

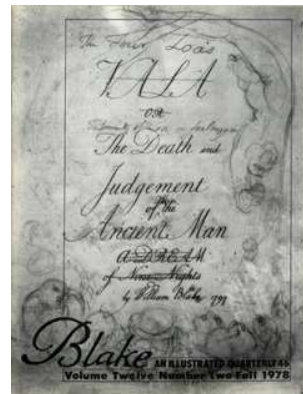
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A R T I C L E

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THE SPECTROUS EMBRACE IN THE FOUR ZOAS, VIIa

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Of all the abrupt shifts in the plot of *The Four Zoas*, perhaps the most startling is the sudden embrace of Los and the Spectre of Urthona in Night VIIA, the climactic reversal of the pattern of further and further fragmentation in the poem, the first unequivocal gesture toward reconciliation that results finally in the reunification of Albion in Night IX. Nothing in the immediate situation leads up to this right-angled turn in the action.¹ On the contrary, Blake erased "End of the Seventh Night" in order to write in the account of this embrace, thus changing the natural stopping point for the Night into a surprising turning point for the entire poem. The reconciliation scene follows immediately upon the Spectre's re-enactment with Enitharmon of the fall of Adam and Eve, during which they copulate and engender the Shadowy Female, whose appearance releases "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" (VIIA.329-31; 85:19-21, E353).² The only grammatical, temporal, and logical transition between the moment of the Shadowy Female's birth and the moment of Los's embrace of his Spectre is "But then" (VIIA.336; 85:26, E353). This juxtaposition of scenes of fall and redemption, spectrous enmity and genuine fraternal love, is related to the Blakean paradox that revelation is concurrent with--and contingent upon--the consolidation of error. It is not difficult to grasp the thematic purpose of the juxtaposition, then, but as a quasi-realistic dramatic scene among members of a love-triangle who symbolize aspects of the imaginative faculty, it raises numerous problems of interpretation. 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?³ 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?

The dramatic reversal takes place on two planes of action, signifying the importance of imagination both in artistic creation and in intimate personal relationships. Insofar as Los, the Spectre, and Enitharmon are fragmented aspects of the imaginative faculty, representing the artist, his self-doubt, and his inspiration, the sudden shift from hostility to cooperation means that the mature artistic imagination becomes capable of acknowledging inner doubt and sublimating it in art. Insofar as Los and Enitharmon are a husband and wife whose deteriorating relationship has been further strained by the competition for Enitharmon between Los and his false personality, the Spectre, the sudden shift from sexual rivalry to fraternal cooperation and marital concord must mean that imaginative love is capable of overcoming jealousy and self-division. On both these planes of action the contact of Los and Enitharmon with the Spectre is all-important.

Until the moment of the fraternal embrace, the primary bond among the three estranged fragments of the primal Urthona is a sexual attraction, rivalry, and jealousy so intense that Enitharmon is very nearly split into two characters. The problematical new figure called the Shadow of Enitharmon is not a separate person but rather a manifestation of that element in the female personality which is attracted to selfishness and deadness in the male and repelled by vital desire. The Shadow corresponds to one side of the Spectre's character, but she is not a complete counterpart to him. During her entire relationship with the Spectre, at the roots of the Tree of Mystery, Enitharmon remains physically present to

Los, outstretched upon his knees, in his upper region above the branches of the Tree. While she is indulging her shadowy moods or fantasies, she appears to Los as "the image of death upon his withered valleys" (VIIA.172; 81:13, E349). He complains that she is cold and wintry when he approaches her but summery and delectable when he is absent. Whenever Enitharmon is dead to Los, her Shadow is alive to the Spectre. In her relationship with Los, she has given birth to Orc, a fully defined character, the personification of energy. In her relationship with the Spectre "in sweet delusion" (VIIA.229; 82:35, E351) she becomes the mother of the Shadowy Female, a vague manifestation of Vala who exists briefly during one stage of the consolidation of error, before reappearing in definite form in Night VIII as the new characters Rahab and Tirzah. The specific, localized affinity between the Shadow and the Spectre is seen in their parallel accounts of humanity's fall from Eternity, in which both reveal an acute sense of sexual jealousy and possessiveness. In short, the Shadow represents the fickle, self-deluded side of Enitharmon; by the device of separating Enitharmon from her Shadow Blake is able to dramatize a stage in her education without making it necessary for Enitharmon, in her primary personality, to renounce the wisdom she has gained through her suffering in Night V. Traces of the old Enitharmon, power-mad and sadistic, appear only in deleted lines: "She Secret joyd to see She fed herself on his Despair She said I am avenged for all my sufferings of old" (VIIA.177-78; E755). Since she has still not learned to love her husband either as creative artist or as craftsman, she is brought down through her Shadow to mate with the "lower" side of Los in preparation for accepting him at his best.

Enitharmon's scorn of Los and her pleasureless coupling with the Spectre are not especially remarkable among the numerous experiences of fallen sexuality in the poem. The turning point for Enitharmon comes as she gives birth to the Shadowy Female. In the "Worlds above" Los weeps in anguish because he cannot perceive the cause of her travail (VIIA.318-20; 85:8-10, E353), but in the "deeps beneath" her "shadow pregnant" brings forth the Shadowy Female, whereupon the gates of Enitharmon's heart burst from their hinges (VIIA.316-24; 85:6-14, E353). It seems that imaginative productivity is now possible only at this debased level, but that as a result of this act of procreation, in which the Shadow and Spectre externalize their worst selves in the form of the Shadowy Female, both are purified. Blake's language here is effectively ambiguous: Enitharmon writhes "till her shadow was deliverd then she ran / Raving about the upper Elements in maddning fury" (VIIA.321-22; 85:11-12, E353). This means both that the true Enitharmon writhes until the shadowy Enitharmon gives birth and that in giving birth Enitharmon is delivered of her shadowy personality. The Shadow of Enitharmon is heard of no more, and the true Enitharmon, now permanently heart-broken (but also made open-hearted and tender-hearted), becomes the vehicle for the Spectre's passage back to Los: "Every sigh & groan / Of Enitharmon bore Urthonas Spectre on its wings" (VIIA.336-37; 85:26-27, E353). This statement appears immediately after "But then the Spectre enterd Los's bosom" and, while taking away none of

the element of surprise, partly explains how the miraculous embrace was made possible.

Drawing on the accounts of the fall which she and the Spectre had exchanged after partaking of the fruit of the Tree, "Enitharmon told the tale / Of Urthona" to Los, whereupon Los embraces the Spectre and gives up "his Domineering lust" (VIIA.338-41; 85:28-31, E353). Los, the creator of the Chain of Jealousy in Night V, is impelled to accept his rival for the sake of reunifying the divided fragments of Urthona: "Come then into my Bosom & in thy shadowy arms bring with thee / My lovely Enitharmon. I will quell my fury & teach / Peace to the Soul of dark revenge & repentance to Cruelty" (VIIA.367-69; 86:10-12, E354). Correspondingly, "Urthonas spectre in part mingling with him comforted him / Being a medium between him & Enitharmon" (VIIA.397-98; 87:26-27, E355). The fact that the reconciliation of Los and his Spectre takes place against a background of sexual rivalry emphasizes the importance of the imagination in human relationships as well as the arts. The overcoming of jealousy is an act of imagination as surely as the writing of a poem. Enitharmon's withdrawal from this scene of "Extacy & Love" to hide "beneath Urizens tree" indicates, however, that the importance of imagination in overcoming guilt and shame has not yet been fully realized. Full union of Los and Enitharmon does not occur within fallen history; it is "not to be Effectd without Cares & Sorrows & Troubles / Of six thousand Years of self denial and of bitter Contrition" (VIIA.399-400; 87:28-29, E355). Though Los is now able to see the Lamb of God within Enitharmon's broken heart, Enitharmon herself shrinks before the punishment she is sure the Lamb will inflict.

In releasing the imagination to function in life as well as art, the Spectre, who among other things personifies the artist's self-censorship, plays a crucial role, and Blake's characterization of this figure is extremely subtle. His prominence in Night VIIA seems to indicate that the selfish impediment to creativity has come to realize that it cannot be overcome by mere repression, enslavement to Los, but must be acknowledged and dealt with honestly, as the Spectre insists to Los in the very act of embracing him (VIIA.336-51; 85:26-39, E353). Despite his repellent attributes, he reveals even as he seduces Enitharmon a spiritual and psychological perceptiveness not yet possible for her. Although his boast to her that he is the creator and superior of Los is unfounded, his nostalgia for the unity and happiness of Eternity is genuine, and he can see the possibility and necessity for reunion with their Emanations of Tharmas, Luvah, and himself as Urthona. He also deplores his own spectrous condition, knowing that spectres as such are insane, brutish, and deformed; and he interprets his longing for Enitharmon as evidence that he is a spectre of the living rather than of the dead (VIIA.269-310; 84:3-40, E352). As a spectre himself, he perceives the threat to productive activity presented by imageless, disembodied thoughts of futility and negativity, the "spectres of the dead."⁴ The spectrous insight which finally wins Enitharmon over is that "till these terrors [the spectres of the dead] planted round the Gates of

Eternal life / Are driven away & annihilated we never can repossess the Gates" (VIIA.302-03; 84:41-42, E353). It takes the spectrous side of the imaginative mind to understand that the true Covering Cherub is made up of one's own shapeless, negative fears and fantasies. Regeneration, the Spectre understands, is possible for him because in Los he has a living counterpart which the spectres of the dead lack altogether, ravaging after emptiness and nothingness. After the Spectre is accepted by Los, his sense of responsibility for the creation of the spectres of the dead, who were released by his begetting of the Shadowy Female, is the basis of his urging Los to give form and beauty to these shapeless abstractions (VIIA.401-10; 87:30-39, E355). The suggestion inaugurates a great cultural renaissance, a new kind of redemptive artistic activity. Even his terror at Vala's new appearance (VIIA.332; 85:22, E353) is evidence of his special insight, an insight which can deepen art rather than block it, a recognition of evil and deadness that need not break an artist's spirit but can drive him to develop a more complex form of art.

One of the most suggestive of the Spectre's ideas is his view of the Tree of Mystery as something "given us for a Shelter from the tempests of Void & Solid / Till once again the morn of ages shall renew upon us" (VIIA.268-69; 84:2-3, E352). This statement seems a radical distortion of the truth, but it also comes very close to the Christian interpretation of the "Law," the old dispensation, as a divinely-appointed stopgap, and indeed in Night VIII the Lamb of God, assuming Luvah's robes of blood, will transfigure the image of the crucifixion on the Tree. Here in Night VIIA the very ascendancy of the Tree of Mystery over both passion and imagination, the very urgency and clarity of the sense of sin, however falsely defined, builds up a pressure for imminent liberation. Despair over evil and guilt can be psychologically beneficial if it awakens an acute and agonizing need for an utterly new state of existence. The fact that, after the Spectre puts the Shadowy Female in charge of Orc in the lower world, the topmost branch of the Tree sprouts to form roots of the same Tree in the upper, conscious, world of Los (VIIA.332-35; 85:22-25, E353) makes the influence of evil and Mystery recognizable now on all levels of the human imagination. When the serpent-wound Tree, with its outrageously false Urizenic identification of energy and evil, overshadows Los, and he joins Enitharmon in eating its fruit and falls also into the moral system (VIIA.395; 87:24, E355), he experiences a psychic suffocation and a wasteful sense of guilt so terrible that they can only be remedied by a clean break, a free existential act like that of Shelley's Prometheus. On the dramatic level this new direction is possible because Los and Enitharmon have lived and suffered enough to have become different persons; in grief and sorrow they have found a depth of humanity capable of reconciliation and forgiveness. From no other fallen faculty can this act arise; it is truly an imaginative leap. Yet this act is precipitated by the eating of the fruit, through "self accusation" and "Self conviction" (VIIA.385-93; 87:14-22, E354), through the assumption of an unbearable burden of guilt and the definitive imposition of a clearly defined but grossly misunderstood "morality," through a despair which would lead

to "death Eternal" but for the Spectre's role as comforter and mediator between Los and Enitharmon (VIIA.396-98; 87:25-27, E355).

In retrospect, one can see that events and characterizations introduced earlier in the poem, especially in Nights IV and V and earlier in Night VIIA, without clear significance for human recovery when they first appeared, have contributed to the moment of reconciliation. In forming a body for Urizen, for example, Los had begun to feel sympathetic pains for his enemy (IV.284-95; 55:20-31, E331), a sympathy that has extended even to his silent sharing of Urizen's envy (VIIA.19,27; 77:19, 27, E346). Los and Enitharmon, repenting the binding of Orc in Night V, had drawn closer in their grief and become more aware of their responsibilities, less selfish. The Spectre, though reluctant to cooperate in Los's labors, had shown concern for the parental distress of the couple: after Los and Enitharmon fainted over Orc, the Spectre "found herbs of the pit / Rubbing their temples he reviv'd them" (V.173-74; 63: 7-8, E336).

Undeniably, though, Blake leaves an area of disjunction between despair and recovery, something not spelled out for us. But far from being a flaw in *The Four Zoas*, this gap reflects Blake's honesty and acumen. If the conversion were totally explainable, the training of psychiatrists could be much abbreviated and all mental illness, perhaps also all social problems related to it, could be cured in one and the same way. Blake's wisdom in leaving this hiatus of explanation is confirmed in other great works which explore the spiritual dark night and recovery from it. The reversal in *Prometheus Unbound* arises from the hero's free, imaginative act of loving forgiveness, but the agency of regeneration is embodied in Demogorgon, a personified question mark, the "somehow" in statements like "Somehow we survived." The same arbitrariness of recovery occurs with Wordsworth in *The Prelude* and with the Red Cross Knight in Book I of *The Faerie Queene*, where the protagonists are reduced to something near despair and then rescued through a form of grace, something they cannot fully understand or explain. Blake takes us further than either Wordsworth or Spenser into the psychology of recovery, regeneration, renewal, but like them he presents the experience of grace, not a formula for obtaining it. If a formula were possible, the concept of grace would not be necessary in theology nor the metaphor of the breakthrough in psychology (or in the physical sciences, for that matter). It happens or it does not happen; if it happens at all, it happens in the midst of despair, both because of and in spite of an intolerable sense of sin and need. Even in such a realistic work as "The Death of Ivan Ilyich," the conversion, when it finally comes, is not explained with the fullness that is offered in the presentation of the other incidents in the story. In *The Four Zoas* Blake does not anatomize the moment of relief and reconciliation itself, as he does through the splintered personalities and actions of Milton; instead, he concentrates on the renewal of life as it flows out from that moment.

The surge of new life takes the form of creative activity. The benefits to both human nature and art are reciprocal. Man's spiritual sickness is treated

by therapeutic art. At the same time this sickness provides new subjects for a deeper, more troubled and more complex artistic vision; the pressure of these new and disturbing subjects--shadows from the inner life rather than reflections of the outer world--bring new art forms into being. All this is presented in the new relationship among Los, the Spectre, and Enitharmon. In the unwilling drudgery of their collaboration in Night IV, they had rebuilt the fallen mental and physical world; art in Night IV is the mirror held up to nature--nature as seen by the fallen imagination and organized according to human conceptions of time and space. But in Night VII the collaboration of the Spectre and Los is willing and mutual, and Enitharmon--though fearful--is cooperative. Instead of working as artisan and apprentice to build a body for Urizen as in Night IV, Los and his Spectre join to build in the "nether heavens" a new and separate world for art, the city of Golgonooza, placed within the merciful limits of Satan and Adam, opacity and contraction, discovered in Night IV (VIIA.379-83; 87:8-12, E354).

In the blended consciousness of Los and his Spectre is "a World within / Opening its gates & in it all the real substances / Of which these in the outward World are shadows which pass away" (VIIA.364-66; 86:7-9, E354). Although the Spectre's claim on Los, "I am thy real Self," is untrue as a bald, isolated statement, it is effective as a means of forcing Los to act on his moment of self-recognition. After his impulsive embrace of the Spectre "first as a brother / Then as another Self; astonishd humanizing & in tears," Los is forced to listen to the insistent voice of his repressed negative and sinister personality:

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
Tho horrible & Ghastly to thine Eyes tho buried
beneath
The ruins of the Universe.

(VIIA.339-52; 85:29-40, E353)

When a new world opens within and Los again embraces the Spectre as well as Enitharmon, the Spectre also "Wondering beheld the Center open'd by Divine Mercy inspired / He in his turn Gave Tasks to Los" (VIIA.374-75; 87:3-4, E354); his destructive impulses are, however, rendered harmless by Los's concentration on the work at hand. The Spectre's claim that he is Los's self is a demand that Los acknowledge his errors; this claim on Los is entirely different from Urizen's reductive blasphemy in Night I, the insistence that there is nothing *else* in man: "The Spectre is the Man the rest is only delusion & fancy" (I.341; 12:29, E303). Los directs the continued building of Golgonooza, where "beneath / Was open'd new heavens & a new Earth beneath & within" (VIIA.379-80; 87:8-9, E354), but it is the Spectre who proposes the new direction for art, the creation of forms for man's shadowy hopes, fears, negative thoughts, desires, failures of nerve, frustrations: "Let us Create them Counterparts / For without a

Created body the Spectre is Eternal Death" (VIIA.409-10; 87:38-39, E355).

The Spectre has found his place within the mature artistic consciousness as a dark vision of emptiness and longing, an intimate knowledge of passion, guilt, and sin, the negative and doubting shadow of idealism which annihilates the ideal if it is disowned and denied but strengthens it if honestly admitted. From Los's acceptance of his Spectre comes the power of Romantic and modern art which admits its own vulnerability and thus speaks to man's doubts as well as his faith. Acceptance of what the Spectre represents allows Wordsworth apparently to undercut his most affirmative statements with such formulations as "If this be but a vain belief." From the same source flows the power of Byron's self-deflations in *Don Juan*, along with his self-assured mockery both of his own creation and of his reader's illusions. This is also the principle of Friederich Schlegel's "divine buffoonery" or Romantic Irony: acceptance in art of that which destroys art, acceptance by the self of that which destroys the self. Just as the artist's admission of his difficulties and his incorporation of negative possibilities into his work may actually serve to enrich and enliven his efforts, so an acceptance of doubt can strengthen any act of imaginative faith. Thus in the last two stanzas of the Intimations Ode, Wordsworth can affirm the thoughts too deep for tears because he no longer shuts out the dark truths avoided in strophes iii and iv.

Since the Spectre's vision is blended with Los's own and the Spectre no longer serves merely as an apprentice-slave, Los is now free to share his creative work with his spouse and to turn to her for inspiration. Their complementary activity in art gives rise to a new intimacy in their male-female relationship. The Enitharmon who calls Los "wonder of Eternity," her "defence & guide," and says, "Thy works are all my joy. & in thy fires my soul delights" (VIIA.447-48; 90:16-17, E356), has become a different person from the tease who evaded her husband's sexual advances or even the sullen adulteress who tearfully and bitterly accepted the shadowy embrace of the Spectre. In their new partnership they work like Blake and his wife as draughtsman and colorist to create celestial murals (VIIA.467-71; 90:35-39, E356). Enitharmon sighs forth vanishing forms from her bosom, from which Los fabricates sublime and permanent forms "Such as the piteous spectres may assimilate themselves into." In response to her plea for "sweet moderated fury," Los, "his hands divine inspired began / To modulate his fires." No longer the dogged blacksmith imposing his will on his spectre, his emanation, his material, his technique, and his form, he becomes the genius whom the very elements gladly obey. His flames are "delighted" and the weeping spectres willingly "Assimilating to those forms" become young and lovely (VIIA.439-74; 90:8-42, E356).

Troubled by the sense of sin, Los, the Spectre, and Enitharmon have felt the need for redemption and have planned to use their artistic creations as sacrificial offerings, ransoms for their sins. But the translucent center opened in Enitharmon's broken heart affords Los a brief glimpse of the possibility of mental sacrifice, self-annihilation, mutual

forgiveness of each vice, the spirit of Jesus:

Turn inwardly thine Eyes & there behold the
Lamb of God
Clothed in Luvahs robes of blood descending to
redeem
O Spectre of Urthona take comfort O Enitharmon
Couldst thou but cease from terror & trembling
& affright
When I appear before thee in forgiveness of
ancient injuries
Why shouldst thou remember & be afraid. I
surely have died in pain
Often enough to convince thy jealousy & fear &
terror
Come hither be patient let us converse together
because
I also tremble at myself & at all my former
life.

(VIIA.415-23; 87:44-52, E355)

Although Enitharmon resists this vision and persists in seeing Jesus as punisher, Los has discovered the spirit of self-sacrifice and mutual forgiveness that opens the Gates of Paradise. In his appearance before Enitharmon "in forgiveness of ancient injuries" he is an embodiment of Jesus, and in having "died in pain / Often enough to convince thy jealousy & fear & terror" he has enacted what is meaningful in Jesus' death, the loving gesture of self-annihilation. If this husband and wife could forgive each other, they wouldn't need a Redeemer, nor would they need to sacrifice their "children," their mutual creations, to an imagined Accuser. No more is said in Night VIIA about Los's vision of Jesus, but when the moment for sacrifice comes

Los loved them & refusd to Sacrifice their
infant limbs
And Enitharmons smiles & tears prevaild over
self protection
They rather chose to meet Eternal death than
to destroy
The offspring of their Care & Pity Urthonas
spectre was comforted.

(VIIA.482-85; 90:50-53, E357)

The imaginative act of creating form, of embodying these ghostly negative ideas, has taught Los and Enitharmon how to sacrifice themselves, not their "offspring." No longer are they the selfish parents who sacrificed Orc to their own jealousies in Night V. Through their artistic endeavors they have given living form to the deadly aggressions that fuel the Urizenic wars; they are now able to see their enemies, Urizen and his eldest son Thiriel, as their own children, Rintrah and Palamabron (VIIA.476-94; 90:44-62, E356-57). The possibility of a reconciliation with Orc is also suggested: "Orc was comforted in the deeps his soul revivd in them / As the Eldest brother is the fathers image So Orc became / As Los a father to his brethren." Tharmas, organizing instinct now fallen into shapelessness, is heartened by the new forms being created, for he hopes to find among them his lost Enion (VIIA.478-87; 90:46-55, E356-57), the hope that had proved vain in the

earlier craftsmanlike work of Los in Night IV (IV.32-33; 48:9-10, E325). Even Urizen finds himself--or a portion of himself--in the loving and shaping hands of a Los who now loves him, and who is surprised at his own ability to love (VIIA.496-99; 90:64-67, E357).

Although Los's conflict with his Spectre is a major theme of *Jerusalem*, the spectrous embrace is not a part of its resolution. Perhaps Blake thought tightness of plot and clarity of motivation were more important than the theme of Los's acknowledgment and acceptance of his negative double. In *Jerusalem* there is no disjunction between juxtaposed scenes of error and illumination, no sudden reversal. Instead, Los first attempts in vain to resist the forces that separate him from his Spectre and Emanation:

Los rag'd and stamp'd the earth in his might &
terrible wrath!
He stood and stamp'd the earth! then he threw
down his hammer in rage &
In fury: then he sat down and wept, terrified!
Then arose
And chaunted his song, labouring with the tongs
and hammer:
But still the Spectre divided, and still his
pain increas'd!

(J6:8-12, E147, K625)

When the separated Spectre attempts to block Los's work, the artist combats his influence first by kindness and then by self-assertion. In his first speech to the Spectre, he sounds as though he has already learned the lesson of *The Four Zoas*, Night VIIA:

I know that Albion hath divided me, and that
thou O my Spectre,
Hast just cause to be irritated: but look
stedfastly upon me:
Comfort thyself in my strength the time will
arrive,
When all Albions injuries shall cease, and when
we shall
Embrace him tenfold bright, rising from his
tomb in immortality.

(J7:52-56, E149, K626)

It is Los's resolution, self-confidence, and unselfish concern with Albion's regeneration that give him power over his Spectre in *Jerusalem*, a point just touched upon in Night VIIA, when the Spectre's desire to destroy Los's body is defeated by Los's concentration on the building of Golgonooza. Los's stern words to his Spectre, out of context, might even be mistaken for one of Urizen's threatening speeches against Albion:

unless
Thou abstain ravening I will create an eternal
Hell for thee.
Take thou this Hammer & in patience heave the
thundering Bellows
Take thou these Tongs: strike thou alternate
with me: labour obedient[.]

Obey my voice & never deviate from my will
And I will be merciful to thee:

If thou refuse, thy present torments will seem
southern breezes
To what thou shalt endure if thou obey not my
great will.

(J8:37-40, E150, K627;
J10:29-30, 35-36, E152,
K629)

This change in Los's tone toward his Spectre in *Jerusalem* may indicate, however, not that Blake had changed his mind about the importance of the embrace in Night VIIA but that in the illuminated book he was concerned primarily with the establishment of Los's authority and control, the attitude toward

one's Spectre that one must assume as a day-to-day working artist. Los's gesture of wiping the dark tears of his Spectre in *Jerusalem* 10:60-61 suggests that Los is still aware of the Spectre as a brother, if not as another self. The final resolution of the conflict occurs in Chapter IV, when Los, after allowing his Spectre freedom to produce his anti-creation, smites the Spectre upon his anvil "& 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" (J91:50-52, E249, K739). Yet in the final plate of *Jerusalem* the Spectre is shown to be present as in his best moments in *The Four Zoas*, cooperating with Los and Enitharmon, carrying out his proper duties as Los's assistant, working with the material of the fallen universe. Though the text of *Jerusalem* never presents a reconciliation scene, this concluding design suggests that Blake continued to accord the Spectre his subordinate but significant function in shaping the products of imaginative activity.

¹ M. H. Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature* (New York: Norton, 1971), pp. 36, 300, discusses this sort of reversal as one of the features of biblical design adopted by the Romantics.

² All quotations from Blake are based on David V. Erdman, ed., *The Poetry and Prose of William Blake* (1965; Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 4th printing, rev., 1970), abbreviated as E, with parallel references to *The Complete Writings of William Blake* (1966; London & New York: Oxford University Press, rpt. with corr., 1974), abbreviated as K. To simplify references to *The Four Zoas*, we give citations in the following order: the Night number in roman numerals, followed by the line number in Keynes, followed by the MS. page number as cited in Erdman, followed by the line numbers of the MS. page and finally the page number of the Erdman edition. Thus the present citation refers to the passage from Night VIIA running in Keynes from line 329 to 331, running in Erdman from line 19 to 21 on MS. page 85, and printed on page 353 of Erdman's edition. Citations from *Jerusalem*, abbreviated J, provide plate and line numbers, followed by page references to Erdman and Keynes.

³ Murry's essay, "Los and the Spectre," chapter XI of *William Blake* (1933; rpt. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), pp. 153-71, is one of the few extended discussions of the spectrous embrace, which Murry sees as a pivotal moment both in the poem and in the development of Blake's thought and work; it expresses Blake's own discovery that the final resistance to vision lies within the artist himself, "a necessary element of [his] being," and by recognizing and receiving his spectrous personality, "Los-Blake attains a new understanding, a new synthesis" (pp. 164-65). In *Fearful Symmetry* (1947; rpt. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1969), Northrop Frye cites Murry's chapter as the basis for his own observation that the "conception of the Spectre of Urthona 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" (p. 298). As for the significance of the Spectre himself, S. Foster Damon, *William Blake: His Philosophy and Symbols* (1924; rpt. Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1958), identifies Urthona as Spirit, Los

as Poet, Enitharmon as Inspiration, the Spectre of Urthona as Spiritual Logic, the Spectre of Los as Poetic Logic, and the Shadow of Enitharmon as Suppressed Imagination (p. 379). Frye has identified the Spectre with "clock time," "the will," and--in a poet--"what is usually called the 'man' in him" (p. 292); he is "the inventive faculty," a sorcerer's apprentice as capable of inventing instruments of destruction as works of art, and is expressed in society as the "sheer automatic compulsion to produce" (pp. 294-95).

The significance of the Spectre is illuminated by Bloom's use of apt analogies from Shelley: the Spectre is "the ruin or desolation that shadows love" near the end of the first act of *Prometheus Unbound* and the doubting, negating First Spirit in "The Two Spirits: An Allegory" (*Blake's Apocalypse*, Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, rev. ed., 1970, p. 253). In a lecture on the Spectre as Doppelgänger at an MLA seminar in 1975, E. J. Rose was primarily concerned with the Spectre's role in *Jerusalem*. C. William Spinks has briefly noted that the Spectre embodies a sense of absurdity that must be incorporated into the artist's work if it is to be redemptive ("Blake's Spectre," in *Studies in Relevance: Romantic and Victorian Writers in 1972*, ed. Thomas Meade Harwell, Salzburg: Institut für Englische Sprache und Literatur, 1973, pp. 30-34).

⁴ Both Bloom and Damon seem to think of the spectres of the dead as human beings without art, or human souls without bodies (see Bloom, *Blake's Apocalypse*, p. 255, and Damon, *A Blake Dictionary*, Providence: Brown Univ. Press, 1965, pp. 382-83), but the context suggests that they are formless, destructive ideas and fantasies which Los, with the help of the Spectre and Enitharmon, redeems by embodying them in art.

The Four Zoas, p. 91 (following page).
