brevity I will, however, not discuss subsidiary issues such as this.

14 This rather complex example is supported by a host of minute particulars. As Los ventures into Albion's interior he hears a conversation between Vala and Jerusalem which brings us back to similar passages at the end of the first and the beginning of the second chapter. Similarly, at the very end of this chapter, "an Aged pensive Woman" takes

> A Moment of Time, drawing it out with many tears & afflictions
> And many sorrows: oblique across the Atlantic Vale
> Which is the Vale of Rephaim dreadful from East to West,
> Where the Human Harvest waves abundant in the beams of Eden
> Into a Rainbow of jewels and gold, a mild Reflection from
> Albions dread Tomb. Eight thousand and five hundred years
> In its extension.
>
> (48:31-37, E197)

The "Moment of Time" is, of course, the moment of Albion's withdrawal. This creation therefore takes us back to the emergence of the days and nights of the fallen world from ontological time at the end of the first chapter, but it describes this event from the perspective of Beulah. One can also see the chapter returning to its origins in the choice of Erin as the orator for the long speech which, apart from the response which it provokes in the Daughters of Beulah, closes the chapter. The terminus of the poem's history returns to the centre of ontological time.

15 One of the most interesting parallels is with the ancient cultic experience of Israel. As Gerhard von Rad explains in The Message of the Prophets, trans. M.G. Stalker (1968; rpt. London: SCM Press, 1980),

from within the cults

> The historical acts by which Yahweh founded the community of Israel were absolute. They did not share the fate of all other events, which inevitably slip back into the past. They were actual for each subsequent generation; and this not just in the sense of furnishing the imagination with a vivid present picture of past events - no, it was only the community assembled for a festival that by recitation and ritual brought Israel in the full sense of the word into being: in her own person she really and truly entered into the historic situation to which the festival in question was related. When Israel ate the Passover, clad as for a journey, staff in hand, sandals on her feet, and in the haste of departure (Ex. 12.11), she was manifestly doing more than merely remembering the Exodus: she was entering into the saving event of the Exodus itself and participating in it in a quite 'actual' way (pp.81-82).

Von Rad cites Psalm 114 as an example of what "this actualization of saving events looked like in the cult." The Psalmist speaks as if a variety of historical events, widely dispersed in time and space, are in fact immediately present to him (p.82n).

16 Cited in Thomas Merton, Mystics and Zen Masters (1961; rpt. New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1967), p.141.

17 Thomas Traherne, Centuries, Poems, and Thanksgivings, ed. H.M. Margoliouth (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1958), I, p.15.

18 Henry Vaughan, The Complete Poems, ed. Alan Rudrum (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), p.227.

19 Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," in Basic Writings, ed. David Farrell Krell (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), pp.149-87; p.180.

20 Ibid., p.173-74.

21 Ibid., p.180.

Chapter Thirteen

1 Martin Heidegger, On Time and Being, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), p.11.

2 Locke, An Essay, I, p.239.

3 Bergson observes the same phenomenon with regard to music. See Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness, trans. F.L. Pogson (London: George Allen & Unwin, and New York: Humanities Press, 1910), pp.100-101. He writes:

> We can thus conceive of succession without distinction, and think of it as a mutual penetration, an interconnexion and organization of elements, each one of which represents the whole, and cannot be distinguished or isolated from it except by abstract thought (p.101).

4 Erdman, The Illuminated Blake, p.332.

5 Mitchell writes in Blake's Composite Art, p.189, that "there are signs that the order of the two middle chapters reflects a vision of the historical development of consciousness as a movement from masculine to feminine dominance."

6 Damon, William Blake, p.456.

7 The syntax is somewhat ambiguous. Harold Bloom, for example, argues that it is the Cities and not the Atlantic Ocean who speak lines 8-11 (E940).

8 Erdman, The Illuminated Blake, p.336.

9 Martin Heideggger, "Building Dwelling Thinking," in Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings, ed. David Farrell Krell (London and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), pp.323-339; p.332.

10 Ibid., pp.327-8.

11 Melanie Bandy, Mind Forged Manacles: Evil in the Poetry of Blake and Shelley (Univ., Alabama: Univ. of Alabama Press, 1981), p.160.

12 Jürgen Moltmann, Theology of Hope: On the Ground and the Implications of a Christian Eschatology, trans. James W. Leitch (London: SCM Press, 1967), p.25.

13 Paul Ricoeur, "Freedom in the Light of Hope," in Essays on Biblical Interpretation, ed. Lewis S. Mudge (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), pp.155-182; p.165.

14 In Eternity, Enitharmon is the ground for a movement towards others. Los is here the radiant sun and Enitharmon the expansive form of this sun. This expansion, however, exists in relationship with its contrary, for during the winter of Eternity's life Enitharmon is a seed who encloses Los. It is only in spring/summer that this closed form is fractured and Enitharmon and Los become expansive once more. In winter, therefore, Enitharmon can be described as a "looking-Glass" which reflects back to Los, as a reversed image, the shape of his own being. The one is in this way changed into the many (63:20-22, E214) and the closure of sleep contains the possibility of the more extreme closure of death and withdrawal. This capacity of Enitharmon to reflect back to Los the shape of his own world is the most obvious explanation for the events that Los witnesses: he thought "it a Poetic Vision of the Atmospheres" (63:40, E215).

15 Erdman, Prophet Against Empire, p.467. Erdman writes that

> Albion's twice bringing Luvah "to Justice in his own City of Paris" (J.63-66) probably refers to the two occupations and the two Treaties of Paris in 1814 and 1815, with Napoleon's meteoric Hundred Days in between. "For Luvah is France: the Victim," to be slain by the knife of a Druid priestess (p.466).

16 See Erdman, Prophet Against Empire, pp.467-8.

17 Basil Willey, The Eighteenth Century Background: Studies on the Idea of Nature in the Thought of the Period (London: Chatto and Windus, 1949), p.2.

18 Ibid., p.205-52.

19 Chambers Encyclopaedia, 1955 ed., vol. 5, p.368.

20 Willey, The Eighteenth Century Background, p.1.

21 Ibid., p.2.

22 Percy Bysshe Shelley, "A Defence of Poetry," in Selected Poems, Essays, and Letters, ed. Ellsworth Barnard (New York: Odyssey Press, 1944), p.560.

23 Frye, Fearful Symmetry, p.377, associates Hand with the three Hunt brothers. Erdman, Prophet Against Empire, p.459, derives him from "the accusing 'indicator' or printer's fist of Leigh Hunt's editorial signature." Edward J. Rose, "Blake's Hand: Symbol and Design in Jerusalem," Texas Studies in Literature and Language, 6 (1964), 47-58 (p.50), usefully describes him as a "kind of anti-Los" who "absorbs all his brethren."

Chapter Fourteen

1 W.H. Auden, "For the Time Being," in Collected Poems, p.275.

2 Paley notes in the Continuing City that the golden string "is visually depicted as russet brown." It is therefore made out of the same substance "that is woven into our own bodies - and that is also shaped into the text of Jerusalem" (p.93). E.B. Murray, "Jerusalem Reversed," Blake Studies, 7 (1974), 11-25; writes that

> when you wind up a string you retrace its original course. The ball of string, that is, has been rolled out by someone who has been where he is inviting us to go. Specifically, then, Blake is telling us to go back where he came from if we want to get to Heaven (p.12).

Murray then goes on to look at the "image of reversed movement" as a "self-referential key to the meaning of Jerusalem." However, in the course of this discussion he does not cover the possibility of travelling backward thro' the text. E.J. Rose argues in "The Symbolism of the Opened Center and Poetic Theory in Blake's Jerusalem," Studies in English Literature: 1500-1900, 5 (1965), 587-606, that the golden string is an "umbilical cord" (p.597).

3 In the first chapter of Jerusalem we learn that the fallen world is on the east side of Eden. Therefore, to get to Jerusalem, as well as Eden, we "by backward steps [must] move."

4 Erdman sees this figure as "Hand, with 'ravening' beak . . . and a cock's comb - a signal of the morning" (The Illuminated Blake, p.357). Mitchell suggests that this figure is an "eagle-man" who "unites the iconography of St. John . . . with the pose of Dürer's Melencolia I to produce an emblem of the apocalyptic prophet as melancholy artist" (Blake's Composite Art, p.211).

5 Bloom, Blake's Apocalypse, p.421.

6 Morton Paley finds a source for Gwendolen's attempt to reduce Hyle to an infant in Joanna Southcott's claims to be "the virgin who was to give birth to the new Messiah, Shiloh." See "William Blake, The Prince of the

Hebrews, and the Woman Clothed with the Sun," in William Blake: Essays in Honour of Sir Geoffrey Keynes, ed. Morton D. Paley and Michael Phillips (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), pp.260-293; pp.280-293.

7 Rainer Maria Rilke, "You, neighbour God, if sometimes in the night," in Poems from the Book of Hours, trans. Babette Deutsch (1941; rpt. New York: New Directions, 1975), p.13.

8 Plate 95 and 96 are discussed at greater length in the final chapter.

9 Frye, Fearful Symmetry, pp.357-8.

9 Mitchell, Blake's Composite Art, p.184.

11 W.H. Stevenson, "Blake's Jerusalem, Essays in Criticism, 9 (1959), pp.254-64; p.259. Stevenson writes on the same page:

> Even Los, strictly speaking, is padding; for what does he do? He watches ceaselessly; he builds Golgonooza: but to no apparent purpose, since he can only watch, and in the end Albion's resurrection does not come through him.

12 Rudolf Bultmann, History and Eschatology, The Gifford Lectures, 1955 (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 1957), p.150.

13 Moltman, Theology of Hope, p.15.

14 For a discussion of the use of "Kingdom of God" in Luke 17:20-37, see Norman Perrin, Jesus and the Language of the Kingdom: Symbol and Metaphor in New Testament Interpretation (1976; rpt. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), pp.57-60.

15 Ibid., p.40.

16 Moltmann, Theology of Hope, p.32.

17 Ibid.

18 Frye, Fearful Symmetry, p.386.

19 M.H. Abrams, Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1971), pp. 259-60.

20 Frye, Fearful Symmetry, p.386.

21 Abrams, Natural Supernaturalism, p.260.

22 Ibid.

23 Deen, Conversing in Paradise, p.231.

24 Mellor, Blake's Human Form Divine, p.325.

25 Erdman, The Illuminated Blake, p.379.

26 Ibid.

Chapter Fifteen

1 This is the strategy adopted by Deen in Conversing in Paradise.

2 Damrosch, Symbol and Truth, p.19.

3 Ibid., p.21.

4 Damon, A Blake Dictionary, p.182.

5 Damrosch, Symbol and Truth, p.20.

Appendix

1 Damon, A Blake Dictionary, p.458; Frye, Fearful Symmetry, pp.272-73.

2 Bloom, Blake's Apocalypse, p.189.

3 Ibid., p.209.

4 Paley, Energy and the Imagination, p.91.

5 Christine Gallant, Blake and the Assimilation of Chaos (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1978); Diana Hume George, Blake and Freud (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1980).

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