

The Four Loves

WLLA

OR

The Torments of Love & Jealousy in  
The Death and

Judgement  
of the

Ancient Man

~~A DREAM~~

~~of Nine Nights~~

by William Blake 1797

Blake

AN ILLUSTRATED QUARTERLY 46

Volume Twelve Number Two Fall 1978

# Blake

**AN ILLUSTRATED QUARTERLY 46**  
**Volume Twelve Number Two**  
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## NEWSLETTER 159



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DAVID V. ERDMAN is working on a new edition of Blake's poetry and prose for Doubleday/Anchor.

EVERETT FROST divides his time between teaching English and humanities and writing, producing, and directing for radio.

NELSON HILTON, in England last year on a Fulbright-Hays grant, just completed his Ph.D. dissertation at the Univ. of California, Santa Cruz.

TERRENCE HOAGWOOD is working toward a Ph.D. at the Univ. of Maryland, where he teaches creative writing.

MARY LYNN JOHNSON (Visiting Assoc. Prof., Cornell College, Mt. Vernon, Iowa) is co-author of *Blake's Poems & Designs*, a Norton Critical Edition scheduled for publication in 1979.

JOHN KILGORE is completing a dissertation on *The Four Zoas* under the direction of Hazard Adams.

MARK LEFEBVRE is finishing a dissertation at Kansas State Univ. on "William Blake's Conception of His Function in Society."

ANDREW LINCOLN, who teaches in the Dept. of English at Westfield College (Univ. of London), completed a dissertation on the evolution of *The Four Zoas*.

CETTINA MAGNO, of the Univ. of Messina, is preparing a photographic facsimile of *The Four Zoas*, as well as a translation and commentary.

THOMAS MINNICK, our Bibliographer, is presently seeing through the press a textbook for freshman English, co-authored with Donald W. Good, and to be published by Macmillan.

JEFFRY SPENCER (California State College, Bakersfield), is working with Jean Hagstrum and Elaine Kauvar on a study of the iconography of English art of the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

BRIAN WILKIE (Univ. of Illinois) is co-author, with Mary Lynn Johnson, of *Blake's Four Zoas: The Design of a Dream* (Harvard, 1978).

ANDREW WILTON, Curator of Prints and Drawings at the Yale Center for British Art, is author of *British Watercolours* (1978).

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## INFORMATION

# THE SWEET SCIENCE OF ATMOSPHERES IN THE FOUR ZOAS

## NELSON HILTON

**A**nd all the time in Caverns shut, the golden  
Looms erected  
First spun, then wove the Atmospheres, there  
the Spider & Worm  
Plied the wingd shuttle piping shrill thro' all  
the list'ning threads  
Beneath the Caverns roll the weights of lead &  
spindles of iron  
The enormous warp & woof rage direful in the  
affrighted deep

While far into the vast unknown, the strong  
wing'd Eagles bend  
Their venturous flight, in Human forms distinct;  
thro darkness deep  
They bear the woven draperies; on golden hooks  
they hang abroad  
The universal curtains & spread out from Sun  
to Sun  
The vehicles of light, they separate the furious  
particles  
Into mild currents as the water mingles with  
the wine.

While thus the Spirits of strongest wing  
enlighten the dark deep  
The threads are spun & the cords twisted & drawn  
out; then the weak  
Begin their work; & many a net is netted; many  
a net  
Spread & many a Spirit caught, innumerable  
the nets  
Innumerable the gins & traps; & many a soothing  
flute  
Is form'd & many a corded lyre, outspread over  
the immense  
In cruel delight they trap the listeners, & in  
cruel delight  
Bind them, condensing the strong energies into  
little compass

Some became seed of every plant that shall be  
planted; some  
The bulbous roots, thrown up together into barns  
& garner

(29.2-30.7)<sup>1</sup>

This passage, a type of the cosmogonic moment variously presented by Blake, has largely been passed over in the silence accorded self-evident meaning, or when discussed, glided through with such selective paraphrase and assured comment as to belie any but an undemanding significance.<sup>2</sup> The three sections present a nearly simultaneous temporal unity ("And all the time. . . . While. . . . While") strongly grounded in a sequence of interrelated images, already suggesting to the painstaking reader that the passage is structured around a coherent underlying meaning.

A first reading reveals that the Atmospheres are woven, spread through space and then reintroduced as a spirit-catching and spirit-condensing net. In the first of two brief notes on the passage (E 871), Bloom answers the strangeness of the "first spun, then wove" Atmospheres with a reference to *Paradise Lost* 7.241, where God "spun out the Air." Milton was only one of the first to use what became a standard and sometimes very involved eighteenth-century image of the woven "fabric" or "texture" of air. Blackmore's popular *The Creation* (1712) set the tone:

---

*Vala or The Four Zoas*, p. 29. London, British Museum.

---

7 15  
44

That Lurid rent from the fatal Heart of the Fallen Man  
And weigh the mafsy Glazes, then fix them in their awful stations

And all the time in Caverns shut, the golden Looms erected  
First spun, then wove the Atmospheres, there the Spider & Worm  
Plead the wond' shuttle piping shrill thro' all the listening threads  
Beneath the Caverns roll the weights of lead & spindles of iron  
The enormous warp & woof rage dreadful in the affrighted deep

While far into the vast unknown, the strong-wing'd Eagles bend  
Their venturous flight, in Human forms distinct: thro' darkness deep  
They bear the woven draperies, on golden hooks they hang about  
The universal curtains & spread out from Sun to Sun  
The vehicles of light, they separate the furious particles  
Into mild currents as the water mingle with the wine.

While thus the Spirits of strongest ray enlighten the dark deep  
The threads are spun & the cards twist'd & twin'd out; then the weak  
Begin their work; & many a net is netted, many a net

Spread



Remark the air's transparent element,  
Its curious structures, and its vast extent:  
Its wondrous web proclaims the loom divine;  
Its threads, the hand that drew them out so  
fine.

This thin contexture makes its bosom fit,  
Celestial heat and lustre to transmit;

(2.618-23)<sup>3</sup>

The scientific exactitude of "Atmospheres" calls attention to the figurative loom in which they were woven. The formula "Looms erected" recalls an image fifteen lines earlier where the Children of Man, "schools Erected forming Instruments / To measure out the course of heaven" (28.20-21).<sup>4</sup> The looms are the schools of warped thought, an image presented more explicitly in *Jerusalem*, where

I turn my eyes to the Schools & Universities  
of Europe  
And there behold the Loom of Locke whose Woof  
rages dire

(15.14-15).

The Caverns then, as the site of this mental manufacture, contain the mind-loom in its perceptual and physical shell.<sup>5</sup> "Beneath" the caverns is without, the vast unknown of the unconscious. *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* presents a similar transition: "an Eagle with wings and feathers of air, he caused the inside of the cave to be infinite" (pl. 15). This mental space was entered by Er at the end of the *Republic* in one of the earliest journeys through the unknown. There he saw "the light which binds heaven" and, hanging from its extremities, "the spindle [atraktos] of Necessity" and its "weight" [sphondulos] (616c ff., cf. *Milton* 35.14-15). The "Atmospheres" offer a later instance of that myth. Ostensibly as natural as the air we breathe, the "Atmospheres" are in fact woven by "the Spider," known for his entrapping web of thought, and the "Worm," who otherwise spins the veiling cocoon of "silken thought" (cf. *Night Thoughts*, l.157-58).

The close proximity of the formulaic "wing'd shuttle" to the "wing'd Eagles" intimates that those "Human forms" are being manipulated by the "Spider" and "Worm," an impression strengthened by the fact that the Eagles "bend," where those weavers "plied"--a very rare verb for Blake, a significant meaning of which was "to bend."<sup>6</sup> Both shuttle and Eagles are moving back and forth filling up space. These eagles suggest the great scientists of the century, like Halley and Newton, who, even in life, were very commonly presented as pursuing extra-mundane, cosmic voyages of intellect.<sup>7</sup> Here Blake sees them drawing their threads or theories of aethereal atmosphere behind them--bringing not light, but darkness visible. This point is confirmed by the application of the remaining three instances of "venturous" to the spider-scientist Urizen, whose "dire Web / Followd behind him" (73.31-32)<sup>8</sup> in his exploration of the Abyss at the end of *Night the Sixth* (also the only *Night* where "the vast unknown" reappears):

Creating many a vortex fixing many a Science  
in the deep  
And thence throwing his venturous limbs into  
the vast unknown

(72.13-14)<sup>9</sup>

The "woven draperies" they bear must be the woven Atmospheres of the previous section, now expanded to "The universal curtains" and "the vehicles of light." These curtains cannot fail to bring to mind Urizen's "woven darkness" in *The Song of Los* (7.25) or those created by the Eternals in *The Book of Urizen* in order to "bind in the Void" and close the fallen worlds from their sight:

12. They began to weave curtains of darkness  
They erected large pillars round the Void  
With golden hooks fastend in the pillars  
With infinite labour the Eternals  
A woof wove, and called it Science

(19.5-9)

This work parallels the Lord's instructions to Moses that His temple is to be furnished with pillars and hooks of gold from which to hang "the veil that shall divide unto you between the holy place and the most holy" (Ex. 26:32, 33, et al.). In *Night the Second* the golden hooks are suns. The woven Atmospheres/curtains which serve also as "the vehicles of light" suggest Newton's formulation of "an ethereal medium, much of the same constitution with air, but far rarer, subtler, and more strongly elastic" (Cohen, p. 179). *The Book of Los* speaks of "Light. . . . conducted by fluid so pure" (5.10-11).

Atmosphere is both woven and fluid at the same time. Its aethereal nature blends into "particles" and "currents," the proper combination of corpuscular and wave theory: "A ray of light is a continued stream of these particles."<sup>10</sup> Water mingling with wine offers a theoretical illustration similar to that of Grimaldi in his *Physico-Mathesis de Lumine*, where "He was led to conclude that light did not go through diaphanous material by direct penetration but rather in an indirect manner . . . . like wine in water."<sup>11</sup> Note the direction of dilution: the wine of light is being watered, but water requires spiritual transformation to turn to wine. On the other hand, this same aethereal atmosphere was seen as being composed of invisible threads by which light was transmitted. Blackmore explained:

The ever-rolling Orb's impulsive Ray  
On the next Threads and Filaments does bear,  
Which form the springy Texture of the Air,  
. . . these still strike the next, till to the  
Sight  
The quick Vibration propagates the Light;

(2.401-05)

Henry Brooke's *Universal Beauty* described the air, "Its mantle wove of elemental threads," which, invisible, "enfolds the sphere."<sup>12</sup> "The various

twine of light" was untwisted by Newton in Thomson's famous image ("Spring," 211), and Erasmus Darwin speaks simply of "the sevenfold threads of light."<sup>13</sup> The curtains woven from these imagined threads appear to be diaphanous--just so the Inhabitants in *The Book of Urizen*

Discern'd not the woven hypocrisy  
But the streaky slime in their heavens  
Brought together by narrowing perceptions  
Appear transparent air

(25.32-35)

The third section returns to the initial spinning as "The threads are spun & the cords twisted & drawn out" which the weak, having "power to resist energy" (MHH 16), make into "many a net." The twisted cords offer another evocation of *The Book of Urizen*, pl. 25, which describes Urizen's spider-web (25.10 ff.), concluding

8. So twisted the cords, & so knotted  
The meshes: twisted like to the human brain

9. And all call'd it, The Net of Religion.

(25.20-22)

The nets are identified with the curtains and Atmospheres, not only being made from the same material (in turn, "like to the human brain"), but, like the draperies they are "Spread . . . outspread over the immense."<sup>14</sup> Blake draws attention to the luminescent component of the image by twice repeating in a single line the "cruel delight" of these activities. The nets of the weak "trap the listeners" and catch "many a Spirit," condensing their "strong energies." The Spirits caught are evidently those same "strong wing'd Eagles. . . . spirits of strongest wing" that originally spread the curtains (now nets), while the trapped listeners are those "list'ning threads" through which the wind shuttle plied. So the spirits are bound in the web they thought to spread and the listeners are woven into what they heard.

The listeners hear the "chords" of "nature's harmony," like the entrancing unheard musical air of the spheres. At the Wedding Feast of Nature, Los and Enitharmon "listend to the Elemental Harps & Sphery Song" (13.1) presented by the "Bright Souls of vegetative life" (13.24). But in Night the Second the flute and mendacious lyre are instruments ("schools Erected forming instruments") playing a seductive, fallacious harmony. In Night the Fourth Tharmas compells Los to "choose life":

And all the Elements shall serve thee to their  
soothing flutes  
Their sweet inspiriting lyres thy labours  
shall administer

(52.3-4)

This single instance of "inspiriting" indicates that the lyres are to do more than "uplift moods." Los must play the lyre to draw spirits into the

furnaces of Urizen he is rebuilding; their bound energy is necessary to fuel his work of constructing the fallen world.

The passage from Night the Second concludes with the unexpected information that the spirits are condensed "into little compass / Some became seed of every plant . . . some / The bulbous roots . . ." It is a striking conclusion to the sequence of events that began with the weaving of the Atmospheres. One such process of condensation was evident in *The Book of Los*, where the prophet caught the spiritual light to make the "glowing illusion" of the mundane sun:

4: And first from those infinite fires  
The light that flow'd down on the winds  
He siez'd; beating incessant, condensing  
The subtil particles in an Orb.

(5.27-30)

The illustration shows that sun to be "black but shining" (SL 8, MHH 18). Urizen reveals in Night the Sixth that when "death" shuts up his powers, he is "then a seed in the vast womb of darkness" (73.8-9)--misremembering his ruined furnaces and "stoned stupor" of Night the Fourth.

It was probably in 1789, at the height of his involvement with The New Jerusalem Church, that Blake read and extensively annotated Swedenborg's *The Wisdom of Angels concerning Divine Love and Divine Wisdom* (London: W. Chalklen, 1788). One of the principal motifs of the book is the descending correspondence running from "the Lord" to the "spiritual sun" to the "natural sun." Divine Love and Divine Wisdom "appear in the spiritual world as a Sun" (no. 83, p. 69) and from that sun proceed a corresponding "spiritual Heat and spiritual Light" (no. 290, p. 264).<sup>15</sup> The "assertion that the spiritual Sun is not Life" (e.g., according to Swedenborg it is from the Lord but not the Lord, so "not Life in itself") annotated Blake, "explains how the natural Sun is dead" (p. 268). In addition to the Lord's presenting himself "as to Love by Heat, as to Wisdom by Light," Swedenborg adds another correspondence, that of "use," presented "by the Atmosphere" (no. 299, p. 271). Atmosphere is invoked because it is "the Continent of Heat and Light" as Use is "Of Love and Wisdom" (ibid.). Thus the Atmosphere is the necessary element "by means of" which the Spiritual Sun "produces the varieties of all Things in the created Universe" (no. 300, p. 273). There are three Atmospheres in both the Spiritual and Natural Worlds, which "in descending decrease," that is, "become continually more compressed and more inert" until "they are no longer Atmospheres but Substances" (no. 302, p. 274). Swedenborg reiterates that "the Substances and Matter, of which Earths consist . . . are, as it were, the Ends and Terminations of the Atmospheres" (no. 305, p. 277). These substances, however, still "have brought with them by Continuation from the Substance of the spiritual Sun that which was there from the Divine" and as a result continue to manifest "a perpetual Endeavour to produce Forms of Uses" (no. 310, p. 280). "The

first Production of those Earths, when they were still recent, and in their Simplicity, was the Production of Seeds" (no. 312, p. 283). The Seeds, in turn, become an "image of creation" moving from their "first Principles to their Ultimates," a movement characterized in Blake's annotation as "A Going forth & returning" (p. 285), a perception which underlies his whole work. "This World is too poor to produce one Seed," Blake wrote in the margins of Reynold's *Discourses on Art* (E 646), and returning to the image in *The Four Zoas*, we see that the effect of the Atmosphere is to catch the Spirits of the Spiritual Sun and condense them into seeds.

Having worked through this involved spiritualist account some may be surprised to discover that Newton was of the same mind. Indeed it is evident that Swedenborg adapts material he would surely have come across in his wide scientific reading. In the "Second Paper on Light and Colours," not fully printed until 1757 but known since its presentation in 1675,<sup>16</sup> Newton begins by supposing that the "aethereal medium" is "compounded, partly of the main phlegmatic body of aether, partly of other various aethereal spirits, much after the manner, that air is compounded of the phlegmatic body of air intermixed with various vapours and exhalations: for the electric and magnetic effluvia, and gravitating principle, seem to argue such variety" (Cohen, p. 180). Blake knew these "spirits" as "Devils. . . Powers of the Air" and remarked, "the air was full of them, & seemd composed of them" (MHH 18). Newton continues:

Perhaps the whole frame of nature may be nothing but various contextures of some certain aethereal spirits, or vapours, condensed as it were by precipitation, much after the manner, that vapours are condensed into water, or exhalations into grosser substances, though not so easily condensable; and after condensation wrought into various forms; at first by the immediate hand of the Creator; and ever since by the power of nature; which, by virtue of the command, increase and multiply, became a complete imitator of the copies set her by the protoplast. Thus perhaps may all things be originated from aether.

(Cohen, p. 180)

In one of the last "Queries" added to the *Opticks* Newton limited himself to suggesting that "The changing of Bodies into Light, and Light into Bodies, is very conformable to the Course of Nature, which seems delighted with Transmutations."<sup>17</sup>

These two accounts may mark the distinction between "Science" and "Sweet Science" which operates in *The Four Zoas*. Newton withheld his idea from publication; "The fact is," observes E. A. Burtt, "Newton's positivism was powerful enough to prevent his carrying his speculations very far in this direction."<sup>18</sup> This for Blake is "Science," the suspension of belief and emphasis on doubt in the interests of the profitability and utility of experimental results. Swedenborg, on the other hand,

though he "has not written one new truth" (MHH 22) is a practitioner of the "Sweet Science" of belief and imaginative relation to the world. The distinction, ultimately, has to do with the place of man in the scientific endeavor; for Newton, "Man exists to know and applaud" (Burtt, p. 297) the order of the God of Nature in His unchanging laws, whereas for Blake the Imagination is to realize itself as the Being that instituted Nature and continually bodies forth new creations. The use of the term "Science" for both endeavors shows that the two will eventually be one.

Both Newton and Swedenborg say that the aethereal condenses in the atmosphere, so that the physical world is, literally, *spiritual*. But while Newton imagines no purpose for the "transmutations," Blake sees in Swedenborg a vision of "a going forth & returning," the circulating, spiraling, expanding movement of the imagination. At the close of the atmospheric moment in Night the Second some of the Spirits are shown condensed into seed to be sown, others condensed into roots, already harvested and stored in "barns & garners," the "store house" of thought (cf. 110[1st].12-13). The seeds may be new thoughts--spiritual energy and enlightenment caught up in an image that will grow and bear--as the roots may be accomplished thought, the organic base for further visions which, Blake says, are always of "somewhat on earth."<sup>19</sup> "The Imaginative Image," writes Blake, "returns by the seed of contemplative Thought" (VLJ, E 545; cf. J 85.27-29). In *The Four Zoas* it is the passage through atmosphere that materializes the image.

Blake reintroduces Swedenborg's three atmospheres in Night the Seventh (a). Los builds Golgonooza in "the nether heavens" where "new heavens & a new Earth" have opened. They are "Threefold within the brain within the heart within the loins" (87.10) and so represent, "A Threefold Atmosphere Sublime continuous from Urthonas world" (87.11) or the second of the threefold atmospheres of Swedenborg's Spiritual and Natural Worlds, arranged in the traditional hierarchy of elemental (loins), celestial (heart), and intellectual (head).<sup>20</sup> This second, natural Atmosphere has a "Limit Twofold named Satan & Adam" (87.12), or Opacity (cf. 56.19) and "Translucence" (87.13, sometimes called "Contraction"). These two limits were in a sense present in the two aspects of the Atmospheres: vehicles of light and condensing net. The medium of these two limits is itself the limit to perception through it. But this atmosphere also provides a necessary secure space in which to sleep and grow:

And we are put on earth a little space,  
That we may learn to bear the beams of love,

"The Little Black Boy," 13-14

"The Natural Earth & Atmosphere," Blake wrote in his annotations to *Divine Love and Divine Wisdom*, "is a Phantasy" (p. 285). The real atmosphere, to use the metaphor the OED first dates at 1797-1803, is the mental one (s.v. "atmosphere," 4). Young agreed:

. . . fine spun Air?  
 Fine spun to sense; but gross and feculent  
 To Souls celestial. . . .

(*Night Thoughts*, 6.140-42)

One of the Eternals at their Feast in Night the Ninth describes the netting of Spirits from the Eternal point of view. When man is wearied, "Folding the pure wings of his mind . . . Abstracted from the roots of Science [*Nature del.*]" (133.14-15), then the Eternals "cast him like a Seed into the Earth" (133.16). According to *The Book of Ahania*, the Spirit is cast "On the Human soul" as "The Seed of eternal Science" (5.33-34). Toward the end of the Night the golden looms and winged shuttle appear for the second time in the poem:

Then Enion & Ahania & Vala & the wife of Dark  
 Urthona  
 Rose from the feast in joy ascending to their  
 Golden Looms  
 Where the wingd shuttle Sang the spindle &  
 the distaff & the Reel  
 Rang sweet the praise of industry.

(137.11-14)

There they fabricate bodies for the spectres, the spirits that the Eternal Man casts into "the world of shadows thro the air" (137.31; cf. 100[1st].2 ff.). The woven atmosphere is one medium of materialization, one instance of the "wide woof" which flows from the looms down into the Chasms "where the Nations are gathered together" (137.17). These references converge at the end of the poem where "The Sun has left his blackness" (138.20) and

The Sun arises from his dewy bed & the fresh  
 airs  
 Play in his smiling beams giving the seeds  
 of life to grow  
 And the fresh Earth beams forth ten thousand  
 thousand springs of life

(139.1-3)

The sun perceptible is now the spiritual sun, and the earth itself is luminous with the fresh airs of "sweet Science" sweeping away the stale atmosphere of binding "dark Religions" (139.10).

<sup>1</sup> Blake references are to David V. Erdman, ed., *The Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, 3rd printing rev. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1968); here pp. 312-13.

<sup>2</sup> D. J. Sloss and J. P. R. Wallis remarked in their edition (speaking specifically of the second verse grouping) that, "This passage presents some difficulty, if, as elsewhere . . . a definitely mental significance is to be read into this myth. For it is impossible to reconcile the intellectual light with the obscurantism denoted by Urizen himself, and manifested in the creation of his new world. It may be therefore that the reference is to the light of the sun, not to mental light"; *The Prophetic Writings of William Blake* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1926), I, 180 n. Milton O. Percival states simply that "The looms weave the spiritual clothing"; while, on the other hand, "The net of the moral law is beginning to take shape"; *William Blake's Circle of Destiny* (1938; rpt. New York: Octagon Books, 1970), p. 63. Erdman sees "the caverns of manufactory" where children are represented by "silkworms" and spiders, and

notes the appearance of Blake's "favorite theme, the spinning and twisting by the weak of the 'gins & traps' of Church and State propaganda"; *Blake: Prophet Against Empire*, rev. ed. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1969), pp. 335-36.

<sup>3</sup> Richard Blackmore, *The Creation: A Philosophical Poem in Seven Books*, in *The Works of the English Poets. with Prefaces, Biographical and Critical by Samuel Johnson*, vol. 24 (London: J. Nichols et al., 1779).

<sup>4</sup> Night the Second, with half of Blake's ten uses, is the center for things "erected"; four pages earlier the Bands of Heaven "the loom erected" (24.10) next to "golden compasses, the quadrant" and other technical instruments, and "They erected the furnaces" (24.13). Shortly after the passage under discussion, the goal of all the preceding, "the Altar . . . was Erected" (30.38-42).

<sup>5</sup> "Caverns," moreover, glance at the received idea that the atmospheres were made underground: ". . . by the continual fermentations made in the bowels of the earth there are aerial substances raised out of all kinds of bodies, all which together make the atmosphere," wrote Newton; I. Bernard Cohen, ed., *Isaac Newton's Papers and Letters on Natural Philosophy and related documents*, assisted by Robert E. Schofield, with explanatory prefaces by Marie Boas, Charles Coulston Gillispie, Thomas S. Kuhn, and Perry Miller (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1958), p. 253. Chamber's *Cyclopedia* defined "atmosphere" as that part of air "which receives vapours and exhalations" (1751, OED). In Night the Ninth, Urizen and family "poured their light / To exhale the spirits of Luvah & Vala thro the atmosphere" (131.33-34).

<sup>6</sup> Ply, "bend," and ply, "employ," are distinct verbs; the former, although now rare, rates an entry half the length of the latter in the OED.

<sup>7</sup> William Powell Jones quotes a number of examples in his *The Rhetoric of Science: A Study of Scientific Ideas and Imagery in Eighteenth-Century English Poetry* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1966), pp. 99-103; see also Marjorie Hope Nicolson, *Newton Demands the Muse: Newton's "Opticks" and the Eighteenth Century Poets*, Princeton Paperback (1946; rpt. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1966), p. 68. One high point of the tradition is Wordsworth's image of Newton as "a mind for ever / Voyaging through strange seas of Thought, alone" (*Prelude* 3.62-63).

<sup>8</sup> This web can represent a different aspect of perceptual entrapment, based on schematic diagrams of the solar system.

<sup>9</sup> The variant form describing "the ventrous feet / Of Urizen" (FZ 125.12-13) associates venturing with "giving birth" via "venter," the womb, and the spectre's podalic birth (FZ 5.15). "Venturous" also represents one of Urizen's many associations with Milton's Satan (cf. PL 5.64, 9.690) and his flight through the Abyss.

<sup>10</sup> "Optics," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, vol. III (Edinburgh: A Bell, 1771).

<sup>11</sup> Vasco Ronchi, *The Nature of Light, An Historical Survey*, trans. V. Barocas (London: Heinemann, 1970), p. 135.

<sup>12</sup> Cited in Nicolson, p. 68.

<sup>13</sup> *The Botanic Garden; A Poem, in Two Parts. Part I containing The Economy of Vegetation. Part II, The Loves of the Plants. with Philosophical Notes* [10 plates engraved by Blake] (1791; rpt. Menston, Eng.: Scholar Press, 1973); *The Loves of the Plants*, I.118, p. 10. In *The Temple of Nature* (London: J. Johnson, 1803) Darwin was to see in "threads" an even more basic unit of life:

Last, as fine goads the glutton-threads excite  
 Cords grapple cords, and webs with webs unite;  
 And quick CONTRACTION with ethereal flame  
 Lights into life the fibre-woven frame.--  
 Hence without parent by spontaneous birth  
 Rise the first spectes of animated earth;  
 . . . . .  
 Life's subtle woof in Nature's loom is wove;

(I.243-48, 252)

This was published, presumably, after *Night the Second* was written. Darwin used analogous imagery of the origin of life from "a simple living filament" in his prose study, *Zoonomia; or The Laws of Organic Life* (London: J. Johnson, 1794), I, 489-98.

- <sup>14</sup> Donne saw a different kind of mental net:  
For of Meridians, and Parallels,  
Man hath weav'd out a net, and this net throwne  
Upon the Heavens, and now they are his own.

("The first Anniversary," 278-80)

- <sup>15</sup> Cf. "The Little Black Boy":  
Look on the rising sun: there God does live  
And gives his light, and gives his heat away.

(ll. 9-10)

Blake told Crabb Robinson that he had seen "the Spiritual Sun" on Primrose Hill (G. E. Bentley, Jr., *Blake Records* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1969], p. 541).

<sup>16</sup> The relevant material is collected in Cohen, *Newton's Papers and Letters*, etc. The letter to Oldenburg which emends the paper, and in so doing recapitulates the idea of condensation, first appeared in Thomas Birch's *The Works of Robert Boyle* in 1744 (I, 74; Cohen, p. 254) and was quickly reprinted in other sources. The complete paper was first published in Birch's *The History of the Royal Society of London* in 1757 (III, 247-305; Cohen, pp. 177-235). But the image was well known before; at the "Academy of Lagado" in *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), "some were condensing Air into a dry tangible Substance, by extracting the Nitre, and letting the aqueous or fluid Particles percolate" (Pt. III, ch. 5). Swedenborg's *Divine Love and Divine Wisdom* was first published in 1763.

Donald Ault seems to have been the first to mention the "Second Paper" in connection with Blake (*Visionary Physics*:

*Blake's Response to Newton* [Chicago & London: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1974], pp. 11, 85) though he does not realize its connection to Swedenborg or to *Night the Second*. He focuses on the negative "condensations" of *Jerusalem*, suggesting that the void which "shrinks and condenses" entering objects is directed, "very possibly, against Newton's doctrine of solid bodies deriving from condensation of 'aether'" (p. 85).

<sup>17</sup> Isaac Newton, *Opticks: or A Treatise of the Reflections, Refractions, Inflections and Colours of Light*; fore. Albert Einstein; intro. Edmund Whittaker; pref. I. Bernard Cohen; table of contents, Duane H. D. Roller; based on the 4th ed., London, 1730 (New York: Dover, 1952), p. 374. Cf. Ault's peculiar remark: "Blake, by taking things spiritual and mental and causing the Newtonian figures in his myth to condense and contract them into solids, is in this way criticizing Newton's doctrine that there could be no such transformation" (p. 88).

<sup>18</sup> Edwin Authur Burt, *The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Physical Science*, 2nd ed. rev., Anchor Books (1932; rpt. Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1954), p. 282.

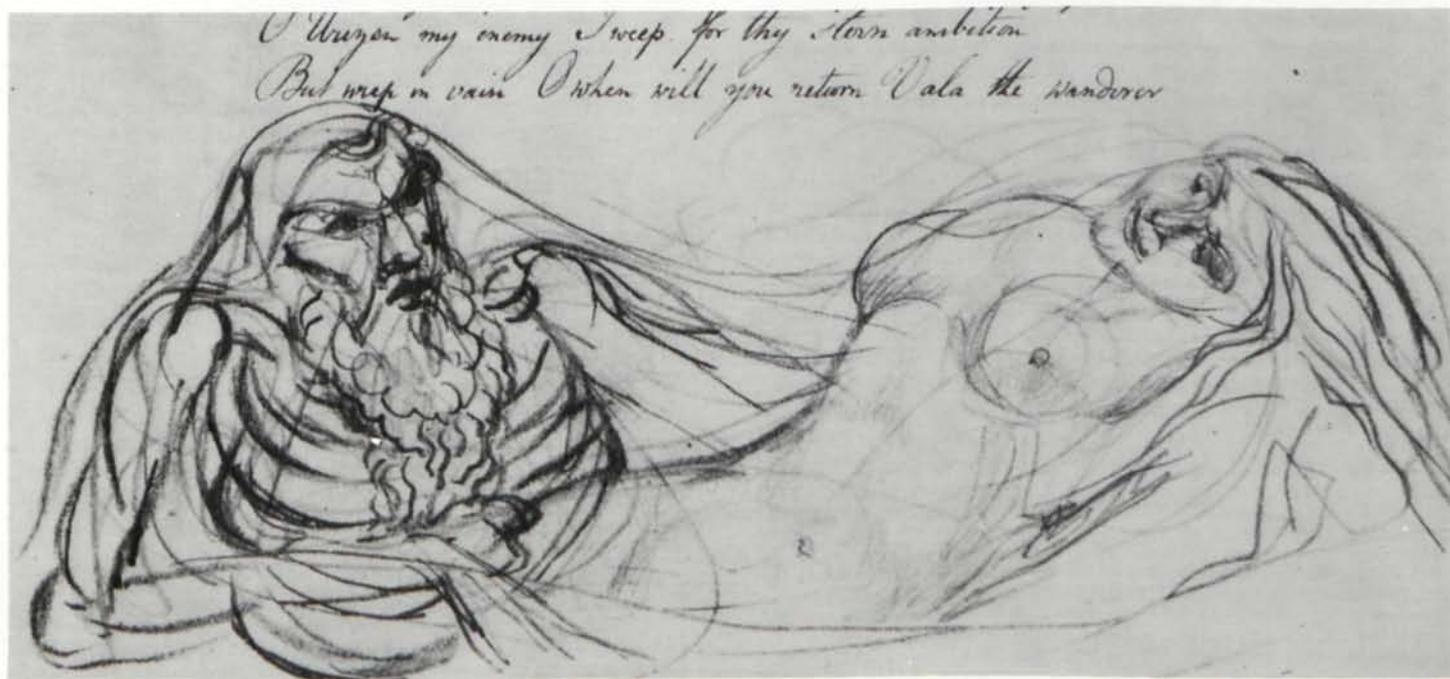
<sup>19</sup> Ann. Lavater, E 590; the single instance of "bulbous" eliminates any possibility for the frequently negative associations involved with "roots."

<sup>20</sup> See for example the illustration to Fludd's *Utriusque cosmii . . . historia* reproduced in S. K. Heninger, Jr., *The Cosmographical Glaas: Renaissance Diagrams of the Universe* (San Marino, Ca.: Huntington Library, 1977), p. 145.

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*The Four Zoas*, p. 27 (detail). London, British Museum.

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# THE FOUR ZOAS AND "THE PHILOSOPHICK CABBALA"

## TERENCE ALLAN HOAGWOOD

The relation of Blake's poetry to Platonic and Neoplatonic thought has attracted discussion for many years.<sup>1</sup> Blake apparently read works by Thomas Taylor, the Platonist,<sup>2</sup> and by Henry More, the Cambridge Platonist.<sup>3</sup> James King has shown that Blake personally knew Thomas Taylor,<sup>4</sup> who read and wrote about Henry More.<sup>5</sup> In the course of their documentation of some analogues to Blake, S. Foster Damon, Desirée Hirst, and Morton D. Paley briefly indicate some resemblances between Henry More and Blake;<sup>6</sup> and "The Philosophick Cabbala," from *Conjectura Cabbalistica* by More,<sup>7</sup> in fact furnishes several specific parallels to *The Four Zoas* which these scholars have not discussed. "The Philosophick Cabbala," part of More's retelling of the fall of man as narrated in the Book of Genesis, bears close resemblance in many points to Blake's retelling of the fall of man in *The Four Zoas*. The fact that *The Four Zoas* is a long poem and "The Philosophick Cabbala" is a shorter work in prose entails, of course, some distinctions in style and formal intention; but some philosophic assumptions and even specific thoughts and specific passages correspond so closely as to suggest comparison: these works have similar casts of symbolic characters, similar accounts of the cause of the fall, and similar accounts of certain consequences of the fall, and some of these similarities are sufficiently close and sufficiently unusual to suggest indirect if not direct relation of the two books.

Specifically, More's concept of the "Soul's Vehicle" (II, 20) resembles Blake's concept of emanation. Each is a feminine portion of an original, masculine character; each is the faculty of joy; and each is the faculty of connecting man with the material world. More describes the creation of this "Feminine part" (III, 1) or "Soul's Vehicle": after the creation of the original man, Adam, "God indued the Soul of Man with a Faculty of being united with vital joy and complacency to

the Matter" of the universe (II, 20). Blake similarly describes the creation of the feminine portion of an original man:

The manhood was divided for the gentle passions  
making way  
Thro the infinite labyrinths of the heart . . .  
. . . stood before the Eyes of Man  
A female bright.

(84:13-16<sup>B</sup>)

More defines this feminine portion as the source of "vital joy" and writes that she represents "joyous and chearful *life*" (II, 24); similarly, Blake's representation of the feminine portion, in the person of Enitharmon, says: "I wake sweet joy" and "wake the bubbling springs of life" (34:85,87). Both writers also clearly characterize the feminine portion of the original man as the faculty of connecting him with the material world. More writes that the original "*masculine Adam* . . . consists in pure subtile Intellectual Knowledge" (II, 18), whereas the "*Feminine part*" (III, 1) with which he is subsequently indued "is that Vital principle that joins the Soul to the Matter of the Universe" (II, 20). The feminine portion of the man is the faculty of sensation of matter in Blake's description, too, and he thus catalogues the bodily senses as attributes of the union of masculine character with his new feminine portion:

They eat the fleshly bread, they drank the  
nervous wine  
They listend to the Elemental Harps & Sphery  
Song  
They view'd the dancing Hours, quick sporting  
thro' the sky  
With winged radiance scattering joys thro the  
ever changing light

(12:44-13:3)

Again,

. . . Los & Enitharmon walkd forth on the dewy  
Earth  
Contracting or expanding their all flexible  
senses  
At will to murmur in the flowers small as the  
honey bee  
At will to stretch across the heavens & step  
from star to star  
Or standing on the Earth erect, or on the  
stormy waves  
Driving the storms before them or delighting  
in sunny beams  
While round their heads the Elemental Gods kept  
harmony

(34:9-15)

In both More's account and Blake's, the activation of this feminine portion, with her functions of joy and connection with matter, is explicitly described as a profound sleep of the man. This profound sleep has, of course, its original in Genesis 2:21-22, where God is said to have caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, during which God creates Eve from Adam's rib. Both More and Blake retell the events of Genesis; but both More and Blake also interpret those events and attach special significance to such symbols as the sleep. The significance of the sleep, in which More and Blake largely agree, does not derive directly from the narrative of Genesis, but seems to be peculiar to the interpreters, and consequently to constitute a parallel that cannot be accounted for by reference to their common source in Genesis. In both writers, the feminine portion of the man is characterized as a state of intellectual sleep and material excitement.

. . . God, to gratify *Adam*, made him not  
indefatigable in his aspirings towards  
Intellectual things; Lassitude of Contemplation,  
and of Affectation of Immateriality . . .  
brought upon him remisness and drowsiness to  
such like exercises, till, by degrees, he fell  
into a more profound sleep. At what time . . .  
that lower Vivificative principle of his Soul  
did grow so strong, and did so vigorously,  
and with such exultant sympathy and joy,  
actuate his *Vehicle*, that, in virtue of his  
Integrity, which he yet retain'd, this became  
more dear to him, and of greater contentment  
than any thing he yet had experience of.

(II, 21)

In Blake's account, too, the feminine portion of the man is characterized as a gratifying sleep and a repose from the tiring intellectual activities of the man. The emanation of Los is characterized thus: "Lovely delight of Men Enitharmon shadv refuge from furious war / Thy bosom translucent is a soft repose" (90:5-6). Just as in More's account the "Feminine part" was "highly invigorated in *Adam*, by the remission of exercise in his more subtle and immaterial Faculties" (III, 1), so too in Blake's account the feminine emanation represents a drowsy slackening of exercise. Enitharmon, for example, was "Once born for the sport & amusement of Man"

(10:25), just as the "Feminine part" in More was born "to gratify *Adam*" (II, 21); then Enitharmon is said to "drink up all his Powers" (10:25), just as in More the "Feminine part" is associated with a remission of Adam's powers. Ahania, another emanation in *The Four Zoas*, is said by her masculine portion to reflect "all my indolence my weakness" (43:18), just as in "The Philosophick Cabbala" the "Feminine part" is said to result from a "not indefatigable" male and is associated with his "drowsiness" (II, 21). This explicit and repeated characterization of the feminine portion as a "Vivificative" state of material consciousness and a "profound sleep" of intellectual consciousness (II, 21) is another instance in which More and Blake are parallel.

Blake writes that in *The Four Zoas* he will sing of a "fall into Division" (4:4), and in this very long and very complex poem, he divides his symbolic characters in more ways than one. Like More, he divides masculine from feminine, as described above; but he also divides an original man--Albion--into "Four Mighty Ones" (3:4), the four zoas themselves. These zoas are said to live "in the Brain of Man," and their "bright world . . . is in the Human Brain" (11:15-16). In *The Four Zoas*, the division of these mental faculties and a contention that arises between two of them are specifically said to precipitate the fall from grace; in "The Philosophick Cabbala" also, two very similar mental faculties are considered separately and a similar contention between them is said, equally specifically, to precipitate the fall from grace.

In "The philosophick Cabbala," a faculty of strong feeling, which More calls "the *Concupiscible*," usurps the function of "Reason" (III, 6), and this usurpation is given as the cause of the fall from grace. Similarly, in *The Four Zoas*, Luvah, the zoa of passion and lust, usurps the function of Urizen, the zoa of reason, and this usurpation is given as the cause of the fall. The faculty symbolized by Luvah corresponds closely to "the *Concupiscible*" faculty: Luvah is called "Love" and his "place the place of seed" (126:7-8). Urizen closely corresponds to the faculty of Reason, as his place is the brain (23:12), and he receives the command from the "holy voice" (64:21) to "Go forth & guide my Son" (64:24), which is symbolized by his command of the "horses of Light" (119:27). The contention between them causes the fall in both writers' explanations. More explains the cause: "the *Concupiscible* . . . snatch'd away with it *Adam's Will* and Reason" (III, 6). Blake explains with equal concision: "Urizen gave the horses of Light into the hands of Luvah" (119:27), and, again, "Luvah siez'd the Horses of Light" (10:13). This is the repeated description of the cause of the fall in both writers. More writes that while Adam's Reason was asleep, "*Adam* was wholly set upon doing things . . . as the various toyings and titillations of the lascivient *Life of the Vehicle* [that is, the *Concupiscible* faculty] suggested to him" (III, 6), and "*Adam* again excused himself within himself, that it was the vigour and impetuosity of that *Life of the Vehicle* . . . whereby he miscarried" (III, 12). In Blake's words, while "Urizen sleeps in the porch / Luvah and Vala woke & flew up from the Human Heart /

Into the Brain" (10:10-12). Vala is the emanation of Luvah, and is consequently a function of passion, which is here again said to usurp the place of the sleeping reason.

I do not argue that "The Philosophick Cabbala" is the only source in which Blake could have found such a model: in *Energy and the Imagination* Morton D. Paley, who does not mention "The Philosophick Cabbala" in this connection, cites several other writers who explain that "Passion subverts the place of Reason."<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, the parallel of Urizen's [reason's] displacement by Luvah [passion] with the Intellectual faculty's displacement by "the *Concupiscible*" furnishes another in a series of parallels between More's account of the fall and Blake's.

The foregoing passages illustrate the parallels of the Urizen/Luvah pair with the Concupiscible/Reason pair; but "the *Concupiscible*" or "the Soul's *Vehicle*" also corresponds to the concept of emanation in Blake. Clearly, however, we can expect Blake's long and complex poem to contain a more complicated system of symbols than More's short prose chapters. The fact that the *Vehicle* seems to be like the emanation in many ways and also to be like Luvah in many ways need not suggest a failure of correspondence between Blake and More; Blake's longer and more complicated work contains a longer and more complicated system of concepts. The sleep of Urizen and uprising of Luvah parallels the sleep of Reason and uprising of the "lascivient *Life of the Vehicle*" in More; but, at the same time, the "drowsiness" of Adam and "vital joy" of his *Vehicle* also parallels the "indolence" and "weakness" and "soft repose" of Blake's males and the concomitant vitality of their feminine portions. Thus, the dichotomy of masculine zoa and feminine emanation seems to correspond closely; but when describing the usurpation of Reason's function by a "lascivient" faculty, Blake uses the symbols of Urizen and Luvah. The *Vehicle* in More therefore parallels the emanation in Blake, and it also parallels Luvah; whereas More's shorter and simpler account uses one dichotomy only, Blake's longer and more complicated account of the same story uses more than one. Both pairs in Blake behave very much like More's pair: a similar opposition of similar mental faculties causes the fall from grace in both accounts.

After interpreting its cause, both Blake and More describe a consequence of the fall from grace which constitutes a particularly striking parallel, because it has no apparent source or suggestion in their common source, the Book of Genesis: both writers treat the incarnation of humans in the material world as a result rather than an antecedent of the fall, and they similarly describe the process by which this occurs. More writes that "the Eternal Lord God decreed, that he [Adam] should descend down to be an Inhabitant of the Earth" (III, 16), and Adam does so: "At last the *Plastick power* being fully awakened, *Adam's* Soul descended into the prepared Matter of the Earth, and, in due process of time, *Adam* appeared cloth'd in the skins of beasts; that is, he became a down-right *Terrestrial Animal*, and a mortal creature upon Earth" (III, 21). According to More, this is the process by which all creatures are incarnated in mortal forms: ". . . God, by his *Inward Word* and *Power*, prepared

the Matter in the waters, and near the waters, with several *Vital congruities*, so that it drew in sundry Souls from *the World of Life*" (I, 20). According to More, this does not occur to humanity until after the eating of the forbidden fruit; it occurs as a consequence of the fall from grace. In Blake's account, after the eating of the forbidden fruit, Los exercises a "*Plastick power*," saying: "Stern desire / I feel to fabricate embodied semblances" (90:8-9). Enitharmon, his emanation, responds, urging him to "fabricate forms" (90:22), which the two of them proceed to do. In Blake's account, as in More's, a "spectrous" multitude begins "Assimilating to those forms" (90:41-42): "Enitharmon erected Looms" and "in these Looms She wove the Spectres / Bodies of Vegetation" (100:2-4). Again,

Enitharmon wove in tears Singing Songs of  
Lamentations  
And pitying comfort as she sighd forth on the  
wind the spectres  
And wove them bodies . . .

(103:32-34)

while

. . . Los employed the Sons  
In Golgonoozas Furnaces among the Anvils of  
time & space  
Thus forming a Vast family . . .

(103:35-37)

Although in *The Four Zoas* it is Los and his emanation, and not God himself, who form the bodies into which souls descend, Los is enabled to do this because "the Divine hand was upon him" (100:6). Blake's version, then, of mortal incarnation follows "The Philosophick Cabbala" rather than Genesis by making human incarnation in bodily form a result of the fall rather than a development that occurred before it. Furthermore, both Blake and More depict the process of bodily incarnation with a vision of divinely prepared matter into which previously bodiless spirits descend.

Although the focus of this study is on the relation of *The Four Zoas* to "The Philosophick Cabbala," I would by no means suggest that *The Four Zoas* alone among Blake's poems bears comparison with More's work; Blake's *Milton*, for example, repeats echoes from "The Philosophick Cabbala." Morton D. Paley has pointed out to me that the speech of Leutha, from 11:35 through 13:6 in *Milton*, which is generally recognized to recall *Paradise Lost*, II:747-814, also clearly recalls More's *Conjectura Cabbalistica*. Leutha says that

. . . entering the doors of Satans brain night  
after night  
Like sweet perfumes I stupified the masculine  
perceptions  
And kept only the feminine awake.

(12:4-6)

This passage has obvious affinities with More's passage in which the "*masculine Adam*" suffers

"remisness and drowsiness" as the feminine portion or "Vivificative principle of his Soul did grow so strong" (II, 18,21). Further, just as More writes

. . . Adam again excused himself within himself,  
that it was the vigour and impetuosity of that  
*Life in the Vehicle*, which God himself implanted  
in it, whereby he miscarried: the woman that  
God had given him,

(III, 12)

Leutha, the counterpart of this feminine Vehicle in *Milton*, says: "I am the Author of this Sin!" (11:35) and

. . . my fault, when at noon of day  
The Horses of Palamabron call'd for rest and  
pleasant death:  
I sprang out of the breast of Satan, over the  
Harrow beaming  
In all my beauty! that I might unloose the  
flaming steeds

(12:8-11)

Here, as in *The Four Zoas*, Blake repeats the emergence of a feminine portion from a masculine character, recalling the pattern in More's work; and here, too, he repeats yet another pattern found in "The Philosophick Cabbala": a crisis following an intrapsychic division and a usurpation by one mental faculty of another. Just as in "The Philosophick Cabbala" "the *Concupiscible* . . . snatch'd away with it *Adam's Will and Reason*" (III, 6), and in *The Four Zoas*, "Luvah siez'd the Horses of Light" (10:13), in *Milton* the pattern is repeated: Leutha's attempt to "unloose the flaming steeds / As Elynittria use'd to do" (12:11-12) precipitates a crisis; "they brake the traces" (12:13) and thereby bring about "A Hell of our own making. see, its flames still gird me round" (12:23). In the pattern of the feminine portion's emergence, then, and in the pattern of intrapsychic usurpation precipitating a crisis, *Milton*, like *The Four Zoas*, bears comparison with "The Philosophick Cabbala." Thus, neither Blake's tendency to recall More's work nor the specific ideas and configurations that he adopts are strictly limited to *The Four Zoas*.

Clearly, at any rate, "The Philosophick Cabbala" furnishes a long series of parallels to *The Four Zoas*: there are similarities between More's "Feminine part" and Blake's emanation; between the two writers' explanations that conflicts among mental faculties caused the fall from grace; and between their descriptions of the descent of spirits into bodily form as a consequence of the fall. So many parallels may suggest a relation between Blake's work and More's. The probable availability of More's work to Blake may even suggest a possible direct relation; but the internal evidence alone of so many similarities constitutes at least, I believe, some indirect relation that may--or may not--be coincidental.

<sup>1</sup> For book-length studies of this relation, see especially George Mills Harper, *The Neoplatonism of William Blake* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1961), and Kathleen Raine, *Blake and Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1968).

<sup>2</sup> Mona Wilson, *The Life of William Blake* (London: Nonesuch Press, 1927). My citation is from the reprint of the revised edition (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1969), p. 52; Harper, pp. 43-44; and Morton D. Paley, *Energy and the Imagination, A Study of the Development of Blake's Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), p. 206.

<sup>3</sup> S. Foster Damon, *William Blake: His Philosophy and Symbols* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1924), p. 167, and Wilson, p. 52.

<sup>4</sup> James King, "The Meredith Family, Thomas Taylor, and William Blake," *Studies in Romanticism*, 2 (1972), pp. 153-57.

<sup>5</sup> Harper, p. 11.

<sup>6</sup> e.g., Damon, pp. 167, 328, 341, 367, 384, 467; Desirée Hirst, *Hidden Riches: Traditional Symbolism from the Renaissance to Blake* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1964), pp. 158-59; and Paley, pp. 216-17.

<sup>7</sup> Henry More, *Conjectura Cabbalistica. or, A Conjectural Essay of Interpreting the Minds of Moses, according to a Threefold Cabbala: viz., Literal, Philosophical, Mystical, or, Divinely Moral* (London: J. Flesher, 1653); also printed in *A Collection of Several Philosophical Writings of Dr. Henry More . . . 4th ed.* (London: J. Downing, 1712), from which I quote.

<sup>8</sup> I use the text of *The Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, ed. David V. Erdman (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1965), pp. 296-392. Citations include Blake's manuscript page number and line number as indicated by Erdman.

<sup>9</sup> Paley, 91 ff. Paley cites Plato's *Phaedrus*, Ovid's story of Phaeton, Prudentius' *Psychomachia*, 11. 740-42, and Milton's *Paradise Lost*, IX:1125-31.

# THE FOUR ZOAS: THE TEXT OF PAGES 5, 6, & 7, NIGHT THE FIRST

ANDREW LINCOLN

The first Night of *The Four Zoas* is one of the most heavily revised parts of the poem, and the physical evidence in the manuscript is sometimes highly confusing, especially where Blake changed his mind more than once about a particular revision. Blake's editors have the daunting task of trying to establish the latest revision of the text when the process of revision was probably never finally completed. The conflicting evidence about the ending of Night the First has been interpreted convincingly,<sup>1</sup> but there are some areas of the text which require further consideration.

## THE UNION OF THARMAS AND ENION

Erdman says that the fragment page 143 represents Blake's revision of the text of page 7 of *The Four Zoas*,<sup>2</sup> and in his text (pages 299-300) its readings are given priority over the readings of page 7. The relationship between the two manuscript pages is complicated, and requires consideration in some detail.

The modified copperplate text on pages 5-7<sup>3</sup> describes how Tharmas sinks into the sea and his Spectre emerges to woo Enion. A dialogue between Enion and the Spectre leads into the description of their mating in the surviving copperplate lines on the lower half of page 7. Hardly any of the original copperplate text that was erased on pages 3-6 can be deciphered, but Erdman has reconstructed the first six copperplate lines at the top of page 7 thus:

- ? "Weeping, then bending from his Clouds he  
stoopd his innocent head"  
? "And stretching out his holy hand in the vast  
Deep sublime"  
? "Turnd round the circle of Destiny with tears  
& bitter sighs"  
And said Return O Wanderer when the day of  
clouds is o'er;

So saying he ... ? fell ... into the  
restless sea  
Round rolld ?the ... globe self balanc'd.

It appears from these lines that in the original copperplate text the union between Tharmas and Enion occurred when the "innocent" Tharmas fell into the sea, and that he, rather than the Spectre, was Enion's partner. It is possible that there was no mention of the Spectre in the copperplate text. Certainly, the term only appears in additions in the copperplate lines surviving on page 7 (in lines 23 and 27). Erdman (p. 743) observes that the first six lines at the top of page 7 "were apparently moved to p 5 for the modified copperplate addition there of lines 9-14 and 25," and they may well have been moved towards the beginning of the Night to make room for the account of the emergence of the Spectre introduced on pages 5-7. It is very strange that Enion's partner in the union, in the copperplate text, should have been the "innocent" Tharmas, as the description of the union on page 7 refers to his "horrible brightness" and his "poisons," which seem to be qualities characteristic of the Spectre. This anomaly suggests that when he transcribed the copperplate text, Blake had already developed a myth involving the union of Enion with a spectre-like Tharmas, but that for some reason he decided to omit the description of this character. Perhaps he had found no way of relating the spectre-like figure to the innocent Tharmas: these conflicting aspects of Tharmas' divided character are related in the modified copperplate revisions by the device of the Spectre. Blake's difficulties in the copperplate text may have arisen from the fact that he had not yet invented this device, and that the spectre-like character was called simply Tharmas--as in the fragment page 141.

Bearing this possibility in mind, I want to turn to the text of the fragment pages 143-44,

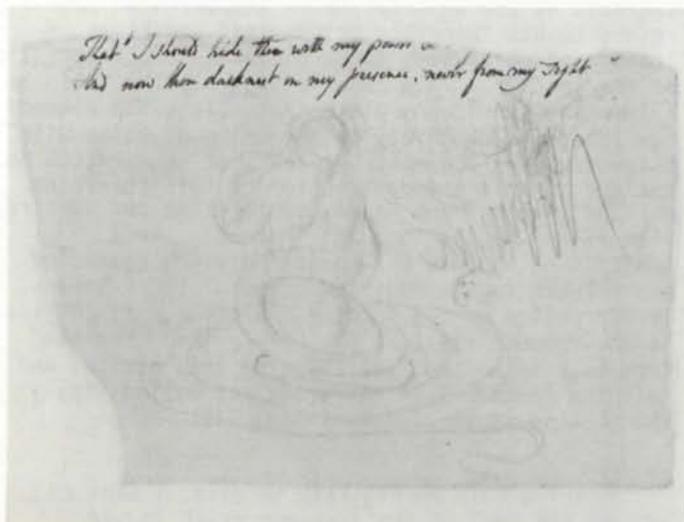
which is transcribed below.<sup>4</sup> Additions are enclosed in angle brackets <>; pencil additions are preceded by <sup>0</sup>; deletions and erasures are in italics within square brackets, [*thus*].

<<sup>0</sup>Opening his rifted rocks> mingling [*their bodies*] <<sup>0</sup>together they> join in burning anguish  
 Mingling his horrible [*brightness*] <<sup>0</sup>darkness>  
 with her tender limbs then high she soared <<sup>0</sup>72>  
 Shrieking above the ocean: a bright wonder that  
 nature shudder at  
 Half Woman & half [*Serpent*] <<sup>0</sup>beast> all his  
 [*lovely changing*] <<sup>0</sup>darkly waving> colours mix  
 With her fair crystal clearness in her lips &  
 cheeks his [*poisons*] <metals> rose  
 In blushes like the morning & his [*scaly armour*]  
 <<sup>0</sup>rocky features> softning  
 A [*monster*] <<sup>0</sup>wonder> lovely in the heavens or  
 wandering on the earth 140  
 With [*Serpent*] <female> voice <warbling upon  
 the [*hills*] & hollow vales>  
 Beauty all blushing with desire <a Self  
 enjoying wonder>  
 <For Enion brooded groaning loud the rough seas  
 vegetate. Golden rocks rise from the [*vorte*]  
 <vast>>  
 And thus her voice; <Glory, delight, & sweet  
 enjoyment born>  
 <To mild Eternity shut in a threefold shape  
 delightful>  
 To wander in <sweet> solitude <enrapturd> at  
 every wind  
 <[*Shining across the ocean/ Enion brooded  
 groaning the golden rocks vegetate The ?b*]>  
 <[*to*] Infolding the bright woman [*from the  
 desolating winds / & thus her voice &*]>

On the verso of this leaf (page 144) are two lines, one cut short where the page is torn:

That I should hide thee with my power &  
 And now thou darkest in my presence, never  
 from my sight

Beneath these lines is a drawing of a nude figure entwined by a serpent.



Bentley, commenting on this fragment, argues that "Blake was copying from the copperplate draft (probably already bound at this point) into his notebook." His argument rests chiefly on the fact that the lines on page 144 appear as an addition on page 7, and on the observation that "the first draft of the notebook clearly reproduces corrections in Night I, while none of the changes introduced into the notebook are repeated in Night I."<sup>5</sup> The two lines on page 144 reappear on page 7 as part of a modified copperplate revision describing the Spectre's relationship with Enion. If, as I suggest, the description of the spectre-like Tharmas existed before the copperplate text of Night I was transcribed, it follows that the lines on page 144 may have existed long before they appeared as additions on page 7. Parts of the basic text of both pages 7 and 143 have been obscured by subsequent revisions, but there are two examples of additions on page 7 which appear in the basic text of page 143. Unfortunately, both of these are problematic. On page 7 "Shrieking" was added in the margin before "Above the ocean" in line 22; it was subsequently deleted, which suggests that Blake changed his mind more than once about including it. In the same line "Nature" is clearly an addition replacing "Beulah";<sup>6</sup> but "Beulah" was an addition over an erased word, which introduces the possibility that when Blake deleted Beulah he was restoring the original term.<sup>7</sup> In other words it is not really clear whether page 143 does incorporate corrections made on page 7, or whether Blake derived the account on page 7 from the fragment, making changes which were subsequently revoked; and the fact that none of the changes made in the fragment were repeated in Night I gives no indication of relative date.

The text of page 143 has been subject to three distinct sets of revisions. The earliest are probably the additions made over erasures. That Blake should have bothered to make erasures here casts some doubt on the idea that the fragment comes from a notebook, as it indicates that he had some concern for the appearance of the page--that it was regarded in the first place as a fair copy, and that the revisions were not intended to be retranscribed in a subsequent fair copy. The additions made over erasures were probably appropriate to the original context of the fragment, but they seem inappropriate for the context of Night I. They consistently emphasize that the product of the union is an epitome of the female will: the words "female," "warbling," "sweet," "enrapturd" all contribute to the feeling of sexual bliss. Bentley suggests that the words "Glory delight & sweet enjoyment born" are the beginning of "Enion's song about the beauties of the natural world."<sup>8</sup> However, the song seems singularly inappropriate to Enion, who in *The Four Zoas* consistently complains about the conditions of experience (in the first two Nights she sings two great laments about the horrors of the natural world). This anomaly is emphasized by a separate

set of revisions in the fragment which introduce a "groaning" Enion to sing the song (lines 10, 14, 15).

In the basic text of the fragment the song is sung by the product of the union of the male and female partners. Raine suggests that the description of the union is derived from Ovid's story of Hermaphroditus,<sup>9</sup> the youth who is ensnared in a river by the water nymph Salmacis, until both are fused into a single, hermaphroditic body. Thus, the union in the fragment appears to be a union in the literal sense, a "mingling" of two bodies to form a new creature which has a dual nature. Ovid's tale is a story of female triumph, and the tone of ironic rapture in the song on page 143 seems appropriate to the beginning of a song celebrating the triumph of the female will. It is a song which would be more appropriate to Enitharmon than to Enion (see for example Enitharmon's songs in *Europe* and *The Four Zoas* 34:56-90); and Enitharmon would seem to be the likely product of the union of two characters called Tharmas and Enion who are fused into a single, fallen being.

So far, then, I have made two suggestions: (a) that in the copperplate text of pages 3-7 Blake was adapting an earlier myth with only partial success, omitting the description of the spectre-like Tharmas; and (b) that the basic text of page 143 may have been part of a myth describing the creation of Enitharmon. These are both conjectures drawn from meager evidence, but I believe they are supported by other available evidence, and that they help to illuminate the problem of the relative dates of pages 7 and 143.

One set of revisions on page 143 is in pencil. These revisions consistently modify the "bright" or spectre-like qualities of Tharmas in the union. For example, "horrible brightness" becomes "horrible darkness," "lovely changing colours" become "darkly waving colours," and "scaly armour" becomes "rocky features." All of these changes seem designed to suggest that Tharmas degenerates into a desolate marine god as he mates with Enion. If Blake did omit the Spectre from the copperplate text of pages 3 to 7, he may well have considered making changes like these to eradicate the spectral qualities which remained in the description of the union. However, being in pencil they may have been tentative suggestions which Blake decided not to adopt when he transcribed page 7.

The remaining revisions on page 143 were in ink. Blake began these revisions by inserting two lines (written as one) between lines 9 and 11: "For Enion brooded groaning loud the rough seas vegetate. Golden rocks rise from the vorte . . ." (part of the second line was lost when the page was torn). He made a second attempt at this revision at the foot of the page, lines 14 and 15. The initial half-line "Shining across the ocean" would replace the end of line 9. Blake conflated the two lines of his previous insertion into a single line by substituting "golden rocks" in the second line for "rough seas" in the first. The conflated line is followed by "The V . . .," or "The b . . .," the remains of words which were lost when the page was

torn. The next line reads "[to] Infolding the bright woman [*from the desolating winds*]," the initial "to" being part of an instruction: in other words, Blake was probably indicating that another passage, from "The ?b . . ." to "Infolding the bright woman . . ." should be introduced here. The conflated line appears in the copperplate text of page 8 as "Enion brooded, oer the rocks, the rough rocks <groaning vegetate>," and this line introduces a description of the awakening natural world which begins "The barked oak . . ." and ends with the line "Infolding the bright children from the desolating winds." This may have been the passage cited for inclusion in the text of page 143.

If the basic text of page 143 originally described how Tharmas and Enion lose their individual identities to become Enitharmon, Blake would have made revisions like these when he adapted the text for use in *The Four Zoas*. Tharmas and Enion were to remain separate, and he had to account for the creation of Enitharmon's consort, Los. The added reference to Enion brooding identifies the woman-serpent with Enion herself, suggesting that Enion temporarily assumes this form while mating with Tharmas. The additions still end with "& thus her voice," so at this stage Blake still intended to introduce the lyric song which would be inappropriate to Enion; but the additions introduce "rough seas," a "groaning" Enion and "desolating winds," all in stark contrast to the blissful tone of the rest of the passage. In the copperplate text the revisions begun in the fragment are apparently taken one stage further: the song is omitted; "golden rocks" become "rough rocks," "golden" probably being eliminated because it seemed out of keeping with Enion's desolate condition; and the "bright woman" of 143:15, a phrase inappropriate to the degenerate Enion, becomes "bright children," enabling Blake to suggest that both Los and Enitharmon were created by the union. It seems, then, that in the fragment Blake was beginning to make necessary adjustments to the tone of the passage, and that this process is more complete in the copperplate text. Page 143 may represent an intermediate stage in the composition of the copperplate text, and all of the revisions on the page may have been made before the copperplate text was transcribed. The substitution of page 143 for page 7 in the text of *The Four Zoas* therefore seems unjustified. We must turn to the copperplate text itself to establish a final text.

### THE INK CIRCLES ON PAGES 5, 6, & 7

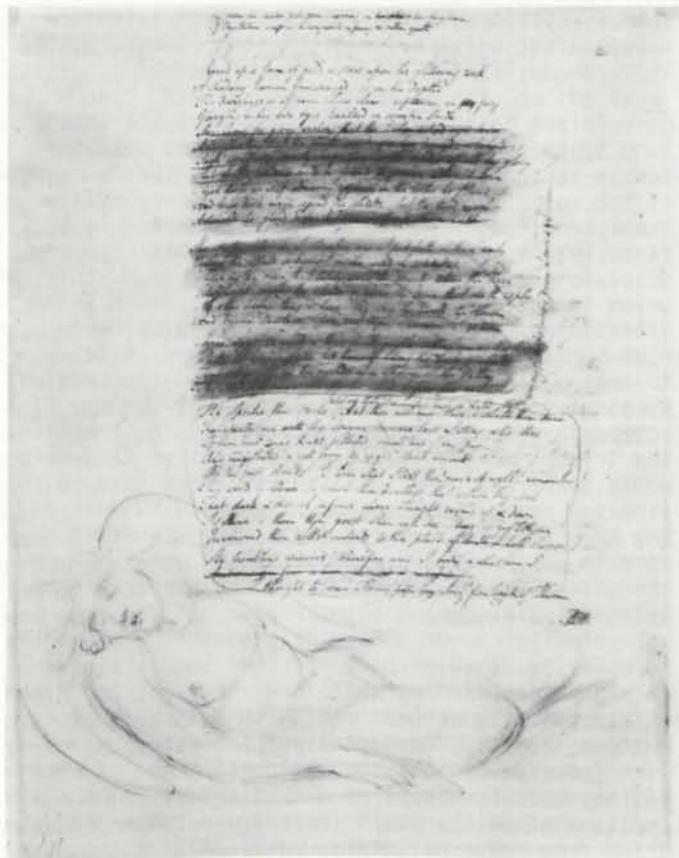
In three places near the beginning of the poem, deleted passages were circled in ink. These are: 5:46-55, Enion's horrified reaction to the Spectre; 6:26, 28-38 (a single block), the Spectre's accusation of Enion and her reply; 7:1-11, the rest of Enion's reply to the Spectre. Blake did not normally draw an ink circle around a passage he wanted to delete, which suggests that these circles have a special significance.

The circled passage at the foot of page 5 was deleted by three slanting ink strokes. However, part of the circle was erased when lines 29 and 30



The Four Zoas, p. 5.

were added, and part of a deleting line was erased when Blake revised the end of line 48 (Bentley does not record this revision, but Erdman shows that "Love is changed to . . . hate" is a subsequent addition). The passage was revised after it had been deleted, and after it had been circled. The circled passage at the foot of page 6 was deleted by two slanting ink strokes, but these strokes were partly erased when Blake made additions in lines 29-31, and part of the circle was erased when Blake added line 38 at the bottom of the passage. Again, this means that the passage was revised after both the ink circle and the deleting lines had been added. On the same page lines 9-25 were deleted by ink strokes and also by a grey wash. The grey wash, however, does not cover the circled passage. At the top of page 7 two long slanting ink strokes deleted the text down to line 18, extending down below the ink circle (which surrounds lines 1 to 11). Within the circle the deleting lines were partly erased when lines 1 to 8 were added. Here, as in the other circled passages, the text was revised after it had been deleted. Revisions to the deleted text only occur within the ink circles, which suggests that the passages were first deleted, and subsequently circled in ink because Blake changed his mind and decided to retain them. The fact that the gray wash on page 6 avoids the circled passage but covers the other deleted lines on the page seems to confirm this.



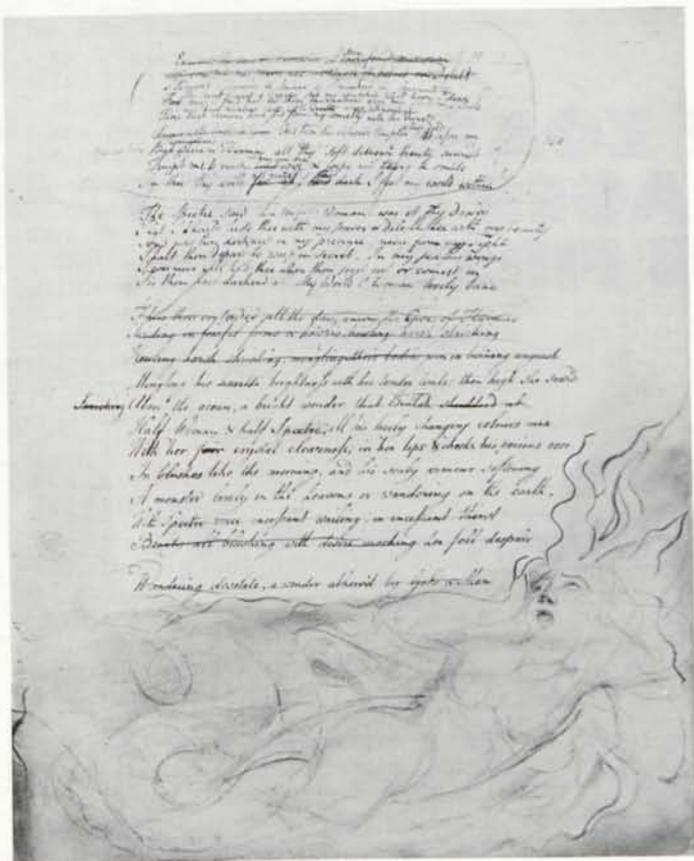
The Four Zoas, p. 6.

It seems possible, then, that the final text on pages 5, 6, and 7 should include some lines which were once deleted, and which are not included in the text edited by Erdman and Stevenson:

PAGE 5. All the lines within the circle (46-55) should probably be retained as none were individually deleted; but not two lines (29 and 30) added above the circle, which were individually deleted by ink strokes; nor the two lines below the circle--the pencilled insert line 56 (which seems to have been partly erased), and line 57 (which was deleted individually by a pencil stroke).

PAGE 6. Line 1 follows on from 5:55. Lines 9-25 were deleted by ink strokes and gray wash, and none of the deletion was superseded by subsequent revisions, so these lines are definitely excluded. The circled passage (lines 26-38) was revised after deletion, but some lines within the passage were deleted individually in pencil. The end of the first line and all of the second line ("Art thou not my slave & shalt thou dare / To smite me with thy tongue beware lest I sting thee also") were deleted and replaced by an addition of one-and-a-half lines (the full line subsequently deleted):

Who art thou Diminutive husk & shell  
[Broke from my bonds I scorn my prison I scorn  
& yet I love.]



*The Four Zoas*, p. 7.

Lines 29-36 follow on from these. Part of the circle was erased when line 38 was added, effectively replacing line 37 which was deleted in pencil. The circled passage, thus revised, should probably be retained in the text.

PAGE 7. An ink circle surrounds lines 1-11, and deleting strokes within the circle were superseded when lines 1-8 were added. Lines 1 and 2 were subsequently deleted individually. Line 8 was revised as follows: "[Among wild beasts to roam] And thou the delusive tempter <to these deeds> sittest before me." (The first part of the line was deleted in pencil, and the words "to these deeds" were written above a gap between "tempter" and "sittest"). Lines 9, 10, and 11 were deleted individually in pencil, but a pencilled note in the margin by line 11 reads "this line to come in," indicating that the deletion of this line has been revoked. The final text at the top of page 7, therefore, should probably include lines 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, & 11. The text continues from line 11 with the undeleted lines 21-26, which describe the union of the Spectre of Tharmas and Enion. The transition from line 11 to line 21 is unsatisfactory, and Blake made no other addition on the page to ease this transition. However, as this seems to be the latest, if incomplete, revision of the text of page 7, this may be the textual arrangement we should adopt.

<sup>1</sup> See W. H. Stevenson, "Two problems in *The Four Zoas*," *Blake Newsletter* 3 (Dec. 1967), pp. 14-17.

<sup>2</sup> *The Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, ed. David V. Erdman, commentary by Harold Bloom, rev. ed. (New York, 1968), p. 742.

<sup>3</sup> In all quotations line numbering follows that in *Vala, or The Four Zoas*, ed. G. E. Bentley, Jr. (Oxford, 1963), hereafter referred to as Bentley.

<sup>4</sup> This transcript differs in some readings (and in the marking of passages as insertions) from the 1968 text, since it incorporates corrections made by Erdman after reading this essay in draft and consulting the manuscript again.

<sup>5</sup> Bentley, p. 160.

<sup>6</sup> When he composed the description of the union, Blake may have been thinking of Milton's description of the original sin:

Earth felt the wound, and Nature from her seat  
Sighing through all her works gave signs of woe.

*Paradise Lost*, IX, 781-82

<sup>7</sup> I now make out the erased word to be "Nature"--D.V.E.

<sup>8</sup> Bentley, p. 160. Bentley apparently thinks that the descriptive passage 8:14-17 was to become part of Enitharmon's song.

<sup>9</sup> Kathleen Raine, *Blake and Tradition* (Princeton, 1968), I, 282-85.

# THE FOUR ZOAS: NEW TEXT FOR PAGES 5, 6, & 7, NIGHT THE FIRST

DAVID V. ERDMAN

**A**ndrew Lincoln's demonstration that *FZ* 143 is not necessarily later than *FZ* 7 is fully persuasive. I have now looked once more at the manuscript and can see that my previous misconstruction of the sequence of revisions had prevented me from recognizing what constituted the proper final text. It had also given me misleading clues that distracted me from deciphering two of the heavily erased words. I can now see that "Serpent" is the original reading in 7:10 as well as in 143:4 and 143:8--and that the second reading in 143:8 is "female". The evidence is hence clear that the final variants in page 143 constitute a layer of revision intermediate between the first readings of that page and the final readings of page 7. And it is impressively evident that the second "half" of the creature that is half woman and half something else, in 7:23 and 143:4, begins as a serpent and ends as a spectre, with this sequence of metamorphoses:

Half Woman & half Serpent<sup>7,143</sup> / beast<sup>143</sup> /  
Spectre<sup>7</sup>

But what does this sequence establish in the other variants on these pages?

HYPOTHESIS 1: That the movement from serpent to beast to spectre is a spiral, the spectre evolving as a higher kind of serpent.

If this is true, then unchanged terms in page 7 should apply first to serpent and finally to spectre. The "scaly armour" of 7:25 and 143:6 (1st rdg) belongs to serpent and finally to spectre; the "rocky features" of 143:6 2nd rdg belong only to the beast. The "brightness" of 7:21 remains unchanged but shifts in 143:2 to "darkness" for the beast. The combination of woman and serpent or spectre is a "monster"; the combination of woman and beast is a "wonder"; it has "rocky

features" and "darkly waving colours" rather than the "lovely changing colours" of the "monster". The somewhat anomalous shift from "Serpent voice" to "female voice" in 143:8 seems to make both halves female: that voice is given to "warbling"; but in page 7 the voice, whether of Serpent or of Spectre (first and final readings), keeps to "incessant wailing".

HYPOTHESIS 2: That the movement is from "Serpent" and/or "Spectre" to "beast".

In that case (assumed to be true by Bentley and Erdman) the changes introduced by the second readings of page 143, when treated as revisions to page 7 (as in the Doubleday text), produce final readings that are inconsistent with the context established in pages 5 and 6, where "Spectre" is the latest reading. (Keynes avoided such confusion by keeping page 143 separate as an "additional fragment"; but then neither Keynes nor Bentley unearthed the "beast," being lost in a misreading of that word as "desart".) (For a demonstration deducing hypothesis 2 from the fact that "brightness" and "scaly armour" et cetera are unchanged in page 7, see Bentley, "The Composition and Growth of *Vala*," in his 1963 facsimile edition, p. 160, fn. 4.)

The changes required in the Doubleday text and textual notes (pp. 299-300 and 740-42) and also in the Longmans text (pp. 298-99) can be spelled out in the Doubleday format as follows:

Doubleday page 299. PAGE 5. After line 43 add ten lines as follows:

What have I done! said Enion accursed  
wretch! What deed. t  
Is this a deed of Love I know what I  
have done. I know

Too late now to repent. Love is changd  
to deadly Hate t  
A[~~ll~~] life is blotted out & I alone t  
remain possesd with Fears t  
I see the Shadow of the dead within my t  
Soul wandering t  
In darkness & solitude forming Seas of t  
Doubt & rocks of Repentance t  
Already are my Eyes reverted. all  
that I behold 50  
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 t

[space]

PAGE 6. After line 8 add ten lines as follows:  
(no extra space):

The Spectre thus spoke. Who art thou t  
Diminutive husk & shell t  
If thou hast sinnd & art polluted know t 10  
that I am pure t  
And unpolluted & will bring to rigid t  
strict account t  
All thy past deeds [So] hear what I tell  
thee! mark it well! remember!  
This world is Thine in which thou t  
dwellest that within thy soul t  
That dark & dismal infinite where  
Thought roams up & down  
Is Mine & there thou goest when with t 15  
one Sting of my tongue t  
Envenomd thou rollst inwards to the  
place whence I emergd t

[space]

She trembling answerd Wherefore was I t  
born & what am I t  
I thought to weave a Covering for my t  
Sins from wrath of Tharmas t

PAGE 7. Without a space, insert the following  
seven lines at the beginning:

I thought Tharmas a Sinner & I murderd t  
his Emanations t  
His secret loves & Graces Ah me wretched t  
What have I done t  
For now I find that all those Emanations t  
were my Childrens Souls t  
And I have murderd them with Cruelty t  
above atonement t  
Those that remain have fled from my  
cruelty into the desarts 5  
And thou the delusive tempter to these t  
deeds sittest before me t  
In this thy world not mine tho dark I t  
feel my world within t

After a space, replace the 14 lines of text with  
the following six:

Mingling his horrible brightness with her t  
tender limbs; then high she soar'd t  
Above the ocean; a bright wonder [that] t  
Nature [*shudder'd at*] t  
Half Woman & half Spectre, all his t  
lovely changing colours mix t 10

With her fair crystal clearness; in her  
lips & cheeks his poisons rose t  
In blushes like the morning, and his t  
scaly armour softening t  
A monster lovely in the heavens or  
wandering on the earth, t

PAGE 8 follows, with no extra space.

These changes in the text necessitate the following  
changes in the Textual Notes, pages 740-43:

740-41: delete everything from "Ten deleted  
lines follow" through "line it would replace";  
insert the following:

Lines 44-53 were cancelled by three diagonal  
strokes but then circled in ink for restoration to  
the text. (For a convincing demonstration that such  
circling, on pages 5-7 and not found elsewhere, was  
intended to bring the circled lines back "in," see  
Andrew Lincoln in (this issue of) *Blake*.

46 Love is changed to . . . Hate] ?Alone  
?possessed by . . . Fears *1st rdg del*

47 All life] [*All*] <A> life *ms rdg*; the erasure  
of "All" was evidently a slip; Blake never used the  
phrase "a life" in the meaning it would have here.

48 Shadow . . . Soul] remembrance . . . eyes  
*1st rdg del*

49 Doubt . . . Repentance] Trouble . . . sorrow  
*1st rdg del*

53] There follow a penciled insert and a deleted  
line it would replace:

Revise the central line on p. 741 to read: "After  
line 8 follow 17 lines deleted by diagonal strokes  
and a grey wash:" and then delete everything after  
the 17th line, ending "manifest," to the end of  
the note (i. e. from "The Spectre thus spoke"  
through "wrath of Tharmas"). Insert the following  
page 6 notes:

Lines 9-19 were deleted by diagonal strokes but  
then restored by a circling ink line.

9-10 Who art thou . . . shell] An insertion,  
with this continuation (later deleted) up the  
right margin:

Broke from thy bonds I scorn my prison I  
scorn & yet I love

The insertion before deletion was to replace this  
*1st rdg*:

Art thou not my slave & shalt thou dare  
To smite me with thy tongue beware lest I  
sting also thee

10-12 If thou . . . past deeds] inserted over  
erasure.

12 So] conjectural reading of strokes imperfectly  
inked.

13 Thine] Mine *1st rdg del*

15 Mine] *mended from thine*

The Spectre is crowding Enion into the outer world  
while he invades the infinite within.

16 whence I emergd] of death & hell *1st rdg del*;  
where *2nd rdg del*

17] A deleted line follows:

A sorrow & a fear a living torment & naked  
Victim

18 for my] for his *1st rdg del*

Replace all of the "PAGE 7 (& 143)" note, up through the fifth printed line at the top of p. 743, with the following:

PAGE 7

Page 7 is a thicket of erased and deleted original and additional lines. The top block of 9 added lines has been deleted, then restored by an ink circle, then heavily revised; the last of these (line 7 in the present text) is so crossed out and mended that to restore it Blake has written "This line to come in" alongside it. The lower half of the page consists of original copperplate writing, with some mending and some deletion of lines. The undeleted original lines appear also on p 143 (a

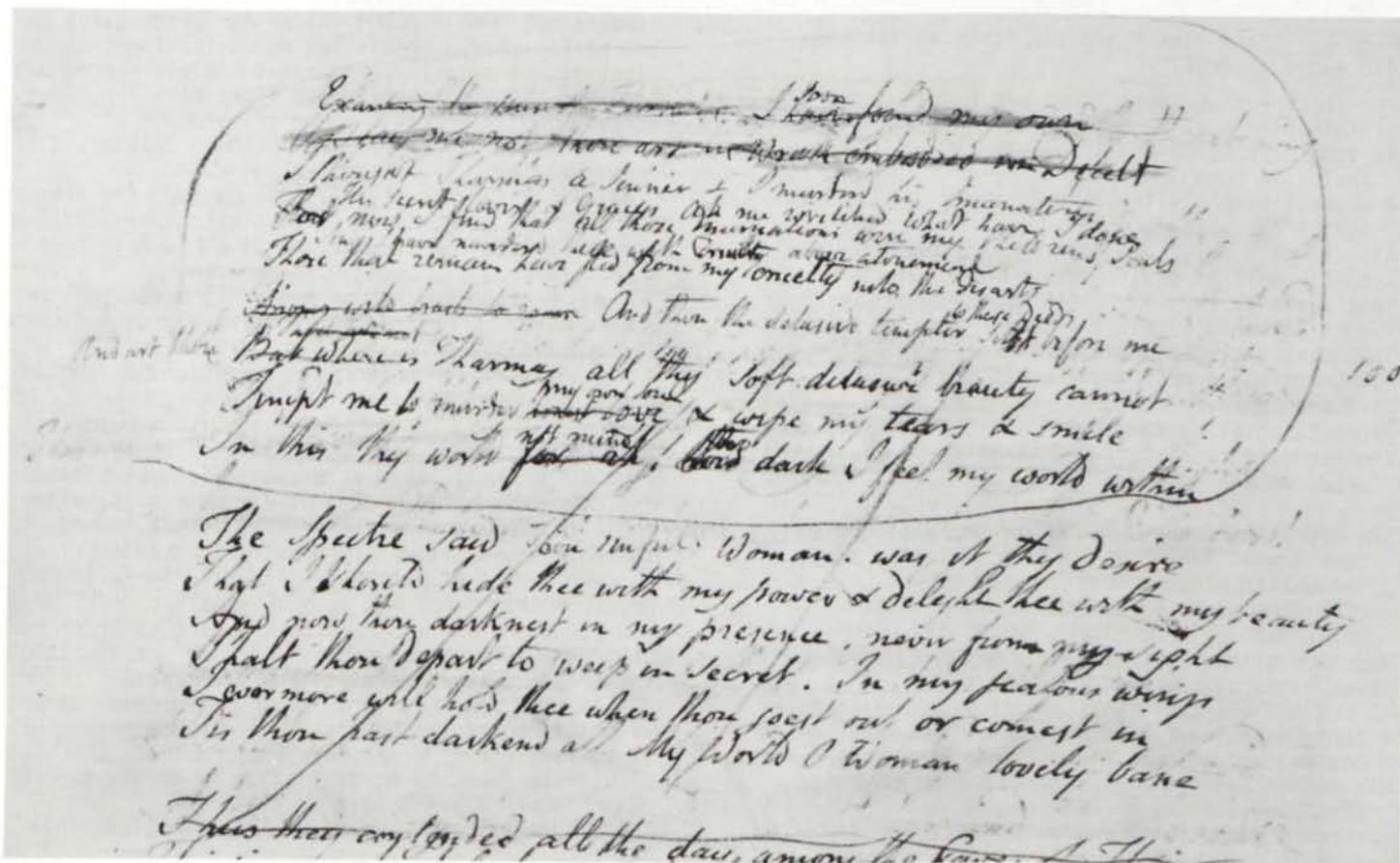
Under lines 1-3 and the preceding cancelled lines are three erased lines in Blake's usual hand, the last

[Here retain the Doubleday textual note, from "word of the 1st line" through "globe self balanc'd"; replace the remainder of the note with the following:]

4] An inserted line.

6] Among wild beasts to roam And thou the delusive tempter *1st rdg del*, followed by two cancelled lines:

[*But where is*]~~[*Thou art not*]~~><And art thou>Tharmas all thy Soft delusive beauty cannot



smaller leaf but neatly written as if begun as fair copy, perhaps of a draft preceding the large copperplate pages) and are there revised. Until recently it has been assumed that the revisions of p 143 were later than the final text of p 7, but Andrew Lincoln argues convincingly that the final revisions on p 7 are later than those on p 143.

1] Preceded by two lines, mended and then heavily cancelled after Blake's encircling:

Examining the sins of Tharmas I [*have*]~~<soon>~~  
found my own  
O slay me not thou art his Wrath embodied in  
Deceit

2] An inserted line.

3 For] But *1st rdg del*

Tempt me to murder [*honest love*]~~<my own soul>~~&  
wipe my tears & smile

7 not mine tho] for ah! how *1st rdg del*  
Six cancelled lines follow, after a stanza break:

The Spectre said Thou sinful Woman. was it  
thy Desire  
That I should hide thee with my power & delight  
thee with my beauty  
And now thou darknest in my presence. never  
from my sight  
Shalt thou depart to weep in secret. In my  
jealous wings  
I evermore will hold thee when thou goest out  
or comest in

Tis thou hast darkend all My World O Woman  
lovely bane

After another stanza break, we return to the original copperplate text, beginning with three deleted lines:

Thus they contended all the day among the Caves  
of Tharmas

Twisting in fearful forms & howling <howling  
harsh shrieking>

<Howling>harsh shrieking, mingling their bodies  
join in burning anguish

Page 143 begins with a variant of the last line:

<Opening his rifted rocks> mingling [*their  
bodies*]<together they> join in burning anguish

(The rocks accord with the "rocky features" of the "beast" of the middle version; see below.)

8 horrible] 1st and 3rd rdg, del but not erased,  
p 7, only rdg p 143; terrible 2nd rdg erased p 7  
brightness] p 7, 1st rdg del p 143; darkness 2nd  
rdg p 143

9 Above the ocean;] p 7; Shrieking above the  
ocean: p 143; on p 7 "Shrieking" is inserted before  
the line but then deleted. Nature] 1st rdg del and  
3rd rdg, p 7; Beulah 2nd rdg del p 7; "that" and  
"shudder'd at" are cancelled but not replaced on p  
7; p 143 reads "that nature shudder'd at".

10 Spectre] 2nd rdg p 7; Serpent 1st rdg del p 7,  
1st rdg p 143; beast 2nd rdg p 143 lovely  
changing] p 7 and 1st rdg del p 143; darkly waving  
2nd rdg p 143

11 poisons] p 7 and 1st rdg del p 143; metals 2nd  
rdg p 143

12 scaly armour] p 7 and 1st rdg del p 143; rocky  
features 2nd rdg p 143 softening] softning p 143

13 monster] p 7 and 1st rdg del p 143; wonder 2nd  
rdg p 143 wandering] wandring p 143

Page 143 continues:

With [*Serpent*]-<female> voice <warbling upon  
the [*hills*] & hollow vales>

Beauty all blushing with desire a Self enjoying  
wonder

(The insertions are written on top of almost illegible erasures, but the *p* and *t* of "Serpent" have left traces in precisely the right places.)

Page 7 continues with three deleted lines:

With [*Serpent*]-<Spectre> voice incessant wailing;  
in incessant thirst

Beauty all blushing with desire mocking her  
fell despair

[space]  
Wandering desolate, a wonder abhorr'd by Gods  
& Men

The revision to "Spectre" suggests that p 143 was put aside before these lines on p 7 were deleted. Page 143 originally continued, after a stanza break:

And thus her voice; <Glory, delight, & sweet  
enjoyment born>

<To mild Eternity shut in a threefold shape  
delightful>

To wander in <sweet>solitude<enrapturd>at  
every wind

(The second line and the two words bracketed in the third were written over erasures.) In the break before these three lines and in the bottom margin below them are two versions of a passage to be adapted from the deleted copperplate text of p 8 and to be followed by line 11 ("And thus her voice") et cetera. In the deleted text (lines 5-13 following 8:7) Enion broods, after bearing two infants, and vegetation grows up from the rough rocks to shelter them. The revision may be intended to have the vegetation grow up to shelter Enion before she gives birth to the children.

The version at the bottom of p 143 (possibly written first) is crowded in like prose but may be lined out, with the help of Blake's slashes and capitals. It begins with a half line that could be meant to replace "a Self enjoying wonder" at the end of 143:9:

Shining across the ocean /  
Enion brooded groaning the golden rocks vegetate  
The b . . . [paper torn away]  
to  
Infolding the bright woman from the desolating  
winds /  
& thus her voice &[c] [paper torn away]

The suggestion is to follow the "Enion brooded" line with its successor (before insertions) in p 8 which reads:

The barked Oak, the long limbd Beech; the  
Ches'nut tree; the Pine.

and to continue the passage, which fills five more lines with vegetation and animation, to conclude with

Infolding the bright Infants from the desolating  
winds

--with the woman replacing the Infants. Blake subsequently deleted all these instructions except the phrase "Infolding the bright woman".

The alternative version, undeleted, consists of a double line crowded into the stanza break between "a Self enjoying wonder" (presumably to be left intact) and "And thus her voice". Here the vegetating process is more complex, involving seas, rocks, and vortex:

For Enion brooded groaning loud the rough seas  
begetate.

Golden rocks rise from the [*vorte . . .*]-<vast>  
[paper torn]

Possibly the plan was to have this triple vegetating proceed at once to "Infolding the bright woman" (undeleted portion of the first version): it would make up a full line (if there weren't too many words on the torn paper): and perhaps to conclude as before with "Thus her voice" et cetera.

# THE SPECTROUS EMBRACE IN THE FOUR ZOAS, VIIa

MARY LYNN JOHNSON AND BRIAN WILKIE

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.<sup>1</sup> 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 ravaging with Enmity & Hatred & War / In dreams of Ulro dark delusive drawn by the lovely shadow" (VIIA.329-31; 85:19-21, E353).<sup>2</sup> 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?<sup>3</sup> 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 avengd 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 Effected 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."<sup>4</sup> 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 Thiriell, 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 stampd 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.

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> 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).

<sup>4</sup> 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.

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

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# Vala

## Next the Seventh

The third began at line 153 the following comes in at the end  
 Now in the caverns of the Great Plains Sherman sees  
 In nameless shadowy vortex stood before the face of Orc  
 The hundred read his dismal head over the flaming youth  
 With a gasp & howling & deep sob that a night long his rage  
 And waste of loss himself in meekness he embraced his form  
 As when the earthquake rages from his den his shadowy huge  
 Appear above the crumbing Mountain. Men wails around him  
 A moment then ascending horror blishes from the center  
 The fiery dogs arise the shadowy huge appear  
 \* O'er rolls round his clouds upon the bases of dark Matter  
 Among the gates of Heaven war Pity & black fear affection  
 Silent on the wings of strong day's radiance  
 \* The hairy horrors read the look, fire on the wastes of fire  
 Red rage renews he rages his horns from his forests black  
 They howl around the flaming youth reading the nameless shadow  
 And running few immortal upon this wild dashing course  
 \* Follow that they pass Vala now become strong dagger and the harvest of  
 Loud sounds the war say sound red Ore in air  
 And read the nameless shadowy female in her hooded vest  
 When all the elemental gods found in the wondrous song  
 Found the War brought terrible souls read in all-vacant steel  
 Around the shell like signals of war. I hear the northern drum  
 Asada, I hear the flapping of the fitting banners  
 The dragons of the North put on their armour  
 Upon the Eastern sea doleful they take their course  
 The glancing of these terrible strappings flames the vault of night  
 Sleep on the wings of the glorious being. Spur spur your ~~clouds~~

The dog that enters the composition counts from his limbs  
 the red and we grow in number  
 the red and we grow in number



# THE ORDER OF NIGHTS VIIa AND VIIb IN BLAKE'S THE FOUR ZOAS

JOHN KILGORE

The presence of two seventh Nights in the perplexing manuscript of Blake's *The Four Zoas* is a scholarly puzzle which has two theoretically distinguishable aspects. First there is the editorial problem of finding the least imperfect arrangement of the two Nights within the text of the poem; then there is the interpretive problem of deciding what imaginative place each Night has in the poem as a whole. The two problems really overlap, of course, for critical issues arise in editorial debate as "internal evidence," and responsible interpretation must be consistent with a factual understanding of the manuscript. Even from a primarily interpretive standpoint, moreover, it is occasionally more illuminating to sift through the hectic evidence of Blake's deletions, additions, and revisions in *The Four Zoas* than to treat the present text as if it were a fully intentional work. The study of the manuscript can itself become a kind of interpretation, for part of the significance of the poem resides in the story of artistic growth and struggle which the manuscript obliquely reveals.

Yet there has been a certain tendency to divorce textual scholarship from critical interpretation in the study of *The Four Zoas*, and in the debate over the VIIa-VIIb problem in particular.<sup>1</sup> In its commitment to a synoptic overview of Blake's entire canon, its preoccupation with the basic structural principles of his symbolic system, what one may call the main critical tradition in modern Blake studies has had very little to say about the manuscript of *The Four Zoas*. Prior to David Wagenknecht's fairly recent discussion of the two Nights seven in *Blake's Night: William Blake and the Idea of Pastoral*,<sup>2</sup> there had been to my knowledge no really detailed critical examination of internal evidence bearing on the problem. On the other side, Blake's editors have been equally reluctant to become "readers" in the Damon-Frye tradition, preferring either to remain within the precincts of

textual scholarship, or to employ such alternative critical methods as Erdman's "historical approach."<sup>3</sup> In some ways, no doubt, this division of perspectives is desirable; yet it has probably lent some obscurity to the problem of the Nights seven, and to the poem as a whole, which is not purely Blake's own. In what follows I try to give a systematic account of the critical and editorial alternatives associated with the VIIa-VIIb problem, synthesizing previous arguments and adding a number of observations based on my own reading of the poem.

Both Nights are headed "Vala / Night the Seventh" and VIIb contains in addition a marginal note, "Beginning of Night VII," and an interlinear note, "Beginning of the Seventh Night," both inserted at line 153 after Blake decided to change the internal order of the Night. "End of the Seventh Night" is written at the end of VIIb, and the same phrase occurred after the last line of VIIa at two or possibly three different stages of revision, but Blake erased it each time to add new material, and after his latest additions he did not replace it.<sup>4</sup> All the leaves of VIIa except the last three bear stitch-marks which indicate that at one time the Night was bound up in a grouping which included most of the present Night III and all of IV, V, and VI; the unstitched leaves were presumably added after Blake had unbound the others. The fact that VIIb bears no stitch-marks indicates that it, like Nights VIII and IX and the added leaves of VIIa, was never bound.

The traditional explanation of the rival Nights is that Blake wrote VIIb first, later grew dissatisfied and wrote VIIa to replace it, and then simply failed to decide what should be done with VIIb. Thus in Erdman's text VIIa is printed in sequence, on the supposition that it represents Blake's later and more definitive thoughts on what should happen at this point in the poem, while

VIIb is printed as an appendix after Night IX. The critical tradition which has grown up around the assumption that VIIa is a later "version" of VIIb interprets Blake's need to rewrite the earlier Night as the symptom of an imaginative crisis, and thus looks to one or both Nights for some definitive turning point in the growth of the poem and the development of Blake's vision. Frye, for instance, associates the textual problem with Blake's invention of the Spectre of Urthona: "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 . . . . Eventually it burst the whole Zoa scheme altogether, and was one of the chief reasons for abandoning the poem."<sup>5</sup>

This account of the poem's growth sounds persuasive, but more recent scholarship has severely questioned the assumption on which it is based, namely that VIIb preceded VIIa. Wagenknecht describes the emergence of the alternative view of the problem:

In 1956 . . . H. M. Margoliouth, in his edition of *Vala* . . . reminded scholars that, except for obviously late additions, the narrative of VIIa flows continuously into VIIb. This fact of course hinted that the long-held assumption that VIIb was composed prior to VIIa needed to be reexamined, as did the idea fostered by received opinion that the two versions were somehow thematically opposed to each other. . . . Margoliouth's hint was developed into a death knell for received opinion by G. E. Bentley's facsimile edition of the poem, which demonstrated conclusively on the basis of stitch marks on the manuscript that VIIb--as VIII and IX--had to be considered later than VIIa.<sup>6</sup>

The implication here is that the two Nights were never alternate "versions" at all, but simply two Nights written in sequence, with VIIa coming first; and that Blake gave both of them the number seven because, when he came to transcribe VIIb, he realized that he needed more than three Nights to finish his poem, and so must fit I-VIIa into six Nights.<sup>7</sup> In other words, VIIb was originally intended as part or all of a Night VIII, but had to be changed into a Night VII; the original Night VII, i.e. VIIa, had to be squeezed back into the preceding Nights.

It should be noted, however, that Erdman does not find Bentley's dating of VIIb conclusive at all,<sup>8</sup> but argues that Blake may have omitted it from the stitched grouping of Nights III-VIIa, not because it was later (i.e., as yet unwritten), but because Blake had already replaced it by the time he bound up the other Nights. This is not impossible, but the hypothesis by itself is not more convincing than Bentley's simpler assumption that all of the unstitched Nights (VIIb, VIII, and IX) are later than VIIa, and it fails to account either for the narrative continuity of VIIa-VIIb, or for the use in VIIb of symbolic names which crept into the poem only at a late stage of revision (Bentley, 171 col. 2).

In short, though no really definitive evidence is available, it seems fairly clear that VIIa was composed before VIIb. Composed, that is, *in some form*: for the conclusion does not apply to the last three leaves of VIIa, which are unstitched and contain "obviously late additions" to the original Night (we will consider the significance of this fact in a moment). Margoliouth's demonstration of the original narrative continuity of VIIa-VIIb remains the most important piece of evidence supporting the newer theory of the Nights seven, so it is worth glancing at this juncture in the text of his *Vala*:

. . . the immortal shadow shuddering  
Brought forth this wonder horrible [Vala] a  
Cloud she grew & grew  
Till many of the dead burst forth from the  
bottoms of their tombs  
The Spectre smild & gave her Charge over  
the howling Orc

End of the Seventh Night

. . . . .

V A L A

Night the Seventh

Now in the Caverns of the Grave and Places of  
human seed  
The nameless shadowy Vortex stood before the  
face of Orc  
The shadow reard her dismal head over the  
flaming youth  
With sighs & howling & deep sobs that he  
might lose his rage  
And with it lose himself in meekness she  
embracd his fire

(Margoliouth, 45-46)

In the original ending of VIIa, the Shadow of Enitharmon, having coupled with the Spectre of Urthona, gives birth to Vala, whom the Spectre then sets as a guard over Orc. At the original beginning of VIIb, Vala obediently stands on guard duty, and then embraces Orc, much as in the *Preludium* to America. In default of more conclusive evidence, the continuity of the narrative is a persuasive demonstration that at an early stage of the poem's development VIIa came first and VIIb second. The argument can be reinforced by other, similar observations. In VIIa Urizen, arriving in the Caves of Orc after his journey through chaos, "took his seat upon a rock" (77:18); in VIIb we find him still seated there (95:16). In VIIa Urizen proceeds to create the precondition of war by enslaving Orc (for "War is Energy enslav'd"); in VIIb there is war. In VIIa Enitharmon tells the Spectre of her fear that Orc may rend her "to the winds of heaven" (82:38) and her hope that he will rend Vala instead (83:34); in VIIb Orc does rend Vala (93:21), and Enitharmon's fear for herself reaches a climax in her "Watchman" speech (97:28ff.). Likewise, early in VIIa (78:4), Blake describes the Tree of Mystery in a way which strongly suggests that he is using the symbol for the first time; there have been no previous references in Nights I-VI, and the more cryptic allusions to

the Tree in VIIb seem to presuppose the passage in VIIa.

This evidence of an original VIIa-VIIb order is further strengthened by the fact that Night VI is continuous with VIIa but not VIIb. Placed at the end of VI, either the original or the revised version of VIIb would produce a bewildering non sequitur. By contrast, VI-VIIa is a clear sequence. Night VI ends with a confrontation between Urizen, Tharmas, and the Spectre of Urthona; VIIa begins, "Then Urizen arose the Spectre fled & Tharmas fled." It is rather hard to doubt that Blake conceived and wrote this transition all at once.

Again, the attempt to think of VIIa as a "replacement" for VIIb becomes very difficult when one notices how greatly the two differ in content. There is virtually nothing in either the original or the added passages of VIIb to indicate that the Night was an early model of VIIa. Given Blake's usual habits of composition, the traditional account of the two Nights would lead us to expect an exceedingly complex entanglement of VIIa and VIIb, or perhaps a single palimpsest. Instead, we have two clearly separate Nights, involving largely different events and characters.

Clearly, then, we ought to abandon the idea that VIIa was originally written to replace an earlier VIIb, an idea which no substantive comparison of the two Nights will support. But this is far from being the end of the story, for Blake made major changes in both Nights as *Vala* turned into *The Four Zoas*. To VIIa he added a few small passages and then the long section of pp. 85-90, one of the crucial episodes of the present poem. He appears to have made few major additions to VIIb, but he left three notes directing that the first 153 lines be moved to the end, thus reversing the order of the two main episodes of the Night (Erdman, 762). These revisions so thoroughly undermine the original narrative continuity of VIIa-VIIb, and raise such doubts concerning Blake's ultimate intentions, that the editor of *The Four Zoas* finds his basic problem still unsolved despite the discovery of the *Vala* sequence. If the order of the original Nights was clear enough, the order of the present Nights is not; it is, in effect, a separate question.

There is no real possibility of reading VIIb first and then VIIa; but once the added passages of VIIa are taken into account, the opposite sequence becomes equally unsatisfactory. It is clear enough why such critics as J. Middleton Murry, Northrop Frye, and Harold Bloom, once persuaded that it was necessary to choose between the two Nights, should be eager to believe that VIIa was the later and authoritative version. For in the present VIIa we have not only the great dramatic confrontation of Orc and Urizen, but the climactic *rapprochement* between Los, his Spectre, and Enitharmon. The latter event in particular, which takes place entirely in the added passages, provides a crucial link in Blake's myth. Prior to VIIa, Los is a merely natural imagination, a formidable but basically inhuman demiurge. He is often called a "demon" and a "terror," and he has helped Urizen to enslave Luvah and later

Orc. Up to this point all his creations have been semi-instinctive, *ad hoc* responses to the fallen state, and the remainder of his energy has been spent in lovers' quarrels with Enitharmon. But the sequence of events which begins with the Spectre of Urthona's seduction of Enitharmon (84-86) works a profound change in Los. By embracing Enitharmon, the Spectre gains the power to "enter Los's bosom," and then is embraced in his turn by Los, "first as a brother / Then as another Self." Under the force of the Spectre's "inspired" persuasion, Los suddenly feels "A World within / Opening its gates" and vows to "teach / Peace to the Soul of dark revenge & repentance to Cruelty." It is at this point that we hear, for the very first time in all Blake's works, of the necessity of "Self-Annihilation"--henceforth one of Blake's two or three most important themes.<sup>9</sup> The new alliance and new vision lead directly to the discovery of Los's true mission: he will progressively reconstruct the fallen Albion, first by weaving "bodies" for the "Spectres of the Dead," then by creating "forms sublime" which the spectres can assimilate into (87:36-39 & 90:15-25). The Spectre of Urthona changes at this point from a "ravning" Selfhood to a helpful "medium," and Enitharmon, still more dramatically, from an aberrant Female Will into a loving source of creative inspiration. Finally, in a fitting climax to these climaxes, the three-way alliance manages to regenerate and redeem the fallen Urizen.

Thus the extraordinary added passages on pp. 85-90 point the way, not only to the apocalypse of Night IX, but to the central myths and themes of Blake's two subsequent epics. Given the importance of the Los-Spectre relationship in *Jerusalem*, and of the weaving of bodies in *Milton*, one gets the impression that in these pages of *The Four Zoas* Blake achieved an imaginative breakthrough which profoundly affected his conception of the later poems--unless, indeed, it was his work on the later poems which showed him how to solve his problems with *The Four Zoas*. It is understandable, then, that critics should find VIIa more faithful to the spirit of Blake's mature vision than VIIb, and should therefore be reluctant to surrender the traditional view of the problem. The tendency can be observed in Harold Bloom's discussion of the Nights seven in the Erdman edition of Blake:

The two sections of Night VII are alternate ways of preparing for the blackness of Night VIII and the liberation of Night IX. I find it difficult to believe that VIIa is not the later in composition, but in this belief I am guided only by what I take to be internal evidence. Whichever was later, our understanding of the poem's total design can only benefit by a study of both versions. I do not think it accurate (or fair to the poem) to read Nights VIIa and VIIb as being an intentional sequence, in that order. VIIa in at least some respects is an imaginative advance on VIIb.

(Erdman, 876)

One cannot fault Bloom's sense that VIIb makes an

unsatisfactory sequel to the present VIIa; for in VIIb we confront the old Los again, a warrior Los with "his knees / Bathed in bloody clouds. his loins in fires of war where spears / And swords rage . . ." (96:21).<sup>10</sup> Similarly, Tharmas, Orc, and Urizen, all of whom have been partially rehabilitated in the triumphant reconciliations of VIIa, reappear in VIIb, without explanation, in more primitive stages of fall. As a sequel to the present VIIa, then, VIIb would give us at best a very sour irony, sufficient to undercut the new ending of VIIa, and with it the justification for the poem's apocalyptic conclusion.<sup>11</sup>

Moreover, the present VIIa tallies fairly well with Night VIII, while VIIb does not. At the beginning of VIII we have a "Council of God" passage--one of Blake's favorite setpieces--and then Los and Enitharmon in effect resume the conversation they have been having near the end of VIIa:

Then Los said I beheld the Divine Vision thro  
the broken Gates  
Of thy poor broken heart astonishd melted into  
Compassion & Love  
And Enitharmon said I see the Lamb of God upon  
Mount Zion  
Wondring with love & Awe they felt the divine  
hand upon them

(VIII, 99:15; cf. VIIa,  
86:44-60)

References to the apocalyptic mission quickly follow, with Enitharmon once again "sighing forth" the spectres and Los "recieving them into his hands" (99:23-100:2; cf. VIIa, 90:35-67). Late additions throughout Night VIII continue to develop the same theme (cf. p. 113), supporting the conclusion that Blake was assuming the final version of VIIa as the immediately preceding Night. One could, conceivably, make a similar argument for the continuity of VIIb (in the revised sequence) and Night VIII, on the basis that the spectres of the dead descend from Beulah at both 95:11 and 99:19. But the spectres also descend late in VIIa (85:18), and on the whole a VIIb-VIII sequence would present an inexplicable shift from sardonic gloom to prophetic hope. The Los and Enitharmon of VIII are unmistakably the prophetic figures who emerge at the end of the revised VIIa; they have little in common with the savage Los and hysterical Enitharmon of VIIb.<sup>12</sup>

It seems, then, that at a late stage of revision Blake decided to route the poem around VIIb. This means that the traditional account of the two Nights may not be so far mistaken after all. Nothing says that Blake had to write VIIb first in order to be dissatisfied with it, or VIIa second in order to prefer it if a choice had to be made. It is quite possible that he first wrote both Nights (as consecutive rather than alternate episodes), next started feeling that his approach to apocalypse was unsatisfactory, and then saw that his best opening for a more suitable approach could be found in the earlier VIIa. Once he had made his changes in VIIa, he would have found that VIIb no longer fit as a sequel; since at this point he had ten

Nights anyway, he might then have decided to keep VIIa as Night VII (reversing his earlier decision to squeeze it back into I-VI), revising Night VIII accordingly. Thus VIIa, though not originally a replacement for VIIb, would have become one by the time Blake finished his revisions.

This theory would seemingly allow us to go on reading VIIb in the way it has usually been read--as an alternate but rejected approach to Night VIII--if we stipulated that VIIb's previous niche is presently filled by the added section of VIIa alone, rather than by the Night as a whole. Once again, however, matters cannot be so simple. Blake was not a poet to delete material he liked if he thought he could possibly find a place for it, and the very fact that he kept VIIb together with the rest of his manuscript testifies to his hope that it could somehow be reintegrated into the poem. Moreover, though VIIb seems to be excluded by the VI-VIIa-VIII sequence upon which Blake finally settled, its disentanglement from the other Nights is incomplete. For instance, the references to war in the added passages of VIIa come quite abruptly; when Los draws Urizen "from out the ranks of war," it is very difficult to tell just what war Blake is talking about.<sup>13</sup> Then on reflection one has to conclude that it is the war described in VIIb. Of course the poem's tendency to subvert linear chronology should never be underestimated, and it is just possible that we are dealing with a proleptic reference to the wars of Night VIII. Still, on the whole the climactic turn toward peace, mercy, and art at the end of VIIa seems more comprehensible if played against the backdrop of Orc's violent rising in VIIb. It is as if Blake, once having written VIIb, could not wholly refrain from assuming it as a basis for his revisions to VIIa, or as if he worked with the intention of later transplanting parts of VIIb into VIIa.

Wagenknecht offers a substantial demonstration of VIIb's importance to Blake's overall argument (225ff.), and shows that Night VIII contains back-references to VIIb as well as VIIa; his conclusion is that Blake left "two integral, not alternative, Nights VII." If Blake had suppressed VIIb, perhaps no one would ever have noticed that it was missing; with the Night before us, however, we see many things that the poem as a whole seems to need. The very dramatic meeting between Tharmas and Vala brings Tharmas up to date--he has been rather scarce since Night IV--and prepares for his next appearance, in VIII. The emergence of Vala herself as a fully distinct character obviously provides a crucial continuation to the story of her birth in VIIa, and a prelude to her appearance as Rahab in the apocalypse. In some ways her epiphany is redone in Night VIII, yet the later treatment is less full, and can be better understood by the light of the earlier one.<sup>14</sup> For instance, the descent of the spectres, "tempted by the Shadowy females sweet / Delusive cruelty" (VIII, 99:20), makes more sense if one has first read the exquisite description of Vala's beauty which Blake provides in VIIb.

In sum, we have to regard VIIb as part of the poem, but there is no really satisfactory way to fit it in. Blake left the Night as a unit, but as a unit it resists placement anywhere in the present

text. It seems that VIIb was originally designed to carry the poem all the way from the birth of Vala to the brink of apocalypse--albeit a simpler apocalypse than the one Blake finally imagined--and it has a cataclysmic finality which makes it seem to belong--somewhere--late in the present Night VIII.<sup>15</sup> Yet its general pessimism and the unregenerate state of its protagonists make VIIb seem to fit best into the juncture between the old and new portions of VIIa, where it originally began. No doubt this is the least unsatisfactory niche; still, VIIb rises to a climax of its own which would throw the alternate climax of the revised VIIa off center. In VIIb the apocalypse seems imminent; in VIIa it is not to come for another six thousand years (87:26). In VIIb Tharmas and Vala seem destined to be key figures in bringing about the final consummation; in VIIa they are supernumeraries. Moreover, if restored to its original position, VIIb would interrupt the story of Los's reconciliation with his Spectre and Emanation, spoiling the narrative rhythm of VIIa. It is certain that Blake himself, once he had conceived of the regeneration of Los, preferred to avoid such interruption and to pursue the narrative of VIIa directly to its present climax.

The puzzle grows still more perplexing when one tries to grasp Blake's reasons for changing the order of VIIb. It seems logical to suppose that the change would have come after Blake had written the new ending of VIIa, since the original continuity of VIIa-VIIb would already have been lost. If at this point Blake was toying with the idea of a VIIa-VIIb-VIII sequence, the switch would have the advantage of moving the descent of the spectres to the end, creating a bridge between VIIb and VIII. Yet the corresponding transition from the new ending of VIIa to the new beginning of VIIb seems quite wayward. At the end of VIIa Urizen is an infant in Los's arms; the reordered VIIb begins, "But in the deeps beneath the Roots of Mystery in darkest night / Where Urizen sat on his rock the Shadow brooded / Urizen saw & triumphed & he cried to his warriors." Of course, this is just enough of a non sequitur to be possibly intentional--especially since Blake has noted at the end of VIIa that Los was able to redeem all of Urizen *except* "his Spectrous form which could not be drawn away" (90:60). The lines take us back to that troublesome crossroads in the narrative, Vala's birth from the Shadow of Enitharmon, and it is this event rather than Los's regeneration--or this event together with a misconception of what has happened to Los--which causes Urizen to triumph.<sup>16</sup> It seems just conceivable that Blake was trying to rearrange VIIb in such a way that, having traced the consequences of the Enitharmon-Spectre union in the upper world of Los, the narrative now backtracks and begins to trace the consequences of the union in the lower world of the spectrous Urizen. Yet such a change, supposing that Blake once intended it, would do nothing to solve the weightier problems involved in a VIIa-VIIb sequence, leaving us with an inexplicable contrast between prophetic hope and ironic despair.

The other possible explanation, to which I tentatively incline, is that Blake changed the order of VIIb before writing the new ending to

VIIa. On this hypothesis, the change would be the first expression of Blake's dissatisfaction with the *Vala* sequence, and the first sign of his search for a more humanistic approach to apocalypse. The advantage of the new order is in moving the confrontation of Tharmas and Vala--which, though gloomy enough, is at least more hopeful than the frantic violence which dominates the other portion of the Night--to the end.<sup>17</sup> The idea is supported by Blake's late addition, at 94:12, of a lament for Luvah which makes the portrait of Vala considerably more sympathetic. Moreover, the reversed VIIb would still be fairly continuous with the original VIIa (though less so than formerly), since the revised beginning returns to the moment of Vala's birth. But if the reordering of VIIb did in fact occur at a fairly early stage, it probably corresponded to a plan of revision which Blake abandoned when he decided to merge Los and the Spectre. At whatever point it was executed, the flip-flopping of the Night was a mechanical tactic, incapable by itself of solving any of the serious problems confronting Blake. His failure to change the numbering of the Nights seven is, by itself, sufficient evidence that he was never finally satisfied to place VIIb between VIIa and VIII.

Still, it is not difficult to arrive at a general sense of Night VIIb's place in Blake's vision, even though it is impossible to find a physical place for it in the text of his poem. In effect, Blake's narrative separates into parallel strands when Vala is born from the Shadow of Enitharmon, at the point of the original ending of VIIa. Frye's account of this doubling refers only to the present VIIa, but seems valid even if applied to both Nights seven: "In Night VII [i.e., VIIa] . . . a double crisis takes place, one an imaginative advance, symbolized by the mingling of Los and the Spectre of Urthona, the other a consolidation of error symbolized by the birth of Rahab [i.e., Vala] from the Spectre of Urthona and . . . the Shadow of Enitharmon" (Frye, 278). Roughly speaking, the path of "consolidation of error" leads through VIIb, with its emphasis on climactic war, the catastrophic rising of Orc, the triumph of Urizen, the epiphany of Vala, and the inconsolable rage of Tharmas; the path of "imaginative advance" leads through the added passages of VIIa, where for the first time we find a fully prophetic Los, aided by his Spectre and Emanation, struggling to save mankind through creative action. The two strands come back together again in VIII (though with some fairly messy duplication of VIIb), where a sense of breakneck progress toward apocalypse is brilliantly captured in the counterpointing of Los's furious acts of creation and Urizen-Satan-Rahab's equally furious acts of subversion and destruction.

Likewise, though no exact chronology of the composition of these Nights can be given, it is possible to speak with reasonable assurance about the process of imaginative growth which must have been involved. At an early stage, it would seem, Blake conceived of an apocalypse motivated almost exclusively by the "consolidation of error," a mechanical apocalypse entailing an almost instantaneous leap from nadir to zenith. What this vision lacked was

the myth of the fully human and self-conscious Los, and thus any sense of the possibility for positive human action in the fallen world. Possibly Blake was astonished at the oversight once he recognized it; possibly he came to regard *Milton* and *Jerusalem* as categorically superior to *The Four Zoas* because in those poems the mature Los, the self-conscious visionary confronting human problems on the stage of human history, is dominant throughout, whereas the far-ranging fantasy of *The Four Zoas* deals largely with a sort of cosmic pre-history.

In any case, the new ending to VIIa marks a decisive change in Blake's concepts of apocalypse and prophecy. By mingling Los and the Spectre Blake creates a human agency capable of turning fallen history in the direction of a Last Judgement, thus transforming the apocalypse into a quest story with the poet-prophet as its unequivocal hero. It was a change which strained the narrative structure of the epic to the breaking point, squeezing VIIb halfway out of the poem and causing major revisions in Night VIII. Yet the new vision does not really invalidate the old; rather, as a later stage in a dialectic, it necessarily implies and incorporates the earlier stages. The essential coherence of the structure which Blake finally left--VIIa, VIII, and IX, with VIIb lounging somewhere in the shadows--is not diminished by the fact that it presumably grew out of a poetic process whose beginning did not know its end.

Why, then, did Blake lack the stamina to make a final disposition of VIIb, if indeed that was all he had to do in order to finish his poem? The question is especially troubling in that Blake apparently had a logical moment at which to attempt the reintegration of the displaced Night when he revised Night VIII to bring it into line with the new VIIa. It would seem more natural to bring in passages from VIIb at this point than to plan on yet another revision of VIII later on. On the other hand, one can imagine that Blake would find the problem of VIIb an unwelcome distraction from the new vision which absorbed him as he reworked Night VIII. Moreover, he might have been rather slow to part with the idea that VIIb could be retained as a unit. *The Four Zoas* is, finally, a story, yet its narrative structure is formed by the spatial accretion of alternate myths and symbols around a central core of events (Fall, Incarnation, Redemption, Apocalypse) which they interpret and exemplify, as well as by the linear unfolding of the plot. It may have taken Blake some time to decide that the clash of the old VIIb with the new VIIa and VIII was a greater incongruity than even this structure could tolerate.

Nevertheless, the recognition of VIIb's incompatibility eventually came, and one still must wonder why Blake never solved the problem. The speculation which suggests itself, supposing that we have guessed right up till now, is that the new inspiration proved all too potent. It drew Blake's energies away from *The Four Zoas* toward *Milton* and *Jerusalem*, but persuaded him more and more that further revisions of the earlier poem were necessary, or at least desirable. Night VIII in particular makes extensive use of the symbolic

"Machinery" of the later epics, in a way that sometimes justifies Margoliouth's remark that "Blake abandoned the poem because the new wine was bursting the old bottles."<sup>18</sup> It is as if Blake could not content himself with completing *The Four Zoas* as such, but had to go on to attempt a wholesale demonstration of the poem's consistency with its offspring; as if, after a certain point, everything had to be said over again from the standpoint of *Jerusalem*. Nights I and II contain certain late additions which suggest that Blake may have decided to work through his first six Nights yet again, installing passages which would anticipate the new vision, before tackling the problem of VIIb. Yet at the same time, judging by the virtually atemporal structures of *Milton* and *Jerusalem*, Blake was undergoing a crisis of disenchantment with narrative itself. In *Jerusalem* he seems completely unwilling to impose anything resembling a narrative chronology on the actions and events of his myth. As he grew more and more accustomed to letting spatial principles of symbolic association prevail over "clock-time," Blake no doubt found himself less and less inspired to resolve the narrative tangles of the Nights seven.

How, then, should the two Nights be presented to the reader? My not very earthshaking conclusion is that K in this particular is superior to E. VIIb should come after VIIa, but is too important to the poem to be treated as an appendix. Both editions are undoubtedly correct in presenting each Night as a unit, rather than attempting to reintegrate VIIb into VIIa or VIII or both, for such an attempt would be highly presumptuous, and would obscure a problem it could not solve. Likewise, it seems best to print VIIb in the revised order, a step which is dictated by the general policy of following the latest intentions for which there is direct evidence in the manuscript.

Whether the critic should be bound by this arrangement of the Nights is another question, or perhaps no question at all, since the critic is always at liberty to choose the order of the passages which he wishes to discuss. But 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.<sup>19</sup> 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 IX. I do not, of course, claim that this ordering of the text would have any authority; it is merely a sequence for which there is some scholarly justification, and one which would be useful for some critical purposes.

<sup>1</sup> An exception to this general tendency is Morton Paley's *Energy and the Imagination: the Development of Blake's Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1970), chapter 6. See pp. 160-61 and 263 for very succinct discussions of the ambiguity of the two Nights seven. A similar approach is taken by E. D. Hirsch, Jr., in *Innocence and Experience: An Introduction to Blake* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1964), chapter 7. In emphasizing the changes and inconsistencies involved in Blake's "development," however, both studies tend to exclude any sense of final coherence in the structure of the poem.

All references to *The Four Zoas* are from David V. Erdman, ed., *The Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, 4th ed., rev. (Garden City: Doubleday, 1956).

<sup>2</sup> Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of the Harvard Univ. Press, 1973. See pp. 225-26, 298-302, and for a critical reading which takes textual problems into account, pp. 210-50, *passim*. In much of what follows I am indebted to Wagenknecht.

<sup>3</sup> David V. Erdman, *Blake: Prophet Against Empire*, 2nd ed. (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1969). See pp. 293-96 for Erdman's description of his method as applied to *The Four Zoas*.

<sup>4</sup> See G. E. Bentley, Jr., *William Blake: Vala or The Four Zoas: A Facsimile of the Manuscript, a Transcript of the Poem, and a Study of Its Growth and Significance* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963), p. 162 col. 2. I am, of course, indebted to Bentley throughout.

<sup>5</sup> Northrop Frye, *Fearful Symmetry* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1947), p. 298.

<sup>6</sup> Wagenknecht, p. 226.

<sup>7</sup> See H. M. Margoliouth, ed., *William Blake's Vala: Blake's Numbered Text* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1956), p. xiii. Cf. Bentley, p. 163, cols. 1-2.

<sup>8</sup> Nor, apparently, does W. H. Stevenson, editor of the Longman's Annotated Edition of *The Poems of William Blake* (London, 1971). On p. 371 Stevenson asserts that VIIb "as a whole was undoubtedly written earlier . . . [and] rejected by Blake." But I find Stevenson's overall position rather confusing and equivocal. If he believes that VIIb was "undoubtedly" written earlier and rejected, why does he print the text VIIa-VIIb, and indicate in his notes (371) that "a continuity in the narrative" justifies this order? This treatment of the text corresponds to the view that VIIb is neither earlier nor rejected; and Stevenson hardly clarifies matters by remarking that "the first part of VIIa . . . appears to belong to the same date as VIIb" (371). My suspicion is that Stevenson really subscribes to essentially the view I give--that the Nights were originally written VIIa-VIIb, with the present ending of VIIa coming later--but has preferred to avoid controversy by not saying so in unmistakably clear terms.

Alicia Ostriker sides with Erdman in *William Blake: The Complete Poems* (New York: Penguin, 1977), p. 945.

<sup>9</sup> Concordance, p. 1654.

<sup>10</sup> Similarly, Stevenson notes that in VIIb, "The regeneration of Los and Enitharmon is ignored," p. 389. Cf. Margoliouth, p. 144, and Paley, p. 161.

<sup>11</sup> Of course Night VIII is a war Night too; but here the battle scenes are matched in stirring counterpoint to scenes which depict Los's mighty efforts to resist the forces of fall, so that the outlook is not nearly so bleak as in VIIb. On the whole, the tone of VIII seems to me one of breathtaking suspense tending strongly toward optimism.

<sup>12</sup> Erdman, p. 758, offers a rather curious argument to show that the two Nights were closely joined at a *previous* stage

of composition. He theorizes that the marginal note Blake left on page 100, calling for the insertion of a passage beginning "Los stood" between 100:1 and 100:2, refers to most of page 90--i.e., basically to the present ending of VIIa--but that Blake later changed his mind and left the passage on 90 in its present position. His conclusion is that "this bit of masonry" (the provisional insertion of 90 into 100) "which cements VIIa closely to VIII, seems to indicate a time when Blake considered VIIb as abandoned (or moved)." Wagenknecht reviews the argument on pp. 298-300; I agree with his conclusion that Erdman's theory about pages 90 and 100 is "extremely suppositious . . . on the basis of physical evidence alone," and also improbable for stylistic and thematic reasons. But unless I misread, Erdman's conclusion still stands, for the different and much more obvious reason that VIIa in its present state is *still* "cemented closely" to VIII. Cf. Paley, p. 161.

<sup>13</sup> There are four previous references to war in VIIa, but these are brief and casual. Concordance, p. 2069.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. especially 101:20ff:

. . . While the dark shadowy female  
brooding over  
Measur'd his [Orc's] food morning & evening in cups &  
baskets of iron  
With tears of sorrow incessant she labour'd the food of Orc  
Compell'd by the iron hearted sisters Daughters of Urizen

Here we have in little the *Preludium* of America--and the original beginning of VIIb--yet again. This could mean that Blake was thinking of VIIb as abandoned, and was trying to sketch in one portion of its contents which he considered vital. On the other hand, the passage is brief enough to have been intended as a refrain or echo, so it is equally possible that Blake was still committed to including VIIb.

<sup>15</sup> In Margoliouth's *Vala*, the ending of VIIb in its original order is joined directly to the original beginning of IX--so that VIIb is in effect the Night VIII of *Vala*. I do not find this arrangement of the text quite persuasive, even as representing an earlier state of the manuscript, but I do agree with Margoliouth's general sense (and with Bentley's) that the material of VIIb was originally conceived as part of the last Night before the apocalypse. It is mainly the emphasis on climactic war (a "signal of the dawn" for which Blake had the authority of *Revelation*) which persuades me of this. But by the time Blake made the present transcript of VIIb, with the heading "Night the Seventh," another Night VIII must have existed.

<sup>16</sup> Vala was originally mentioned in the third as well as the first line of the passage, which read "Urizen cried to the Shadowy Female" rather than "Urizen cried to his warriors." The change, however, does not affect the fact that Urizen is gloating over the birth of Vala: it merely means that his speech is now directed to his warriors rather than her. An additional, deleted line on the same page reads, "The shadowy voice answer'd O Urizen Prince of Light," showing that Blake at one time conceived of Urizen's speech as part of a conversation between Urizen and Vala. Since no other trace of Vala's half of the conversation remains here (it has conceivably been moved to VIII, 102:28 ff.), it seems probable that the change in the third line came quite early, before the reordering of the Night.

<sup>17</sup> Stevenson, p. 390, gives the opposite opinion: "In the second half (as it now is) Orc appears. In transferring this passage to the end, Blake has delayed till last the revelation of the worst evil."

<sup>18</sup> *William Blake* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1951), p. 115.

<sup>19</sup> See *Blake's Night*, pp. 224-25.



# THE REVISION OF THE SEVENTH AND EIGHTH NIGHTS OF THE FOUR ZOAS

ANDREW LINCOLN

The presence of two Nights headed "Night the Seventh" in *The Four Zoas* forces editorial choice of an uncomfortable kind. If we decide to exclude one we will exclude material which seems necessary for a full understanding of the poem. If both are included, how should we read them? We seem to be left with a narrative which is hopelessly confused. In this article I want first to analyze in detail some of the stages in the poem's development, and then to suggest a textual arrangement which will allow the two Nights to be read as a single and reasonably coherent narrative.<sup>1</sup>

## NIGHTS VIIa AND VIIb

By considering VIIa (pages 77-90) as a single homogeneous narrative, Sloss and Wallis helped to establish the critical tradition which has regarded this Night as later than VIIb (pages 91-98). They asserted that "Enitharmon's fear of punishment and utter extinction . . . and Los's creation of Bodies from the Spectres" were described "in the main body of the text,"<sup>2</sup> whereas they are clearly described in a subsequent addition to the main body of the Night, introduced after two previous Night endings (at 85:22 and 85:31). In order to have a meaningful basis for the discussion of relative dates, we must first try to distinguish the original form of VIIa from the subsequent additions.

The first four leaves of VIIa, pages 77-84, have stitch marks which indicate that they were once bound together with pages 43-76 and 111-12. The presence of stitch marks on pages 111-12 suggests that this leaf was not originally designed for its present context in VIII (the rest of which was never

bound) but had some other place in the manuscript. Bentley suggests<sup>3</sup> that the leaf, which has a full-page sketch on page 112, was bound at the end of IV when Blake added the pencilled instruction "Bring in here the Globe of Blood as in the B of Urizen" between lines 17 and 18 on page 55. Bentley argues that the drawing (showing a male looking anxiously at a female howling in horror, the female trying to break away from the male's embrace) was intended to illustrate the lines which follow the Globe of Blood passage in *Urizen*:

But Los saw the Female & pitied  
He embrac'd her, she wept, she refus'd  
In perverse and cruel delight  
She fled from his arms, yet he followd.

(*Urizen* VI,1)

Bentley concludes that the leaf was added after Blake had covered page 56 (originally left blank) with additions; but the two sets of additions which cover the page contain Christian symbolism of a fairly developed kind, and so Bentley's suggestion implies that the binding which once held pages 43-84 and 111-12 was made after Blake had begun to introduce Christian material into the poem. As no other page containing Christian symbolism in the basic text shows any sign of stitch marks, this seems unlikely.

As there is no apparent connection between the drawing on page 112 and anything else at the end of IV, the leaf may have been designed for some other context within the binding that once held pages 43-84. Although only the first four leaves of VIIa were bound (pages 77-84), there is no Night ending on page 84, and the first ending now occurs after line 21 on the unbound page 85. Bentley comments: "Assuming that the Night was complete when bound, [Blake] later found it necessary to alter the last

leaf so much that the whole leaf had to be removed and a new one substituted."<sup>4</sup> This rests on the assumption that the Night was complete when bound, which is open to question. The first Night ending on page 85 comes after the description of Vala's rebirth; and page 86 has a full-page drawing of a female figure who is probably Vala, which may have been intended to illustrate the Night ending. With this leaf VIIa would have nine pages of text plus a full-page drawing, in line with the pattern Blake had established in III, V, and VI, and which he probably intended for IV. As we have seen, it is unlikely that the leaf containing pages 111-12 was bound at the end of IV. It seems more likely, in view of the drawing on page 112, that the leaf was originally designed for the end of VIIa. The relationship between the Spectre of Urthona and the Spirit of Enitharmon described on pages 82-84 follows the pattern typical of Los and Enitharmon, the male tortured by jealousy, the female scornful and elusive:

He turnd from side to side in tears he wept &  
he embracd  
The fleeting image & in whispers mild wood the  
faint shade.

(82:26-27)

The drawing on page 112 would have been very suitable for VIIa if the Night had ended with the tension between the Spectre and Shadow still unresolved. When Blake bound the leaf with pages 43-84, that may have been his intention; but in transcribing VIIa he may have begun to feel that Vala's birth would make a better climax (deciding, perhaps, to transfer it from the beginning of the eighth Night?). In that case he would naturally unbind his manuscript to remove pages 111-12; and he would also prepare a new sheet which would be exactly like pages 85-86 before the additions. When it was unbound page 111 was almost certainly still blank, and it was only written on when Blake decided to use it in VIII. In this case, then, Blake seems to have bound a leaf and prepared it with a drawing *before* anything had been written on it: a surprising instance which calls into question the assumption that the stitch marks were made after Blake had completed, or partially completed, a draft of the poem. This also suggests that the basic text of page 85 may have been the first ending of VIIa to be transcribed on proof pages, and that it may be regarded as the original end of VIIa. I shall subsequently refer to the basic text of pages 77-85 (ending with 85:22) as "VIIa1," and to the added material (85:23-90:68) as "VIIa2."

Night VIIa1 contains little that could be regarded as "late" in relation to pages 43-76. The Shadow of Enitharmon is a new figure, but she enters the poem through the same kind of division that produced the Spectre, and her appearance is a natural development in the disintegration of Urthona rather than a late development in Blake's symbolism. There are references to Beulah in the Shadow's account of the fall on page 83, but Beulah is also mentioned in the Spectre's account of the fall on page 50 in IV. Night VIIa1 has strong narrative links with pages 43-76, as it describes the confrontation between Urizen and Orc (anticipated

at the end of VI), and the rebirth of Vala (anticipated in V). Taken together, the narrative of pages 43-85 follows the narrative sequence of *Urizen-Ahania* (the active confrontation between Urizen and Fuzon becomes a verbal confrontation between Urizen and Orc, but at the end of both the defeated energy principle is forced to ascend the tree of Mystery).

As Erdman points out in his review of Bentley's edition of the facsimile, stitch marks alone are of little help in questions of relative date.<sup>5</sup> Leaves without stitch marks could have been superseded and removed before Blake bound the manuscript, or they could have been added afterwards. Nor can we be sure at what stage in the process of composition the manuscript was bound. So we must rely on internal evidence: the coherence of the narrative may be indicative, and the date of transcription will be suggested by the latest reference in the basic text.

In VIIb there is material which clearly seems to be later than anything in the basic text of pages 43-76 or VIIa1, namely lines 4-14 on page 95, which describe the Daughters of Beulah "Waiting with Patience for the fulfilment of the Promise Divine," and which conclude with the appearance of Satan. Once again, the relevance of these lines was obscured by Sloss and Wallis, who reported that they were "written over a previous draft, deleted,"<sup>6</sup> whereas they are clearly part of the basic text. The "Promise" of these lines is a reference to the story of Lazarus in John 11. Similar references occur only in recognizably late additions to the poem, on the added page 21 (lines 9-10) and in an added passage on page 56 (line 1). Satan also appears only in late passages, as on the added page 22 (line 4), in the added passage on page 56 (line 19), and in the manifestly late eighth Night.

This evidence alone suggests that VIIb is later than VIIa1, but there is also the fact that VIIb has stronger narrative links with VIIa1 than it has with VI. The growth of the tree of Mystery, Orc climbing the tree, and Vala's birth are all described in VIIa1, and yet all are assumed in VIIb; and the original beginning of VIIb (on page 91 before the narrative was rearranged) seems to follow from the end of VIIa1. Bentley suggests that Blake revised and expanded the eighth Night, rewriting it as two Nights, one of which was VIIb;<sup>7</sup> this suggestion merits further consideration, for if VIIb does contain material which was displaced from the eighth Night we would expect to find some evidence of this displacement. I believe such evidence does exist.

In the Lambeth books Blake had developed two different images for the corruption of Orc: in *Ahania* crucifixion, and in the Preludium of *America* the embrace with the Shadowy female, whose possessive reaction suggests that she may simply absorb Orc's energies. In VIIa1 Blake reconciles the two images. The Spectre draws Vala to embrace Orc who is stretched on the Tree of Mystery. An elaborate parallel to the Preludium of *America* begins with the

Let me & her annihilate separate & be no more  
 For thou art but a form & vision & art & of thyself  
 But nothing being created entirely by thyself & Love divine  
 By fusion, unison. Spoken through thy word assumes my form  
 With unresistible conviction. I feel I am not one of those  
 Who when convinced can still resist the generous conviction  
 By Reason's power. Even I already feel a world within  
 Opening its gates & in it all the real substance



Of which there in the entrance Word are shadows dark pop away  
 Come then into my vision of a thy shadowy form long with thee  
 My lovely Euthymia. I will quell my sting & teach  
 Peace to the soul of dark ravage & repulse to smelly  
 To speak not of Euthymia Euthymia of the Spectre  
 Cloud words have passed in latency & love unites

daughters of Urizen feeding Orc (79:26-28). Orc's transformation into a jewelled serpent recalls not only Fuzon's corruption on the tree, but also Orc's growth into maturity. Vala is born as a spreading cloud at the end of VIIa1, and in the first lines of VIIb she stands before Orc (91:1-2). Directly after these lines in VIIb, Orc breaks free from his bondage and is embraced by Vala "that he might lose his rage" (91:4). The embrace completes the transformation of Orc: "his human form consumed in his own fires" (93:21) until "No more remaind of Orc but the Serpent round the tree of Mystery" (93:24). Vala herself is strewn on the abyss. The confrontation of Vala and Orc is resolved, then, near the beginning of VIIb. However, there is a passage in VIII (101:10-25) which should, logically, precede this embrace. In this passage Orc is still in bondage, and his transformation into a jewelled serpent is still not complete--he is still "raging," his form is still partially "human." The passage brings us to a point equivalent to the third line of the *America* Preludium, and it is at this point that we might expect a description of the embrace in which Orc breaks from bondage and loses his human form completely.

There is evidence of similar displacements elsewhere in VIIb. Urizen's triumphant proclamation at 95:15-24 was addressed to the Shadowy female in the basic text, and followed by a line which was immediately deleted: "The shadowy voice answerd O Urizen Prince of Light." The speech that was to have followed here was omitted, but perhaps it is worth pointing out that Vala addresses Urizen only twice in the rest of the poem, once at 31:4-16 and once in VIII (102:28-103:20) in a speech which begins, as above, "O Urizen Prince of Light." It seems possible that the speech in VIII was once intended as a reply to Urizen's proclamation. Blake must have been editing the text from which he was copying when he transcribed VIIb. After 96:18 half a line was deleted: "Urizen namd it Pande," which suggests that Blake was cutting short a longer passage here. He introduced instead, rather abruptly, the passage 96:20-98:31, which may have originally had a different context.

Urizen's proclamation is followed by a description of his preparations--the construction of a slave-based economy and the erection of a temple of secret religion. More of these preparations are described in passages which now appear in VIII, and these passages seem to be leading up to an apocalyptic confrontation like the one described in 96:20-98:31. In the passage 100:27-32 Urizen begins to manufacture the machinery of warfare, the object of this work being "To undermine the World of Los & tear bright Enitharmon / To the four winds" (100:35-101:1). The work is continued in 102:14-22, where Urizen gives "life & sense . . . To all his Engines of deceit." The four lines 101:29-32 apparently describe the culmination of this activity:

Thus Urizen in self deceit his warlike pre-  
parations fabricated  
And when all things were finishd sudden wavd  
<among the Stars>  
<His hurtling> hand gave the dire signal  
thunderous Clarions blow  
And all the hollow deep rebellowd with the  
wondrous war.

In their present context these lines simply herald an intensification of the conflict which is seen to be an inherent feature of the fallen world over which Urizen presides; but the lines themselves seem to describe a more decisive event. All of Urizen's preparations, now described variously in VIIb and VIII, seem to be leading up to such a moment. The sudden, apocalyptic battle-signal should herald the eruption of warfare. We might expect the passage 96:20-98:31, describing the furious response of Los and Tharmas to the outbreak of war, to follow such a signal. The passage apparently has a climactic significance. The relationship between Los and Enitharmon is at its lowest ebb. Los, as in *Europe*, rises eagerly to the prospect of war; his appearance is more wrathful here than at any other point in *The Four Zoas*, and his speech, 96:25-28, emphasizes the apocalyptic dimension of the conflict, closely following Revelation 19:17-18. The last line of the passage hints at the consequences of the spreading confusion, for "Urizen's web vibrated torment on torment."

The collapse of Urizen's web is described in VIII in a sequence which now begins with the Shadowy female's speech. The collapse occurs at 103:21-31, and the description of Urizen's final degeneration is continued in 106:17-107:36. In 107:32-35, Tharmas and the Spectre of Urthona give their strength to Los:

And Tharmas gave his Power to Los Urthona gave  
his strength  
Into the youthful prophet for the Love of  
Enitharmon  
And of the nameless Shadowy female in the  
nether deep  
And for the dread of the dark terrors of Orc &  
Urizen.

These lines seem to anticipate some decisive action by Los, and it is possible that they were followed originally by the description of Los rending the heavens, now found in the beginning of IX. Several factors suggest that this description formed the conclusion of an eighth Night designed to follow VIIa1. Night IX originally began on page 119 with the words "Without this Universal Confusion . . ." (119:24). In the poem as it now stands these words clearly apply to the chaos described in the new beginning of the Night; but when they were first transcribed they must have applied to the end of the eighth Night. There is a reference to Los destroying the heavens in the main body of IX, on page 121:

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.

(121:23-25)

Here the destruction of the heavens is seen as a direct result of the Spectre of Urthona's attempt to give up his strength to Los. When these lines were transcribed they cannot have referred to the new beginning of IX unless Blake added the new beginning before he had transcribed three pages of

the Night (the lines occur three pages after the original beginning). This seems to confirm that when Blake transcribed the main body of IX, the "Universal Confusion" was described at the end of the eighth Night, after the description of Urthona giving his strength to Los.

In the new beginning as it now stands, Los's destructive gesture is described in a passage of thirteen lines (117:1-13) added over an erasure. In the added passage Los is watched over by Jesus, so the action appears to be part of the divine scheme of redemption, and the passage is clearly related to a late addition near the end of VIII (110:38-41). Without the Christian framework the significance of Los's action would be different. The crucial lines on page 117, in which Los reads "the heavens across from immense to immense" recall his gesture in *The Book of Los*, Chapter II, where he stands "frozen amidst / The vast rock of eternity"; "The Prophetic wrath, strug'ling for vent" reads the rock "from immense to immense," and he falls into the abyss. This is an example of the destructive nature of prophetic impatience, marking a further stage in the fall. As originally transcribed, the corresponding action in *The Four Zoas* may have been ironically redemptive, taking the confusion of Urizen's empire to its ultimate limit, a collapse analagous to the destruction of the ego necessary for Man's awakening.

In lines 117:24-25, 118:1-6 there is an account of the destruction of the Spectres of Urthona and Enitharmon:

The Spectre of Enitharmon let loose on the  
troubled deep  
Waild Shriell in the confusion & the Spectre of  
Urthona  
Reciev'd her in the darkning South their bodies  
lost they stood  
Trembling & weak a faint embrace a fierce desire  
as when  
Two shadows mingle on a wall they wail & shadowy  
tears  
Fell down & shadowy forms of joy mixd with  
despair & grief  
Their bodies buried in the ruins of the Universe  
Mingled with the confusion. Who shall call them  
from the Grave.

The "Spectre of Enitharmon" here is clearly an alternative term for the "Shadow" that appears in VIIa1 as a result of a further division of Urthona. The passage seems to be an attempt to resolve the problem of Urthona's disintegration. No solution is offered in VIIa1. The added endings of VIIa do not completely resolve this division, but they do introduce a principle by which unity may be achieved: the principle of self-annihilation. Compared with the new endings of VIIa, the solution offered in the passage above seems crudely mechanical. The outcome would seem to be a separation from Los, rather than integration with him, as their bodies lie "buried in the ruins of the Universe."

The additions at the end of VIIa1 (i.e. in VIIa2) almost seem to take the situation described above as their starting point. In the additions, the Spectre speaks to astound Los's ear with "irresistable conviction"

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.

(85:37-40)

It seems that the account of the Spectre of Urthona's union with the Spirit of Enitharmon now contained in the new beginning of IX was composed before the additions at the end of VIIa were conceived. In fact the account may be Blake's original solution to the problem of Urthona's disintegration, a problem which is prominent in VIIa1. Other manifestations of error introduced in VIIa1--Urizen's books and the Tree of Mystery--are consumed in the new beginning of IX, so the narrative as a whole would have formed an appropriate conclusion to an eighth Night designed to follow on from VIIa1.

There does seem to be evidence, then, to support Bentley's suggestion that in the process of revising the eighth Night, Blake rewrote it as two Nights, the first of which was VIIb. There are traces of a narrative sequence which may have been dislocated in the process of revision. This sequence probably began with the embrace of Vala and Orc, may have described how Urizen's empire-building culminated in an apocalyptic confrontation with Tharmas and Los and in the collapse of Urizen's web and the stupefaction of all of Man's faculties except Los--who pulled down the heavens. Such a narrative would have formed an appropriate sequel to VIIa1, and I shall subsequently refer to this (lost) version of the eighth Night as "VIIIa."

## NIGHT IX

At this stage, a consideration of the ninth Night may prove helpful, and Bentley's comments on this Night make a convenient starting point for discussion. He suggests that early drafts of the eighth and ninth Nights may have been bound together with pages 43-84, and "may have described a titanic war among the Zoas (Night VIIb seems to be a prelude to such a war). This war would have resulted in 'Universal Confusion' (with which Night IX begins, page 119), and have been resolved perhaps, in the reunion of the four Zoas in the Eternal Man." He suggests that as VIII and IX contain overt Christian references, they are probably later than VIIb: "They were probably recopied when VIIb was, but Blake's rapidly changing ideas may have forced him to transcribe Nights VIII and IX yet once or twice again." He suggests that IX is earlier than the existing VIII, and concludes: "Presumably Blake's major alteration from the previous draft of Night IX was in his composition or rewriting of the great harvest of the vintage which concludes the Night."<sup>8</sup>

For convenience I shall refer to the main body of the ninth Night, without the new beginning (i.e. 119:24-139:10) as "IX\*." It seems that the absence of stitch marks in IX\* leads Bentley to conclude that this Night must have replaced an earlier copy; it follows from this that IX\* must have evolved

through a major revision of the "earlier version," as only such a major revision would justify the complete retranscription of a Night. But as we have noted, internal evidence is likely to provide a surer indication of relative date than the absence or presence of stitch marks. Curiously, Bentley's hypothesis for the "original" ninth Night seems quite appropriate to IX\*, which does resolve the Universal Confusion "with the reunion of the four Zoas in the Eternal Man." How much of IX\*, then, if any, is the product of subsequent revision?

The harvest and vintage sequence begins at 124:6 and continues to the end of the poem, forming the greater part of the Night. There are obvious precedents for such a sequence in Revelation 14:14-20, and in *Ahania*, where Urizen is introduced as the eternal sower. The detail in which the sequence of ploughing, sowing, and harvesting is described in IX\* suggests that Blake was drawing on his observation of the rural life around Felpham, and the sequence contains none of the Christian references that might be regarded as conclusive evidence of revision, although some elements could be regarded as late relative to pages 43-85. First, there is a development in the presentation of Beulah: Urizen and his sons, wearied after the sowing, receive visions on the "Couches of Beulah" (131:21). Their vision is the long pastoral interlude in which Luvah and Vala, and Tharmas and Enion, are reunited in innocence. However, this development is anticipated in the Shadow of Enitharmon's account of the fall in VIIal, where Beulah is identified as a region of dreams, a pastoral retreat from Eternity, an enticing world where Man's fall began: "he forgot Eternity delighted in his sweet joy / Among his family his flocks & herds & tents & pastures" (83:21-22).

The denunciation of Mystery on page 134 is clearly a direct allusion to the archetypal female of Revelation 17 and 18, but it is not certain that when IX\* was transcribed the name Mystery had the specific meaning that it has in VIII, where it is the name of the most degenerate form of Vala, Rahab. In VI one of Urizen's daughters is identified with the female of Revelation by the writing on her forehead, and the female in IX\* may have been introduced similarly, as a simple personification of Urizenic mystery, appropriate to the apocalyptic context. The names "Satan," "Rahab," and "Mystery the Harlot" appear only in an addition to IX\* (120:47,49), suggesting that the specific symbolic meanings they have in the poem were developed after the Night had been transcribed.

The introduction of the Eternals on page 133 indicates Blake's growing sense of the existence of an unfallen reality, a development which culminated in the introduction of "the Council of God;" and the reference to the "Mercy Divine" at 125:39 suggests an unequivocal faith in divine providence. However, there are references to "The ever pitying one who seeth all things" and to "Providence divine" in VI (71:25-26, 74:31-32); and the Eternals are to some extent anticipated in the Shadow of Enitharmon's account of the fall in VIIal: "Wonder siezd / All heaven they saw him dark. they built a golden wall / Round Beulah" (83:9-11). If the Eternals in IX\* do indicate a new concern with divine intervention,

they are clearly closer to the Eternals of *Urizen* than to the providential Council of God. (As in *Urizen*, the intervention of the Eternals described in 133:15-21 contributes to man's fall.)

Finally, the reference to the "crown of thorns" which falls from Luvah's head (135:23) as he rises from the Eternal feast may be an example of the identification of Christ and Luvah which becomes important in the Christian additions to the poem, although there are no other examples of this identification in IX\*, and as a passing reference the line may simply describe the risen Orc relinquishing the trappings of the Tree of Mystery.

There seems to be little in the harvest and vintage sequence which can be identified as the product of a major revision. In fact, the only parts of IX\* which contain symbolism for which there is no precedent in the basic text of 43-85 are those passages near the beginning of the Night which refer directly to Christ and Jerusalem.

Man's awakening, as it is described at the beginning of IX\*, involves the gradual reassertion of his will. Responding to the Universal Confusion he reasons with himself until he recovers first a sense of determination, and then feelings of wrath (120:27). This active struggle is the natural sequel to the resignation of will described in the copperplate text (23:3,5,6). However, after a description of the regeneration of Urizen, there is a passage in which Man describes his awakening in terms of a divine intervention. The passage begins:

Behold Jerusalem in whose bosom the Lamb of God  
Is seen tho slain before her Gates he self  
renewd remains  
Eternal & I thro him awake to life from deaths  
dark vale.

(122:1-3)

These lines introduce a description of the seasonal revival of *Ahania* in a harmonious relationship with Urizen, followed by five lines in which Jerusalem is hailed as the bride of Christ, "Mother of myriads redeemd & born in her spiritual palaces / By a New Spiritual birth Regenerated from Death" (122:19-20). This allusion to Revelation 21 shows a new readiness to use Christian symbolism in a direct way, but the providential awakening mentioned here seems quite irrelevant to the awakening actually described, and seems to deny the importance of Man's struggle to reassert his will. This suggests that the eight lines referring to the Lamb of God were not originally an integral part of the passage in which they now appear, although they must have been introduced before page 122 was transcribed as they are in the basic text. In IX\* there is no mention of the Council of God, and there is nothing to connect Jerusalem with Golgonooza, nor with Los (who is mentioned only four times in the Night), nor with Enitharmon (who is mentioned only twice). The immediate connection between St. John's vision and the basic myth of IX\* (apart from the obvious fact that both describe an apocalypse) is the fact that St. John's vision involves the ordering of a creative sexual relationship, a principle of vital importance

in the reintegration of Man's faculties in Blake's poem. The passage framed by the Christian lines on page 122 describes the relationship between Ahania and Urizen in its ideal form. Blake seems to have introduced the Christian symbolism in a context which emphasizes the correspondence between the sexual harmony required in his own myth and that which forms the climax of Revelation.

The other example of this kind of Christian symbolism occurs at the end of a passage describing how the dead gather, waiting to be delivered. Again, Blake seems to have introduced references to Revelation in a context which enables a general analogy to be made: Jerusalem appears as "the innocent accused before the Judges" (123:22) and, like the crucified Christ, is identified with the oppressed who now rise to be delivered from their oppressors. The vision of the Cloud of Blood is seen as the climax of the violent destruction of the universe, and identifies the destruction with the Judgment of Christ's second coming. The vision includes

four Wonders of the Almighty  
Incomprehensible. pervading all amidst & round  
about  
Fourfold each in the other reflected they are  
named Life's in Eternity.

(123:36-38)

Margoliouth, commenting on the word "Life's" in the last line, writes: "in spite of the apostrophe I think this is a plural and is a translation of ζωα, Zoas, the 'beasts' or living creatures of Revelation 4. . . . The four 'Life's' have not here been identified with Urthona, Luvah, Urizen and Tharmas, so providing a new title for *Vala*."<sup>9</sup> As Margoliouth suggests, the symbolism of this passage has not really been assimilated into the symbolic structure of the Night. The references to divine intervention are registered as interpolations which remain ultimately separate from the rest of the Night. This is the fundamental difference between the Christian references in IX\* and those in VIII. In any Night that had been retranscribed at least once to accommodate material which would radically modify the conceptual basis of the poem, we might expect the new ideas to revise the existing ideas satisfactorily; we might expect their modifying effect to be dominant, if not complete. This is largely their effect in VIII. If the first fourteen lines or so of VIII are compared with the awakening described in IX\*, the formalizing effect that the Christian framework was to have is evident. In the lines at the beginning of VIII the machinery of divine intervention has been fully developed, but at the expense of the will: Man responds passively to a regulated scheme of redemption in which his own will plays no part. In IX\* the Christian references have no such controlling effect, but are subordinate in a narrative which is otherwise conceptually compatible with the basic text of pages 43-85. The limited importance of these references suggests that they were not introduced as part of a carefully planned revision; they seem to have been introduced more as an immediate response to the major model for the Last Judgment, the Book of Revelation, and Blake may even have decided to

introduce them while he was actually transcribing the Night. Their extent is so limited that their inclusion would hardly seem to have justified the complete retranscription of the Night, or even of the individual leaves on which they occur. As there seems to be little evidence of major revision elsewhere in the Night, it seems likely that the Christian references were included in Blake's first transcription of his "Last Judgment," which survives as the basic text of IX\*.

## NEW DEVELOPMENTS

This study of the ninth Night implies that IX\*, like VIIa1, was part of a single draft of the poem which included the basic text of pages 43-76 and a copy of the eighth Night similar to the sequence I have called "VIIIa". Within this draft the lengths of the Nights had tended to increase towards the end of the poem, and there had obviously been some development in the symbolism. For example, Beulah had become more important towards the end of the poem, and Christian symbolism had been introduced in the ninth Night. It has long been recognized that much of the text on the proof pages may have been composed while Blake was staying with Hayley at Felpham. Commenting on the proof text, Margoliouth pointed out that "Some of the Tharmas passages, especially in Nights III and IV, point to a personal knowledge of the sea which we have no reason to suppose Blake had before he went to Felpham."<sup>10</sup> As we have noted, Blake may have been influenced by his observation of the rural countryside around Felpham in his treatment of eternal harvest in the ninth Night. Blake's letters from Felpham help to illuminate some of the developments in the poem.

After the depressing final years at Lambeth, the removal to the peaceful environment of Felpham and the security of Hayley's patronage seem to have given Blake a profound sense of spiritual release. His enthusiasm is evident in his first letters from Felpham, and a fortnight after his arrival he sent a poem to Butts which describes his "First Vision of Light."<sup>11</sup> The poem relates how, on the beach at Felpham, he has a vision in which his limbs are infolded in beams of gold by "One Man." This is a regeneration visualized in terms far removed from the fierce, revolutionary apocalypse of the Lambeth books. The tone and imagery of the poem are mild, the poet is passive, there is little sense of a determined imaginative effort. This implies an awareness of divine providence which had largely been absent from Blake's work since *Songs of Innocence*, and the poem also suggests a new readiness to use direct (as opposed to satirical) Christian parallels. The "One Man" may be identified readily with the New Testament "Good Shepherd." Man's vision of Jerusalem on page 122, derived from Revelation 21, has obvious similarities with the "Vision of Light" that Blake described to Butts: just as Blake was reborn in a renewed environment at "Female" Felpham, so Man is awakened by Christ to be reborn in Jerusalem's "spiritual palaces." Blake's adoption of Christian symbolism in *The Four Zoas* may have begun with his tentative attempt to reinterpret the resurrection described in the ninth Night in the light of his growing awareness of a

divine providence. The willingness to adopt symbols from both Testaments of the bible, a willingness apparent in additions to the poem, was undoubtedly stimulated further by his study first of Greek, and then of Hebrew, begun under Hayley's supervision at Felpham. By January 1803 Blake felt confident of his mastery of Greek, and was looking forward to reading "The Hebrew bible."<sup>12</sup>

In a letter to Butts dated 22 November 1802,<sup>13</sup> Blake included a poem "composed above a twelve month ago" which, after dramatizing some of the doubts and uncertainties he suffered at Felpham, ends triumphantly:

Now I a fourfold vision see  
And a fourfold vision is given to me.

Whether the word "Now" in the first line refers to the date of the rest of the verses, which were composed "above a twelve month ago" (i.e. in 1801), or to the date of the letter (November 1802) is open to question. But it seems unlikely that Blake could have delayed by a year the announcement of the gift of fourfold vision, and these last lines may have been added to the rest of the poem when the letter was written (i.e., Blake was writing of past difficulties which had now, in November 1802, been resolved). Another letter to Butts of the same day seems to confirm this, for Blake declared "I am again Emerged into the light of day; I still & shall to Eternity Embrace Christianity and Adore him who is the express image of God . . . My Enthusiasm is still what it was, only Enlarged and confirm'd."<sup>14</sup> I think the tone of this letter expresses more than the need to keep in favor with a more orthodox patron; it suggests that as Blake progressed into fourfold vision, Christianity assumed a new meaning for him.

In the basic text of pages 43-76 the term "Beulah" occurs only twice, in IV, where the Spectre tells Tharmas "thou Drewst all the Sons of Beulah into thy dread vortex following / Thy Eddying spirit down the hills of Beulah" (50:5-6). This reference to the "Sons of Beulah" is unique: Blake normally refers to the "Sons of Eden" and the "Daughters of Beulah," and the reference in IV may have survived from a time when Blake regarded Beulah as Man's, eternal dwelling place, the highest attainable ideal. When he received the gift of fourfold vision Beulah would naturally come to be seen as a lower paradise, and the need to distinguish the different degrees of vision in a coherent symbolic structure must have become apparent. A passage in the Shadow of Enitharmon's account of the fall in VIIa1 seems to be an early attempt to make such a distinction:

Wonder siezd

All heaven they saw him dark. they built a  
golden wall  
Round Beulah There he reveld in delight among  
the Flowers.

(83:9-11)

Here Beulah is clearly identified as a lower paradise, distinguished from a higher ideal identified vaguely as "All heaven." In IX\* there is a further development, for Beulah is identified as a resting

place from Eternity where Man reposes, entertained by dreams before his resurrection.

There are two descriptions of cyclical relationships in IX\*. In the long pastoral passage Tharmas complains:

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.

(131:2-5)

The recurring cycle described here is comparable to the cycle which Blake developed more fully in "The Mental Traveller." In introducing this myth showing history as a series of recurring cycles, Blake was beginning to go beyond the original structure of *The Four Zoas*, which was concerned with a single cycle from fall to redemption. As a counterpart to the relationship of Tharmas and Enion there is a description of an ideal cyclical relationship between males and females, in which the obedient female sacrifices herself so that the male remains "Immortal":

Then bright Ahania shall awake from  
death  
A glorious Vision to thine Eyes a Self renewing  
Vision  
The spring. the summer to be thine then sleep  
the wintry days  
In silken garments spun by her own hands against  
her funeral.

(122:6-9)

This harmonious relationship is the converse of the time-bound cycle, and both cycles suggest that when Blake transcribed IX\* he was already beginning to devise a structure in which the different levels of vision would be characterized by distinct and antithetical modes of existence.

The new developments visible in VIIa1 and IX\* are on a small scale and do not seriously threaten the general coherence of the narrative in which they occur. Bentley has discovered that page 48 of the manuscript was used as a backing sheet when Blake was printing engravings for Hayley's ballads at Felpham. Engravings for the first ballad are dated 1 June 1802, and, as it is very unlikely that Blake would temporarily remove a page of his manuscript to use it as a backing sheet, it is reasonable to conclude, as Bentley does,<sup>15</sup> that the page was not transcribed until after the end of May 1802. Pages 43-84 may have been bound together some time after this date; and as we have seen, at least one leaf (pages 111-12) seems to have been bound before any thing was written on it. Early in 1803, two months after Blake had written to Butts about "fourfold vision," his letters began to refer to the completion of a major work, and on 6 July he mentioned

a Sublime Allegory, which is now perfectly  
completed into a Grand Poem. . . . This poem

shall by Divine Assistance be progressively Printed and Ornamented with Prints & given to the Public.<sup>16</sup>

Frye thinks that this "does not literally apply to *The Four Zoas*, which was never completed into anything."<sup>17</sup> But although the poem was never "progressively Printed and Ornamented with Prints" there is no reason to suppose that it was never completed into anything. The poem as it stands contains revisions almost certainly made after 1803; but Blake could have been referring to an intermediate stage of composition in which nine Nights had been completed into a unified and symbolically homogeneous whole. It is possible that Blake was referring to a single draft of *The Four Zoas* which included a revised copperplate text, pages 43-85 and IX\*. Blake's symbolism may have begun to develop in new directions when his Grand Poem was almost complete. This would explain the new developments apparent in VIIa1 and IX\*; and it would also explain why Blake subsequently began to revise the poem, to integrate the new ideas more fully.

### THE FIRST REVISION OF THE EIGHTH NIGHT

If VIIb *was* composed during a revision of "VIIIa," what kind of changes were made to the eighth Night at this stage? The text of VIIb and of the present eighth Night should provide useful clues. The existence of VIIb suggests that Blake was extremely reluctant to discard material once it had been used in the poem, and so it may be possible to find traces in VIII of material introduced in any previous revision (even if it has been subsequently modified). Night VIII is manifestly composite, and consists of: (i) six leaves which contain a continuous narrative running from the title-page (page 99) to page 110, on which "End of the eighth Night" was twice written and twice erased; and (ii) three leaves (pages 111-16) which contain material to be interpolated in or added to pages 99-110. For convenience I shall refer to the basic text of pages 99-110 as "VIII\*." This text ends at 110:28, "And all his Sorrows till he reassumes his ancient bliss."

Broadly speaking, VIII\* falls into three sections, as the Night is divided by a sequence describing the descent, judgment, and crucifixion of Christ, the sequence occurring almost exactly in the middle of the Night (104:5 to 106:6). The last part of the Night begins "Darkness & sorrow covered all flesh Eternity was darkend," and from this point to the end of VIII\* there is nothing in the basic text necessarily later than the basic text of pages 43-85. Although the rest of VIII\* contains highly developed Christian symbolism, the reference to the Divine Lamb at 107:37-39 and 110:1-2 are both subsequent additions; and there is no mention of the redemptive labors of Los and Enitharmon in this part of the narrative, although they are prominent in the rest of the Night. This suggests that the last section may have been composed before the development of Blake's Christian symbolism was advanced, and before Los had begun to assume an actively redemptive role in the poem. The section ends, after Tharmas and the Spectre give up their strength to Los, with the final lamentation of Ahania and Enion's comfort-

ing answer. One of Blake's first revisions to VIIIa may have been the addition of the lament with Enion's reply, which would have displaced the original ending (Los rending the heavens), which would then have to be added at the beginning of the ninth Night. Such a revision, while changing the ending of the eighth Night from an explosive climax to a passage of elegiac expectation, would help to re-establish the presence of Enion and Ahania (who are largely absent from the central Nights of the poem) before their resurrection in the last Night.

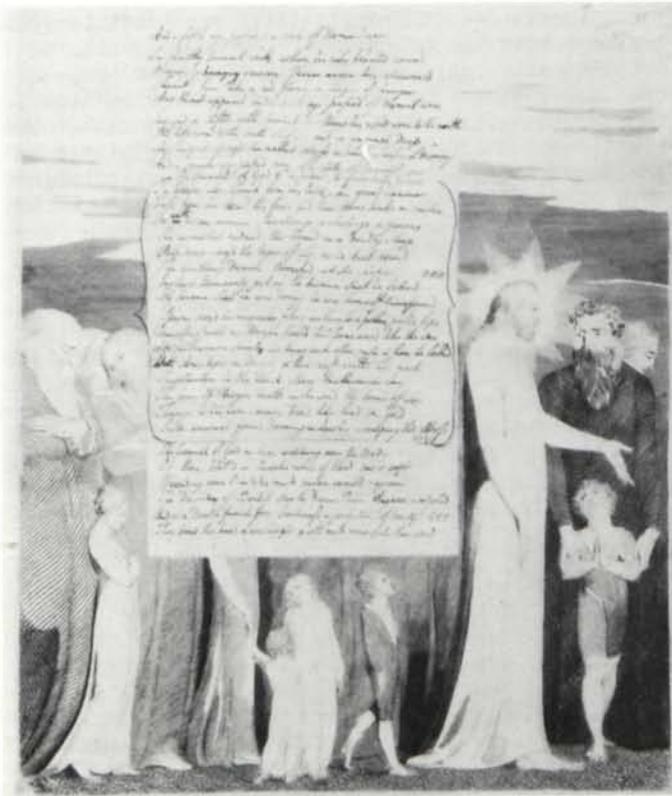
The material in the basic text of VIIb which seems manifestly late indicates that when the Night was composed, Blake was beginning to define the different degrees of vision in a coherent structure. In VIIa1 and IX\* Beulah had been distinguished from Eternity; in VIIb two more levels are distinguished, although they are not named. The Shadow female extends through one:

far & wide she stretchd thro all the  
worlds of Urizens journey  
And was Adjoind to Beulah as the Polypus to the  
Rock.

(95:1-2)

This world has been the scene of most of the events described in the poem, but now Blake distinguished a lower world "Beyond the Limit of Translucence," the world of single vision and opacity which was subsequently called "Ulro." As the dead descend into this world to form Satan, the daughters of Beulah sing songs of comfort, "Waiting with Patience for the fulfilment of the Promise Divine." This passage suggests that when Blake composed VIIb he envisaged a comprehensive scheme of divine intervention which would control the events of the fallen world.

At the end of IV Blake made two additions, the first of which was twenty-two lines long, transcribed over the original (erased) Night ending, at the foot of page 55 and at the top of page 56. It was marked for insertion after 55:9 (i.e., it was designed to follow the description of Los binding Urizen). In this addition the daughters of Beulah observe the fallen world from "Beulahs mild moon covered regions," and take comfort in the Divine Vision embodied in the Council of God. The last six lines of the passage, which were subsequently erased, may have described a measure of divine intervention by the Council, and, if Erdman's conjecture for the fourth line is correct, the founding of the limit of Contraction.<sup>18</sup> The founding of this limit is described in the passage which replaced these six lines, and also the founding of the "Limit of Opacity" or Translucence, which suggests that the erased lines may also have described the founding of the limit of Translucence. This means that the first addition at the end of IV may have been designed to prepare for the related passage in VIIb, where the dead descend below the limit of Translucence to become Satan. (In the first addition the daughters of Beulah quote Martha's rebuke to Jesus: "Lord if thou had'st been here, my brother had not died," John 11:21; in VIIb the daughters are comforted by Christ's reply to Martha, "Thy brother shall rise again," v. 23.)



*The Four Zoas*, p. 55.

The passage at the beginning of the eighth Night, in which the Council, described as a "Vision of all Beulah," meets to create the fallen man, brings the scheme initiated at the end of IV to fruition. Christ's descent and the final epiphany of Satan in the eighth Night are seen as the culmination of a divine scheme which has been observed in all its stages by the daughters of Beulah. The description of the Council of God in the eighth Night, then, is closely related to the first addition at the end of IV and to the passage in VIIb describing the formation of Satan, and it was probably introduced during the revision which produced VIIb. The passage may have been modified subsequently when Blake composed VIII\*, for it contains Old Testament references and the term "Eden," for which there is no precedent in VIIb. Similarly, it seems unlikely that the second addition at the end of IV, or the reference to the story of Lazarus on page 21 (lines 9-10) were added at this time; both passages contain terms, such as "Emanation," which seem later than anything in the basic text of either VIIb or VIII\*.

It seems clear that when Blake composed VIIb he must have planned to include in the eighth Night some kind of sequence describing the epiphany of Satan, and the incarnation and crucifixion of Christ. The late passage in VIIb clearly prepares for Satan's epiphany, and the crucifixion would form the prelude to the triumphant second coming which had already been described in the ninth Night. There is little in the account of Satan's epiphany described on page 104 in VIII\* that is not anticipated in VIIb or

compatible with the Christian passages in IX\*, except perhaps the introduction of the "Sons of Eden." The last lines on page 104 originally stated that the Lamb of God would "rend the Veil of Mystery / And the Call Urizen & Luvah & Tharmas & Urthona," which prescribes a more directly active role for Christ than he actually has in the rest of VIII\*: they suggest that he will become a kind of divine caretaker who will assume responsibility for reintegrating the faculties on Man's behalf. In VIII\* Man's regeneration depends on the creative labors of an enlightened Los who is inspired by Christ. The pencilled addition at 104:31, "Los said to Enitharmon Pitying I saw," may be an attempt to maintain the presence of Los in a passage which was conceived before Los had been seen as an enlightened redeemer. There may also have been an early version of the judgment and crucifixion which was subsequently revised to produce the fragment p. 145, and the final version 105:1 to 106:6.

Each of these additions to the eighth Night--the description of the Council of God, the Christian sequence, the lament of Ahania and Enion's answer--would have increased the length of the eighth Night. This increase in size, together with the fact that the introduction of a scheme of divine intervention would have a far-reaching effect on the poem as a whole, may have prompted Blake to undertake a major reorganization of the narrative sequence of the Night. It was probably at this stage that Blake decided to add the new beginning to the ninth Night and to compose an entirely new Night, VIIb, taking from VIIa the description of the Vala-Orc embrace, the construction of Urizen's empire, and the passage describing how Tharmas, Los, and Enitharmon react to the warfare.

In composing VIIb, Blake would have to change the sequence and the significance of events originally described in the eighth Night. The warfare was now seen to begin not with Urizen's apocalyptic battle-signal but with the Vala-Orc embrace; and the conflict became an inherent feature of Urizen's empire, rather than the culmination of his elaborate preparations. Orc no longer loses his rage completely at the moment of the embrace with Vala, for although the embrace is now described in VIIb, the description of Orc's transformation on the Tree of Mystery is retained in the eighth Night, the swelling Orc symbolizing enslaved energy bound in the widening conflict of Urizen's empire. Orc is thus seen as an active force in Urizen's empire. Orc and Urizen are now seen to be "Communing" (100:33).

Night VIIb seems to have been composed before Blake had reassessed the role of Los, for he appears in the Night as a wrathful figure rather than a patient, enlightened redeemer. The major difference between the version of the eighth Night produced at this stage and the present VIII\* (apart from local revisions) would be the absence of the three passages which in VIII\* describe the redemptive labors of Los and Enitharmon (99:20 to 100:26, 101:35-37, 103:32 to 104:4). In other respects the outline of the eighth Night--beginning with a description of the Council of God, continuing with chaotic warfare, a central sequence describing the crucifixion, and concluding with a passage possibly identical to

106:17 to 110:28--would have been very similar to VIII\*. I shall subsequently refer to this second version of the eighth Night, contemporary with VIIb, as "VIIIb."

When he transcribed VIIb Blake probably did not intend to exclude VIIa1 from the poem, as both Nights contain elements essential to the coherence of the poem's narrative, and VIIb seems to have been designed to follow on from the end of VIIa1. As Bentley suggests,<sup>19</sup> it seems likely that Blake intended to conflate the first seven Nights into six; but whatever revision he had in mind, he doesn't seem to have carried it out at this time, and he probably deferred the problem of reconciling the two seventh Nights.

Although VIIb had just under 300 lines as originally transcribed (comparable to VI and VIIa1), it was transcribed on four leaves instead of the usual five, and no room was left for a full-page drawing on the final page. This suggests that when he transcribed VIIb Blake had used up most of the *Night Thoughts* proof-leaves, and had started to use them more sparingly. The new beginning of the ninth Night was probably transcribed at about the same time. An addition at 118:7 refers to Rahab and Tirzah, who are mentioned nowhere else in the new beginning, although they occur in the basic text of VIII\*. This suggests that the new beginning was probably transcribed before VIII\* was composed. However, it seems unlikely that the revised eighth Night ("VIIIb") was transcribed at this stage. The last part of VIII\* (106:17 to the end), as we have seen, contains no late symbolism in the basic text, and was probably identical to the last section of VIIb. It seems unlikely that Blake would copy out this section *twice*, once in VIIIb and again in VIII\*, without making any changes. Before it was transcribed the eighth Night probably underwent further revision.

## THE SECOND REVISION OF THE EIGHTH NIGHT

In a letter to Hayley of 23 October 1804, Blake suddenly made an unusually enthusiastic announcement:

I have entirely reduced that spectrous Fiend to his station, whose annoyance has been the ruin of my labours for the last passed twenty years of my life. He is the enemy of conjugal love and is the Jupiter of the Greeks, an iron-hearted tyrant, the ruiner of ancient Greece. . . . Suddenly, on the day after visiting the Truchsessian Gallery of pictures, I was again enlightened with the light I enjoyed in my youth, and which has for exactly twenty years been closed from me as by a door and by window-shutters. . . . he is become my servant who domineered over me, he is even a brother who was my enemy.<sup>20</sup>

As John Sutherland has observed, this enlightenment seems similar to the one experienced by Los in some of the additions to *The Four Zoas*: "After 1804, Blake seems more concerned with communicating a method he had discovered by which men may win free from individual, internal tyranny--a method by which an individual may free himself from the domination

of one distorted aspect of his own psyche (either from Urizen, or from the Spectre of his dominant Zoa--in Blake's case, from the Spectre of Urthona)."<sup>21</sup> Throughout much of *The Four Zoas* Los appears as a spectral figure. In the main body of the ninth Night, for example, he is mentioned only a few times, once near the very end of the poem, where he is not clearly distinguished from the Spectre of Urthona:

Urthona is arisen in his strength no longer now  
Divided from Enitharmon no longer the Spectre  
Los  
Where is the Spectre of Prophecy the delusive  
phantom.

(139:4-6)

The apparent lack of distinction between Los and the Spectre in parts of the poem possibly reflects Blake's own difficulties in freeing his prophetic voice from its attendant Spectre. In additions at the end of VIIa the relationship between Los and the Spectre is brought into focus. The original Night-ending on page 85 [after line 18] was erased to make room for an addition of six lines in which

Los Embracd the Spectre first as a brother  
Then as another Self; astonishd humanizing &  
in tears  
In Self abasement Giving up his Domineering  
lust.

There are echoes in these lines of the extract from the letter quoted above; and in another letter to Hayley (4 December 1804) Blake writes in similar terms that he has lived a "Divided Existence"<sup>22</sup> but is no longer at war with himself. The passages in *The Four Zoas* in which Los unites with his Spectre to assume the role of enlightened redeemer were probably suggested by the dramatic enlightenment that followed Blake's visit to the Truchsessian Gallery in the Autumn of 1804.

The new enlightenment seems to have come after VIIb was transcribed, and after the Christianization of the poem had begun, but before the second version of the eighth Night (VIIIb) had been copied out. It was a development which would cause a peculiar problem of organization. When VIIb was composed, it seems probable that Christ's descent in the eighth Night was to have been the major turning point in the poem, because at this stage in the poem's development none of Man's faculties would have been capable of enlightened action (Los's final rending of the heavens would have been an act of desperation rather than an enlightened gesture). When Los became an enlightened redeemer, Christ's descent would appear as a culmination rather than a turning point. The redemptive labors of Los would be described most appropriately in the prelude to Man's awakening, the eighth Night. But as Los's reconciliation with the Spectre provides a partial solution to the problem of Urthona's disintegration, a problem which is discussed in some detail by the Spectre and the Shadow of Enitharmon at the end of VIIa1, the reinterpretation of Los would inevitably strengthen the narrative links between the end of VIIa1 and the eighth Night--despite the fact that the two Nights were now separated by the new Night, VIIb.

The exact nature of this problem will become clear if we examine some of the elements of the VIIb narrative. At the end of VIIa1 the rebirth of Vala is described thus: "a Cloud she grew & grew / Till many of the dead burst forth from the bottoms of their tombs" (85:17-18). Before later additions were made to this page, the last line would seem to have had only a general significance, identifying Vala's rebirth as an event of apocalyptic importance. A variant of the same line occurs in VIIb, where the dead descend beyond the limit of Translucence to form Satan (95:11-14). There "the Dead" begin to take on a specific importance in the developing mythology. When Los had been reassessed, the identification of the Dead as victims of Urizen's war became important to Blake's conception of Los's redemptive activities. In VIII\*, for example, Los strives to assimilate the chaotic warfare:

Los builds the walls of Golgonooza against the  
stirring battle  
That only thro the Gates of Death they can  
enter to Enitharmon.

(101:35-36)

The pronoun "they" refers to "the Dead" who are rescued by Los and Enitharmon as they descend towards the lowest level of existence "tempted by the Shadowy females sweet / Delusive cruelty." The descent described in VIIb thus became an integral part of the process of redemption.

However, in VIIb there is tension rather than cooperation between Los and Enitharmon. Los responds enthusiastically to the violence, and Golgonooza seems threatened by his neglect rather than strengthened by his efforts: Enitharmon cries "O Los unless thou keep my tower the Watchman will be slain" (98:6). In short, in VIIb the misguided Los contributes eagerly to the chaos which, as an agent of redemption, he should be striving to assimilate. When Los had been reassessed, then, part of VIIb became useful to the developing scheme of salvation, while part became manifestly inappropriate to that scheme. As long as the narrative of VIIb remained unchanged between VIIa1 and the eighth Night, Blake would have difficulty in introducing an account of Los's enlightening reconciliation with the Spectre and Enitharmon where it would be most appropriate--at the end of VIIa1.

Another problem in introducing new material to the poem would be the inevitable strain imposed on the general structure. The basic text of VIII\* had over 400 lines--about 100 more than any other Night except the ninth; it had six leaves instead of five; and the text continued on the verso of the sixth leaf, leaving no room for a full-page drawing. In these respects the Night was "irregular." Blake was being forced by the quantity of his material to abandon some of the formal patterning which had shaped his earlier Nights. However, the Night was transcribed on *Night Thoughts* proof pages in the normal way, and had approximately the same number of lines per page as the earlier Nights on the proof pages, which suggests that Blake still maintained some concern for the general appearance of his

manuscript, and was hoping to resolve the problem of his two seventh Nights within a nine-Night structure. The desire to preserve the formal structure of the poem obviously conflicted with the desire to include growing quantities of new material, but Blake may have maintained a fairly selective attitude towards new material at this stage.

The regularity of VIII\* will be appreciated if it is compared with the two leaves added at the end of VIIa1, in which the reunion of Los with the Spectre and Enitharmon is described. These leaves, pages 87-90, were formed by cutting in two a print (of *Edward & Elenor*, 1793); the text is written on one side of each leaf (with the print on the other side), and the number of lines per page is considerably larger than the average for the rest of the proof-text. The fact that the leaves were made by destroying a large print would suggest that they were among the very last to be added to the poem, used when Blake was having difficulty finding paper of an appropriate size, and when the overall appearance of the manuscript was less important to him than the inclusion of all relevant material. However, with one or two local exceptions, the basic text of pages 87 and 90 seems to be contemporary in date of composition with those passages in VIII\* which describe the redemptive labors of Los and Enitharmon. Much of the material added at the end of VIIa1, then, may have been composed before, but transcribed some time after, VIII\* was transcribed.

On page 85 Blake erased the original Night ending (of VIIa1), adding nine lines in which Los embraces the Spectre and gives up his "Domineering Lust," and a new Night ending which was erased when the Night was extended further. The final result of the later additions was a continuous narrative from 85:32 to 90:68. Although as the poem now stands this narrative *is* continuous, there is evidence to suggest that it was originally composed and transcribed as two distinct sections designed for separate contexts within the poem. The first section runs from 85:32 to the foot of page 87 (line 59 in the basic text). The text from 85:32 to 86:14 is really a more elaborate version of the previous nine-line addition, except that it describes Los's reunion with the Spectre in terms quite new to the poem, for Los now responds to the Spectre's doctrine of "Self annihilation." Golgonooza, previously featured in IV (49:18-21), V (59:28; 60:1-3), and VIIb (97:31-32), now becomes prominent, opening a way to "new heavens & a new Earth" (87:9). In 87:30-35 the Spectre explains that Los's task will be to ransom the "Spectres of the Dead," a phrase which here refers to the dead who burst from their tombs when Vala is reborn at the end of VIIa1. But Los can find no way to redeem the Spectres until he has been reconciled with Enitharmon, an event which will complete the second stage of his enlightenment. In 87:13-29 Enitharmon tempts Los with the fruit of Urizen's tree, and Los eats the fruit, sitting down "in Despair." This passage ties the narrative firmly to that of VIIa1, as it continues the tension between Los and Enitharmon described on pages 81 to 85. The text of page 87 concludes with Enitharmon still possessed by jealous fears, still refusing the entreaties of Los and misinterpreting the descent

of Christ: "I . . . fear that he / Will give us to Eternal Death." At this point Los's restoration is incomplete, as he has yet to be reconciled with Enitharmon.

Whereas the passage from 85:32 to 87:59 was clearly designed as a continuation of VIIa, the basic text of page 90 may have been designed originally for a different context. In 90:5-7 Los pleads once more with Enitharmon:

Lovely delight of Men Enitharmon shady refuge  
from furious war  
Thy bosom translucent is a soft repose for the  
weeping souls  
Of those piteous victims of battle . . .

The references to "war" and the "victims of battle" are explained when Enitharmon is finally reassured by Los and they are reconciled: Los draws flames "From out the ranks of Urizens war" (90:30). "Urizens war" is the chaotic conflict which is described in VIIb and the eighth Night. On page 90 the identification of the Spectres of the dead as victims of this battle suggests that this passage may have been designed originally for some context after the embrace of Vala and Orc, which in VIIb initiates the conflict.

On page 100 in VIII a marginal note "Los stood &c" indicates that a passage was to be inserted between lines 1 and 2. Erdman suggests that this refers to 90:2, originally the first line on page 90, which originally read "Los stood in Golgonooza in the Gate of Luban." Erdman observes that "The thematic material of 90, amplified with marginal additions, seems all an amplification backward from the 'Looms in Luban's Gate' in 100:2."<sup>23</sup> The suggestion of an "amplification backward" follows from the observation that page 90 is "unquestionably a late addition." The physical evidence, we have seen, would certainly suggest that pages 87 to 90 were among the last additions to the poem, but this does not necessarily apply to the original date of composition. From the internal evidence the material in VIII\* describing the labors of Los and Enitharmon seems to be a continuation of the text of page 90. Los's reunion with the Spectre and with Enitharmon, and his discovery of a way to redeem the victims of Urizen's war, are assumed in VIII\*, where there is no mention of the Spectre, and where Los and Enitharmon start to rescue the Spectres of the dead at the beginning of the Night. In fact, shortly after Los and Enitharmon are introduced the focus of attention moves away from Los to the building and working of Enitharmon's looms. The shift in emphasis seems quite natural if VIII\* is read as a continuation of page 90, where full attention is paid to Los's role and Enitharmon, finally reassured, begins to assume importance in the scheme of salvation. It seems more likely that Blake worked out the details of Los's reunion with the Spectre and Enitharmon before VIII\* was copied out, rather than composing it afterwards as an "amplification backward." Old Testament references occur in the three leaves added to VIII\* (pages 113, 115, and 111) and in the added leaves pages 19-20, all of which also seem to be unquestionably late additions, but there are no comparable

references in pages 87 and 90, which again suggests that the texts of the later pages may have been composed before Blake had begun to adopt Old Testament references.

When Blake first reassessed the role of Los, he may have composed two related but distinct passages: (i) a new ending to VIIa, describing the conversion of Los by the new doctrine of "Self annihilation," which included his reunion with the Spectre but did not resolve the tension between Los and Enitharmon; (ii) a narrative designed to come after VIIb (i.e., to be included in the eighth Night) which described Los's reconciliation with Enitharmon and the construction of Enitharmon's looms. By leaving the tension between Los and Enitharmon unresolved in the new ending of VIIa, Blake may have hoped to explain the strained relationship in VIIb, although the Spectre-like Los of VIIb is hard to equate with the humanized Los of page 87, who has already begun his inspired construction of Golgonooza. When Blake first composed this passage he was possibly more concerned with developing the myth to his own satisfaction than with the problem of containing it within the existing structure of the poem.

I have suggested that in his attempts to preserve the formal outline of the poem Blake probably maintained a fairly selective attitude to new material. In view of the fact that the new passages were developing beyond the original scheme of the poem--could provide, in fact, the basis of a separate poem--Blake may even have considered dropping VIIa from the poem at this stage. A note on page 91 of VIIb reads, "This Night begins at line 153 the following comes in at the End"; on page 95 after line 14 a note indicates the "Beginning of the Book Seventh Night"; and at the foot of page 98 Blake wrote, "Then follows Thus in the Caverns of the Grave &c as it stands now in the beginning of Night the Seventh." When he added these instructions he clearly intended the seventh Night to begin at 95:15. The sixth Night ends on page 75 with Urizen's confrontation with Tharmas and the Spectre, who impede his progress down the vale of Urthona. In the final lines of the Night Urizen breaks down their resistance, as his "massy Globes . . . slow oerwheel / The dismal squadrons of Urthona." Line 15 on page 95 would follow on quite well from this point as the beginning of the seventh Night:

But in the Deeps beneath the *tree* <Roots> of  
Mystery in darkest night  
When Urizen sat on his rock the Shadow brooded  
*dismal*  
Urizen saw & triumphd & he cried to *the Shadowy*  
*female* <his warriors>  
The time of Prophecy is now revolvd & all  
This Universal Ornament is mine . . .

(95:15-19)

The "Shadow" in line 16 was the Shadowy female in the original context. If these lines followed from the end of VI, however, "Shadow" would refer to the Spectre of Urthona, who is called the "Shadow of Urthona" in 75:6, where the term was altered from

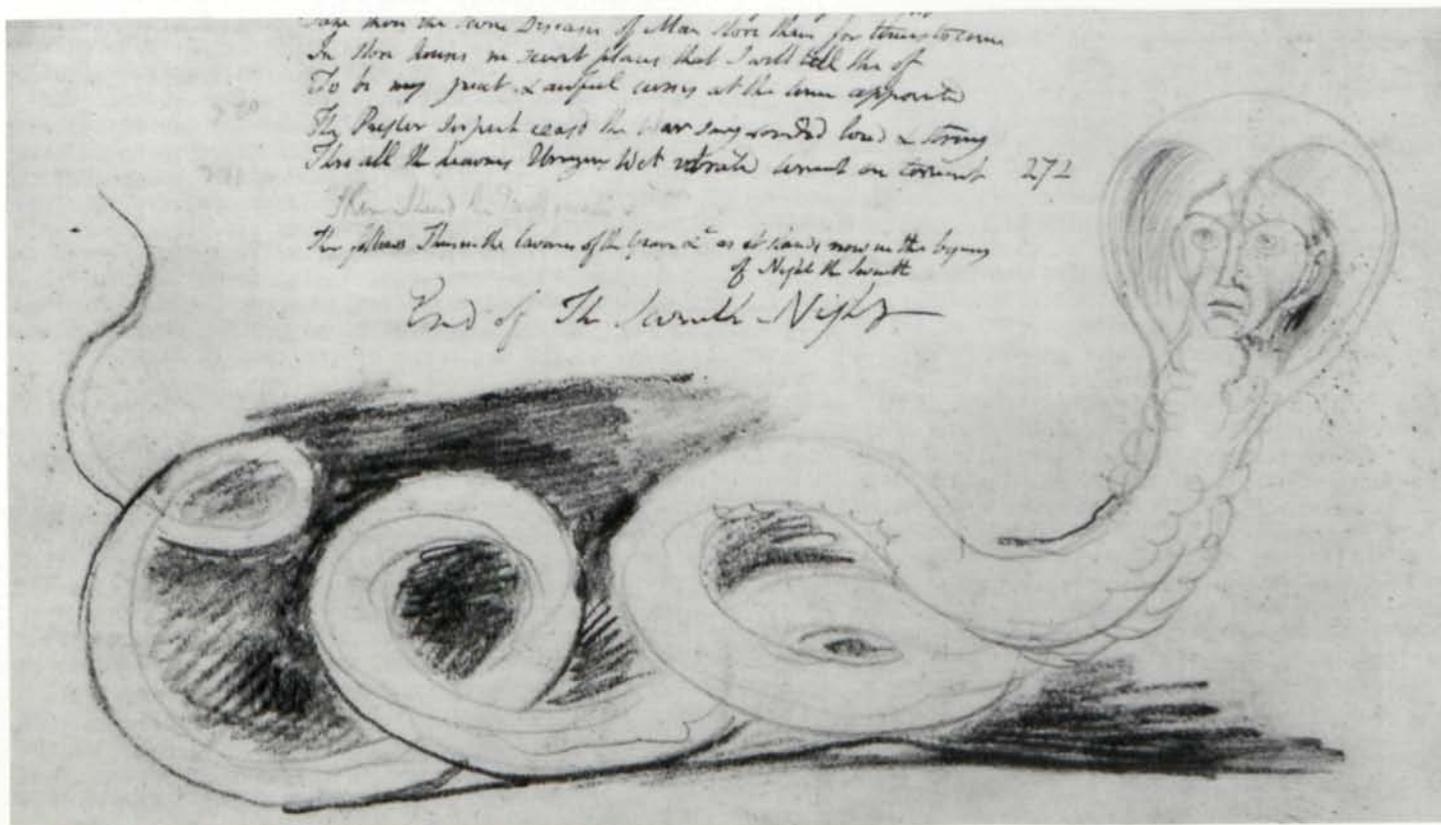
"Shade of Urthona," possibly to emphasize this identification. It may have been at this stage that Blake deleted the last surviving reference to the Shadowy female, in line 17, and substituted "his warriors." Urizen's triumph in lines 18 and 19 would thus be seen as the consequence of his victory over Tharmas and the Spectre, and the chaotic warfare that follows would be seen as a consequence of the confrontation at the end of VI. This may have been the kind of transition Blake intended when he indicated that the seventh Night began at 95:15.

Blake's instruction at the original beginning of VIIb clearly states that "the following [i.e., 91:1 to 95:14] comes in at the end." This portion continues the description of the chaotic conflict (but without featuring Los or Enitharmon) and shows how the Shadowy female, stretching through the fallen world, creates the conditions necessary for Los's redemptive activity in the eighth Night, as the dead descend on her clouds to form Satan. The portion ends with the description of the descent of the dead, which would lead appropriately into VIII\*, on the first page of which there is a similar passage (99:24-26).

The transposed halves of VIIb, then, would link effectively with both the end of VI and the beginning of the eighth Night, and when he added the instructions to indicate the transposition, he may have intended to exclude VIIa1 from the poem. This, however, was probably only a temporary measure, for the lengthy revisions in VIIa (i.e. the addition of VIIa2) show that Blake decided to keep the Night after all.

Rather than abandon VIIa1, or further unbalance the poem by introducing the two new long passages describing the enlightenment of Los and Enitharmon, he may have decided to edit the new passages in a drastic way. The nine lines which formed the first new ending to VIIa may have been designed as an alternative to the longer ending. The lines give a brief summary of Los's union with the Spectre without introducing any new terminology: Los does not respond to the doctrine of Self annihilation, but simply to the Shadow of Enitharmon's "tale of Urthona." After the new ending Blake wrote "The End of the Seventh Night" indicating that he still thought of this as the seventh Night. The addition would therefore supersede the instructions in VIIb, and might even imply that Blake had decided to drop VIIb from the poem. The new ending would certainly introduce an anomaly, as the Los of VIIb is almost an epitome of the "Domineering Lust" which, in the new ending, he gives up. Perhaps he regarded the new ending as a provisional measure, a concession to the new material he had decided to exclude at this stage, written at a time when he had found no way to reconcile the two seventh Nights.

Of the second passage, designed for inclusion in the eighth Night, Blake seems to have decided to introduce only a part at this stage--namely the three passages describing the labors of Los and Enitharmon and the weaving of a "Universal female form" identified as Jerusalem (99:20 to 100:26, 101:35-36 and 103:32-39, 104:1-4). This is the culmination of their redemptive labors, and relates their activity to the descent of Christ, already described in the eighth Night. Lines 99:20-23,



which as the manuscript now stands represent the final stage in a gradual process of enlightenment, would have represented the moment of enlightenment itself in the absence of the long additional passages at the end of VIIa. All the references to "Ulro" in VIII\* are contained in the three passages describing the enlightened Los and Enitharmon; Blake probably adopted the term at this stage. He also further revised the central Christian sequence at this time, introducing first the figure of Rahab (as the fragment page 145 shows), and then the song of the females of Amalek which features Tirzah. At this stage, then, Blake's reading of the Old Testament began to influence the poem's symbolism more directly. Having introduced this song to the revised Christian sequence, Blake transcribed VIII\* on the proof-pages.

The revision which in two stages transformed the original eighth Night into VIII\* reveals a growing tension between the wish to incorporate large quantities of new material and the wish to preserve the poem's original structure; and there is evidence to suggest that Blake's symbolism was still developing rapidly when VIII\* was composed. The song which features Tirzah and the passage which introduces Rahab suggest that Blake was trying to contain as concisely as possible a mythology which was rapidly developing beyond the original myth of the poem. VIII\* was not the final product of this development, but represents an intermediate stage.

Blake made two kinds of revisions to VIII\*: (i) local modifications within the original six leaves of the Night; (ii) additions contained on three extra proof-leaves, pp. 111-12, 113-14 and 115-16. The three extra leaves radically change the structure of the Night, but the first revisions to VIII\* were probably the local revisions designed to integrate more satisfactorily the older and newer elements of the existing mythology, without introducing any more new ideas. Three Christian additions in the last section of VIII\* have this function, updating part of the narrative which contained no Christian references when it was copied out. At the beginning of the Night an addition of twelve lines on page 99 describes the double female form of the daughters of Beulah, mentioned in the first addition at the end of IV. The narrative sequence was altered on pages 100 and 101, the passage 100:27-101:3 having a new context between lines 32 and 33 on page 101; and two additions on page 101 were probably made at this time: a passage of five lines describing the appearance of Satan (written in the margin without a guideline, but placed by Keynes and Erdman after 101:3), and five lines describing the labors of Los. The description of Orc's transformation into a jewelled serpent would now be followed by the description of Urizen's instruments of war, in which Urizen is seen "Communing with the Serpent of Orc." The rearrangement restores to Urizen's battle-signal something of its original significance, for it is now seen to have special consequences, intensifying the conflict which begins to take the

form of Satan. The new sequence also suggests that the epiphany of Satan is the culmination of Orc's transformation and of the sinister communion between Urizen and Orc. The added lines describing Los's redemptive labors, by which the dead are humanized, emphasize the opposition between Los's effort and Urizen's military campaign which causes the dead to degenerate into the form of Satan.

These revisions make better or wider use of ideas which were already present in VIII\*. However, Blake undertook another series of revisions designed to integrate the figure of Rahab more successfully into the Night, which led eventually to major alterations. In the description of the crucifixion in VIII\* the daughters of Amalek, Canaan, and Moab were identified as different forms of Rahab, and Rahab herself was identified as Mystery (who had been introduced as a simple personification in the ninth Night). An addition at 105:11-24 attempts to account for the appearance of Rahab in the poem: "The Synagogue Created her from Fruit of Urizens tree"; and the addition was subsequently extended by three-and-a-half lines which explain that she was "hidden within / The bosom of Satan," and that her daughters are called Tirzah. Tirzah, who in VIII\* had been introduced within the song of the daughters of Amalek, now entered the main narrative, and her relationship with Rahab was clarified. Other revisions probably made at about the same time are the added line 105:13, which describes Vala hidden in Satan's bosom "as in an ark & Curtains"; and, at the foot of page 104, the last one-and-a-half lines, which were deleted and replaced by a new account of the purpose of Christ's incarnation: "To Give his vegetated body / To be cut off & separated that the Spiritual body may be Reveald." With these revisions Blake was apparently preparing to introduce the description of Rahab's epiphany after the revelation of Christ's spiritual body, which had been included in the fragment page 145, but excluded from VIII\*. It was probably after he had made these additions that he erased the original Night ending of VIII\* and added a new passage (110:30-37) in which he seems to have been working towards a climactic conclusion describing the final epiphany of Rahab before the revealed Christ. The passage was not finished, but was deleted and replaced by a shorter passage (110:38-41) in which Los takes Christ's body from the cross and places it "in a Sepulcher which Los had hewn / For himself." This action is repeated at the end of a marginal addition on page 106 (7-16); and the new passage of thirteen lines introduced on page 117, in the new beginning of the ninth Night, describes how "Los & Enitharmon builded Jerusalem weeping / Over the Sepulcher & over the Crucified body." Both of these revisions were probably made when Blake revised the ending of VIII\*.

Clearly, Rahab was becoming increasingly important in this series of local additions. The new passages show how she managed to absorb the crucifixion in a religion of mystery. Los, Enitharmon, and Jerusalem weep over the sepulchre, and their misunderstanding of Christ's death is Rahab's triumph. When Blake added the new ending on page 110 he had still not introduced a description of Rahab's epiphany, although Jerusalem weeps

over the sepulchre "two thousand years," suggesting a relationship between Rahab's triumph and contemporary history. This relationship is brought into focus in the text of the added page 111. After explaining that St. John understood the immediate absorption of Christ's death into a religion of mystery, the passage describes the rise of Natural Religion after the Synagogue of Satan had resolved to burn Mystery:

The Ashes of Mystery began to animate they  
 call'd it Deism  
 And Natural Religion as of old so now anew  
 began  
 Babylon again in Infancy Call'd Natural Religion.

(111:22-24)

This satanic second coming provides the logical conclusion to the series of local additions made to VIII\*, for it is the final consolidation of error, the final epiphany of Rahab, and the passage may have been added shortly after Blake made the final additions on pages 110 and 117. The references to "Ahanian weeping on the Void" and to Enion speaking "from the Caverns of the Grave" indicate that this text was designed for the end of the eighth Night, and when he composed it Blake may have intended to add it at the foot of page 110 after the second Night ending. He chose instead to transcribe it on a separate leaf, the leaf which may originally have been intended for the end of VIIa (the engraving of the sorrowful, pierced Christ on the recto of the leaf would make an appropriate illustration for a text which describes how Christ's death was misinterpreted). The text was first pencilled--possibly Blake was hesitant about using up a near-exhausted stock of proof-leaves for revisions of this kind--then it was inked, but without a new Night ending at the foot of the page. By this time he had added almost eighty new lines to VIII\*, and the night now had seven leaves. There would be little reason now not to include material which had previously been excluded on grounds of economy in deference to the poem's structure. When page 111 was written he may have omitted a new night ending because he intended, or felt that he might need, to add more new material at the end of the Night. For some time the pressure of new material had been gradually eroding the poem's structure. At this point it seems that Blake opened the floodgates, and the original structure was overwhelmed.

In the manuscript as it now stands, the texts of pages 113-116 have been interpolated into the eighth Night at two points: 113:1-39 is inserted on page 104, in the song of the Sons of Eden; and 113:40-116:6 is inserted on page 106 after the description of the crucifixion. Both passages have been modified to suit their present contexts. The text on page 113 originally began with an invocation to Blake's muse, "Daughter of Beulah describe . . .," but this was subsequently changed to "We behold with wonder" so that the narrative could become part of the song of the Sons of Eden. The added line 24 beginning "We look down into Ulro . . ." and the alteration in line 33 have the same effect. An ink line was drawn after line 39, and the passage below the line was modified to introduce Rahab,

while on page 115 the third-person description in the basic text was altered to become part of Los's speech to Rahab. Before these changes were made pages 113 and 115 may have formed a single narrative, but it would have been a passage unlike the narrative of the rest of the poem: it would have been a digression amplifying the main narrative by providing an historical perspective. The description of the geography of Golgonooza and Udan Adan, and the myth of Rintrah, Palamabron, and Satan seem to be the result of independent experiments rather than developments designed for a specific context in the poem. The pages have more lines of text than any of the other proof-leaves used in the manuscript, which again suggests that Blake's stock of proof-leaves was dwindling. Page 114 has a full-page engraving of the risen Christ, and page 116 has a full-page drawing which may represent the risen Man. The illustrations may indicate that the narrative was originally intended for the end of the eighth Night, but as there is no Night ending on page 115, the pages may have been interpolated in the rest of the Night shortly after they were transcribed.

Blake interpolated the pages by modifying the passages as we have said; by adding a marginal direction after 104:10, "We behold with wonder &c," to indicate where 113:1-39 should be inserted; by adding a note after the six lines at the top of page 116, "Darkness & sorrow &c turn over leaf"; and by adding after 106:16 the instruction, "But when Rahab &c turn back 3 leaves." This marked another departure from the regularity of the manuscript. Not only was the length of the eighth Night further increased, but the leaves of the manuscript were no longer in a strictly sequential order. In other words, at this stage the manuscript was beginning to look more like a rough draft than a fair copy. There would be little reason now not to make any other major alterations that seemed necessary by annotating existing leaves instead of recopying the revised text; and there would be little reason not to include material previously excluded to preserve the shape of the poem. In short, there would be little reason to exclude the full account of Los's enlightenment, and Blake probably decided to introduce this material after he had added pages 113-16.

He seems to have used up his last *Night Thoughts* proofs in pages 113-16, for to accommodate the new material about Los he had to cut a large print of *Edward & Elenor* in two. When he used these sheets he may still have intended to introduce the account of Los's enlightenment as two separate passages. Erdman notes that "90:1 is probably an addition, the text originally starting within the platemark"--and it is this line that now links the narratives of pages 87 and 90. Line 90:2 originally began "Los stood in Golgonooza . . ." and between lines 1 and 2 on page 100 in the eighth Night a marginal note, "Los stood &c," calls for an insertion which, as Erdman notes, "probably refer[s] to 90:2 before revision." Erdman concludes that "Blake wrote the





*The Four Zoas*, p. 115.

two pages 87 and 90 as a sequence, considered using the second page as a second page for Night VIII (i.e. inserting it on p 100), but then chose to tighten the sequence (with additions at the bottom of 87 and top of 90) and insert it (unquestionably a late addition) at the end of VII.<sup>24</sup> However, when Blake added 90:1 he may have been creating rather than tightening a sequence, and as originally transcribed page 90 may have been intended as an addition to the eighth Night, to be interpolated like pp. 113, 115, and 116. (The reference to Rintrah and Palamabron in 90:45-58 may have been introduced as the page was transcribed to account for the appearance of these characters in the myth described on page 115.)

We have seen that although VIIb seems to follow logically from the end of VIIa1, the scenes describing the tension between Los and Enitharmon would seem completely out of place if made to follow an account of their enlightened reunion. This may be why the description of the reunion on page 90 was originally designed for inclusion in the eighth Night. When Blake moved page 90 from VIII to the end of VIIa, he must have felt that he had overcome this problem. Presumably, when he moved the page, he had decided to drop VIIb from the poem, thus removing the anomaly.

As we have seen, he may have considered removing VIIb earlier, when he added the first new ending of nine lines to VIIa. But the fact that VIIb has

survived in the manuscript suggests that Blake was never finally committed to excluding it, although he left no indication of how the Night should be fitted into the poem. However, as VIIb had been rearranged so that the second half (95:15-98:31) would follow on directly from VI, and the first half (91:1-95:14) would lead into the eighth Night, 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.

We have already seen how the transition from VI to 95:15 would work. The new beginning of the seventh Night would describe Urizen's initial triumph over Tharmas and the Spectre (following their confrontation at the end of VI), the preparations for Urizen's Universal Empire, Los and Tharmas rallying to the battle, the consequent degeneration of Los's relationship with Enitharmon, and the universal conflict of the natural world:

sullen the wooly sheep  
Walks thro the battle Dark & fierce the Bull  
his rage  
Propagates thro the warring Earth the Lion  
raging in flames  
The Tyger in redounding smoke.

(98:17-20)

The transition from this part of VIIb to the beginning of VIIa would be assisted by the similarities between the lines above and 77:6-9. Urizen, having conducted his preparations while sitting on a rock (95:16) now rises, causing Tharmas and the Spectre to flee once more. Leaving the battle, Urizen descends to the caves of Orc. After the confrontation with Orc, the narrative focuses on the disordered relationship of Los and Enitharmon. Vala is reborn, and is given charge over the howling Orc, an event which underlines the urgency of the problem of Urthona's divided personality. On page 87 the narrative continues with an account of Los's reunion first with the Spectre and then with Enitharmon. After the reconciliation (on page 90), which sets another part of the scheme of redemption in motion, the narrative would return to the confrontation between Vala and Orc, prepared for in 85:22. VIIb pages 91-95 would follow effectively from the end of VIIa2. On page 90 Tharmas is heartened by the first signs of recovery:

But Tharmas most rejoicd in hope of Enions  
return  
For he beheld new Female forms born forth upon  
the air

(90:55-56)

But in pages 91-95, after Vala has embraced Orc she mocks this hope and attempts to deceive Tharmas (94:12-23), while the Dead descend upon her clouds and begin to take up the form of Satan, thus preparing for the epiphany of Satan in the eighth Night.

This arrangement produces a seventh Night of about 790 lines, compared with about 620 in the eighth Night and about 850 in the ninth Night. The total sequence is inevitably rather disjointed, but Blake had used a comparable patchwork method when composing VIIb and VIII. Furthermore, the arrangement tends to reduce serious anomalies in the text rather than create them.

It seems that here, as elsewhere in the poem, Blake did not finally complete his revisions. We have no authority for this textual arrangement, but neither do we have authority to exclude VIIb from the poem. As I said at the beginning of this article, the problem compels editorial choice of an uncomfortable kind. I suggest we adopt an arrangement which includes all the available material necessary for a full understanding of the poem, and which introduces order to the narrative.

<sup>1</sup> All references to *The Four Zoas* follow the line-numbering in the facsimile edited by Gerald E. Bentley, Jr.: *Vala, or The Four Zoas* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963), hereafter referred to in the notes as "Bentley." In quotations, *italics* indicate an erasure or deletion; additions to the basic text are bracketed < >.

In the text of my essay, the following abbreviations are used:

Night VIIa1	ms pages 77-85 (to line 85:22)
VIIa2	85-90 (85:23-98:68)
VIIa	hypothetical lost draft
VIIb	a second hypothetical draft, very similar to VIII*
VIII*	ms pages 99-110 before additions
VIII	final ms version
IX*	ms pages 119-39 (from line 119:24)

<sup>2</sup> D. J. Sloss and J. P. R. Wallis, eds., *The Prophetic Writings of William Blake* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1926), I, 138.

<sup>3</sup> Bentley, p. 200.

<sup>4</sup> Bentley, p. 162.

<sup>5</sup> David V. Erdman, "The Binding (*et cetera*) of *Vala*," *The Library*, 5th Ser., XIX (1964), 121-22.

<sup>6</sup> Sloss and Wallis, I, 337.

<sup>7</sup> Bentley, pp. 162-63.

<sup>8</sup> Bentley, p. 163.

<sup>9</sup> H. M. Margoliouth, ed., *Vala, Blake's Numbered Text* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1956), p. 148.

<sup>10</sup> Margoliouth, pp. xxiii-xxiv.

<sup>11</sup> See the letter to Butts of 2 Oct. 1800: Geoffrey Keynes, ed., *Blake: Complete Writings*, rev. edn. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969), p. 804-06.

<sup>12</sup> Keynes, p. 821.

<sup>13</sup> Keynes, pp. 816-19.

<sup>14</sup> Keynes pp. 815-16.

<sup>15</sup> Bentley, p. 161.

<sup>16</sup> Keynes, p. 825.

<sup>17</sup> Northrop Frye, *Fearful Symmetry* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1947), p. 314.

<sup>18</sup> David V. Erdman, ed., and Harold Bloom, *The Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, rev. edn. (New York: Doubleday, 1970), p. 752.

<sup>19</sup> Bentley, p. 163.

<sup>20</sup> Keynes, p. 935.

<sup>21</sup> John Sutherland, "Blake and Urizen," *Blake's Visionary Forms Dramatic*, ed. David V. Erdman and John E. Grant (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1970) pp. 250-51.

<sup>22</sup> Keynes, p. 935.

<sup>23</sup> Erdman, *Poetry and Prose*, p. 758.

<sup>24</sup> Erdman, *Poetry and Prose*, p. 758.

*The Four Zoas*, p. 82 (detail).



# A NOTE ON THE STRUCTURAL NECESSITY OF NIGHT VIIb

MARK S. LEFEBVRE

The strongest evidence that VIIb is an essential part of the poem, and of "Night the Seventh," is the way its incidents fulfill structural patterns established in the preceding Nights. The fall from oneness is initiated in "Night the First," the imprisonment of the Eternal Man in "Night the Fourth," and the rise toward salvation in "Night the Seventh." The central problem of the poem, Urthona's division, is emphasized in these three Nights in the repeated motif of Urthona suddenly alone beside his anvil (compare I, 22:16-18; IV, 50:6-10; VIIa, 84:16-17), and in the evolving relationships among Tharmas, Los, and Enitharmon. Without VIIb there would be serious gaps in the development; yet the continuities are broken if we read VIIa and VIIb either in simple sequence or in reverse order.

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.

This rearrangement changes the complexion of VIIb. It no longer serves to initiate the harmony which is achieved in "Night the Ninth." It now serves to emphasize the action in "Night the Seventh." Placed after VIIa1 it interrupts the action at a critical point and holds the reader in suspense over the outcome of the birth of the "wonder horrible." During this short interval the rest of the main characters are deployed in their appropriate positions for the climactic events of VIIb1 (the battle) and VIIa2 (the ascendance of Los). VIIb2 serves this purpose well because it contains

a short account of each character's situation at the time of Vala's birth, thus enabling Blake to orchestrate the final movement of the poem.

A further indication that this arrangement (VIIa1, VIIb2, VIIb1, VIIa2) is the most sensible reading is the way each section fits into those next to it and the rest of the poem. VIIa1 takes up the narrative at the end of "Night the Sixth" so smoothly that this order has never been interrupted in any editions of the poem. VIIb2 does not follow VIIa1 as nicely, but Urizen's opening response ("Urizen saw & triumphed": 95:17) could easily be to Vala's birth at the end of VIIa1 (85:7,22). Urizen would certainly have cause to exult, since he believes the birth to be the successful result of his plot.

The two parts of VIIb do not mesh as well as before Blake reversed them, but there is some textual evidence that Blake made the reversal precisely for the purpose of placing VIIb2 as the sequel to VIIa1, namely the substitution of "his warriors" for "the Shadowy Female" in 95:17 and the erasure of the original 95:25, "The shadowy voice answered O Urizen Prince of Light." In the original order this was intended as Vala's reply to Urizen.

Stronger support for keeping the revised sequence of VIIb2,1 can be found in the way VIIb1 leads into the events of VIIa2. In 95:4-7 the daughters of Beulah invoke the Eternal Promise: "If ye will believe your Brother shall rise again." The first words of the spectre to Los at the beginning of VIIa2 recognize that promise (85:43-86:3). The final transition, from VIIa2 to "Night the Eighth," is smooth enough, although there is little to indicate that VIIa2 must directly precede it. The opening lines of VIII could follow just about anything, since they open a new scene. It is appropriate, however, that the scene opens after Los has reinstated love and unity in the world. If we agree that the transitions from section to section from VI to VIIa2 make the most sense, then the absence of a signaled transition to VIII should not trouble us.

# NIGHT THE SEVENTH: THE EDITORIAL PROBLEM

DAVID V. ERDMAN

Henry James managed to overlook typographical errors in his text while concentrating on the serious business of removing commas which the printers had inserted (and some of his own).<sup>1</sup> William Blake while revising and reorganizing his text managed to overlook cumbersome redundancies--two "Chap: IV" headings in *The Book of Urizen*, two of "Night the Seventh" in *The Four Zoas*. Neither writer should be thought to have "abandoned" his works. Perhaps Blake as his own printer (or scribe) might have settled the fate of all those dangling insertions and the two chapter headings if he had lived to inscribe one more fair copy. We shall never know. And we tend to forget that we cannot know how many drafts and revisions and fair copies were made and discarded before the assembling and inscription of the surviving manuscript of *The Four Zoas*, although it is built on the remains of several fair copies beginning with the one dated "1797" and patched even after the etching of his other epics. When we come upon the insertion of a reference to annihilation of the Selfhood, we may think we are witnessing the dawn of that concept in Blake's mind: we should allow for the possibility that he had already written his *Milton*. When we debate whether to move the parts or the wholes of the two Nights the Seventh from their positions "in the manuscript," we forget that Blake did not number his pages (beyond "14" in the first Night) and that the manuscript was a heap of unbound and unsorted sheets when the Linnell brothers lent it to the first editors, Ellis and Yeats. "An attempt had been made to put it in order, but without success," records Ellis. "The arrangement of the loose sheets occupied us during several long days" (*The Works of William Blake*, ed. E. J. Ellis and W. B. Yeats, 1893, II, 300).

It has been traditional to scoff at the editorial casualness of Ellis and Yeats, whose transcription of Blake's words is full of howlers. It has not been recognized that the sequence of pages we accept today is pretty much that established by Ellis's arrangement, not over those several days but over several years. Many of the sequences

were fairly easy to discover, with the help of Blake's occasional catchwords, his handwriting sizes, his counting of lines by tens and fifties and by Nights, as well as the frequently incontestable narrative flow. But most of these aids are lacking for the area of the present investigation. Here editors are often entirely on their own, attempting by conjectural leaps and plodding deductions to trace the intentions of the apocalyptic imagination. Bentley's conclusion (p. 197) that each editor is "at liberty to rearrange the leaves as seems best" cannot be taken as a serious generalization, but is practically operative for Night VII. How did the two Nights the Seventh survive? Were they together when Blake turned over the heap of unbound separate leaves (half-sheets) to John Linnell? Had he placed some leaves at the bottom of the pile?

Let us consider what Ellis found for evidence of order in the manuscript pages of what we are calling VIIa2. The three leaves bearing the pages now numbered 85-86, 87, 90 (in our editions, not in the manuscript) were not found where we think they belong. Ellis at one stage considered pages 87 and 90 as part of "5th N[ight]" and tried p. 87 as "p 3" and p. 90 as "p 4" of that Night. Later, assembling the leaves bearing pages 90, 87, and 86, facing versos up and in that order, Ellis numbered them 1, 2, 3 and queried the first (p. 90) "?fragment 7th (1)." Before press time Ellis and Yeats had assembled and paginated the first ten pages of VIIa and had discovered that the text on 86 (their page 10) follows from the text on the other side, i.e. 85 (their page 9).<sup>2</sup> Subsequent editors (perhaps Ellis in the first place) confirmed the sequence of pages 77 through 85 by Blake's own line-counting--but not quite. Margoliouth and Bentley noticed evidence of a potential gap between 84 and 85, but quickly dismissed it. Blake's pencilled line-count at the bottom of p. 84 ("292 or 297": the poet hesitating whether to keep or cancel five lines of his marginal insertion preceding the last two lines of the page) must signify, judging from his other totals at

ends of Nights, that he considered 84:42 as the end of a Night; there is certainly sufficient cadence. Much later (according to Margoliouth and Bentley) Blake's numbering in ink by fifties produced a line-count of "350" (mended, however, from "370") alongside line 12 of p. 85 (line 8 before insertion of lines 1-4). When Blake made that count he had extended the Night beyond the 292 or 297 lines of pages 77-84, presumably on an intervening leaf containing from 46 to 71 lines (depending on how many of the inserted lines on 84 and 85 he included in his count). The insertion of 85:1-4 could have been made to bridge the gap made by removal of the leaf. Margoliouth simply notes that "no lacuna is indicated by the sense" (but of course) and rules that "Blake's '350' must be meant for '300'." His confidence derives from the consideration that "a lacuna would mean a whole leaf missing with 50 lines (far too few for two pages)"--and from neglect of the fact that some pages have pictures (76, for instance) that take up space. Bentley (pp. 199, 204) repeats the argument: "a missing leaf would probably have about seventy lines on it." Neither Bentley nor Margoliouth was influenced by the mending of the numeral from 370 to 350, which they did not observe.<sup>3</sup> Confident that there can't be 50 lines missing because there would have to be 70, Bentley fails to consider that Blake could have written 70 lines and cancelled 20. Blake's way of working must often have resulted in leaves removed or moved to other positions. I have no hypothesis about the missing leaf, but perhaps Andrew Lincoln can evolve one that suits his hypothetical reconstruction of the movements of parts of Night the Seventh.

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. There is evidence, we see, for concluding that Blake, with at least temporary intent, sidetracked VIIb when he inserted VIIa2 as a firm piece of masonry fitting VIIa directly to VIII.<sup>4</sup> There is also evidence, in the fact that Ellis found pages 85-90 not obviously "in" Night the Seventh at all, that Blake may have removed the masonry unit of pp. 85-90 (all of 7a2 and its bridge from 7a1) to leave open a sequence from 84 to 91--or to 99. Ellis does not give page numbers to the pages of 7b and clearly did not find it "in place" either. What finally decided Ellis and Yeats was there being only one terminal rubric "End of The Seventh Night," the one on p. 98. We all seem to agree that no part of VIIb nor VIIa should be discarded. Blake left no instructions--to himself or posterity--for their arrangement, and those of us who have become familiar enough with the text to face the problem of its arrangement already "have" both Nights, whatever order we read them in. The editorial problem remains: to choose a sequence which will work best, in the context of the whole poem, for the new or the occasional reader.<sup>5</sup>

My editorial self has been moved by the present discussion, further homework, and discussions with John Grant and Harold Bloom, 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. Even the graphic evidence contradicts itself: Blake left two ornamentally lettered headings, "Vala / Night the Seventh"--but he left, as Ellis noted, only one "End of the Seventh Night," at the conclusion not of VIIa but of VIIb! Perhaps the greatest liberty to be taken in accepting the textual masonry cementing VIIa to VIII will be our snatching the finis line from page 98.<sup>6</sup> Ellis's point was in justification, not of printing two Nights Seventh but of conflating them as one.

To return to the specific analyses and hypotheses about the two Nights, I should like to sum up my understanding of the arguments by using a compact symbolism without further verbalizing--with Arabic numerals (6, 7, 8 instead of VI, VII, VIII) and the following sigla:

- ° = original fitting in fair-copy, or a linkage directed by Blake
- + = a more or less good fit
- ! = an abrupt jump (such as Blake created when he transposed 7b1 ° 2 to 7b2 ! 1)
- ? = a bad fitting, what Kilgore calls "a bewildering non sequitur"

As I understand Lincoln's reconstruction, there was once this sequence, before revisions: 6 ° 7a1 ° 7b1 ° 7b2 ° (+) 8. There was never the bewildering non sequitur either of 6 ?! 7b1 or of 7b2 ? 7a1. Then, when Blake transposed the halves of 7b, by his inked instructions, a fairly abrupt but obviously tolerated linkage resulted: 7b2 °! 7b1, the aim perhaps being to link 6 + 7b2 ! 7b1 + 8 and to eliminate 7a, which consisted entirely of 7a1. The reversal made a poor linkage of 7b1 ? 7a1, if he meant to retain 7a between 7b and 8; on the other hand 6 ° 7a1 + 7b2 was not impossible. But then Blake added 7a2, confirming the retention of 7a but making a place for it problematic. What were the possibilities? To retain 7b with either part of 7a would be difficult.

6 + 7b2 ! 7b1 ? 7a1 ° 8 would produce a bad sequitur.

More successful would have been the sequence 6 + 7b2 ! 7b1 + 7a2 + 8, although the tidiest set of transitions (disregarding structural omissions) would have been: 6 ° 7a1 ° 7a2 + 8, dropping 7b altogether.

Blake shows no signs of having considered the proposals that are now being made in the interest of incorporating, somehow, the indispensable 7b:

Lincoln's suggestion: 6 + 7b2 ? 7a1 ° 7a2 ? 7b1 + 8.

Kilgore's main suggestion: 6 ° 7a1 ° 7b1 ° 7b2 ! 7a2 + 8.

Lefebvre's suggestion: 6 ° 7a1 + 7b2 °! 7b1 + 7a2 + 8.

Lincoln would revise the ? between 7a2 and 7b1 to ! by restoring the word "Now" to 91:1 (which Blake may have misquoted as "Thus"). The sequence he proposes makes good sense as a conclusion from his analysis of the probable evolution of the extant texts. And it preserves the linkage made by Blake when he added 7a2 to 7a1, while it only moves further apart the halves of 7b which Blake had already rearranged. But the proposal to fit VIIb between the two parts of VIIa seems to make the better reading sequence. Between the Kilgore alternative, to restore b1 and b2 to their earlier order, and the Lefebvre alternative, to retain the reversed order called for in the manuscript, I incline to prefer the latter as doing the least injustice to the claims of narrative and the manuscript evidence. And on that point Kilgore agrees, if we are talking about a published edition.<sup>7</sup> Harold Bloom, whose Commentary (as he points out) will work quite well when rearranged, agrees with me that most people reading the poem will find it more available in this form--and that no editorial handling, in any case, can possibly acquaint the reader with the full nature of the editorial problem, let alone the "manuscript evidence." Perhaps it tells us something about the sequences of the text, as well as about Bloom's Commentary, that we can easily see that rearranging will cause no difficulty and, indeed, will give the reader a stronger epic sequence. "You must state, though," says he, "that we really do not know how Blake perceived narrative continuity, how much departure from the Homeric norm he felt comfortable with." Ault's theory, that Blake as it were got a twentieth-century charge out of narrative discontinuities, is of course somewhat anachronistic.<sup>8</sup> Mitchell is perhaps closer to Blakean thinking when he argues that "Blake intentionally designed *Jerusalem* to allow only an approximate sense of structural orientation" as, in part, a rhetorical strategy.<sup>9</sup> Not that *Jerusalem* and *The Four Zoas* have the same shape; nine Nights are round and they revolve, while four Chapters reverberate.

## CENTRIFUGAL ANIMADVERSIONS

The question of the earliness or lateness of VIIa "taken as a whole" has been quite sufficiently flogged, but I feel some responsibility for the confusion. My note at the head of VIIa should not have read "Written later than and presumably to replace Night Seven b" but something like this: "Nights VIIa and VIIb were at one stage a continuous pair of chapters with identical titles. Additions were made to VIIa (on pp 85-90) which linked it directly with VIII. Blake left no instructions for relocating VIIb; it is here given following IX." But once the discussion gets down to the lateness of VIIa<sup>o</sup> 2, most of the disagreement vanishes. As Kilgore says, ceasing his heavy fire, "the traditional account . . . may not be so far mistaken after all. . . . Thus VIIa [he means 7a1] though not originally a replacement for VIIb, would have become one by the time Blake finished his revisions [i.e. added a2]." Q.E.D. He even comes round "tentatively" to the thought that "Blake changed the order of VIIb before writing [VIIa2]." So we can "break through" to where the

discussion should have begun. I cannot believe that Margoliouth's observation of the narrative continuity of a1<sup>o</sup> b1 was news to anyone working on the text; I find no excitement about it in his correspondence with me when he was preparing his edition. The textual question was whether Blake's revisions culminated in a "structure which Blake finally left . . . with VIIb lounging somewhere in the shadows" (Kilgore's language as he puts up his sword).

The stitch-mark argument is threadbare now; as Kilgore says, one hypothesis "is not more convincing" than the other; neither accounts for the narrative continuity, which in either case can be accounted for by several hypotheses. That was my point in my "Binding" review of Bentley's *Vala*. You test a theory by seeing if it withstands assault; since Bentley hadn't tried, I did. But the reactions of Kilgore (and Wagenknecht, whom he quotes) tell me that I overdramatized the criticism. Bentley had enlivened his bibliographical prose by declaring that Erdman had "gambled heavily . . . and lost a sizeable proportion of his shirt" (p. 168). Bentley was right, except perhaps in his proportions, but some of his dating evidence was left without a stitch. His theory of "anomalous" leaves, rather arbitrarily defined, put seven late pages into VIIa and only six early ones; it seemed a hypothesis that just got in the way. I was testing the structure of his argument, not building one of my own. Lincoln, now, makes a carefully elaborated extension of Bentley's valuable suggestion that VIIb was matter displaced from VIII.

Lincoln's tracing out the probabilities of a coherent evolution which involves VII in relation to the whole, especially the additions and changes in IV, VIII, and IX, I find generally plausible, often convincing, and elegantly handled. His sigla (VIIa, \*IX, etc.) are clear and keep us aware of moving in a world of hypotheses. But I am uneasy about some of his arguments that appear to assume the possibility, where it seems slight, of distinguishing plot requirements from changing intentions. We are all guilty at times of confusing time of conception or composition with time of inscription; he appears to be doing so when he finds a "reassessment of the role of Los" in "late" passages (or takes it as evidence of lateness: just which, is not always clear). The "tension rather than cooperation between Los and Enitharmon" which Lincoln sees as characteristic of Los before a reassessment interpreted as a product of Blake's changes of thought in 1803-04 is not unlike the tension between Los and Enitharmon that occurs in *Jerusalem* as the poet's song "draws to its period" (see J 83-88). No one has suggested--but perhaps someone should--that Blake underwent a reassessment of Los while composing the final plates of *Jerusalem*.

Lincoln replies that he is concerned strictly with changing plot requirements and that his argument is that the text of 7b2 was excluded from the poem until Blake had made a number of other important revisions--a matter which requires trying to draw a distinction between time of composition and time of inscription. "I don't argue," he writes, "that 7a2 must be an addition because it describes the conversion of Los, but that as this

material appears to be an addition it seems likely that Blake's plot requirements changed; and that as the Los passages in 8 seem to be a sequel to 7a2, they may be part of the change."

This is not a proper occasion to argue about the conversions of William Blake, nor about the roles of Los or Orc or the shadowy Female who has found him and will not let him go, in the *America* Preludium. The revolutionary embrace (of 1776/1793) is surely not presented as an act of jealous possession; yet possibly Andrew Lincoln is right to read the Preludium as equivocal.

<sup>1</sup> See H. K. Girling, "A Toot of a Trumpet against the Regiment of Editors," *Bulletin of Research in the Humanities*, 81, iii (1978): 297-323.

<sup>2</sup> The Ellis and Yeats edition, 1893, numbers lines Night by Night and does not indicate manuscript pages, but the textual sequence is that of the first pencilled series of folio numbers in the manuscript, running from 1 to 68. The texts of pp. 15-16 and 111 are given in an Appendix of "fragments." Some indication of the ordering problems faced by Ellis and Yeats is given by the queries on the leaves of VIIa2 trying them for Night V, then as a misplaced "fragment" of VII, and by the numbering of some Nights by leaves ("sheets") and by pages. Night V apparently gave difficulty, with some sheets facing wrong side up; the only number on the proper 4th page is "6" (p. 60) and p. 62 was once numbered "5" then "6"--possibly when pp. 87 and 90 were queried "5th N p. 3" and "5th N p. 4." The 9th page has "8" changed to "9." Finally the proper sequence of leaves 2-5 was marked as "sh2," "Sht 3," "sht 4," and "5th sheet," in pencil notes (partly erased) that seem to cite "cat. Ellis": perhaps Ellis had made some sort of catalogue of sheets which could be consulted when reshuffling had caused disarray. (It must have been later that these five leaves were heavily designated "Book 5 Page 1" etc., with "Book" only twice corrected to "Night"--or can these heavy markings have been Blake's own, whose heading for this Night first read "Book"? The g's are more like Ellis's, but I am uncertain.)

Night VI was also marked by sheets, 2d, 3d, 4th, and 5th, correctly, but only the first three pages were given numbers: did doubts remain, or had the problem vanished? Night VIIa was paginated up through "11" (p. 87) and "VII" was written beside Ellis's "27th (3)" query. Ellis queried "what night?" at the top of p. 97, but by press-time had taken the plunge of including the sequence we think of as VIIa and VIIb as a single Night. We do not know where the parts had been found--except that they had not been found together and that VIIa1 and a2 had not been together.

It was not hard to see "what night" p. 97 belonged to, since its verso bears the unerased legend "End of The Seventh Night," and we find a revealing entry in Ellis & Yeats (III, 173): "Line 786 [95:14] is the only possible end of Night VII" (accepting the transposition of the halves of VIIb). This declaration solved the editorial problem, and pp. 78-98 were printed as a continuous Night. But the failure to paginate VIIb may indicate lingering reservations.

Night VIII presented no difficulty, except that leaves 56 and 57 were not included in the text until after page numbering--and that the concluding page was not numbered. Night IX has page numbers that only begin with "5" but run correctly to "20" but then jump to "27" followed by "27," again, with no number on the final page.

How can we be sure that Edwin J. Ellis wrote these queries? For one thing, they clearly precede the ordering decisions reflected in the 1893 edition. For another, Ellis identifies the handwriting by initialing and dating a longish note on page 15: "(a separate sheet. It cannot be placed as its sequel is missing.)--E J E--1891." The letters, especially the g and t, are distinctive and are identical to those in the word "fragment" on p. 90. Thirteen years later Ellis adds a further note below it: "Perhaps it is all an insertion designed to precede 'Enion blind & age bent wept upon the desolate wind, [line] 373,--in the 1st printed numbering [i.e. the 1893 text].--

Suggestion of Mr. F G Fleay 1904" (i.e. Frederick Gerard Fleay, 1831-1909, editor and poet). These notes tell us why pp. 15-16 were kept at the end of the Ellis-Yeats text as "fragments" (along with p. 111, also unplaced). And apparently Fleay's suggestion was too late for the Ellis 1906 edition, in the press by 1904. Actually both pp. 15-16 and p. 111 remain in the

Keynes *Bibliography* (1921) as "additional leaves and fragments" foliated "69" and "70." Sloss and Wallis finally put both these stray leaves into proper places though they continued some of the confusion of sequences in Nights I and II. For example, the order now accepted, of pp. 18, 21-22, 19-20, was arrived at by much editorial agony. If Ellis had managed, accidentally or with care, to put the leaves in that order, subsequent editors instead of weighing and reasoning might have felt they were merely "retaining the manuscript order."

Perhaps it should be noted that the pencil foliation that runs from 1 to 68 corresponds to the Ellis-Yeats sequences, while the revision that runs to 70 is made after insertion of pp. 15-16 as folio 8 and of pp. 111-12 as folio 56, with the numbers moved forward one after "8" and two after "56."

<sup>3</sup> Margoliouth (p. 133) does note the mending but takes it as 350 "perhaps imperfectly corrected to '300'." I need another look at the manuscript.

<sup>4</sup> A misreading by Wagenknecht, followed by Kilgore, of my textual note (*Poetry & Prose*, p. 758) referring to additions on pp. 87 and 90 that tighten the sequence to VIII as a bit of masonry makes for some mirth at that lunatic Erdman who sees masonry in a misfitting conjecture (they take me to refer to possible use of 87-90 as an insert on p. 100). I didn't, of course. But I do write difficult sentences. Recently Robert Essick (in *Blake* 43, p. 181) joined Gerald Bentley in misreading my shorthand attempt to define the gesture of the angel embracing "All Religions" as "with arms around stone tablets . . . and a bearded priest . . ."; I seemed to be saying that the arms were around the tablets only! (*The Illuminated Blake*, p. 24)

<sup>5</sup> The ideal edition for scholars will be a photographic and typographic facsimile, with better photographs, and transcripts freed of the misleading features of the Margoliouth and Bentley editions. New photographic techniques may one day restore the erasures and palimpsest to legibility. The transcripts should not confuse fair copy and palimpsest, as Bentley's do.

<sup>6</sup> No editor, so far as I know, has felt guilty about ignoring Blake's own page numbering in copies of *Urizen* that put Plate 8 after Plate 10, and we all restore the rejected Plate 4. Incidentally, my note on p. 727 contains a howling non sequitur. In support of the hypothesis that Plate 8 was designed to replace Plate 10, I argue that in two copies the lines on Plate 10 that contain the refrain words "first Age" are marked for erasure. The evidence rather supports the contrary view, as I ought to have seen, that Plate 10 was meant to be kept. I report this somewhat in the spirit of Charles Lamb hissing his own farce.

<sup>7</sup> What I have called Kilgore's main suggestion is what he recommends as "a critical order" to be followed in reading, the order used by Wagenknecht. Kilgore would, however, "print VIIb in the reversed order." When he is considering a printed text he is guided by the policy of "following the latest intentions for which there is direct evidence in the manuscript"; when recommending the original order, for reading, he is guided by a suspicion "that the reordering of the Night corresponded to a plan of revision which Blake never carried out." These are proper distinctions. I find myself concurring (for a printed text) with the "direct evidence" rather than the suspicion; what I am less certain is that presenting each Night Seventh as a unit must be "undoubtedly correct." The discussion, the evidence and the considerations brought forward, have inclined me to doubt that Blake's manuscript, not known to have been in its present bound order, makes it feasible to present each of the two Nights Seventh "as a unit" while attempting to preserve the unity of the entire poem as comprised of nine Nights.

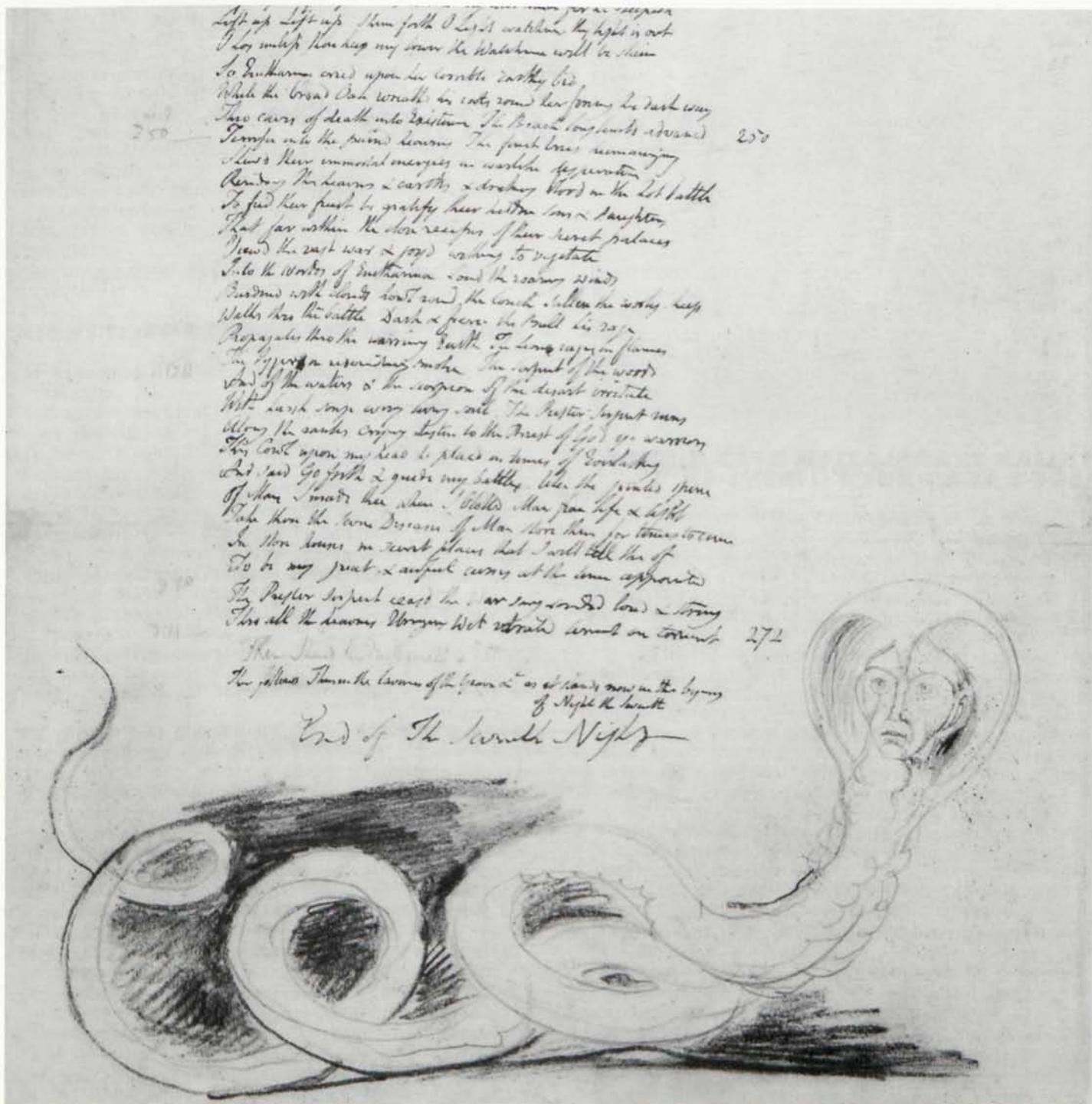
<sup>8</sup> Donald Ault, "Incommensurability and Interconnection in Blake's Anti-Newtonian Text," *Studies in Romanticism*, 16 (1977): 277-303. Yet there is much wisdom in Ault's analysis of what is happening in *The Four Zoas*. "The basic formula . . . is: incommensurability does not entail disconnection; and interconnection does not entail unity" (298). "From the opening of the poem Blake has been striving to dissolve a solid

framework right before our eyes. . . . The final version [of Night the First] frustrates all attempts at causal connection by deleting the predicate forms which allow the language to be divided into causally related phrases" (299). Even so, Night I, heavily and rather carelessly patched (to judge by Blake's general practice elsewhere in the poem), is a special case, not altogether relevant here; and Ault at times misreads to find his "inversion or reversal of narrative 'facts'"--as in the evidence he produces on p. 282 from pages 4 and 22. Tharmas' saying that he bears pity to Enitharmon, who "hath taken refuge in my bosom" (p. 4) will appear to be reversed on p. 22, "And Tharmas took her in pitying," only if the reader chooses to misconstrue by attaching the "pitying" to Enitharmon and not Tharmas. A witty fellow can do this with many a text but

cannot convince us that the author or his contemporary reader would have faltered into such misprision.

<sup>9</sup> W. J. T. Mitchell, *Blake's Composite Art* (Princeton University Press, 1978), p. 215. I have talked too much about "narrative sequence" perhaps; the linkages I have diagrammed as ! and + and ! do not threaten to order Blake's text into anything tidier than what Mitchell calls "approximate structure and centripetal focus."

The Four Zoas, p. 98 (detail).



# THE FOUR ZOAS FOR ITALY

## CETTINA MAGNO

**E**DITOR'S NOTE: Cettina Magno has translated the FZ into Italian, and she is preparing a photographic facsimile of the manuscript. (She kindly loaned us several of the infrared photographs that illustrate the articles in this issue.) The passages of poetry and interpretation below are excerpts from her work.

### ITALIAN TRANSLATION OF FZ NIGHT I PAGE 3 AND PAGE 4 (LINES 1-4):

Canto della Madre Antica che di furia i cieli  
scosse  
udendo il forte echeggiante Verso eroico  
marciare  
in ordine Schierato nel giorno della Battaglia  
dell'Intelletto.

Quattro Potenti stanno in ogni uomo: un'Unita  
Perfetta  
non può esistere. se non dalla Fratellanza  
Universale dell'Eden  
l'Uomo Universale. Al Quale vada Gloria Sempiterna  
e Così Sia

(Quali) siano le Nature di queste Creature  
Viventi il Padre Celeste soltanto  
(lo sa) nessun Individuo (le conosce nè)  
potrà conoscerle in tutta l'Eternità

Los era il quarto fulgente immortale, & nella  
Terra  
di uno splendido Universo Sovrano imperava  
giorno & notte  
giorni & notti in gioia ricorrente, Urthona era  
il suo nome  
nell'Eden; nei Nervi Auricolari della vita Umana  
che è la Terra dell'Eden, le sue Emanazioni egli  
diffuse  
Fate di Albione quindi Dei Pagani, o Figlia di  
Beulah Canta

la sua caduta nella Divisione & la sua  
Resurrezione nell'Unità.

### NIGHT IV PAGE 54 LINES 1-19:

La Mente Eterna circoscritta cominciò a roteare in  
vortici di furia  
girando & girando senza posa & la spuma sulfurea  
sollevandosi densa  
formò un Lago chiaro & lucente. Bianco come neve

oblio silenzio necessità chiusi nelle catene della  
mente  
in ceppi di ghiaccio si contraggono disorganizzati  
avulsi dall'Eternità  
Los batteva sulle sue catene & alimentava le sue  
fornaci  
versando sodòr di ferro & sodòr d'ottone

Senza tregua l'immortale incatenato ansimava di  
dolore  
e d'angoscia insopportabile sinchè un tetto scabro  
stravolto  
inglobò la fonte del suo pensiero

in un sonno dagli incubi orribili simile agli anelli  
della catena  
una immensa spina dorsale si contorse nel vento tra  
tormenti  
spuntando con dolore. costole come curve di Caverna  
e ossa solidificarono di gelo tutti i suoi nervi di  
gioia  
ed una prima era passò. stato d'orribile dolore

Dalle Caverne della sua Spina legata giù sprofondò  
con terrore  
un globo rosso e rotondo. che bruciando girava giù  
giù in fondo all'Abisso  
Pulsando Inglobandosi tremando Emettendo diecimila  
rami  
intorno alle sue solide ossa & una Seconda Era passò  
stato d'orribile dolore.

**NIGHT IX PAGE 138 LINES 20-32:**

Il Sole ha lasciato la sua oscurità per trovare un  
 piu fresco mattino  
 e la tenera Luna gioisce nella notte chiara e senza  
 nuvole  
 L'Uomo procede in mezzo ai fuochi il male è tutto  
 consumato  
 i suoi occhi guardano le Angeliche sfere che sorgono  
 giorno & notte  
 le stelle si spengono come lampada che muore & al  
 loro posto  
 gli Occhi Espansi dell'Uomo mirano la profondità di  
 mondi stupendi

Una Terra un mare lì in fondo errano come Globi  
 Vaganti ma Stelle  
 di fuoco sorgono di notte dall'Oceano & un Sole  
 ad ogni alba, come Uomo appena Nato si alza tra inni  
 di Gioia  
 chiamando l'Aratore al suo Lavoro & il Pastore al  
 suo riposo  
 cammina su per le Montagne Eterne alzando la sua  
 voce celeste  
 conversando con le forme Animali di saggezza notte  
 & giorno  
 che sorgendo dal Mare di fuoco camminano rinnovate  
 sulla Terra

**NIGHT IX PAGE 139 LINES 1-10:**

Il Sole s'alza dal letto rugiadoso & le ariette  
 fresche  
 scherzano tra i suoi raggi che sorridendo dan nascita  
 ai semi della vita  
 la Terra rinnovata irradia diecimila mille sorgenti  
 Urthona è risorto in tutto il suo potere non più  
 diviso da Enitharmon non più lo Spettro di Los  
 Dov'è lo Spettro della Profezia dov'è il Fantasma  
 irreale  
 è svanito & Urthona ora sorge dai suoi muri in rovina  
 con tutta la forza antica per forgiare l'armatura  
 dorata della scienza  
 per la Battaglia dell'Intelletto La guerra delle  
 spade ora è cessata  
 le Religioni oscure son scomparse & la dolce  
 Conoscenza regna.

**FZ NIGHT II PAGE 27 (SEE ILLUSTRATION  
 ON PAGE 86 OF THIS ISSUE):**

The drawing at the bottom of the page is an example of a connection between text and design that can be traced in spite of the unfinished state of the poem. At the beginning of the second Night the male human body is shown in its dependence on the element of water, while in the text Albion splits into the dichotomy of "the human" and "the divine." Here Luvah and Vala, after being cast into the furnaces of Urizen's fire, are caught in the veil of Nature (where life is fed by death), and begin a state of generation under the compulsion of the "fortuitous concourse of incoherent / discordant principles of Love & Hate" (ll. 12-13). The body of man is therefore shown in its dependence on the womb of woman, the body generated and brought to life with the seal of death and old age. The body of woman is young,

sensuous, fleshly, and alluring because her destiny is to insure the eternal continuity of the cycle described by Luvah in the text. The two figures are linked by the same tissues of blood, flesh, unexpansive forms. Their eyes meet, fixed in the question the sexes will eternally put to one another: "is it life or death you give me?"

**FZ NIGHT VIIIA PAGE 86:**

This beautiful drawing--of Enitharmon's body, displaying the fleshly fragrance of her forms--seems to be the object that the figure on the recto, with his hand on his forehead, is trying to scan. She is drawn here in the very state of transformation that she is undergoing in the text: from a shadow producing natural, vegetating forms without counterparts, to a bodily vehicle helping Los "to fabricate forms sublime." Her double nipples seem to offer the duplicity of milk containing both life and death, which Los accepts, persuaded by the promise of the Spectre of Urthona (page 85, ll. 42-46). Her genital zone is no longer hidden in secrecy; beside her right thigh a crouching little figure is nursing a baby in swaddling clothes; and signs of vegetation are drawn on the same line of her left knee. The roughly sketched lines all around the lower part of the drawing are hardly identifiable: the only impression they convey is "circularity." This is what Los, Enitharmon, and the Spectre of Urthona are trying to exorcize, opening the center of mortal time to the translucence of vision. Considering the function of this figure in Night VIII and her return to the realm of Urthona in Night IX--when the Jerusalem hidden in her heart will emerge through the revived, ever-living figures of Ahania, Enion, and Vala--it seems appropriate that here her head is surrounded by a bandage, that she is kneeling, and that her attitude and gestures express acceptance rather than joy.

# A CHECKLIST OF RECENT BLAKE SCHOLARSHIP

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# REVIEWS

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**Reviewed by Andrew Wilton**

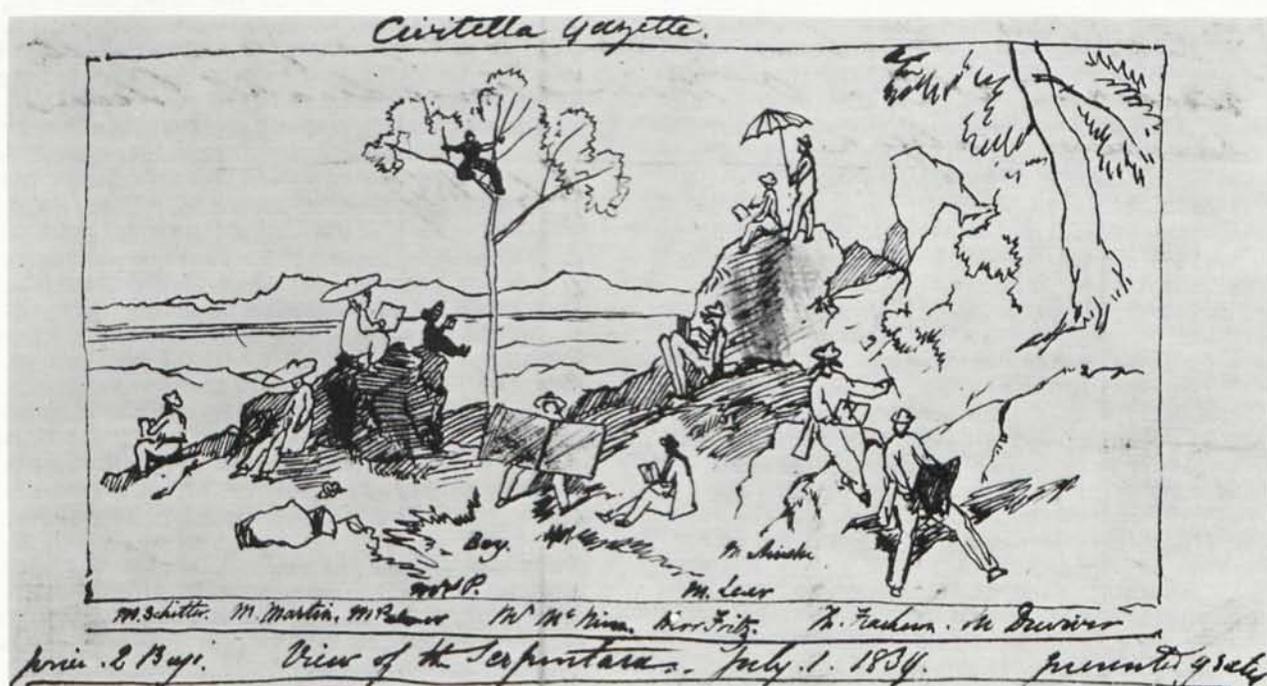
It is now over fifty years since Samuel Palmer's son organized the exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum from which the general interest in Palmer dates. The artist was presented then as a "Disciple of William Blake," and that loose description has stuck. Geoffrey Grigson's important account, *Samuel Palmer the Visionary Years* of 1947, was constructed on the foundation of that description, and even David Cecil's brief but comprehensive biographical sketch in *Visionary and Dreamer* of 1969 lays the same firm emphasis. There has been much praise of Palmer--or at least of certain aspects of his work--but no great willingness to accord him any role other than that of "disciple."

Palmer himself unintentionally encouraged this approach. The very word "disciple" with its New Testament overtones perfectly evokes the passionate religious wellspring of his art. He spoke of Blake with fervor as one of the great spirits of history, morally as well as artistically excellent, in a class apart. The intensity of response that Blake characteristically showed is apparent also in Palmer's best work, and Palmer indicated that he felt such a response to be in some way "Blakean." Yet his art is in almost every way of a different kind from that of Blake, and, in sum, is by no means the work of a "follower," either in its content or in its technique. We have long been in possession of the circumstantial evidence necessary to form a judgment of its real character, for not only have we had access to much of his output, but A. H. Palmer's illuminating *Life and Letters* has been in print since 1892. Now that Raymond Lister has edited the complete correspondence, still more of the essential material is easily available.

For Palmer wrote a great deal about both the theory and technique of his art. He was a remarkably

gifted prose writer, with a natural sense of rhythm, of rhetoric, of imagery, and a voluminous store of quotations. There were moments in his life when he contemplated turning to literature for his livelihood, and he would have been well fitted for such work. "It is very much easier to give vent to the romantic by speech than by [painting]," he said. Accordingly, we have a vivid picture of those aspects of the world and those ideas that moved him, or repelled him, and can trace accurately in his letters the genesis of particular images in his pictures from particular experiences in his travels. There is also a great deal of information about his methods of working, especially after he became associated with Philip Gilbert Hamerton, editor of the art magazine *Portfolio*, who got Palmer to write for him on the use of watercolor and on etching. There are letters to pupils that give detailed directions as to how to create special effects in watercolors, and long letters to his patron Leonard Rowe Valpy expounding his personal interpretation of natural phenomena as the substance of art.

The mass of correspondence from Italy during his honeymoon, which Mr. Lister prints with all Hannah Palmer's contributions, charts not only personal matters like the gradually opening rift between Palmer and his interfering father-in-law, John Linnell, but the whole slow, marvellous dawning of the Italian experience on Palmer's sensibility--the realization of "certain types of landscape only found in perfection in Italy," as he said. It was for him "a course of purgation--getting a quantity of rubbish and confusion out of my mind." These reactions seem odd in the hermit of Shoreham, the quintessentially English rural visionary. What need had Palmer of Italy, any more than Blake? Yet Blake esteemed Michelangelo above all artists, and even at the very beginning of the Shoreham period, Palmer was dreaming of Italy and the great works of the Italian



A rare record of the Palmers' honeymoon in Italy has recently come to light, and as it is, as far as I know, the only representation of Samuel and Hannah together at that time, it seems worth publishing here. It is a drawing in pen and brown ink, on a cut fragment of envelope, 4 by 7 1/2 inches, and was acquired by the British Museum in 1975 among a group of pencil drawings which, though unattributed, are identifiable as the work of the Welsh artist Penry Williams (1800-85) who lived in Italy for much of his life and became acquainted with most English artists visiting Rome. The back of the sheet seems once to have been inscribed with Williams' name and address--in the Piazza Mignaneli, off the Piazza di Spagna; only the final letters of the two lines are visible at the edge of the sheet. A further inscription reads: ". . . of Civitella has been made (for the poor,) amongst residents at Don O. Mss a considerable sum has been realized, / July 1839". On the recto, the drawing is bordered by a line, above which is written "Civitella Gazette." Below, "price 2 Biagi. View of the Serpentara .. July.1.1839. presented gratis." The drawing itself is annotated with names of the various figures who are depicted sitting and sketching on the rocks in an expansive landscape: within the border, a "Boy" in a tree is apparently the object of several of the sketchers' attention; and "M. Ainslie", "Mrs P." and "M. Lear" are all easily identifiable. Samuel James Ainslie (1806-74) is seated under an umbrella held by a manservant; he spent much time in Italy, and travelled with George Dennis, author of *The Cities and Cemeteries of Etruria*, published in 1848. "Mrs P" is evidently Hannah Palmer; she is shown as a tiny figure, in a large bonnet, perched on the edge of a rock near the ungainly form of her husband. 'M. Lear' is Edward Lear (1812-88), whose lithographed *Views in Rome and its Environs* was to appear in 1841. Outside the border the other members of the party are indicated; most of these are unidenti-

fied, some of the names even illegible. They seem to be "M.Schitter. M.Martin. M.Palmer Mr McNiven (?) Herr Fritz. Fr. Frankson (?) M Duvivier (?)". "M.Martin" is Albin Martin, a pupil and protégé of Linnell's, who had joined the Palmers in Rome in the Summer of 1838.

Shortly after this expedition, Hannah wrote home from Civitella: "Our life now is so thoroughly that of working people that not knowing the days of the week we rose last Sunday morning in haste at 4 o'clock in the morning, got all our sketching apparatus packed up for going down into the valley to our daily work thinking it was Saturday; not [*sic*; nor?] should we have been the wiser had not Mr Lear, an artist here who keeps a journal, told us. Mr Martin works as hard as anybody." Palmer, under the same date, wrote: "Yesterday and today--for the first time in our travels I have been wholly unable to work which is very miserable as Civitella abounds so with beautiful foreground studies that our time being short not a moment should be lost. Of Mr. Martin I am sorry to be obliged to give a much worse account. In spite of every precaution against sun etc. he has suffered every fortnight since coming to Rome--with sickness at the stomach--so as to be for several days unable to eat-- . . . at Subiaco we attributed it to the intense heat--but the air is much cooler here and Mr. M. never sits late in the sun--nor without an umbrella at any time." This may explain the large, wide-brimmed hat that Martin wears in the drawing.

The sketch is a delightful insight into the lives of Palmer and Hannah and their friends during the Italian tour, and is strikingly similar not only in its humor but in technique to the pen drawings of Lear himself. It includes almost certainly the least sympathetic portrait of Palmer to have come down to us; but a portrait at which, no doubt, Palmer would have laughed heartily. (A.W.)

masters. To George Richmond, about to tour the continent, he wrote, "I should like to know how the Giants of the Sistine Vault strike first upon your soul, in words as near as possible like those you would break forth into on entering the chapel . . . I suppose, with most young men that go to Rome, you will disagree with me when I suggest that it is not most useful to spend time in copying one or two pictures elaborately in colours: in a shorter stay how well might you serve the arts in your country by making small drawings for engravings, of a few of the very finest sculptures . . . I fancy myself working intensely hard for a week on grey paper; the quickest way of copying statues; to give my country a true version of the divine St. George of Donatello . . ." In imagination, Palmer was already (and he at Shoreham!) deep in the wonders of the Italian Renaissance, planning not only what he would look at, but how he would draw it. The progression from Shoreham to Rome was inevitable, and in this at least Palmer is at one with his contemporaries, and very far from Blake, who was self-sufficient in his opinions and responses, content with prints and "dealers' Titians" to use the barest clues in constructing his own vast world-picture.

And so Palmer moved on, impelled by a spirit of his age that exercised remarkably tight control over him, considering that he was in almost every respect a reactionary, one who cringed away from the present, who sought to hide from the evils of "progress," who mistrusted science and was terrified of the increase of agnosticism, tight lacing, urban sprawl, pollution and public schools--a pattern of the conservative mentality past and present. As he grew older, indeed, his very religion, the motive force behind his greatest art, became prosy and prudish, the agent of repression to his children and the subject of endless discourses that we should now label typically "Victorian." Mr. Lister betrays an odd lack of understanding of the educational methods of the period when he castigates Palmer for feeding his three-year-old son on the Bible, Bunyan, and *Sandford and Merton*. Palmer's advocacy of a bowdlerized Shakespeare is disconcerting, however, given his strong feeling for literature, and his acquaintance with Blake's own unselfconscious modes of expression. Like many other talented artists of his time, he succumbed to the stifling climate of general opinion (one almost senses that he knew it, in his constant complaints about the unhealthy atmosphere of London), and his art suffered like everything else. When in 1859 he wrote "I seem doomed never to see again that first flush of summer splendour which entranced me at Shoreham," he expressed the same nostalgia for his own creative youth that Millais was to feel when, standing in front of one of his early canvases during a retrospective show in 1886, he was moved to tears by the contrast between that and his current work.

The comparison with Millais, however, points up Palmer's real distinction from the successful Millais' world of fashionable and glib virtuosity. He never had any success as a "society" painter, and although in a sense he never wished it, we catch an unmistakable note of frustration and puzzlement when, in Rome, he watches his friend Richmond moving in fashionable circles while he and Hannah are left

out of the social life of the city, and are given no commissions. When he returned to England, fully equipped with the right subjects, he waited many years to be admitted to the Society of Painters in Water-Colour, and there is no doubt that he very much wanted to belong to that body of artists. It is in the context of the Society, and of another, more informal institution, the "Etching Club," that his later work can best be assessed.

It was an avowed object of the instituted watercolor artists that they should create works of high seriousness in their chosen medium, and indeed it was to facilitate the exhibition of such works, without the unfair competition of oil-paintings, that they had founded their society in 1804. They treated subjects that ranged from the kind of picturesque landscape that is most associated with watercolor to the grandest figure pieces, historical or mythological, and elaborately detailed scenes in exotic countries, especially Italy and Spain. Palmer worked in oil for much of his life, but in practice showed a decided preference for watercolor, especially in the second half of his career. He employed the methods of enriching and strengthening watercolor used by many of his colleagues: bodycolor made its appearance early on at Shoreham, and much of his later work was "a kind of Tempera" as he said in a letter of 1873--which recalls, perhaps, Blake's use of that vehicle. Whatever the details of his method, he strove to load his watercolors with a density of feeling and a richness of detail that was precisely analogous to the intentions of the Society. What we recognise as distinctive is the continuing strain of the visionary insight into rural life that was so active in the 1820s; if feebler and more rarefied, that fervid instinct for the inwardness of the countryside and the religious force of its beauty informs much of his late work, and makes him, in fact, one of the finest of the Society's artists.

The technical range and power of watercolor at this period undoubtedly owed much to the example of Turner, who was an inspiration to the founders of the Society, even though by virtue of his membership of the Royal Academy he could not belong to it. What emerges very clearly from the letters of Palmer is that, while Blake was never superseded as his spiritual guide, Turner became a technical and practical inspiration of the greatest importance. The effect on him of Turner's *Orange Merchant* of 1819 is often noted; but that large marine painting can hardly have had much practical bearing on Palmer's work. Even the atmospheric little watercolor studies that date from about that time are hardly "Turnerian" in any serious sense. But the meticulous precision with which he constructed his later watercolors can have been based on no other master. References to Turner's watercolors are frequent in Palmer's writings; it is true that he asserts that Claude is the greatest of all landscape painters--but then Turner would himself have sympathized with that view; and Turner, he observed, "had the faculty to which Claude never appeals in vain." While he was in Italy, he often saw landscape through Turner's eyes, and he indicates that Turner conveyed the poetry of the scenery, just as he wished to do himself: ". . . what beautiful country must

be here in summer it is difficult to conceive--the lights of Canaletti are like the literal versions, and Turners more like the poetical . . . ." He notes that Turner was very fond of the Val d'Aosta, and that he did not like Subiaco; he inquires eagerly after "the fine collection of Turner's drawing at Mr. Windus's"; he often asks about the pictures Turner was showing at the Academy, and once comments on the "corruscation of tints and blooms in the middle distance of his Apollo and Daphne"--which "is nearly, tho' not quite so much a mystery as ever," and adds "I am inclined to think that it is like what Paganini's violin playing is said to have been; something to which no one ever did or will do the like." In the same place he says "I would give anything to see some of Turner's best water-colour drawings now; and if I am preserved to come home, shall beg the favour of Mr Daniel to get me a sight of a most splendid collection: . . ." He observed that "the plenitude of light [in Italy] gives a coolness of shadow and a glow of reflection of which we have no notion in England. No one has done it but Turner and he makes the shadows and reflected lights much lighter than in nature." He carried this enthusiasm home with him, and waited many years in anticipation before he had access to the artist's bequest, which was at first exhibited in the South Kensington Museum at Brompton: "As soon as the Turners come," he wrote in 1859, "I shall be out enough you may be sure, in the direction of Brompton." Turner crops up in Palmer's letters as a figure whose every action and thought he has studied with love: he adjures his correspondents to look at Turner's prints for particular subjects; to visit the Fawkes collection of Turner's drawings at Farnley Hall; he notes that Turner knew Margate well, and that a house near Turner's was haunted. In short, there are ubiquitous indications that Palmer knew much about the life and work of Turner and had "adopted" him as a touchstone of excellence in the field of contemporary landscape.

This may seem self-evident, given Turner's preeminence. But the significance of such a respectful regard in Palmer is far greater than that of the mere professional esteem of the mediocrities in the Water-Colour Society. In Palmer's later work, we sense the striving to achieve what Turner achieved of enhanced and rapturous union with nature; Turner was not at all like Blake, but in his way he was a visionary artist, and as a practical example for Palmer was far more immediately relevant. Mrs. Hamerton recalled Palmer's conversation as being spiced with "anecdotes of Turner and Blake," and this coupling has never, I think, been given its proper weight. Of all the ambitious watercolorists who were influenced by Turner, Palmer was perhaps the only one with the intensity and honesty of vision to benefit from more than his technical lessons. Hence, he is a landscape artist of real distinction in a generation of somewhat shallow virtuosos. Judged by the standards of his youthful achievement--his own standards--he did not maintain his early quality; but judged by *theirs*, he was a conspicuously fine exponent of the grand watercolor style of the period.

In his biography, Mr. Lister does not explore Palmer's achievement in any depth, contenting himself with a reiteration of the conventional summary of

his art, and reaffirming what he himself made clear in his book on the etchings (1969), that it was as a printmaker that Palmer, late in life, found himself once more. He concentrates on the personal aspects of Palmer's life, giving a full account of the long-drawn-out quarrel with Linnell, though he follows A. H. Palmer's conclusions in apportioning the blame pretty evenly on both sides, while the letters strongly suggest that Palmer was consistently well-intentioned and gentle in his responses to a very difficult man (and the tone of Albin Martin's correspondence with Linnell--printed here when subjoined to Palmer's own--is quite as obsequious; which suggests that Palmer was not unusual in being somewhat cowed by his father-in-law). He recounts the appalling tragedy of the deaths of Palmer's two eldest children; but it is not difficult to present them in their full horror, since Palmer himself put his anguish only too painfully into words. Oddly enough, Mr. Lister offers no explanation for the death of Mary, Palmer's daughter, in 1847, although in the *Letters* he quotes a statement by Hannah Palmer that the little girl had been poisoned by a weed she had picked and eaten. All in all, considering the range of documentary material to which he has access, he does not present a picture that differs essentially from the existing one; and he fails to narrate the story in a coherent or interesting way, flinging scraps together as best he can, without giving them an overall and purposeful form. The main facts are, for the most part, there; but Grigson and Cecil make better reading.

The editing of the letters is handled with much greater success. Mr. Lister has assiduously transcribed, ordered and annotated a mass of confused material, and makes very good sense of it. He has identified a large proportion of the people mentioned, and pinpointed most of the multitudinous quotations. His footnotes are helpful and plentiful. I would suggest that he has erred in identifying the "West" to whose "recollections from the old Masters" Hannah Palmer refers on 8 April 1839, and who also appears in a note of 17 February 1829 as Benjamin West, P. R. A: this is surely Joseph West, the watercolor copyist who made transcriptions of pictures in the Louvre and other collections in a style influenced by Bonington. I think, too, that it is mistaken to identify the phrase "The thing that is not" as a quotation from *Julius Caesar*, Act v, scene iii: it is surely the Houynhnmh paraphrase for a lie, in the fourth book of *Gulliver's Travels*, which we know Palmer had read. The letters are very agreeably presented by the Clarendon Press, and Mr. Lister's system of transcription is on the whole lucid. He eschews the editorial *sic*, but the printers have not befriended him here, for there are many misprints which can only mislead users of the volumes, who will have no guide as to which are Palmer's oddities and which the printers' errors. The editor himself seems guilty of a number of puzzling lapses, as when he transcribes a phrase in a letter of 1839: "inveighed Hannah into the conspiracy" is nonsense as read--the word must be "inveigled"; the misreading is repeated several times. Again, Mr. Lister occasionally interprets lacunae rather oddly: once Palmer ends a letter, after a reference to Heaven, "which that we may ( ) day see together in good earnest is the hearty prayer of . . . Yours affec-

tionately, S. Palmer": Mr. Lister inserts (to) in the gap; clearly (one) is the correct reading. I am not sure that I concur with his expansion of ampersand and contractions such as "aff" for "affectionately," since he does not always expand "ye" for "the" or "wd" for "would." How very different Blake texts would look if "&" were invariably treated to editorial expansion! But these are minor inconsistencies in a remarkable feat of careful research and consistent editing which, whatever the merits of the biography, itself makes a book extraordinarily well worth reading for its account of the mind of a pathetic, lonely and pessimistic, yet distinguished man. It is a fit summary of Palmer's naivety and self-denigration, and of his lifelong earnestness in pursuit of an art which was, as Blake had taught him, at least half divine, that he should sign himself, at the conclusion of one of his last letters, "A blind baby feeling for the bosom of truth."

**The Book of Job Illustrated by William Blake.** Introduction by Michael Marqusee. Paddington Masterpieces of the Illustrated Book. London and New York: Paddington Press Ltd., Two Continents Publishing Group, 1976. 52 pp., illus. \$4.95, paper.  
**Reviewed by Jeffry Spencer**

**T**his paperback volume represents more of a tribute to Blake's marketability than to his artistry. Its modest price will ensure its popularity in museum shops from Los Angeles to London, where, regrettably, it will attract buyers who are interested in Blake but relatively uninformed about him. For their five-dollar investment they will receive a fairly competent eleven-page introduction to the poet-artist and to the Job illustrations, a thirty-five page reprint of the Book of Job in the Authorized Version, and twenty-two plates of decidedly inferior quality.

The title page of this book suggests that it has been designed as one of a series of "Masterpieces of the Illustrated Book," and Michael Marqusee's introductory essay is directed at the appreciative

amateur. Its three-part division discusses "Blake and the Bible," "Blake as a Visual Artist," and "Blake's Illustrations of the Book of Job" in, respectively, three, two-and-a-half, and six double-columned pages. The brevity of these sections prevents any exploration of those complexities and contradictions that make the interpretation of Blake's works so difficult and yet so rewarding; what remains is an over-generalized, simplified rehash of prior scholarship (although no debts are acknowledged in this undocumented introduction), studded with illustrative quotations from the poetry and prose. Although there is nothing here that one can condemn as blatantly wrong-headed, there is equally little that is fresh or exciting to praise. The best that can be said is that no one coming to Blake through this introduction will be seriously misinformed. Had the publishers of this volume chosen to trim that half of its length that is given over to needlessly reprinting the entire Book of Job, replacing those pages with a more substantial introduction to the plates, the prospective purchaser would have been better served. Space might then have been found for a section listing Blake's textual variations from the King James Job, similar to the ones that appear in Foster Damon's *Blake's Job* (Brown, 1966) and in Appendix I of Andrew Wright's *Blake's Job* (Oxford, 1972). Additionally, the reader would profit from the sort of sensible analysis of the marginal texts provided by Jenijoy LaBelle in *The Visionary Hand* (ed. Robert N. Essick, Los Angeles, 1973).

Passing from text to picture provides further grounds for even deeper dissatisfaction. Reproductions are slightly larger (about five-eighths of an inch) than the originals, though this discrepancy is not noted. Such enlargement may have been deemed necessary to show detail: the printing is very dark, and highly shadowed sections of many plates are muddy and indistinct, despite the dead white paper that provides a brighter background than the grayish or creamy tones of papers used at the time of the publication of the originals. Night scenes like Plate XII ("I am Young & ye are very Old . . .") are especially poor; in this plate the outline of Elihu's figure is indistinct at the left, and the configuration of the mountain behind Job is not wholly visible. Comparing these plates, page by page, with those in the clothbound edition of *Blake's Job* published by Brown University, one cannot fail to be dismayed at the very much poorer quality of the newer set. Indeed, even the Dutton paperback version of Damon (with illustrations in reduced size) provides clearer reproduction--and at half the cost of the Paddington Press volume.

Wearied as perhaps we are by the crescendo of lamentations that bewail the encroachment of pop culture into the Temple of Art, we must regard this volume as another bit of evidence that an increasing interest in museum-going and concomitant rise in museum shop sales are combining to make ventures like this one more and more commercially rewarding. We who love Blake ordinarily rejoice when reproductions of his work are made more available and inexpensive. If, however, as here, greater accessibility is offset by a significant decrease in quality, what appears gain may well be loss.

**The Story of Job:** An original treatment by Lester Clarke and David Wickes for a television ballet of **Job: A Masque for Dancing** by Ralph Vaughan Williams (from a treatment by Sir Geoffrey Keynes). Choreography by Robert Cohan. Produced for Thames Television (London) by Lester Clark and Anton Bowler. Directed by Anton Bowler. Performed by members of the London Philharmonic Orchestra (conducted by Vernon Handley) and by members of the London Contemporary Dance Theatre.  
**Reviewed by Everett C. Frost**



**T**he *Story of Job* is a visual marvel, and creates some interesting puzzles for a reviewer with loyalties both to broadcast media and to Blake which I shall discuss in turn. Perhaps the most impressive aspect of the production is the full and imaginative use it makes of television as a medium for the creation as well as the transmission of art. This is a virtue worth emphasizing (in particular since the production was invested in by a *commercial* television house rather than one--hypothetically at any rate--freed to invent by public subsidy) for it represents a standard of invention against which television production can be measured.

The television screen allows for the presentation of two, not three, dimensions. A third dimension can only be suggested by proportion, scale, camera angle, and spatial relationships: long landscape shots, for example, "flatten out." Further, on television, colors are themselves and do not blend easily, but transmit gravitating in the direction of primaries and secondaries; though television can manage luminescent pastels. This makes the medium ideally suited for two-dimensional visual works such as the water colors of Blake.

The ballet's exploitation of these inherent characteristics of the medium is brilliant and operates at all levels of the production--in the treatment, choreography, performance, and post-production mixing of the final videotape. Thus,

for example, using overlays of one video image upon another, coupled with effective lighting and the use of lasers, the television ballet creates a visually enriched heaven that is plausibly Blakean. At one moment a circle of angels choreographed for Blakean motion revolves around the throne of God transcending what a stage could allow and creating an environment that is fully mental and unrestricted by the bounds of space and time. At another moment, Satan is represented in fall or flight (the simultaneity of these two points of view being enhanced by the medium) against a backdrop of moving stars, so that he--as in Blakean representation--is simultaneously static and moving, undoubtedly in transition from one place to another, and yet between two places that are wholly out of nature. Unhappily none of the photographic stills of the performance provided by Thames Television to accompany this review exemplifies this, most crucial and most effective, aspect of the production. The intricate collaboration among the people responsible for the initial treatment, the choreography, the performance, and its realization on videotape is masterful.

Similarly, the collaborators have achieved success with the use of color. For technical reasons having to do with greater success in coping with blue as a backdrop, primary use is made of the Butts set of water colors (as reproduced in the 1935 Morgan facsimile).

Coloration, costume, backdrop, choreography, and Blake design have been carefully integrated to heighten the visual impact of the ballet, and the luminosity of the television screen assists a striking transference of Blake's water colors into another medium. The angels and the sons and daughters of Job, for example, wear filmy Blakean gowns of yellow, green, blue, or red. Blake's water colors are often quoted by the gestures of the dancers and, by cross-fading, the water colors and the dancers sometimes coincide, the Blake water color fading into the screen to conclude a scene of danced action.

For budgetary reasons the scenes in heaven are visually enriched more than the scenes on earth; and the production is thrown off balance by relying more heavily on Blake's water colors to move the action on earth along than that in heaven.

The ballet as a television production leaves only two things to complain of:

If one sees, as I do, Blake's *Illustrations of the Book of Job* capturing a mental scene in motion at key moments in the action (as if caught by a candid photographer of the mental drama rather than postures arrived at as poses for the recording angel), then there are moments in the ballet which betray an annoying instinct for reverencing rather than incorporating the key moments Blake hath left us. Thus, for example, Satan and Job dance postures which tantalizingly and dramatically suggest Blake's well known "Satan Smiting Job with Sore Boils" (and a Blakean thrills at the effectively executed

counterpoint between the painting and the ballet) only to conclude with the dancers freezing into a tableau and holding it for the predictable fade to the water color itself. What Blake made dynamic--a moment to be quoted by the dancers in passing--has become self-consciously posed. There are other moments in which the pictures are used more fluidly and effectively (Job and his Accusers, for example); and the illustrations themselves do not always appear when the ballet quotes them, but the overall effect is as I have described it in this instance. There are, I think, reasons for this rigidity which I shall suggest below.

The second complaint about the production has to do with the generally conservative and conventional nature of television production. In television land, highly imaginative heavens inevitably suggest that conflation of romance and technology known as science fiction. Thus Blake's enigmatic stony furniture in heaven, as designed for the sets in this ballet, is made to resemble a generalized futuristic design suggested, say, by the smooth slab that serves as a metaphoric motif in Kubrick's *2001*. Similarly, Satan's descent through the heavens, striking as it is in simultaneously conveying stasis, motion, and transition, additionally carries the unfortunate trappings of the movement of a spaceship through intergalactic space as in conventional science fiction programming like *Star Trek*.

The music for the production is the Vaughan Williams *Job: A Masque for Dancing*. It is not, however, the fully orchestrated version available



band that allows for such magnificent recreation of sound on radio?--

The dancing is entirely effective and captivating. This is a highly skilled ensemble, fully capable of performing this difficult piece. Of particular note is Namron, who performs the role of Satan--a demanding role, done with flawless articulation and skill. There has been some irritated response for having cast the only black dancer in the production as Satan. The reply has to be, of course, that he interprets the role magnificently and that no racial slur is implied. Still, the production might easily have clarified the racial ambiguities simply by integrating the casting of the sons and daughters and/or the comforters of Job.

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The second portion of the review is more problematic than the first; and its problematic nature is suggested by the lineage that results in this production.

In the beginning there was Job. Then there were Blake's illustrations of it, and then the scenario by Sir Geoffrey Keynes from which Ralph Vaughan Williams composed a score, out of which Dame Ninette de Valois created a ballet. The music is now used for a new treatment and a new choreography. To whom should a reviewer owe his allegiance if he does not want simply to bloom in a demonstration of the anxieties of influence? For purposes of the second portion of this review, I will place mine squarely with Blake on the grounds that no one involved in the conception of *The Story of Job* thought they were doing it without him. I do so with the insistence that it is possible to make a satisfying artistic experience unintentionally abusing or even deliberately misreading Blake.

On its merits, this is a wonderful production. It is not Blake, though its producers would like it to be so. The ballet contains a narration (competently managed by Andrew Cruickshank) from the Authorized Version of the Bible, amounting to a plot synopsis, and implying that Blake is merely illustrating the well-known text. This ignores Blake's own inscriptions on the engraved designs which quote the Bible from Genesis to Revelation and additionally provide invented "captions" of his own. Nor is this complaint easily dismissed as one made on behalf of Blake specialists petulant for being dispensable; for it is the main thrust of the designs that is bypassed in ways that some basic awareness of Blake's work might well have precluded. Blake's relationship to any text he illuminates is enigmatic and elliptical; seldom does he simply illustrate; and nowhere is this more true than in his intricate visual *interpretation* of The Book of Job--as the commentary by Keynes and Binyon in the Morgan facsimile might have indicated.

The designs are variously mimed, quoted, and shown without much attention to what they mean because they are taken as illustrations rather than illuminations of Job; and this, I think, accounts for some of the woodenness mentioned earlier in the review.



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commercially on the recording made by Sir Adrian Boult, but the version rescored (by Vaughan Williams) for the touring ballet company in the 1930's and not given public performance since. This is, of course, a reason in itself for experiencing the production, for this previously unrecorded chamber orchestra version of the work is sensitively done (conducted by Vernon Handley with members of the London Philharmonic Orchestra). Unfortunately one hears it through the tinny speakers reserved for television broadcast and so loses richness. --When, Oh When will television broadcasters and manufacturers conspire to learn that they operate in the same FM

The ballet dutifully (and promisingly) begins and ends with the first and last of Blake's illustrations--with the musical instruments hanging up in the tree in the first illustration and being played in the last. But the ballet has the performers dancing about with queer Blakean instruments in the concluding scene without knowing what to do with them other than to freeze in place for the final quotation, cross-mix, and fade. For the point has been missed--that Job has undergone a last judgment from a pious and dutiful reverence for his gifts to an energetic and creative use of them. The end of the ballet seems piously grateful for the hard time just got over; and we are *still* in need of the Blakean vision we ought just to have had to correct it. This is an error of interpretation that interferes with the entire ballet. The initial relationship between Job and his wife and between Job and his children is danced as far too affectionate and caring for the story Blake is telling. This provides an opportunity for some beautifully rendered ensemble and duet dancing, particularly by Job (Robert North) and his wife (Siobahn Davies), but it is not Blake.

In Blake's designs, Job and his God are reflections of each other, and this feature is somewhat enhanced by having both characters interpreted by the same dancer, Robert North. North sustains both roles with eloquence and skill; but the roles, make-up, hair style, and manner have been made different and so the point is lost. As Job, he is fluid, emotionally vigorous and appealing, and too young; while as God he is staccato, deliberate, and a bit harried, but not convincingly authoritative.

But perhaps most annoying, and attributable to the same failure of interpretation outlined above:



the sequence of the designs is altered. It is out of the fourteenth illustration (When the Morning Stars Sang Together) beautifully rendered that Satan's descent emerges, thus losing the point of struggling to arrive at that epiphany. Further, Job's Evil Dream (illustration 11) is moved considerably forward such that the sequence of Job's torments emerge out of his dream, rather than Blake's way, that among Job's torments--and perhaps the most decisive of them--is his apocalyptic dream. Thus the ballet conveys the uneasy implication that all that occurs to Job is "only" a dream, albeit a moving and prophetic one. It must be added, however, that within the context of the dream, the sequence of devastations is eloquently rendered, as is the interaction between Job and his Comforters, including Elihu (Ross McKim)--these last being rendered in a Blakean way.

There is no reason why the production of a ballet cannot rework Blake's visual materials to its own ends. But for what purpose? to what end? In this instance I infer that the producers had not intended to do so; and that a production which moved me and which I liked might have been more moving yet had it adhered to what it tried to convey in a centrifugal rather than centripetal manner. In the form we have it, the production loses an imaginative center and focus.

I close with a lament that while an English audience has had an opportunity to view the production, no such prospect seems imminent for American television audiences. The approximate cost for securing rights to American broadcast is estimated at \$16,000--not much as these things go--but initial reactions from American public television are discouraging.

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- 1 GOD (Robert North).
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- 2 JOB (Robert North), JOB'S WIFE (Siobahn Davies), and the three COMFORTERS.
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- 3 JOB (Robert North) with his WIFE (Siobahn Davies).
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- 4 JOB (Robert North) rejoicing with his daughters after his new understanding of GOD.
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# NEWSLETTER

## TATE BLAKE GALLERY

A new gallery specially designed for the Tate Gallery's Blake collection is scheduled to open in Autumn 1978. As well as the majority of the Tate's own Blake collection and a section devoted to such artists as Samuel Palmer and George Richmond, the display will include the two panels "Winter" and "Evening" lent by the Vaughan Johnson Trust, the watercolor sketch "Job and His Daughters" lent by Dr. R. E. Hemphill and a group of works from the Bateson Collection. The Bateson Collection, which was previously on long loan to the Honolulu Academy of Arts, includes the four works shown in the large Tate Gallery exhibition earlier in the year, "Pestilence," the color print "Satan exulting over Eve," the sketch for the alternative design for the title page to *The Grave*, and the late book illustration discussed elsewhere in this issue of *Blake*. In addition the collection contains three other works which have also been placed on long loan at the Tate Gallery, a tracing possibly by Blake himself from the drawing of "The Last Judgment" in the Rosenwald Collection, the drawing of "Adam and Eve sleeping" included by Geoffrey Keynes in his first book of *Pencil Drawings by William Blake*, 1927, as no. 35 but later recognized by him as a drawing by Edward Francis Burney, and a pen and wash drawing of "The Expulsion of Adam and Eve" which bears a false signature of Blake and the date "1803" but is certainly not by him. Not all of these works will be on view but those in store can be seen by appointment. MARTIN BUTLIN, KEEPER OF THE BRITISH COLLECTION, TATE GALLERY, LONDON.

## MLA BLAKE SEMINAR 1978

The Special Session on "Blake's Concept of Self" is scheduled for the annual meeting of the Modern Language Association in New York this December. Prof. Anne Mellor of Stanford University will be heading the session. An abstract of each paper to be presented follows:

Robert N. Essick, "William Blake: The Printmaker as Poet"

The paper will consider some of the ways in which Blake's profession influences his poetry. Eighteenth-century etching and engraving involved procedures, both mental and physical, that shaped the imagery of the *Illuminated Books*. In *Milton* and *Jerusalem*, Blake's struggles as a printmaker became part of the biographical material he transformed into universal myth. A study of these influences and references offers insights into Blake's habits of mind as a poet and into his conception of himself as an artist.

Christine Gallant, "Blake's Presence as First-Person Voice in *Jerusalem*"  
Blake is concerned with the unification of the Self--a Self that includes the unconscious, or Chaos--and he explores the unconscious throughout his poetry. He strongly desires his reader to understand this hidden part of the Self as well, as he leads the reader of *Jerusalem* through day-by-day experiences of "the Chaos of Satan." We can see this in Blake's use of the first-person voice, an unusual tense for him (save in *Milton*). Jung helps to understand the use of this tense as he analyzes the authoritative voice appearing in dreams, a voice seeming to come from outside the dream's context. He says that such a voice may be either a spokesman of the unconscious for the dreamer or (very rarely) a messenger from "the supraordinate Self." The first-person voice functions in *Jerusalem* as does this dream-voice. Blake's use of this tense reveals that in these passages he saw himself as such a spokesman, both for the unconscious and for the unified center of the total personality which is the Self.

John H. Sutherland, "Some Blake Self-Images in *Milton* and *Jerusalem*"

The term "self-images" is used to refer to pictures in which Blake reveals fairly directly something of his own inward state. Five plates from *Milton* (M 10, 32, 37, 40, 47) and three plates from *Jerusalem* (J 1, 6, 100) are discussed (plates numbered here as in *The Illuminated Blake*). It is argued that some of these are pictures connected with peak experiences in Blake's life. A pattern of spiritual autobiography is suggested, and the question is raised as to whether this pattern directly reflects Blake's perception of his own life, or whether the pattern is a partial fiction designed to enhance the structures of his two works. Particular attention is given to J 100, which is taken as an interesting vision, by Blake, of his own spiritual state late in life.

## MLA BLAKE SEMINAR 1979

W. J. T. Mitchell of the University of Chicago will be discussion leader for the 1979 Special Session on Blake at the MLA Annual Meeting. The topic will be "Blake on Language and Writing." Those interested in being on a panel should send Mitchell a paper of not more than fifteen pages by 30 March 1979 at the latest, sooner if possible. (This Blake session should not be confused with the one scheduled for MLA December 1978.)

MLA

## GUNNAR HARDING

"Song of Innocence" and "An Evening at Home with William Blake" (poems published in the summer 1978 issue) originally appeared in *Ballader* by Gunnar Harding, published by Wahlstrom & Widstrand (Stockholm, 1975); the poems were published in *Blake* with the kind permission of the author and publisher.

**RUTHVEN TODD**  
**1914-1978**