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Blake's Infinite Self: An Essay on Experience, Prophetic
Language and Divine History

by

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(Honours B.A.)

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and
Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of

(Master of Arts)

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Thesis Abstract

The thesis explores Blake's account of experience, prophetic language and divine history in an attempt to define his notion of the "infinite" self. This self resembles that of Hegel which is ultimately to be grasped in terms of a process of inner articulation and negative self-relation. For Blake, the self is complete (in the sense of no longer self-eviscerating) when it acknowledges the necessary union or marriage of self and other within the ground or ideality of their difference. It is the activity of language which expresses this process as it comes to completion for Blake in and through the following levels of experience: the prophetic Milton, in whom Blake sees an important transitional figure embodying an unsettled mixture of the old and the new (Blake's other); Blake's encounter with Milton in the poem Milton, the result of which Blake comes to perceive in his predecessor his own other; and the dynamics of such an encounter extended onto the plane of history and the three classes of men.

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A Note on References and Abbreviations

I quote William Blake from The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake, Ed. David V. Erdman. All references to Blake's prose text are cited by page number; references to identified poems are cited by plate and verse number. I quote John Milton from The Complete Poetry and Major Prose of John Milton, Ed. Merritt W. Hughes. All references to poetry are cited by book and verse number, and references to the prose are cited by page number.

The following abbreviations are used:

BU	Book of Urizen
FZ	Vala or The Four Zoas
J	Jerusalem
M	Milton
MHH	Marriage of Heaven and Hell
PL	Paradise Lost
SE	Songs of Experience
SI	Songs of Innocence

The following abbreviations are used for multiple works by the same author.

Hegel, G.W.F.	CR	The Christian Religion
	DR	Determinate Religion

	<u>HL</u>	<u>Hegel's Logic</u>
	<u>PN</u>	<u>Philosophy of Nature</u>
	<u>PS</u>	<u>Phenomenology of Spirit</u>
	<u>SL</u>	<u>Science of Logic</u>
Altizer, Thomas	<u>HA</u>	<u>History as Apocalypse</u>
	<u>NA</u>	<u>The New Apocalypse</u>
Cassirer, Ernst	<u>LM</u>	<u>Language and Myth</u>
	<u>PSF</u>	<u>Philosophy of Symbolic Forms</u>
Freud, Sigmund	<u>CD</u>	<u>Civilization and Its Discontents</u>
	<u>EI</u>	<u>The Ego and The Id</u>
	<u>OS</u>	<u>On Sexuality</u>
Frye, Northrop	<u>FS</u>	<u>Fearful Symmetry</u>
	<u>AC</u>	<u>Anatomy of Criticism</u>
Hilton, Nelson	<u>LI</u>	<u>Literal Imagination</u>
Ricoeur, Paul	<u>FP</u>	<u>Freud and Philosophy</u>
	<u>RM</u>	<u>Rule of Metaphor</u>
	<u>SOE</u>	<u>The Symbolism of Evil</u>

The Bible is quoted from The New Oxford Annotated Bible with Apocrypha

Full bibliographic information for references here and in the notes will be found in the list of texts cited.

I have carefully retained Blake's sometimes irregular spelling, since to note it with sic would disrupt our sense of his actual text.

Preface

In pursuing the meaning of Blake's notion of selfhood, I have been aided significantly by the thought of Hegel. This thesis, however, does not purport to be a comparison of Blake and Hegel, but rather the means by which certain unexplored areas of Blake's vision acquire conceptual clarity through the thought of Hegel. His poetry is elusive and intentionally ambiguous, thereby defying all attempts at a definitive interpretation. What I have done, instead, is to offer a structural blueprint that reveals the way in which Blake's symbolic meanings develop. Each different school of criticism makes a distinctive choice of symbols in its analysis, prematurely reducing Blake's achievement to a particular ideological framework (Platonism, Materialism, or Gnosticism). I have shown how the dynamic in Blake's poetry allows the images and symbols to undergo multiple transformations within a visionary process. In this regard, I am indebted to Donald Ault and Mark Bracher whose works have suggested to me the possibility of new dimensions within which an Hegelian dialectic is possible.

There has been a small tradition of scholarship built around a comparison of Blake and Hegel. J. Brownowski determines the nature of Blake's connection to Hegel in terms of a similar dialectic of thought they shared. But such a formal technique of thought merely seeks to impose externally a pattern of contrariety onto objects and events. It

disregards the possibility that life itself reveals events in a full contrariety that is beyond the endless run of thesis and antithesis, that engages each side of the opposition as the ground of the other's developing reality.

Thomas Altizer recognizes Blake's dialectic as the movement of being itself, but he transposes that movement to an exclusively private or existential realm. Blake is a solitary mystic, a St. John immersed in the dark night of the soul, whose final apocalyptic overturning of fallen existence can only occur as a private triumph of the soul. David Punter brings Blake and Hegel together in the light of discussion of history and society as the true medium for their dialectic to unfold itself. Although I agree with his approach, I feel that more can be done in terms of exposing Blake's "dialectical" poetry as poetry, and then to proceed out from such an analysis to Hegel.

Martin Nurmi states unequivocally that "Blake is not a Hegelian." He says:

Though he [Blake] uses the word "progression" in the Marriage, his contrary forces do not, like Hegel's "thesis" and "antithesis," constitute a world process of "becoming." Indeed, Blake's Human world, in which the contraries freely interact, is not one of becoming at all, for it is perfect; the only "progression" there is in it is that of continued creativeness. And, of course, Blake would have

nothing to do with anything as abstractly systematic
as Hegel's dialectic. (57)

Hegel's dialectic is not a fixed agenda prescribing thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. These terms were first coined by Fichte and rarely used by Hegel. This triadic structure is only the external or superficial side of dialectic. The more one reads Hegel, the more one discerns the dialectic becoming more subtle and complex as it proceeds. The terms which Hegel uses to describe the movement of his dialectic are the "negation of negation" and "sublation" (See Appendix I). Thus, far from being a process of "becoming," the negation of negation sublates the contradiction of the original antithesis, reconstituting the universal as the whole in which mediations are both contained and suspended within it. It involves that intellectual intuition, that timeless insight, in which all fragments of reality are seen in their interconnectedness. I will argue that this is indeed Blake's notion of "perfection."

Chapter One

Blake, Hegel and The Experience of The Human

Many critics have felt bound to conduct their interpretation of Blake's vision through an analysis of his rejection of Bacon, Newton and Locke. They argue that his opposition is one of flat rejection. I will argue in this thesis that the sophistication of Blake's insights allows him to grapple with the dilemmas of Enlightenment thought in a posture that is critical without being dogmatic. In adopting Hegel's notion of "sublation" as the conceptual core of my argument, the reader will see that Blake has both suppressed and preserved the Newtonian world-view in the sense that it remains an integral, but severely limited element, within a broader imaginative synthesis. That is to say, his "Mundane Shell," his "vortexes," his "limit of contraction and opacity," are moments in a process of development through which they become the boundaries of states of error. Thus, the mechanistic principles of order and reason of Newton are transmuted into an intelligible ordering of being as organism whose fundamental component is not fixed matter, but energy and time.

1. The Part and The Whole

Let us begin with what Blake found objectionable in the thought of the Enlightenment. We can approach this subject by introducing the figure of Blake's "Shadowy Female" whose symbolic representations are the various mystery and nature cults that have ensnared man throughout the ages. In Blake's view, the cult of nature reaches its apex of infamous

glory in the age of the Enlightenment with Deism and scientific empiricism.

The Shadowy Female dons the veil of nature, assuming the guise of the femme fatale who lures man into the folds of her veil, obfuscating his sight so that he can only see reality through a film of matter. The cult of nature, and its various derivative forms, covers our perception of the world with a layer of heavy matter, dulling or generalizing the content of that world to the extent that it is made amenable to the criterion of "sense certainty." The subject focuses on the solid and presently perceptible reality in which the fragment of blunt matter is seen as the primary and/or only ingredient left over after sense certainty has systematically stripped away all secondary qualities. But, through a chain of logical inferences initiated by the presuppositions of sense certainty, even this primary or barest component of matter is soon suspected of being an appearance of something more substantial (more general) hidden beneath it.¹ Truth becomes an elusive substance beneath the accretion of "facts" that are peeled away forever. Thus empiricism inadvertently reverts to that metaphysics which it had condemned as an anathema to a clear and unequivocal presentation of the "facts."

This is the case, ironically, because the veil places a subtle but pervasive layer of obfuscation between subject and object, reducing the subject to the role of the passive recipient of stimuli emitted from a world whose objectivity is assured through its inscrutable, and thereby, intractable

"thing-in-itself-ness." Hence, the apprehension of a world in terms of its correspondence to "sense-certainty" leads to uncertainty, and the subject becomes a perceiver alienated from the world perceived. In this condition, the participation of the subjective in and with the formation of an objective world-view is undermined, and truth becomes, not as that which coheres within the interdependent unity of subject with object, but as that which is imposed from the other side of an unquestioned, indeed, unfathomed boundary. Thus, because a subject stands indifferently or passively before the immediately perceptible thing isolated by analysis, all vital diversity, normally sought out by an intact imagination, recedes into the background and eventually dissipates into the void. The human capacity for creative synthesis is supplanted by a formal reason which extracts the part from the whole. It vitiates thereby the strength of the whole so that each dissected part stands out dismembered, bare, and non-descript.

We become what we see, and we see what we have become. The veil of analysis, which separates subject from object, shatters both the integrity of the human being and the cosmos, the former replicating in the latter the image of its own dismembered self. We see this most clearly when Urizen explores his dens for Orc. He shrinks back in horror at the havoc which the divisive powers of his reason have wreaked upon his world:

And His world teemed vast enormities

Frightning; faithless; fawning

Portions of life; similitudes
Of a foot, or a hand, or a head
Or a heart, or an eye, they swam mischevous
Dread terrors! (BU,8:2-7)

A Urizen-like mentality "takes portions of existence and fancies that the whole" (MHH,16:9-10).

What is missing in "empirical" analysis is the principle of wholeness. The tendency of empirical thought to analyse without reintegrating results in that fortuitous collection of things for which no necessary connection can be found. Northrop Frye's comment on the above quotation from the Book of Urizen is useful. A human eye is not seen as a functioning part integral to the whole human being. It is seen as a piece of matter passively registering the stimuli of light (Frye,FS 19-29). For Blake, however, a man sees not with his eyes, but through his eyes. The whole being of an individual is summoned up to direct the perceptions of the eye. But the obsession for order compels the Urizenic intellect (the Enlightenment thinker) to classify the eye with all other eyes in the attempt to determine their common characteristics. By extracting the eye from the whole human being and placing it under the general category of "eye," the uniqueness of the human perception working through the eye is repressed. The human self, too, then, becomes an abstraction in which all selves find themselves replicated. It is against this kind of devastating blow to the dignity of humanity that Blake writes, "To Generalize is to be an Idiot. To Particularize is Alone

Distinction of Merit. General Knowledges are those Knowledges that Idiots possess" (Blake 641).

It is in connection with this generalizing tendency of empirical analysis that Blake says man succumbs to the use of memory rather than following his unique inspiration.² In memory, one retains only the vague essence of an object, losing the minute particularity of the object's situation in the world. In this way, analysis becomes the bad memory that recalls the object in accordance with a predetermined category. The tree dissipates into the idea of a tree (the sensuous universal) and the idea of the tree finally becomes the molecules that make up all matter (the abstract universal). Likewise, the self devolves from the position of self, which is this unique one, to the idea of the self, which is essential in language, to that bare integer of existence that is the atomic individual.

The craving of the mind for a concrete content is the mainspring of Enlightenment empiricism. Blake, too, is in favour of concrete knowledge. But what he means by it is not the "thing" taken in isolation, abstracted from its "organic" relationships. In order to prevent speculative extravagance, the Enlightenment thinkers insisted upon a literal or factual accounting of reality.³ But for such an accounting to be objectively coherent, the empiricist inevitably had to separate the particular of sense from the context of experience, placing it arbitrarily under the influence of general law. Although such law had reference only to an empirical content, it was used, nevertheless, to weaken the concreteness of the

phenomena of the world.

Breaking with Enlightenment thought, Blake claims that it is the imagination (rather than abstraction) which allows the mind to emerge from the torpor of its corporeality, and become an enlivened spirit, displaying itself in the material of nature: "To the Eyes of the Man of Imagination Nature is Imagination Itself. As a man is So he Sees. As the Eye is formed such are its powers" (702); To the eyes of the miser the sun resembles a guinea, but to the man of imagination the sun appears as "an Innumerable company of the Heavenly host crying Holy Holy Holy is the Lord God" (566).

But precisely how does Blake salvage from the apparent morass of Enlightenment thought an affirmation of human creativity? The answer must focus on the way in which Blake employs his theory of "states" to contain, and thereby, to mitigate, the effects of Enlightenment materialism.⁴ By dint of such containment, only the essence of what was experienced in the state is carried forward to a more comprehensive vision of human life. Enlightenment ideas of order and reason are, thereby, transplanted within a "circumference of energy" as the self-effacing, self-regenerating "limit" through which rational order attains its fullest expression. The containment of a state, however, is never anything forced upon or external to that state, as if some larger entity had simply engulfed it. The particular state can be judged within a fuller context only because the state itself submits to the dynamic of its own determinate being. Hence, Enlightenment ideas of order and certainty are

first annulled through their opposition to disorder and doubt and are then reinstated in their higher expression as harmony and faith.

In The Vision of The Last Judgement, Blake writes that man "passes thro them [states] like a traveller who may as well suppose that the places he has passed thro exist no more, as a man may suppose that the states he has passed thro exist no more" (556). States are the stages of error which the divine mercy creates so that a state and not man in it shall be blamed. The distinction between the state, as the external veil of selfhood, and the "eternal" individual, as that which is realized through the agency of imagination, Blake makes clear in Milton: "The Imagination is not a State: it is Human Existence itself .../ The Memory is a State always, & the Reason is a State Created to be Annihilated & a new Ratio Created" (M,32:31-5). By virtue of the recognition that the error is itself a state, its deleterious effects are reduced to a moment that is superseded by another. Analytic reason, then, is not the whole of human mind. It is simply one event of human consciousness which, as it is passed through, becomes historically relativized, its errors being abandoned to the past.

The merciful containment of error is illustrated by Los as he beats out the measures of time in the forging of the chain around Urizen. The reductive perspective inherent in each state (each link in the chain) is revealed in the course of time and is necessarily led to the extreme opposite. The indifferent progression of partial truths, however, is brought

together through their mutual transfiguration within the encompassing vision of Los' poetic truth. Logical contradiction and impasse, arising from the mere spatial "side-by-sideness" of the states, become transformed into the creative paradox and the ambivalence of tragic insights found in the twists of time. It is in this way that Los creates his own system so that he can avoid being "enslav'd by another man's" (J, 10:20).

In the following excerpt from Jerusalem, Blake describes this act of "passing through" states.

Albion goes to Eternal Death: In Me All Eternity.
Must pass thro' condemnation, and awake beyond the
Grave!
No individual can keep these laws, for they are death
To every energy of man, and forbid the springs of
life;
Albion hath entered the State Satan! Be permanent O
State!
And be thou for ever accursed! that Albion may rise
again:
And be thou created into a State! I go forth to Create
States: to deliver Individuals evermore Amen!
(J, 35:9-16)

All Eternity passes into the fallen Albion. But Eternity is reawakened "beyond the grave" having known what

Newton's sleep is. That is to say, eternity sojourns in the underworld of time, as one man becoming all men (Albion). Hence, in Albion, Eternity puts on the state of Satan, so that the Satanic can be recognized and condemned through man, but not as man in the sense of whom he will become through the Eternity that abides in him.

2. Hegel's Three Moments

The theory of states permits a transition from Blake to Hegel. In the introduction to the Encyclopaedia, Hegel sets out the principles of a speculative philosophy in which the structures of thought correspond to the movement of being itself. Thus, as each facet of consciousness passes away as a moment (phase) toward the development of the Concept (self-consciousness), so the various states succeed each other with the passing generations of man, discarding their outer crust of error in the ultimate achievement of a resurrected Albion or a Divine Humanity.

Hegel identifies three moments which, as we shall see, correspond to a similar tri-part division of consciousness in Blake's poetical account of man. They are 1) the abstract understanding; 2) the negative dialectic; 3) speculative or positive reason.

Hegel's discussion of the first moment reveals precisely that kind of cognition operative in the empirical or Urizenic reason. It is the dead world of Ulro in which there appears to be no intrinsic capacity to move beyond itself. While the

mind is in this state, it thinks it resides in a universe, not of its own making, but one which is fixed for all time, objective and monolithic in its proportions over and against man.

In this regard Hegel says that the "understanding sticks to fixity of characters and their distinctness from one another: every such limited abstract it treats as having subsistence and being of its own" (HL 113). As we have already seen with reference to the "eye," the understanding seeks to separate things out, to distinguish one thing from another by grouping together what is similar and excluding what is dissimilar. Thus, the understanding focuses its attention on qualities which have been abstracted from their concrete embodiments and arbitrarily subsumed under general categories. Qualitative distinctions thus give rise to a quantity of "unqualified" things, or again, to an aggregate of abstract entities defined solely by the general category under which they have been subsumed. The relationship between things, then, is an immediately undifferentiated one, for things abstracted from a concrete context are necessarily dissolved in the universal's homogeneous, or merely quantitatively determinate substance.

The implications of such a form of understanding for a notion of the human self should be apparent. Qualitative distinctions between individuals are obliterated when individuals are reduced to a single common denominator. As such, they become atoms contending in the void. It is precisely this reduction of the individual which Blake sees at

work in ideologies of all kinds as their potential for violence and tyranny. Given that the understanding comprehends the individual under the power of the "unit," it can deal with contradiction, opposition or difference only by force of exclusion. The self, reduced to the level of abstract or isolated selfhood, nullifies, in whatever form, the independent existence of an other or collective of others.

The political implementation of such reductionism reaches its culminating effects with the Reign of Terror in the French Revolution where all opposition to a universal individualism is methodically removed by the guillotine. Individuality that recognizes itself solely through the dread of self-preservation no doubt announces a General Will to equality; but such a will wills away all difference.⁵ In the following excerpt from a letter to George Cumberland, Blake summarizes his insights into the consequences of the French Revolution.

A line is a line in its minutest sub-divisions
straight or crooked. It is itself not inter-
measurable. Such is Job. But since the French
Revolution Englishmen are all intermeasurable
by one another (699).

Tyranny throughout history, often assumed to be the collective imposing the force of its rule on the individual, is, from a the modern point-of-view, selfhood run amok. An individual or group of individuals divorces itself from its binding

relationship to another. It attempts thereby to grasp at a tenuous form of self-certainty in the object of its enslavement. Its sense of self and the sense of self of those it enslaves, however, are seriously impaired, since each has been divorced from the web of qualitative relationships that define their role within a concrete collective. In a marginal note to Berkeley's Siris Blake says: "The Harmony & the Proportion of a horse are not the same with those of a Bull. Everything has its own Harmony and Proportion. Two Inferior Qualities in it For its reality is Its Imaginative Form" (663-64). One harmony cannot become intermeasurable with another, for that will make it "One law for the Lion & Ox [which] is oppression" (MHH, 24).

Let us now proceed to the second moment. Hegel writes that "in the dialectical state these finite characterizations or formulae supercede themselves, and pass into their opposites" (HL 115). When used as an instrument of the abstract understanding alone, dialectic is reduced to the function of a simple negation, or what Blake calls the "negative reason", the "reasoning ratio" (Hegel's Verstand). But as the essence of human time itself, the negative dialectic reveals the abstractness inherent in the propositions of the understanding, and thus it will abrogate the limitations of those propositions, allowing them to veer around to their opposite. But such dialectic does more than place opposite conclusions side by side. It does more than simply reveal, by external reference, the relativity of each conclusion "while still leaving it in isolated validity." It

is "an indwelling tendency outward" through which light is shed on the incompleteness of one term standing apart from another (HL 116). And thus, they are compelled towards one another in a connection that is immanently necessary. In this second moment, Blake's world of Ulro, which seemed to have perpetuated its spatial solidity through the "bad infinite" of thesis and antithesis,⁶ is finally passing away towards something else. Blake, in agreement with Hegel, states in the Marriage that "Without Contraries [there] is no progression" (M, 3:7-9) -- contraries which, if they are to be brought into a continuum of progression truly evolutionary, must be married.

J. Bronowski, in his study of Blake, claims that the Marriage "shows that Blake made for himself, twenty years before, the dialectic of Hegel's formal thought" (93). Bronowski is right insofar as he has correctly isolated the nature of their thought to be essentially dialectical. But to the extent that, for both Blake and Hegel, thought corresponds to the movement of being in the actual world, their notion of dialectic is much more than a formal technique. Hegel writes that "wherever there is movement, wherever there is life, wherever anything is carried into effect in the actual world, there dialectic is at work" (HL 116). And, indeed, in the "Proverbs of Hell," the paradox of life reaches its consummate expression through the recognition that dialectic is at work. For dialectic is no more mysterious than that which is intrinsic to mortal being. To the extent that being endures through time, it is always implicitly other than what it is;

as it simply moves from one spot to another, it is forced beyond its immediate actuality to become its own "other," or the explicit state of what it was implicitly. Here are some examples:

The road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom.
Eternity is in love with the productions of time.
If the fool would persist in his folly he would be wise.

Excess of Sorrow laughs. Excess of joy weeps.

Joys impregnate. Sorrows bring forth.

Damn braces: Bless relaxes.

Joys laugh not. Sorrows weep not. (MHH,4:10,18;
8:26,29; 9:57,60)

All oppositions are wedded, within the passing of time, not as a neat and lifeless synthesis, but in a union of creative tension through which one is compelled to live through the various others. For "Attraction and Repulsion, Love and Hate, Reason and Energy, are necessary to Human existence " (MHH,3:7-9).

Hence, time allows the immediacy of identity in the unfallen state to pass into identity divided between self and other, and then to reclaim that self-image through one's own other. Time, as that which harvests the fruit of what was implicit in the seed, realizes self-identity as the occurrence of a relation to self, through which the self is moved towards

a sense of who it is through another. For a relation always implies two points of reference through which the dynamic of a relation is actually established. Although the adult and the child in the Songs participate in a common substratum of being in which one identity is collapsed into another (the child has no sense of who it is apart from the adult), the very designation of adult and child suggests the possibility of a unity of autonomous identities. The child will become an adult and return to the parent with a secure sense of its own self-sufficient identity.

Conversely, if the Age of Reason is the culmination of that fallen state representing difference determined solely in terms of quantities, it must surpass itself in the recognition that all differences is interrelated through the ground of its identity. For difference can only be determined as difference when included within a whole of differences through whose ground these differences are recombined in terms of a qualitative priority of being. An individual would cease to an individual if there were no others through which he could compare and contrast his distinctive quality.

Thus, the state of innocence can be fathomed in its distinctive quality only from the perspective of experience itself. The innocent do not know that they are innocent; only the fallen know that. But this knowledge is gained only by actually reliving the moments of faith and love within a broader context of experience than that described in the Songs of Experience. This fulfilled experience, through which one learns from one's mistakes, is a wise innocence that has

re-emerged from the marriage of the lamb and the tiger. The whole is affirmed through a momentary blurring of diversity in a loving self-sacrifice, while wrath fuels the sense of an individual's own distinctiveness if such self-sacrifice is to have intelligible meaning. The eternity of the unfallen world is itself a partial state that should be, and has been, superseded by time. For the unfallen world is really a part belonging to the total configuration of the fallen world, from whose dark ground could emerge the ray of a redemptive vision. Thomas Altizer says:

In the light of Vision, the Fall is all, and dialectically, the very fullness of Vision derives from the totality of its fallen ground: Vision cannot reverse all things unless it initially knows them in a fallen form. An eschatological End can only follow a primordial Beginning, but that beginning is not creation, it is Fall; and not Fall as a primordial and distant event but as a continual and present process, a process that has become identical with the very reality of existence itself.

(NA 2)

Let us now turn to the Songs of Innocence which, together with the Songs of Experience, constitute the second or dialectical moment. The Songs are particularly revealing to us because they remain firmly bound within the second moment. Neither state is yet explicitly the other whereby innocence is

directly informed by experience to create a wise innocence.

An appropriate point of departure is a passage from Frye's Fearful Symmetry:

The Songs of Experience are satires, but one of the things that they satirize is the state of innocence. They show us the butcher's knife which is waiting for the unconscious lamb. Conversely, the Songs of Innocence satirize the state of experience, as the contrast which they present to it makes its hypocrisies more obviously shameful. Hence the two sets of lyrics show contrary states of the soul, and in their opposition there is a double-edged irony, cutting into both the tragedy and the reality of fallen existence. The same imaginative deadlock occurs whenever what may loosely be called the ideal and the actual are brought into conflict. (FS 237)

The ideal world, as expressed in the state of innocence, is not the ideal of the Platonic forms or the transcendental heaven of Christian belief. It is the ideality found in the child's world, and by extrapolation, it is also the ideal found in the infancy of collective humanity when it still possessed a compact consciousness. Indeed, in such a world there is no difference between the ideal and the actual. The ideal, like an ether or a transparent energizing fluid, infuses all things, bringing them together in a consubstantiality in which a perfect symbiosis occurs. Thus,

in this stream of pure and simple being, determinate form is only a potential. The tendency of the pristine mind is toward "intensive compression" through which its emotional intensity is transmitted onto an object in nature, making that object the whole (Cassirer, LM 33).⁷ Because it fills up its consciousness for that moment, it becomes a god, the life-force, or what have you. There is, as yet, no apprehension of a world in which the immediate object serves as the point of departure for a web of impressions that mediates between the subject and the whole.

In the Songs the image of the guardian fills up the consciousness of the child, allowing the child to rest in a secure and blameless existence.⁸ The relationship between parent and child, the nurse and her charge, the shepherd and his flock, suggests that primal unity in which the feeling of trust and security is implicit in the ontological status of the reality in which they simply find themselves. The guardian becomes the guarded, and the guarded shifts, almost imperceptibly, to the voice of the guardian. For, ultimately, both are surrounded by a congenial and familiar world, as a fetus in a mother's womb. In the poem "The Shepherd," we see this convergence of the roles of guardian and guarded clearly. Just as the sheep repose in the security the Shepherd has provided ("He is watchful while they are in peace" SI,5:27), so he himself is secure in the knowledge that his Lord the shepherd protects him: "And his tongue shall be filled with praise" (SI,5:24). In "The Cradle Song," the infant, who is protected by his mother, is likened to the Christ child. The

circular pattern is fulfilled through intimations that the Christ child once wept and felt compassion for all humanity. The mother herself becomes the child of a child.

Sweet babe in thy face,
Holy Image I can trace.
Sweet babe once like thee,
Thy maker lay and wept for me

Wept for me for thee for all,
When he was an infant small.
Thou his image ever see,
Heavenly face that smiles on thee.

Smiles on thee on me on all (SI,16:21-29)

The same fusion of identities is developed in a more complex way in "The Echoing Green." The activity of the poem begins with "The Sun does arise" (SI,6:1) and ends with "The sun does descend" (SI, 6:23), thereby establishing the boundaries of a single day in which the events of the poem occur. The cycle of a day suggests the eternal cycles in nature. The day, then, is the present invested with the significance of eternity, for it holds the cyclical pattern of events that extends back to an indefinite past and reaches out to a pre-ordained future. In the action of the poem, the young children and the old folks represent the two extreme points which come together in the circle that forms man's life.

Although fallen consciousness sees itself as isolated ego following a linear course that terminates with its utter perishing, the pristine mind sees old age and death as the moment preceding new birth. The same stream of being that animates past members will continuously run through the new. At sunset, the children, weary with play, gather around the laps of their mothers; and in an analogous movement, the old folks, who have reached the sunset of their lives, are consigned to the womb of nature.

Indeed, Blake goes so far as to bring about a complete convergence of the two perspectives through the narrative structure itself. The child begins speaking on behalf of the old man: "And soon they all say./ Such such were our joys" (SI,6:16-17), and very quickly our expectation of two postures of time is not fulfilled. The phrase "our sports have ended" (SI, 6:24) contains enough ambiguity to suggest a merging of the two voices, referring to both the end of the child's play and the end of life's play for the old folks. Sunset is the time when all activities cease, but it also holds the promise of a renewal of activity on the following day with a new sunrise. The voices which merge and form a single identity also constitute a single temporal perspective where past and future collapse into an eternal present. "The Sun does arise" and "The sun does descend" forever.

In the poem "Infant Joy," we sense an emerging ego from the inchoate ground of primal identity. In the first stanza, the mother's immediate recognition of her child as "Joy" reveals that mother and child are still one and the same

identity. In the second stanza, however, a certain distance is obtained between the two. The spontaneous recognition that the child is "joy" is replaced by a wish that "Sweet Joy Befall thee!" (SI,25:6), an anticipation of future possibility based upon past experience.⁹ Thus, the wish comes down from the mother whose knowledge of pain puts her in a different sphere of experience altogether. Joy is no longer the stream of being in whose double current mother and child are dissolved into each other. It is now a single attribute whose quintessential moment is infant joy, which may or may not continue into adulthood. The wish anticipates the dawning of the distinct ego for whom sorrow and joy are unresolved oppositions. But this is mere anticipation, for in the unfallen world joy is still the obverse side of sorrow. Each is given its due measure in the perennial round of life that is the expression of pure and simple being. In "The Little Black Boy," "The Chimney Sweeper," "Little Boy Lost" and "Night," the severity of sorrow is mitigated by the recognition that sorrow always gives way to joy.

The state of innocence is not a world to be berated, but one which must be left behind as the phase of childhood must be "outgrown." Frye says:

To present the pastoral life as a child's world which is soon outgrown is thus quite faithful to the genius of the pastoral form. Once again we see that unless we visualize the unfallen state as a City it will always seem impotent and transient compared to

the fallen world. As an ideal the Utopia is much more human than the Arcadia. Even the Utopia, however, means nothing unless it is conceived in the apocalyptic terms of a New Jerusalem and a destroyed order of nature. (ES 237-38)

In the Songs of Experience, where experience is, for the most part, still an unassimilated or disintegrated material, the seamless unity of innocence is torn into the conflicting spheres of the ideal and the actual. Each sphere exists, however, only in its opposition to the other, displaying itself in a condition of logical dependency on the very other from which it had striven to achieve independence.

On the one side the empty ideality is drained of its temporal and existential content. As a pale and cold cloud that hovers above man in the form of an "ought to be," it prescribes a mode of behaviour out of place in the unique circumstances of a situation. The ineffectiveness of this moral imperative is more bluntly expressed in the dire consequences which follow upon a repression of all natural instinct and feeling. In "The Sick Rose," the invisible worm is that love which, because it has been forced underground, becomes a poisonous love of resentment and possessiveness. The howling storm, as Hirsch suggests, represents a perversion of the natural order in which love is robbed of its spontaneity and openness ("bed/ of crimson joy" SE, 39:5-6), and becomes an insidious instrument of entrapment (89).

On the other side the world of the actual is the

glorification of a ribald egoism, uninformed by the presence of a moral collective through which its actions would unwittingly become a partial evil within a greater good. Hirsch has called such egoism the expression of nature's elan vital rebelling against a punitive moral order (62-63). In the introductory song of the Bard, we find a wish to bestow upon the earth its long awaited due:

O Earth O Earth return!

Arise from out the dewy grass;

Night is worn,

and the morn

Rises from its slumberous mass. (SE, 30:11-15)

The "innocent impulses of the lamb have been curbed by [the] restraints" of the moral law. And thus, the sacrificial lamb is converted into the revolutionary wrath of the tiger (Schorer 214). The life of intuition and satisfied impulse is held up as the new ideal which opposes itself to the etherial ideals of an other-worldly philosophy. The phrase "The Stars threw down their spears" (SE, 42:17) alludes to those members of the angelic order in Milton's Paradise Lost who, having reached the threshold of endurance, burst forth into a revolutionary fervor that propels them downward into the abyss of their untutored emotions. The stars symbolize that cold and abstract rationalism through which feeling and instinct assume the aspect of an alienated or externalized nature. The prospect of the tiger, the lion and the wolf offers an

awe-inspiring but inhuman world. Even when they lay down with Lyca, they seem to retain an aura of unappeasable wildness.

However, the resolution to the antithesis between spirit and nature, love and wrath, good and evil, if not explicitly worked through, is at least foreshadowed within the primeval forest of contending wills. A "fearful symmetry," which suggests an order arising from a re-alignment of asymmetries, anticipates the resolution in the Marriage where "reason is the circumference of energy." For ultimately, the Divine hand which forged the tiger in the furnaces of wrath, also made the lamb with love and compassion. The distinction between the two forms of creation promises their paradoxical union in the Marriage through the dialectic that retains all oppositions within the robust equilibrium of the artistic endeavour. Energy which has been forced out from the "barren climes" (MHH, 2:16) of "inhuman restraint," into "dangerous and flourishing pursuits," returns to the calmness of emotion recollected or ordered for its presentation in the artwork (Schorer 216).

Thus, just as the Songs of Innocence implicitly contains self-identity that is also a self-relation, so experience intimates a harmony found in and through the discord of discrete selves. This is reinforced in a few of the other poems, one of which is "A Little Boy Lost." The key quatrains are as follows:

Nought loves another as itself
Nor venerates another so.

Nor is it possible to Thought
A greater than itself to know:

And Father, how can I love you,
Or any of my brothers more?
I love you like the little bird
That picks up crumbs around the door. (SE,50:1-8)

The self-conscious superiority with which the boy gives the crumbs of food to the bird, begins the movement toward the greater sentiment of a selfless love.¹⁰

In "The Little Girl Lost" and "The Little Girl Found," the formless energy of a rampant egoism is channeled as the measured tension in the reciprocity of the creative act. For seven days Lyca's parents travel through "vallies deep" and "desart wild" (SE,36:3,12), reminding us that chaos is the element that continuously informs the creative process. Unlike the Persephone myth in which Ceres bargains for her daughter to return annually, Lyca's parents ensure an earthly paradise by staying in the underworld with Lyca. "Nor fear of wolfish howl/Nor Lion's growl" (SE,36:51-52) establishes the ground for order to insinuate itself through the means of a disordered and temporal nature.

We have seen how each state hesitantly reaches out beyond its immediate, indeterminate condition, to being that is other. Thus, the second moment ends, not as a moment prematurely broken off from the continuum of time as an absolute, but as one which is compulsively led to the third

moment. This third moment, which Hegel calls "positive reason" (Vernunft), is the action of negation that dialectic exerts upon the world in the form of a "negation of negation." It is not the simple and absolute negation of the abstract understanding, but one "whose result contains what it results from, absorbed into itself and made part of its own nature.... [Hence] positive reason apprehends the unity of terms in their opposition. The result of the dialectic is positive because it has a definite content, or because the result is not an empty abstract nothing, but the negation of certain specific propositions which are contained in the result" (HL 119).

A new patterning of perspective becomes conceivable. Innocence/Experience, as the linear personal axis of vision, has ceased to be effective by this point. For despite the fact that the contrary states exhibit a potential for movement beyond themselves, their juxtaposition is, for the most part, simple, dramatic and absolute. We have now to go beyond the Songs to a more interpersonal vision. This vision is captured by the image of a series of concentric circles, each circle elaborating upon the one preceding, forming a context of vision that allows the double negation to return to the original stance in the light of a more comprehensive form of consciousness. The subtle gradations of consciousness, each turning inwardly into eternity upon the other, is first made the subject of Blake's poetry in the Marriage with the phrase "reason is the circumference of energy."

What does Blake mean by such reason? He provides a hint in the bird which "cuts the airy way" (MHH, 5:1-5). The flight

is obviously not an imposition of restraint on unwilling energy; it is not that reason which is the abstraction that attempts to impose one law for both the lion and the ox. As the "circumference of energy" it is organic form within whose "recursive"¹¹ activity beings are defined as both means to something else and as ends in themselves. The bird stays true to its nature by taking a flight of spontaneous self-expression as it "cuts" its way through the air. Yet, the tension is necessarily relaxed as "air" assumes the adjectival form "airy," suggesting a willing openness to and appropriation of the element which supports the birds's flight. The activity which expresses its very nature implies the existence of something or someone else upon which the activity takes a self-defining shape.

This circular dynamic, through which one defines one's self as one returns to one self out of another, contrasts with the unmoving circle of eternity in the state of innocence, where the self simply is. The bird's flight is the spiralling movement of time that brings within the pull of its orbit the various components that gives time its direction toward the realization of one's innate telos. To that extent, such time also contrasts with the temporality of fallen existence: in the case of a traditional metaphysics, where heaven and hell are the terminating points to human activity, time moves from the past to the present, toward an indistinct future (Blake's memory); in the case of the tiger's "natural" existence, the arbitrary will simply consumes each moment as it passes, thereby breaking the continuity of remembrance with future

anticipation.

This circular dynamic becomes more explicit in Milton with reference to the metaphor of the vortex:

The nature of infinity is this: That everything has
its

Own Vortex; and when once a traveller thro Eternity.
Has passd that Vortex, he percieves it roll backward
behind

His path, into a globe itself infolding; like a sun:
Or like a moon, or like a universe of starry majesty,
While he keeps onwards in his wondrous journey on the
earth

Or like a human form, a friend with whom he livd
benevolent.

(M,15-27)

Urizen's vortex comes from the Cartesian model, which refers to that sphere of influence around the star that constitutes a self-enclosed universe: "And the Sciences were fixed and the vortexes began to operate/ On all the suns of men and every human soul terrified/ At the turning wheels of heaven shrunk away withring terrified" (EZ, 73:213). But the traveller of eternity suggests the element of time that would destabilize the "fixed Sciences" in the process toward a more human science. The initial impression of a traveller's encounter with a stranger is one of radical difference. The stranger, like the vortex, appears as a self-enclosed universe operating

according to its own remote stellar laws. The abstraction of the gravitational influence reduces everything within its orbit to the same spatial or mechanical motion: the man is simply "the man" in the sense of the generic Homo sapiens fixed in its broad characteristics that exclude the vast particularity of this man. But the cavity or the vacuum in the center of the circle subjects a passing body to its action. The traveller is pulled into the center of the stranger's influence while exerting his own influence. And thus, he begins to recognize the other as "human form a friend with whom he livd benevolent."¹² One vortex feeds into another through the force of time that provides the continuity between all differences. The traveller comes to perceive the stranger as an intricate center of consciousness like himself - a self, which, like himself, exists in a web of relatedness to other selves, just as the remote star is now seen to be situated within a vast stellar system ("starry majesty").

The "negation of negation" achieves its consummate expression in Blake's Milton as the denial of selfhood. From what has already been said, the reader will ascertain that Blake is not lapsing into a Christian asceticism. The double negation allows the denial of the body to become partially reversed as the individual identity is re-placed in the whole of concrete or determinate relationships. The collective becomes mediated in and through the individual which, in turn, expands beyond its immediate presence towards the "mediated presence" of others.¹³ The illusion of a self-sufficient or corporeal entity disappears when the individual is recognized

to be determined as individual through the interdependence of all individuals. Thus, the simultaneous identity in difference realizes the uniqueness of an individual in his relationship to another, just as the other fulfills his intrinsic uniqueness in his response to the first.

It becomes clear why Blake would, on the one hand, stress the importance of the individual, and on the other, speak of the bane of selfhood, exhorting the annihilation of the individual as the only path to regeneration. In Golgonooza, which is the workshop for the production of bodies as well as art, Los' function as the fixer of limits involves the body in precisely this paradox of denial and affirmation. The limitation of "contraction" and "opacity" means to curb the tendency of a corporeal body to contract within itself as a densely opaque substance. Thus, limitation allows the body to be re-placed within an organic reality subject to the regenerating effects of time. This form of self-denial as self-transformation is the foundation of the "Body of the Divine Humanity."

3. Organic Form and The Dialectic of Desire

Since reason, for Blake, is the "circumference of energy," it would be appropriate at this point to discuss the fully organic form of the human self through whose dialectic of desire energy is able to curve back on itself. Hegel develops this dialectic of desire in the fourth chapter of the Phenomenology, and Blake refers to it in There is No Natural

Religion. In examining Blake's treatment of the subject, we shall refer to the Phenomenology only when its insights prove to be a valuable hermeneutical aid.¹⁴ The following argument hinges on the premise that the act of desire is both a condition of the fallen world and a promise of its regeneration.

To ensure survival a living thing satisfies its appetite through the negation of an alien object, reducing that object to a state that can be assimilated by its own being. Thus, by its act the desiring subject proves itself to be a nothing that nullifies. But it is not an absolute nothing, for the subject desires the something (the determinate nothing) that is gnawing at its gut by its absence. It is this deficiency or lack of completeness inherent in finitude which compels it to move beyond its immediate emptiness to appropriate being other than itself. However, such desire produces a mere corporeal sense of self - a self awareness that arises from a thingish other which resists and dominates the self's existence.¹⁵ The fact that the object is still out there means that the "I" may not be here as it diminishes from the sense of gnawing emptiness. The relationship undertaken with the other, then, is one of "I-it." In regarding the other as a natural object, as a thing whose externality and independence are to be overcome for one's immediate gratification, the "I" itself becomes a "thingish" I. As Blake says, "The desires and perceptions of man untaught by anything but organs of sense must be limited to objects of sense" (2).

In the following excerpt from the Phenomenology Hegel

describes this relationship of the "I" to the "it":

Desire and the self-certainty obtained in its gratification, are conditioned by the object, for self-certainty comes from superseding this other: in order that this supersession can take place, there must be this other. Thus self-consciousness, by its negative relation to the object, is unable to supersede it; it is really because of that relation that it produces the object again, and the desire as well. (PS 109)

Although the self requires the cancellation of the other to ensure its own survival or "certainty of self," the other must be continually present for the cancellation to be effected. Blake poses the same paradoxical situation in the following statement: "If the many become the same as the few, when possess'd, More! More! is the cry of a mistaken soul, less than All cannot satisfy Man" (Blake 2). The equilibrium of a satiated desire becomes quickly disrupted by the resurgence of a new desire; "More! More!" is the cry that proceeds from the delusion that self-certainty can only be assured by the continuous consumption of the same kind of "thingish" object, thereby producing the bad infinite of a quantitative series. This form of the bad infinite, which perpetuates the condition of a mere corporeal sense of self, is not a viable alternative to the true infinite. For the true infinite brings about, not corporeality, but the "human form divine" that replaces and

enlarges the particular self within a collective of mutually reciprocating desires. Although the infinite takes its rise from the corporeality of nature's world, it far exceeds its bounds by implicating it in the fullness of human spiritual possibility. As "less than All cannot satisfy man" (Blake 2) the individual becomes trapped in the tedious repetition of the bad infinite, in which all single actualities never succeed in replacing the consummate or integrated whole. But it is this very tediousness with the plethora of meaningless things to be consumed that impels the human self to step outside this desire and search for something qualitatively different. It is here that this desire becomes sublated, returning to itself as the only object worthy of its satisfaction.

Blake says that "The Desire of Man being Infinite the possession is Infinite & himself Infinite" (3). The self, then, must leave behind the immediate actuality of its finitude and address itself to the other's desire in the fulfillment of a mediate infinitude. The mere corporeal sense of self grows into a more encompassing form of consciousness as it learns to feel satisfaction in the satisfaction of other desires. The desire for the true infinite, which makes the possessor of the desire infinite himself, is, then, the "desire for the desire."¹⁶ Desire itself is not a thing which would redound on man a quality of thingishness. It is an activity expressing the emptiness that compels man to negate unceasingly his given nature for the realization of a future self that is essentially other than what it is. The self desires a desire other than its own, which is only to say

that it desires its own desire in a mediated form. It enlarges its dynamic ground to include other wants and needs in the recognition that they are necessary to the ultimate fulfillment of its own. The desire to be recognized as a free and independent individual can only be satisfied if the other, from whom the self demands the recognition, willingly offers it from a position of freedom and independence. Here, lordship and bondage are replaced by a dialogue of love.¹⁷

Blake concludes with the following aphorism: "God becomes as we are, that we may become as he is" (3). It will become more and more clear by now that when Blake speaks of God or the infinite, he is not referring to the being of a pre-lapsarian world. For this being, which dwells in immediate unity with itself, eliminates the necessity for desire - desire that is an expression of fractured being striving to regain unity with itself through another. Nor is he referring to the being of a transcendental world that is the one side of the dualism of the state of experience. From a state of affairs which forbids man appeasement of his desires in this world, he seeks escape to the possibility of appeasement in another world. But in such a world the object of desiring is the "one" who is not also the "all." It is the alienated projection of the solipsistic self withdrawn from the world of social interaction. This form of selfhood can only result in the state of an "unhappy consciousness,"¹⁸ for a transcendent being is the other that can never be reclaimed by the self as its own other. By negative implication, then, true desire is also not an infinity dispersed among the

immediate finite objects of appetite, incessantly rising up again and again after each momentary satiation. Here, too, frustration occurs in the endless run of thingish objects that eludes the individual's need for a sense of completeness and rest in the "one." With reference to both situations in the fallen world, Blake says, "If any could desire what he is incapable of possessing, despair must be his eternal lot" (2). The infinite can be no other than the realm of mutually reciprocating human desires - that intermediate realm between an inaccessible transcendent region and a subjectivity. Among all things dispersed, it is only through this dimension of infinite intersubjectivity that "God becomes as we are, that we may become as he is." That is, God is the "one" who becomes the al' so that the self, through its expansion into the multiplicity of relationships that is the "all," becomes the one who is God. In The Four Zoas we read:

We immortal in our own strength survive by stern
debate

Till we have drawn the Lamb of God into a moral form
And that he must be born is certain for One must be
All

And comprehend within himself all things both small
and great (FZ II:12-20)

Notes

1 A good description of empiricism is provided in HL in the section entitled "Second Attitude of Thought to Objectivity: Empiricism" (60-5).

2 The definition that Blake uses for "memory" is distinct from the mental capacity of re-membrance which involves a certain creative relationship to the past. The precise nature of remembrance will be discussed later on in the thesis.

3 The sense of "literal" I am using here is the conventional one which refers to the prosaic or matter of fact truth. In Milton, Blake uses the words "literal expression" to convey our sense of the word "concrete," a thing determined within the totality of its possibilities.

4 David Punter says the following with reference to Blake's theory of states: "Each quality can be historically relativised, and escape from false consciousness rendered possible: thus also, States are the stages through which Albion passes, and in Jerusalem we see that they may have a repressive or liberatory function" (145).

5 Hegel speaks of the Reign of Terror in this way in the PS 355-363.

6 Hegel says that "this infinity is the wrong or negative infinity: the finite rises again the same as ever, and is never got rid of and absorbed" (HL 137).

7 Ernst Cassirer develops his notion of mythical consciousness in the context of the development of language.

8 E.D. Hirsch focuses on the images of guardianship as the basis for his interpretation of the Songs of Innocence (21-47). Hirsch, however, defines the ideal as the "kingdom of blessedness to come" (33). I feel that the images of guardianship fit better within the notion of "ideal" that I have claimed to be representative of the Songs.

9 Hirsch says that "the poem expresses that empathy in its strongest form, motherly love. Neither the mother nor the child speaks separately; the child speaks the mother's joy, the mother the child's meaning" (201). Hirsch claims that this "loving identification" expressed in the naming of the child as "Joy" are again presentiments of a transcendent Eternity on earth that have nothing to do with "natural world" or "experience" (43). I, on the other hand, stress that the world of innocence or inexperience does not make such a distinction. The innocent mind collapses Eternity into the natural world in much the same way that a child sees no difference between its play and the real. In the second stanza the mother's "foreknowledge of sorrow in life" is the anticipation of the consciousness of experience, which will arise from innocence, but is not yet fully explicit within

it. It is not, as Hirsch would have us believe, a departure from Eternity, into the world of "mixed joy and sorrow," "before [the] return" to the unadulterated joy of heaven (202).

10 This view has been suggested to me by Hirsch's interpretation of the same poem. He says that the natural world of selfhood is "the vital harmony of polyphony rather than the dull unison of the plain song" (278).

11 The term has been borrowed from the new sciences of ecology and cybernetics to denote physical and natural systems that are self-organizing, i.e., capable of self-generation and response to external stimuli. It is here being used in the fuller sense of a process of inner articulation, of infinite self-relation.

12 Both Mark Bracher and W.J.T. Mitchell provide similar interpretations of this passage. See Bracher 83, and Mitchell 71-72.

13 Mark Bracher's study of Blake refers to an "ontology of presence" which views "Being as extrinsic to the individual, and as a homogeneous substance dispensed through a feudalistic, quid pro quo system. If one assumes, as is the tradition, that Being is identical with presence - i.e., that fully to be means to be permanently present, unchanged by existence - then Being must be separate from existence, which is continuously changing. And if Being is extrinsic to the existing individual, then the being of one individual is not necessarily unique or different from that of another, and individuals are ultimately interchangeable" (4). Thus, Bracher suggests "mediated presence" as the means by which the integrity of the individual is secured. He says that in such a case, "individual entities are intrinsically and essentially constituted by relationship to one another...the sharing of the experience of the other without violating the individuality of either self or other" (5).

14 Alexander Kojève has clarified a number of points for me in my interpretation of Hegel's notion of desire. See primarily his first chapter entitled "In Place of an Introduction," 3-30.

15 Kojève uses the term "sentiment of self." My choice of the word "corporeal" better suits a Blakean discourse.

16 In other words, a desire no longer desires an object as a thing, or as the barrier outside of itself in nature. It desire another desire as its own. Its desire is the particularity of its own desire reflected back into itself and so brought back to universality. The form and content of desire are no longer at variance with one another.

17 Kojève emphasizes lordship and bondage, war and

struggle in his exposition of Hegel's notion of desire. And although these are, indeed, the elements which have dominated history in man's search for himself, I have suggested, with Blake, that this particular form of historical consciousness could be overturned through a human/divine love. The desire for desire is, according to my view, precisely this kind of love which allows man to emerge from the bad infinite of opposing volitions. This is not inconsistent with Hegel's own views. His early philosophy was primarily an attempt to explore the notion of love as the means by which man achieves the highest form of mutual recognition. Although he later referred to love as rationality at the level of immediate feeling, it always remained an essential facet of ethical substance.

18 Hegel defines the "unhappy consciousness" as "the duplication of self-consciousness within itself, which is essential in the Notion of Spirit, is thus here before us, but not yet in its unity: the Unhappy Consciousness is the Consciousness of self as a dual-natured, merely contradictory being" (PS 126).

Chapter II

Language and The Contraries: The Dia-logic of Self and Other

Left to its own resources, the dialectic of desire is caught in an endless round of appetitive drive, consumption, satiation, and the re-emergence of appetite. The object of desire reasserts its absolute independence with each new desire. How, then, does the desiring being take a leap beyond this bad infinite to re-present desire as its own other? For Blake, it is through the medium of language.

If, for Blake, being is authentic only as determinate being, then such being must have the capacity for speech. Through the freely projecting system of linguistic symbols, being apprehends both an objective world of interrelating objects, and the formative laws of its own creative nature through which such a world assumes its internal coherency. Language, then, does not merely copy an already given reality, but embodies the formative power that initially makes possible the recognition of a self both in the self's contrasting relationality to an objective world and through the dialogic disclosure of a discursive ground of mediation between self and world. As such, language is an intersubjective enterprise that determines reality according to the shape of its own activity, the activity of a manifold realm of living discourse.

1. Blake and Heraclitus: The Myth of The Divine Logos

The importance that Blake ascribes to the role of language is made clear by the prevalence of the myth of the divine logos in his epic narratives. Blake's inclusion at the beginning of *The Four Zoas* of the opening credo of John's

Gospel ("the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us") establishes the direction of the fall and its apocalyptic overturning as a movement from the remote self-contained dignity of the heavenly Word, to its dispersion among particular detached words, and their reunification into a living logos or a community of discourse. This tri-part structure, as we have seen, determines the action of Blake's entire poetic vision, and it applies with equal validity to his notion of language.

The myth of the Divine Logos, recaptured in the image of Luvah in robes stained with blood, and at the end of Milton in "the Clouds of Ololon folded as a Garment dipped in blood" (M, 42:12), recalls John's description of "one who is faithful and true clothed in a vesture dipped in blood: And his name is called the Word of God" (M, 19:11-13).¹ It is made apparent from subsequent allusions to this Word in Blake's poetry that it must not be venerated as a transcendental wordless logos, a mystic absorption into silent meaning. The myth of the God incarnated in a particular man (but a man who nevertheless becomes the man), allows the reader to comprehend the word as immanent in the "literal expression" of human speech itself.

The Clouds of Ololon folded as a Garment dipped in
blood

Written within and without in woven letter: & the
Writing

is the Divine Revelation in the Litteral expression:

A Garment of war, I heard it named the Woof of six
Thousand Years (M,41:12-15)

Literal in this sense does not refer to the univocity of meaning or the one-sided determination of a designated object. Rather it refers to the inter-animation of word or unit of expression and its contextual framework (to its system "of historical, psychological and etymological associations that have evolved in the course of 'six Thousand Years'" of living speech).²

Just as we saw in a previously quoted passage that "the lamb of God" is the "one" which also becomes the "all," so now, the development of the divine logos into its literal expression is seen to move in ever-widening circles emanating from a central point. Emanation in the Blakean sense does not entail a simple dilution, or even copying of the original; rather, each successive emanation contains an expanded referential context, always enfolding the content of the preceding within a broader scope of vision. In an illuminating passage from Jerusalem, Blake describes the process that achieves a literal expression.

All Human Forms identified even Tree Metal Earth &
Stone.all

Human Forms identified, living going forth and
returning wearied (J,99:1-2).

Each new concentric circle takes its momentum from the central point as that original spring from which mediation draws substance. But equally, each new circle, as a newly emerging horizontal line in linguistic development, contains its own center or a "differential mode" of the initial primal meaning. The passage speaks of a "going forth" from a central point, where the primal ground of indifferent polysemous meaning gives rise to a mode of representation which is its meaning, to the periphery, where the discovery of distinct forms leads to a consciousness of the distinction between self and object or representation and meaning. And finally, linguistic activity resolves itself into a "returning wearied" from the periphery to the center in the recognition that all identified forms are "human forms." Each form, by assuming an integral relationship to the other, reflects its origins in the integrity of human consciousness itself. This final literal expression, then, achieves a dialectical reciprocity or a union of creative tension between the internal and external, representation and meaning, center and periphery.

An interesting point for comparison is Heraclitus' account of logos. He gave special attention to the problem of logos in its relationship to human language.³ Heraclitus' presentation of the problem possesses a lingering mythical quality that, in its self-containedness and concreteness of expression, renders it especially amenable to a comparison with Blake's mytho-poetic construction. Through a keen metaphysical intuition, Heraclitus claimed to have fathomed the mysterious depths of logos when he compared its nature to

cognition through which the attributes of an object are simply given to us in the form of mutually independent perceptual contents.⁶ As Harris points out, for Hegel, "every perceptual content is a 'structured Gestalt' - a self-specifying universe or whole, the structural principle of which determines the nature and qualities of its elements" (228). Here, "system" (recursivity) is the ground of the universal connection between subject and predicate. The copula "is" explicitly identifies subject and predicate in a necessary relation. That is to say, the relational judgment raises the individual above its merely immediate presence - as randomly having this or that quality - and posits it as the knowing subject, developing itself in and through the content of its experience. Thus, the subject is more than any single quality abstracted from the substance of its contextual experience. And the predicate is more than the universal quality imposed on just any subject; it is the universal particularized through the mediation of the individual.

Both the judgment of cognition and the judgment of feeling are in themselves inadequate.⁷ Each must gravitate toward the other through the organizing energy of the whole. Subjective feeling unites with the object of its specific need or desire through the mediation of activity. Thus feeling becomes objectified, its fortuitous and random content organized through the experience of that activity. The dull presentiment of the objective whole, whether it comes through the feeling of satiation, or whether it comes through the painful sense of contradiction from unfulfillment, is raised

purely definitional character, permeates it with a certain "fixed[ness]" that seems to remove it all together from "the stream of becoming] (Cassirer 120). But living speech necessarily demands that the word can only be understood in the context of other words. For, as with all other things in the cosmos, human speech is regulated by a law of measure - a law which allows each word to stand in its appropriate place within a whole more comprehensive than the mere aggregative contribution of isolated words.

Such a law ensures that the preponderance of a single word or univocal statement would be counterbalanced by the necessary positing of its own antithesis in the act of speech.⁵ The substantive noun allows, through its juxtaposition to the relational copula "is," the introduction of a certain predicative clause that renders it a more concretely determined unit of expression. Here, the copula is not just an empty connective in which subject and predicate maintain an external relationship to one another. It holds an implicit "is not," or the "predicative universal" through which the subject meets with itself in the tensional interplay of identity and difference. A similar readjustment occurs at the level of the propositional statement or judgment. Such a statement, as characterized by the affirmative "is," by the dogmatic assertion of subjective conviction, is opposed by that which "is not;" each statement, as informed by the other, reflects a double negation that is a more richly defined or ambiguous positivity.⁶ Thus, by keeping well within its measured bounds (its determinative place), the definite term

(word or phrase) paradoxically appears to be continuously bursting those bounds, reaching out to the whole of speech through its inner dialectical tension of destruction and preservation of meaning.

Logos, then, is not an abstract logos wanting in concrete expression, nor is it the logos of a particular word, statement, or person. It is, as Heraclitus believed, our logos. In the original simplicity of expression, Heraclitus summarizes his entire philosophy in the following statement: "Do not listen to me, but to the logos" (Buber 104). In an illuminating passage from Martin Buber's study of Heraclitus, the logos is defined as "what is common to all."

"The common" is the sustaining category for Heraclitus. It enables him, despite men's want of understanding - so painfully suffered and so fiercely reproved by him - to grasp and confirm as a spiritual reality their togetherness, the full mutuality of human being. When Heraclitus says of the logos, the meaning of being that dwells in the substance of the word, that it is common, he thereby asserts that all men in the eternal originality of their genuine spoken intercourse with one another have a share in the consummation of this indwelling. (Buber 90)

In a similar vein Blake says in the opening to Jerusalem, "I pretend not to holiness! yet I pretend to love, to see, to

converse with daily, as man with man" (J,3:20-22). And again, he says, "In Eternity man converses with man, entering into each other's bosom (universes of delight in mutual interchange)" (J,96:5-6).

2. The Enlightenment and Language

The Enlightenment considered language to be an indispensable tool of communication and the acquisition of scientific knowledge. Yet, for all its undeniable value it was also recognized to be fraught with imperfections. It was a terribly irregular tool, which, if left alone, would become an opaque medium interposing itself between the truth and the understanding.

In the following excerpt from his essay "On Words," John Locke advances the typical Enlightenment appraisal of the deficiencies of language:

If we consider, in the fallacies men put upon themselves, as well as others, and the mistakes in men's disputes and notions, how great a part is owing to words, and their uncertain or mistaken significations, we shall have reason to think this is no small obstacle in the way to knowledge. I am apt to imagine, that, were the imperfections of language, as the instrument of knowledge, more thoroughly weighed, a great many of the

controversies that make such a noise in the world, would of themselves cease; and the way to knowledge, and perhaps peace, too, lie a great deal opener than it does. (Locke 119-20)

The eighteenth century had developed an aversion toward religious and ethical language, whose vague emotive and connotative meaning was held to be responsible for the misunderstandings that led to open conflict. If language is not to be a disruptive force, it should be strictly confined to denotative or designative meaning, in which clearly determinate ideas are made the sole object of communication.⁷

Locke says:

It is not enough if a man uses his words as signs of some ideas: those he annexes them to, if they be simple, must be clear and distinct; if complex, must be determinate, i.e. the precise collection of simple ideas settled in the mind, with that sound annexed to it, as the sign of that precise determined collection, and no other. (Locke 152)

If we allow our feelings to get in the way, language could escape our control, and, in an insidiously subtle fashion, control us.

In order to avoid such a state of affairs, the Enlightenment laid great stress on the necessity of reducing language to an instrumentality of a preconceived knowledge.

The preoccupation with the "correct" definition of each word was motivated by such a need to establish a direct correspondence between distinct ideas and their arbitrarily imposed signs. Locke says that "a man shall take care to use no word without a signification, no name without an idea for which he makes it stand (152). The relation between ideas and signs, then, is not necessary, but far from being random; it is enforced by the literal or lexical consensus on the specific utility of the word. The emphasis upon the correct definition allows the primary unit of meaning to become the particular word-sign. Thus, the sentence is reduced to an aggregative association of words, in which conjunction and preposition are relegated to the subordinate function of simple connectives. Cogency of expression does not rely on the rhetorical persuasiveness of the argument wherein each word or unit of expression displays an internal consistency within the contextual framework.⁸ Rather, it depends on the fixed identity of the word established through its referential source in the external idea. Words, then, are not ambiguous centers of meaning, in which their alternating revealing and concealing intimates the integrity of speech. But they are like pieces of transparent glass through which one gazes to the ideas, that exist in a separate dimension, on the other side. Language is made subservient to the goal of scientific precision, and in social intercourse, it is meant to invoke, with the utterance of each word, precisely the same idea in the mind of all those who hear it.

Why this diminishing of the spiritual mystery

traditionally accredited to language? Why the reduction of language to a mere instrument of control in the hands of the scientist attempting to apprehend the bare materiality of nature? Charles Taylor provides an answer. With the advent of the Scientific Revolution in the seventeenth century, language was divested of its ontic status. No longer seen as participating in the universal discourse of a divine logos, it was now recognized as a process that went on in our own minds. It was seen, not as a discursive expression of universal thought, but as a representational mode, essentially distinct from the object represented. The question of epistemology then arises. How do we know what we know? How is it that certain ideas come to be represented in our minds when they are no longer construed as an expression of a transcendental presence? In the associationist psychology of Locke and David Hartley, ideas were seen as composites of associated parts which, when broken down into the original bits of sensation, were the fleeting impressions from nature herself (Taylor 13-17). Hence the use to which language should be put was that of disinterring those original sense impressions that with time become overlayed with layers of secondary obfuscation. Locke makes this clear in the following passage:

It may lead us towards the original of all our notions and knowledge, if we remark how great a dependence our words have on common sensible ideas; and how those which are made use of to stand

for actions and notions quite removed from sense, have their rise from thence, and from obvious sensible ideas are transferred to more obstruse significations, and made to stand for ideas that come not under the cognizance of our senses.(107)

Many of the ideas present in ordinary speech are hidden beneath an entangled association of emotive half-truths. It is the task of the scientist or philosopher to disentangle these ideas by reducing them to their smallest sensible components, and then to reassemble them according to the way things are put together in nature, i.e., according to rational immutable laws. As Locke says, "the name must also be conformable to things as they exist" (107). By making a "factual" correspondence to objects in nature, the words allow the sentence to gather the vast multiplicity of sensational fragments into the simple and symmetrical structure of the scientific concept. Thus, this form of prosaic language, which works from the most elementary to the more composite, differs from the form of speech in whose complex whole the part stands as an infinite center of reference - in whose network of interdependent parts, each, by negative implication, resonates with the meaning of the whole.

Important conclusions can be inferred from this assessment of language. First, it is believed that ideas are preformed in the mind, and language is merely appended, like extraneous baggage, onto the ideas. Language, then, is not seen as somehow integral to the development of the cognitive

function which makes possible the determination of ideas in the first place. The second significant point is that language ought to be made into an expression of an ideational or theoretical content, which, in its reconstruction of an objectively given, rationally ordered nature, stands in opposition to a language based on feeling.⁹

How does Blake react to the Enlightenment notion of language? With reference to Locke, he says that he read the Essay when very young. "Lockes Opinions of Words & their Fallaciousness are Artful Opinions & Fallacious also" (659). In an Island on The Moon, the tone with which he refers to Locke and his writings is quite flippant, yet the seriousness of his criticisms is apparent. Scopprell takes up the book and reads the following passage to his friend Obtuse Angle: "An Easy of Huming [Human] Understanding, by John Lookye Gent" (456). Locke's notion of language, Blake argues, is not fully exhaustive of the broader subjectivity whose mode of expression shapes a world of human activity rather than simply reproducing a lifeless objective process. Hence, instead of doing away with feeling, the very activity of language would depend on the mediation of the appetitive and volitional drives into a refined intellectual feeling, or the transposition of the inner and outer worlds within the tensive activity of metaphor.

Yet, for all Blake's vehement objection to Locke and his "fallacious opinion of words," he shares with Locke the belief in a minutely organized language: "Every word and every letter is studied and put into its fit place" (J,3:50-1). And

again, a superficial resemblance becomes apparent as he impresses upon his reader the necessity that words express "clear and distinct ideas," that they form firm "bounding" lines to what otherwise would be a "Dumb despair" (J,36:60). It is here, however, that Blake, while displaying an obvious affinity for Locke's opinions, also parts company with him. Despair, or any other feeling, is not to be eliminated but given a voice through which it becomes human. He rejects "primitive animism," or the subjective "what is," because it loses sight of the discursive tension between identity and difference in the pervasive ambience of feeling (Ricoeur, RM 250-255).¹⁰ Locke's ideas, on the other hand, present us with the objects of nature in terms of mutually exclusive cognitive contents, creating a gulf between "what is" and "what is not." For Blake, however, human consciousness, as it achieves its fullest expression, subsumes and transcends both postures. Every single content of consciousness is possible only by the simultaneous existence of every other. Indistinct feeling finds release or objective expression through naming; and, as such, it receives a determinate, differentiated or spiritual content. The concentration of the amorphous feeling into a distinct linguistic point must necessarily be accompanied by the simultaneous naming of other points of feeling within a contrapuntal arrangement: love comes into distinct relief only in its necessary opposition to hate; admiration is made explicit through contempt. Language, then, allows feeling and cognition to become identical functions. Cognition or reflection is not something that is

merely juxtaposed to feeling but constitutes an integral element in the nature of human feeling itself.¹¹ In the following passage from Jerusalem, Blake sees language as that hard, resistant structure that allows the ocean of indistinct feeling to become articulated into "clear and distinct ideas."

I call them by their English names: English, the
rough basement
Los built the stubborn structure of the language,
acting against
Albion's melancholy, who must else have been a Dumb
Despair. (J,36:58-60)

Language, then, becomes the organ of mediation between the inner and outer worlds, between subjective feeling and objective immovable thingishness.

It is apparent from what has been said that, for Blake, language is not an aggregate of signs arbitrarily afixed to an already completed system of ideas. Language enters into the ideas as a constitutive element in their formation. And thus, ideas are continuously changing and growing in their reciprocal relation to language. We see this clearly in a passage from Milton.

Such are the words of man to man
In the great Wars of Eternity, in fury of Poetic
Inspiration,
To build the Universe stupendous: Mental forms

Creating. (M,30 :18-20)

The passage conveys the sense of great energy with which an individual is continuously creating those mental forms that shape our reality. Ideas are thus not congealed centers of consciousness through which a given universe is apprehended. But in their tensional containment of the "is" with the "is not," they reflect the integrity of human consciousness as it reflects upon its labour of creation in the world. "Jealous her darkness grows" (M,18:42) or the "loud thunders told of enormous conflict" (M,18:47-48) are examples of tensional metaphorical ideas that, being neither "purely subjective feeling," nor "purely objective in the positivistic sense" of the word, testify to the reciprocity of the inner and the outer, the "is" and "is not."¹² Through this transposition of the internal to the external and vice versa, ideas achieve what Frye calls an "articulated mood" (Frye, AC 80) or what Ricoeur distinguishes as a "texture of feeling" from simple "things of feeling" (Ricoeur, RM 226-228).

The reciprocity of ideas and language is the bounding line of an energy of desire. It both bounds desire, and it acts as the horizontal possibility which lures desire out of its compulsion to consume being that is other (that which "is not"), to achieve satisfaction in the mutuality of desires desiring each other in living dialogue ("such are the words of man to man"). We have, then, in dialogue the interplay of difference against the background of resemblance (identity) or the gathering of resemblance from different points of

perceptual contact that is the metaphorical "nodal point" (Ricoeur 228).

3. The Marriage of Heaven and Hell: A Discussion of "Tensive" Language.

In the Marriage, Blake's adherence to the notion of a dialectical union of opposites provides the inspiration for a tensive language that is the expression of energy and reason joined in a creative reciprocity. The Marriage, therefore, levels its attack against any metaphysical abstraction that sees fit to separate these two components into mutually exclusive realms. On the one hand, Blake attempts to undermine the basic presuppositions of traditional idealism; first, that the principle of action (the initial compulsion for the movement of energy) resides solely with the intelligible world, and second, that the sensible world is a mere receptive context for the manifestation of that action.

Blake ingeniously inverts the order of this hierarchy by stating that "Good is the passive that obeys Reason. Evil is the active springing from Energy" (MHH, 3:11-12). In Plate V, he does away with all vestigial notions of a dichotomy between energy and reason by stating that "Reason is the circumference of energy." Even the so called "good" ideas of the past are ultimately perverted forms of energy.

This is shewn in the Gospel, where he prays to the Father to send the comforter or Desire that Reason

may have ideas to build on, the Jehovah of the Bible being no other than he, who dwells in flaming fire. (MHH,5).

Blake also rejects the sensationalism of an associationist psychology whose reduction of sensation to a mere impression from nature or a mere reaction to external stimuli is an inadequate picture of man's spiritual activity. A sensory impression is lifted from the dynamic flux of impressions and made part of an objective or "contentless" idea. It is not sensuality itself which is at fault, but sensuality that is the product of a misdirected perception. Blake says that "If the doors of perception were cleansed everything would appear to man as it is: infinite./For man has closed himself up, till he sees all things thro' the narrow/chinks of his cavern" (MHH, 14:15-18). The Marriage, then, is a celebration of sensual exuberance. It sees sensation not as reactivity, but as pure activity.¹³ The spiritual or reflective element is immanent in the act of sensation itself. It is the principle of sensory organization by which the mind focuses upon a particular object from the nebulous realm of indistinct sensation; it establishes the determinacy of the object by virtue of its contrasting relationality to other determinate objects. Spirit, then, is the form, which itself becomes the content as it organizes phenomena as phenomena. It is with this in mind that Blake says: "Reason is the bound or outward circumference of energy." Energy turning back on itself is the distinction and

affirmation of difference within the unity of consciousness.

How these principles of an active perception are deployed in the creation of the poetic metaphor is made apparent in the following excerpt from the Marriage.

When I came home: on the abyss of the five senses,
where a flat sided steep frowns over the present
world. I saw a mighty Devil folded in black clouds,
hovering on the sides of the rock, with corroding
fires he wrote the following sentence now perceived
by the minds of men, & read by them on earth.

How do you know but ev'ry Bird that cuts the airy
way , Is an immense world of delight, clos'd by your
senses five? (MHH,6)

The process of corrosively inscribing the words on the wall melts away the hard materiality of the rock surface. The blank abstract wall looms over the passive observer (the "senses five") as an uncompromising physical presence. But when the poet applies the energy of his mind to the matter before him, all resistance breaks down and the infinity "hid beneath" is revealed. The truth of each bird, as it wings its "airy way," is an "immense world of delight" through which the total context of life, in all the complexity of feeling, is reinstated. The cliff side is shrunk back to compassable size under the span of the bird's flight. It is now part of a system of interrelatedness brought to relief by the words of

inspired speech. Thus, this power of metaphor, through which disparate parts of reality are combined and recombined to create a new organization of our sensory experience, is in this way "infinite." Metaphor is the infusion of a sensory imagination into an otherwise "senseless" world.

Stephen Carr, discussing the nature of Blake's art in terms of the logic of difference, writes that this logic is manifest in Blake's method of manually producing and engraving limited editions, each copy of which differs in some significant detail from the original (Carr 177-196). Carr argues that the difference of each copy from every other allows the reader to focus his attention on the material formation of the words themselves and, as such, on the interplay of new meaning derived from altered contexts. Mechanical reproductions, which attempt to reproduce the original in every detail, tend to reduce the flexibility and openness of a body of text. It becomes a cipher whose signified meaning or idea is congealed at an ever increasingly remote distance, just as the spiritual substance has abandoned the shell of its body. It was in just this way that the Enlightenment conceived language as a series of signs pointing to the original text of nature.

Blake treats the original not as something to be excluded, and thereby, to be inadvertently sustained in its abstract distance, but as that which ought to be dialectically entered into as one's own other. Every succeeding copy must, in some sense, retain the signifiatory value of the original.

in with out the original, how could one understand change? In

what sense would expansion and alteration of the paradigmatic referential structure have meaning? Blake, then, wishes to make his unique technique of printing a reflection of the general interrelationship between words and their referential source. There is a literal or lexical meaning of the words "man" and "snake." These words always refer to the same idea in Blake's poetry or in a teacher's instruction to young children. Yet, there is a web of connotative value assigned to each word by a community of living discourse. The poet, through the tensional dynamics of the metaphorical idea, brings these two systems of value together in a way that expands and interconnects the semantic fields of both: "That man is a snake" evokes the picture of a man who is guileful, crafty and subtle, and the snake acquires an anthropomorphic quality which is more than the literal designation of a reptile-like creature would suggest. In the metaphorical idea, Blake brings together the hitherto separated linguistic spheres of the connotative and denotative in a viable reciprocity.¹⁴

The "infernal" method of printing by corrosives is the necessary corrective to the mistaken impression of a body distinct from, and even, inferior to the soul. And by inference, it also redresses the rupture between feeling and cognition, the connotative and denotative value of a word.

The notion that man has a body distinct from his soul, is to be expunged; this I shall do, by printing in the infernal method by corrosives,

which in Hell are salutary and medicinal, melting apparent surfaces away, and displaying the infinity that was hid. (MHH, 14:10-14).

The corrosives refer to the method of printing and etching designs by acid that creates the body of the text. And thus, it also refers to the energy of desire that is released from the corporeal body, but which, recoiling back on itself, is relocated within the spiritually articulated corpus of the work of art. Infinity, then, is a freely proliferating body of symbolic forms that serves as a matrix for the fulfillment of desire. The apparent surface of an alien materiality is melted away to reveal a body made sentient by soul. It is not a body as a dead encasement brought to life by an extrinsic substance; it is a body given a sense of who it is through communication with another.

The allegory of "The Printing House in Hell" illustrates more clearly than any other part of the Marriage that language, through the expression of its inherent connectedness, constitutes the precondition of both an internal and external reality. The transmission of meaning from one generation to another is envisioned as having taken place in six caves, each of which signifies the human mind at a different stage in its development. Each stage, as a self-contained whole, implicitly contains the full range of all other possibilities. The Dragon-Man, which occupies the first cave, reveals that man, even as he was when still sunk in a dark sensuality, is still man in his ability to

synthesize his sensual experiences into a meaningful mythic order. The Dragon is that fertile symbol that recalls us to the remote regions of our past; and yet, his wings takes us to the heavens while still reminding us of our kinship with the earth. His paradoxical nature, as both sensuality which is incipient spirit and, as spirit which remains firmly grounded in its sensual origins, is made explicit in the identity of the Dragon with the man. He sits at the mouth of the cave sifting through the raw sensual material, exercising a "reflective discrimination" even with reference to something as simple as consumable goods. The cave is the human skull, and its opening, on whose edge the Dragon man sits facing the outer world, is the head's mouth - the sense of taste being the most tactile of all senses through which one is immersed in one's sensual surroundings. The connection with the outer world is a primitive one, but, because primitive, not less human. Its words compress reality into the simplified emotional ambience that corresponds to primitive need; but the emotion is still expressed in articulate form. As Herder says in his essay on The Origins of Language, "Man's most sensual condition is still a human condition, implying the operation of a mind in a more or less perceptible degree, whilst the animal's least sensual condition is still an animal condition in which no possible clarity of its thought could produce a human idea" (134). Language, which is present as a whole even at this early stage, contains the full breadth of man's consciousness -- that is, the entire disposition of the human's cognitive, volitional, the emotive and the sensual

pnature.

Caves two and three refer to the viper and the eagle. At the end of the allegory, the illustration of the viper and the eagle joined together returns us to the unity of sense and spirit in the dragon-man. The unity, however, is a relation between its parts; the breadth of its context allows the inner and outer worlds to become not exchangeable but inter-changeable. Thus, in the poem itself, the two stand in a state of mutual alienation that is the penultimate stage before their re-unification as a relation of disparate but complementary parts. The viper is the Dragon without wings. Its association with the earth is made clear by the mythic account of its birth in which it eats its way out of its mother's womb, thereby perpetuating the pain and contradiction of biological generation. The eagle, on the other hand, is an inhabitant of the heavens. He is able to gaze directly into the sun without blinking. He is referred to as the "eagle with wings and feathers of air" and he causes "the inside of the cave to be infinite" (MHH, 15:10-12).

Caverns four, five and six are more visibly associated with the process of the printing and binding of books. The stillness and the symmetrical order with which the books are finally lined up on the shelves provide a continuing reflection that the greatest distillations of civilized life, that its most highly structured languages, are no more and no less than the sublation of an intrinsically human desire through which its creaturely horizon is extended by the creation of symbolic forms.

In the following chapter, we will continue our discussion of the relationship between cognition and volition (feeling, desire), the concept and metaphor, in terms of a textual analysis of Blake's "Proverbs of Hell." Having dealt with Blake's notion of language in a general analysis, our investigation shall now proceed into Blake's actual use of language in poetry.

Notes

1 Nelson Hilton makes this connection. He also says that "if the Spirit has been incarnated in language, then it should be possible to move through the corporeality of the word back to the Spirit, to recognize - to name - the Word in the word" (4).

2 Hilton, LI 7. He continues to say that Blake's "literal expression" is that which is "ratified and amended by generations of imagination, the word continually extends a covenant to inform us of its universe of signification. Every word is a parable about linguistic structure as incarnate in human imagination."

3 Most of my thoughts on Heraclitus have been pulled together from varying sources, particularly Buber, Coplestone and Cassirer.

4 Cassirer says that "the two principles which the Heraclitean metaphysics had seen as a compelling unity: the doctrine of the identity of the word and being and the doctrine of the antithesis between word and being were developed independently. For the first time the problem of language was formulated with true conceptual sharpness - but at the same time these philosophers shattered Heraclitus' fundamental thought, transferring it from the realm of symbolic signification to that of abstract concepts" (PSF 122).

5 In this regard Cassirer says that "If we wish to regain a deeper knowledge of the true nature of the thing, there is no other way than to supplant this particular determination by another, that is, to oppose to each word embodying a specific individual concept, its own antithesis. Indeed we find in language taken as a whole, that every meaning is linked with its opposite, and the two together become an adequate expression of reality. The spiritual synthesis, the union that is effected in the word, resembles the harmony of the cosmos in that it is a harmony of opposing tension (PSF 120).

6 Here, I am obviously interjecting Hegelian concepts to spell out Heraclitus' meaning. Heraclitus does not specifically refer to the judgement or propositional statement, nor does he ever employ the terms "negativity or positivity." The "is and "is not" is a distinction that Ricoeur makes in his study of language. See his RM 255.

7 The other fully articulated Enlightenment view of language is found in Hobbes 100-110. The abuses to which language is subjected are: "first, when men register their thoughts wrongly, by the inconstancy of the signification of their words; by which they register for their conceptions, that which they never conceived; and so deceive themselves. Secondly, when they use words metaphorically; that is, in

other sense than that they are ordained for; and thereby deceive others. Thirdly, when by words they declare that to be their will, which is not. Forthly, when they use them to grieve one another: for seeing nature hath armed living creatures, some with teeth, some with horns, and some with hands, to grieve an enemy, it is but an abuse of Speech, to grieve him with the tongue, unlesse it be one whome wee are obliged to govern; and then it is not to grieve, but to correct and amend" (102).

8 Ricoeur states that this form of language would be called a "denotative" as opposed to a connotative language which does rely on the context to point up the pertinent meaning of each word. See his RM 91, 148, 229-239). I am also indebted to Northrop Frye's distinction between centripetal and centrifugal language. Centrifugal, or outward language, reduces the word to a mere sign that stands for (put in place of) an empirical fact or object in nature. The metaphorical, on the other hand, is centripetal in that its meaning is bound up with the peculiar deployment of words within the sentence or poetic verse. The strategic juxtaposition of words have an internal necessity; the connective "is" brings together disparate elements of reality into a self-sustaining or self-referring unity of meaning. See his AC 73-82.

9 Cassirer believed that it was with Herder's contribution to the study of language that feeling and cognition were finally seen to be inseparable components of the same linguistic process. The notion of organic form was the essential "middle link" that allowed nature and art, intuition and cognition to become related to another. I will argue that Blake's reaction to the Enlightenment is developed in terms of this same "organic form" in the Marriage. See the PSF 152-154.

10 Ricoeur also calls this an "ontological naivete" in which the mind seeks support "in the sympathetic attractions of nature, prior to the interposition of a dissecting intellect" (RM 250).

11 Cassirer quotes Herder as saying that "Man demonstrates reflection when the force of his soul works so freely that in the ocean of sensations that flows into it from all the senses, he can, in a manner of speaking, isolate and stop one wave, and direct his attention toward this wave, conscious that he is so doing" (PSF 152-3).

12 The example which Ricoeur uses to illustrate this point is from a poem by Holderlin. "The joyous undulation of the waves" is part of the "poetic shema which proclaims the reciprocity of the inner and the outer" (RM 246). I have chosen two examples from Blake's poetry which mirror one another, proclaiming this same "reciprocity of the inner" ("Jealous her darkness grow") and the outer ("Loud thunders told of enormous conflict").

13 Cassirer says that "the content of the spirit can be conceived only in activity and as activity....This general view is most sharply and succinctly expressed in Humboldt's famous dictum that language is not a work (ergon) but an activity (energeia)" (PSF 160-161).

14 Here, I am again indebted to Ricoeur's discussion of denotative and connotative language.

Chapter III

The Logic of "The Proverbs"

The contention that Blake and Hegel share a notion of reality that is essentially dialectical leads us to invoke the Hegelian syllogism as the structure of movement behind the "Proverbs of Hell." The immanence of the whole of speech in every utterance compels the proverb to move beyond the inadequacy of its partial truth, to a state of mutual supplementation with other proverbial truths. Thus, far from being an aggregate of fragmentary utterances, Blake's proverbs reflect a state of self-awareness through which disparate parts of reality are brought together as the internally coherent whole of living discourse. The Blakean proverb and the Hegelian syllogism are not mere "ciphers in space."¹ For Hegel, the judgment, as a phase in the development of the syllogism, is always "the answer to a question;"² it is the movement of thought thinking itself out in a concrete social setting. With reference to Blake, the cycle of proverbs in the Marriage is the product of the conscious experience of the imagination which organizes contradictory feelings and volitions through the principle of wholeness and unity.

1. The Judgment and The Proverb

In the Marriage it is the dismantling of selfhood, and its reintegration as self within the whole of living discourse, that is witnessed in the proverbial statement subject to the movement of time.³ In order to get a sense of the structural dynamics behind this process, we again turn to Hegel for the counterpart to the proverbial statement; and

specifically, to the assestory judgment of value.⁴ Judgment is the fundamental condition of thought through which the ego attempts to articulate its experiences of a world inexhaustibly diverse, yet synthetically structured in its diversity. The form which the judgment usually takes is "I believe," "I think" and "I assert" (Harris 227). The relation of the object to the evaluating ego allows that object to be reevaluated in its interrelationship with other objects. The knowing ego recreates the immanence of the whole within each of the parts of its perception, invoking the "ought to be" as the ideal which impels reality on to a further articulation of its incipient structures. Hence, as Errol Harris has commented on this part of Hegel's Logic, "the criterion of value, of what ought to be, is the criterion of truth, what things have it in them to become" (236).

That kind of judgment that Hegel calls "assetoric" is, however, a lesser form of value judgment, which, in its proverbial interpretation of truth, is the blank certainty of subjective conviction. Its value judgment is solely emotive, without the hard and fast distinctions which, for both Hegel and Blake, render reality as the "whole" of "minute particularity" (for Hegel it is the "concrete-universal"). The subject thus establishes its connection with the whole on the basis of immediate intuition or as the dim awareness of "things of feeling."⁵ The sense of the whole is satisfying, but inadequate to the truth that subsists in each distinct part as it completes itself through every other.

But Hegel equally inveighs against the judgment as pure

cognition through which the attributes of an object are simply given to us in the form of mutually independent perceptual contents.⁶ As Harris points out, for Hegel, "every perceptual content is a 'structured Gestalt' - a self-specifying universe or whole, the structural principle of which determines the nature and qualities of its elements" (228). Here, "system" (recursivity) is the ground of the universal connection between subject and predicate. The copula "is" explicitly identifies subject and predicate in a necessary relation. That is to say, the relational judgment raises the individual above its merely immediate presence - as randomly having this or that quality - and posits it as the knowing subject, developing itself in and through the content of its experience. Thus, the subject is more than any single quality abstracted from the substance of its contextual experience. And the predicate is more than the universal quality imposed on just any subject; it is the universal particularized through the mediation of the individual.

Both the judgment of cognition and the judgment of feeling are in themselves inadequate.⁷ Each must gravitate toward the other through the organizing energy of the whole. Subjective feeling unites with the object of its specific need or desire through the mediation of activity. Thus feeling becomes objectified, its fortuitous and random content organized through the experience of that activity. The dull presentiment of the objective whole, whether it comes through the feeling of satiation, or whether it comes through the painful sense of contradiction from unfulfillment, is raised

to sympathetic identification with another in which one becomes cognizant of one's place in a common humanity. The single judgment, then, is never taken in isolation, but is part of the exposition of a total experience, expanding into the syllogism as it defines its peculiar interrelationships with innumerable other judgments.

Let us now determine in what sense the proverb and the judgment are related. Blake sees the proverb as both a detached fragment of speech expressing an arbitrary point-of-view, and as a means for gaining access to the pulsating nexus of dialogue. He sees that the subjective certainty of a point-of-view leaves the proverb fundamentally vulnerable to every encroaching oppositional view. Thus, the proverb, as Blake uses it, must become susceptible of a dialectic that carries it beyond the opposition between its view and another. The separateness of the moments or points-of-view must be annulled within a temporal unity of action which encompasses the subject of action and the object towards which such action is directed. The various moments posited by a set of proverbs are combined within the same teleological whole - the dialogue which raises the incidental utterance to the expression of a thought process.

It is important to point out that the conventional proverb is not an explicit judgment as understood in the sense of a subject and predicate joined by the copula. But the comparison is justified by the fact that the proverb constitutes a crude form of judgment which the ego makes about the nature of its experience. In the words of one

commentator, the proverb is a "'definitive judgment,' a 'normative voice' that expresses itself in the 'affirmative mood' of the 'present tense' [i.e., the] 'What is' or 'What ought to be'" (Edwards 40). As definitive judgment, the conventional proverb is not the conduit of a dialogic activity through which the temporal is specified as in evolutionary change, but instead the point at which a fragment of consciousness is broken off and thrust onto an exclusive "now" with an independent substance of its own. Whether it be in the form of an explicit command or advice given, the grammatical mood of the proverb is always one of coercion, the hard positivity of a will to influence the behaviour of another. Thus, there is no independent subject of action which is found in other kinds of judgment. And, therefore, the copula is not necessary, for its presence would suggest the possibility of continued action, the flow of temporal nuances through which the events are embraced as a totality of moments within an individual consciousness. In the proverbs "Look before you leap" and "He who hesitates is lost," the copula is there only when we, in our minds, ask why prudence is rewarded or why does impetuosity reap the best results? The questioning leads only to a formal connection of the subject and its particular situation to the universal which remains an unmoved "ought to be." Prudence or impetuosity is rewarded because it is the good or proper thing to do. When we are then asked to give an account of why it is good, we are compulsively led to the beginning of the tautological circle of meaning: it is good or proper because it is prudent. Thus,

the proverb is an example of "block language" (Edwards 49), a form of definitive judgment which has been frozen out of the fluidity of speech situations. The finality of the tone closes off the possibility of any rejoinder; indeed, its structure is such that it cannot even recognize the existence of another who might make one. From the other side, the subject who formulates the moral edict (proverbial universal) demands that all others recognize its conviction as generally valid, in spite of the fact that the arbitrary or singular "mineness" of the content of its convictions is utterly inadequate to the universality it proclaims. Ignorant of the rich and grounding interconnectedness of the all, the subject nevertheless takes it upon itself to legislate immediately for the good of the all.

It is confronted, as a result, with an infinite number of legislating individuals to which its will bears no necessary (concrete) relationship. Thus, the determination of allness, through which the proverbial statement connects the individual with the universal, differs from the allness that, for Blake, grounds the divine humanity. With reference to the latter, we are all human beings without whose interconnectedness we would not be capable of any act warranting a moral evaluation; with reference to the former, however, "allness" is simply that false generality that is every individual's "common" sense response to the moment. Hence, for example, all actions, which are performed impetuously, are deemed to be unwise or bad (or their contrary, depending on which proverb is being invoked by which

individual). Thus, for both sides, individuality slips into a universal without truly determinate content. It is left with the empty abstraction of $P=U$ (the particular is the universal) as the projection of the subject's present feeling or mood alone.

How, then, does Blake's use of the proverb allow it to emerge from this impasse. In order that the inertness and vacuity of the edict be translated into the persuasive force and validity of a concrete-universal truth, it must first be called forth by the individual to assume a direct relevancy to the situation at hand.⁸ But the advice or command embodied in the proverb simply cannot bear up to scrutiny. "Look before you leap" is suddenly confronted by the manifold contingencies that are present in finite existence, and is, therefore, revealed to be the manifestation of someone else's subjective arbitration of will. One's own present situation may demand a peremptory and audacious exploitation of its hidden potentials. Or, another situation may require a thoughtful review of the facts before action is taken; "He who hesitates is lost" suddenly proves to be an outdated cliché.

As we shall see, Blake begins to convert the proverb into the synthetic activity of the "apodictic judgment" (HL 243) when he introduces another proverb (or another view within the same compound action of the first) that reflects the activity of the individual who has been compelled to examine the content of its present situation, and to test the validity of the universal in the light of that situation. What happens is a simple negation of the first proposition, a

swift dialectical transition into the opposing point-of-view. "The particular is the universal" becomes, in the moment of its juxtaposition to my situation, "This particular is not the universal." One tone or mood, then, simply replaces another, and dogmatic assertion leads to dogmatic denial. The bare formalistic equation of "This rash or prudent individual is good or bad" has yet to be fleshed out by a description of the process by which one assertion passes away, as a moment into another, thereby creating an event that is more than its separate constituent moments. Thus the "Proverbs of Hell" move toward a fulfilled syllogistic structure by providing a unified context of experience through which the particular subject and the universal become reconciled in the continuing action of the individual - in the significant event that pulls together the various strands of a person's life into the "fibrous" whole of prophetic vision.⁹ The succession of proverbs in a set evolves into the kind of evaluative judgment that grasps its subject in its total relationship to what Hegel calls the "real," or what Blake calls a "fourfold" reality.

Thus, we are led to the formula $P=I=U$ (the universal becomes concrete through the mediation of the individual's activity).¹⁰ The movement between proverbs reveals that each element undergoes the negation of negation. Each, through the initial positing of its own distinct character, passes necessarily into its other, and becomes not a negation of itself as nothing, but a negation that is a determinate nothingness whose result retains the initial premise from

which it began. But the very possibility of transition from one position into its own opposite is dependent on the existence of a grounding third term or the negation which evokes the whole within which each premise can be seen as part of an internally articulated totality. The universal develops into the particular, and conversely, the particular rises to the universal through the "absolute individual" which at once encompasses both the essential in existence and the existence of the essential.

Both prudence and impetuosity are allowed to exist as different moments on the same continuum of an unfolding spiritual activity. A steadfast pursuance of a particular point-of-view (attitude) necessarily calls forth its opposite, whose content reflects both the supposition and consequence of the original position. A certain opportunistic ability to grab the moment may result in the attainment of power, whose consolidation entails a scrupulous management, a thoughtful cooperation with other factions.

Blake achieves this self-specification of the whole of experience through the positing of several proverbial truths in a system of mutual illumination. The process of self-awareness begins with the indistinct feeling of the whole that the self immediately possesses in the object of its experience. It capitalizes on the moment in terms of a dogmatic "I feel" or "I think," therefore "let it be so." But the contingent and fortuitous, the changeable and the idiosyncratic, give themselves over to a connection between subject and object that is confirmed, in the totality of

experience, as a "fearful symmetry" or, as Hegel would call it, a "systemic necessity." The notion of an abstract common quality (of goodness or badness) inherent in the single proverbial truth, gives way to a progressive succession of truths that testify to the conscious experience of organizing difference in accordance with a principle of spiritual unity. Feeling and cognition become reconciled as the moments of wisdom, which takes subjective feeling to be a moment in the growing specification of the absolute.

2. The "Proverbs of Hell"

We shall now direct our attention to the proverbs themselves. Those I have selected deal with joy and sorrow, folly and wisdom, and the plow and the seed. For the sake of guiding my reader through the course of my discussion, I have duplicated each set of proverbs in the order that Blake has them in the Marriage.

First, let us begin with the Joy/Sorrow proverbs:

Excess of Sorrow laughs. Excess of Joy weeps.

Joys impregnate. Sorrows bring forth.

Joy laughs not. Sorrow weeps not. (MHH, 8:26; 8:29; 9:60)

In the proverbs, Blake undermines any attempt on the part of a reader to define emotional experience in the instant of its overwhelming mood or feeling tone. The proverbs, instead,

place these emotions in the context of their action upon the world, which allow their capriciousness as responses to become transformed into something more durable and cognizant of a world in which others exist.

Blake begins the series with an "Excess of Sorrow laughs, Excess of joy weeps." The paroxysm of excessive emotion necessarily gives itself over to the dialectic of self-abolition in which joy becomes sorrow and sorrow becomes joy. Here, then, we see Blake presenting the first movement of the syllogism, which is that "indwelling tendency outward," a revealing of each felt moment to be inseparable from every other; a movement in which each is reflected into its other, opposes itself to it, and unites with it.

But it is not enough that such be simply the case. The unfolding of the syllogistic structure demands that it be shown how this is the case. The second proverb provides the experiential basis or the mediating ground that allows each to exist on the same continuum of being as both the original incentive and final outcome of the other. The images employed are sexual ("Joys impregnate. Sorrows bring forth"). The ecstasy accompanying conception is followed by the pain and labour required to bring forth the fruit of that conception. And this new fruit contains the seeds with which the whole process repeats itself. Through the activity of individual consciousness, each felt moment is brought to a distillation of its true essence only in its working relationship with every other. Joys and Sorrows become a richly woven tapestry that reveals the shifting hues, the bright shades and the

darkly illuminating lights that constitute the totality of life's evolving patterns.

The transition from an "Excess of Sorrow laughs, Excess of Joy weeps" to "Joy laughs not, Sorrow weeps not," is made through a series of spontaneous moments of feeling that are mediated by the individual into an articulated mood, or a feeling that has been deepened to encompass greater areas of life. The action of the first line, which produces a direct line of access into the opposing mood, turns back on itself ultimately to reveal a joy that simply does not laugh or weep, and a sorrow that does not weep or laugh. If "Joy laughs not," then neither does it weep. And likewise, sorrow that weeps not, laughs not. The logical circle ends in a double negative construction (when taken with the other proverbs) that both suppresses and preserves the original mood. Each emotion occupies a middle ground between an affirmative and negative mood, rendering the difference between them one of accent or point-of-view. Thus, the third line reflects a universal individuality as the continuous substratum in and through which the various moods are held together as a fulfilled experience - as the creative paradox that recognizes the tension in unity between joy and sorrow. The sorrow of the death of one's self participates in the joy of one's rebirth that is and is not what one was.

Joy and Sorrow are no longer fortuitous emotional moods superimposed upon the indifferent content of the world. A joy which is naively joyous does not take cognizance of the suffering in the world. But a sorrow that is purely

melancholic is again an indulgence in one's present mood that prevents one from feeling joy for another's joy. "Joy laughs not, Sorrow weeps not" mends a world sundered between subject and object, the have and have nots. The self, which begins with a feeling of itself in its appetites, becomes the self raised to a sensibility of who it is through a world shared with others.

Since, for Blake, language constitutes a process of thought, both collective and individual, his linguistic meanings intersect with our own at the level of convention. And yet, the meaning of his words cannot be exhausted by conventional meaning alone. For the originality of the context, within which these words appear, would have us participate with Blake in the remaking of language that is at once reverential toward the past and looking forward in anticipation to the future. By focusing on the context, the reader is able to trace the essential lines of association that pass through the center of each word.

Blake's statement "The Infinite alone resides in Definite Determinate Identity" (J,55:64) becomes, in our present discussion, Ricoeur's "nodal point," the crossway at which the finite and the infinite converge to form the "literal expression." That is to say, the exhaustive disjunction of particular polysemous words (the infinite within the finite) rests on their interconnection along the seams of individual vision. The Hegelian syllogism makes explicit the dependence of the polyssemous word on the outward context of meaning that has its basis in our own concrete

reality. The syllogism, then, in a double current of movement, focuses meaning inwardly, on the "condensed economy" of the polysemous word (Ricoeur, RM 115,144-45). As one commentator has suggested, it opens up the "spatial fields" of each word (Hilton 11), thereby constructing lines of thought on the flat surfaces of the text itself (the diachronic aspect of language). But the very activity of realigning a thought on the page depends on the simultaneous outward movement of the syllogism to the world that allows the word in its sedimented associations to become reassociated within the "breathing fields" (M,5:2) of living dialogue. Rather than immersing ourselves in the bad infinite of symbolic meaning in Blake's poetry, we are led to rely on the context of his unique poetic vision to point up the pertinent meaning of each unit of expression. The threefold dimensionality of space opens to a fourfold textuality which is simply not the textuality of the text, but of the individual intersecting with the world through the fibres of time (the synchronic aspect of language).

We now turn to another set of proverbs, those focusing on the figures of the "fool," the "wiseman," and the "knave."

The road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom.
A fool sees not the same tree that a wise man sees.
The hours of folly are measur'd by the clock, but
of wisdom: no clock can measure.
If the fool would persist in his folly he would
become wise.

Folly is the cloak of knavery.

The selfish smiling fool.&the sullen frowning
fool.shall be both thought wise. that they may be
a rod. (MHH, 7:3,8,12,18,19; 8:32).

When we approach these figures through the proverbs, we are entering into a system of signs that takes up the past as the movement toward future possibilities. But first, what is the past that Blake is working with? From the baggage of traditional associations, there is the sense of the fool as the man who is mentally deranged, or at least, deficient in common sense. Through his lack of common sense, and his exclusion from common affairs, he is privileged with a disinterested, even Olympian point-of-view. He, thus, brings to bear upon the world a "transcendent" insight that penetrates beyond the flitting appearances of life's vicissitudes into more permanent internal relationships. His eruptive and seemingly incoherent utterings are taken to be glimpses into an atemporal order of reality that contradict and criticize the ways of the world. He is both the holy fool and the innocent wiseman.

Then, there is the fool who participates in the general condition of folly brought about by sin in a fallen world. He is the unwise fool by virtue of being deficient in goodness;
11
he is simply the knave.

The concept of universal sin gives way to the idea of a blind and amoral material process, which becomes the basis of an ever-mounting struggle for political power. The earth,

then, no longer the inert shadow, dimly and passively replicating its etherial counterpart, becomes a stage of its own, in which sound and fury signify a constant play of one fool upon another. The elimination of a transcendent order of values abandons the earth to the mortal conflict of two kinds of fools: the fool that becomes the deceived, as in the case of the man whose trustfulness and imprudence places him in the vulnerable position that allows him to be deceived; and the knave, whose machiavellian guile enables him to exploit the moment and to become an artful perpetrator of deception.¹² Folly and knavery become interchangeable states in the sense that each signifies merely different moments in the same temporal escalation towards the attainment of power. Folly, then, no longer the expression of goodness or sin, more neutrally denotes imprudence or a deficiency of a certain practical knowledge of the ways of the world. And the knave, with his greater Machiavellian pragmatism, inevitably becomes dupe to someone else in the course of life's unexpected turns.

Having noted this, let us now bring together the various threads of association within the argument that Blake has specified through the movement of the proverbs. The initial assertion inveighs against the prejudice that the subject of judgment (folly) is independent of a world through which it may be given the opportunity to work itself out into its opposite. The condensed formulation of this first line unravels itself in subsequent proverbs to explain how, in fact, the excess of one position allows it to recognize its

individual consciousness. In the second and third proverbs, the disjunction between a subject and the world is illustrated by the exclusive perspectives on reality attributed to each: "A fool sees not the same tree that a wiseman sees" and "The hours of folly are measured by the clock, but of wisdom no clock can measure." Two of three kinds of foolery already mentioned are here pitted against one another: the fool who regulates his life by the clock is the unwise, the knave engrossed in the cut throat affairs of the world; the wise man is the holy fool, concerned only with those things above the measure of human time.

The next proverb brings together the two perspectives in a way that reminds us not exclusively of the holy fool who is unself-consciously wise, but of the buffoon whose sardonic wit betrays a certain self-knowing wisdom. The grotesque and the paradoxical in the fool's insight into reality are enhanced to such an extent that they lead to truth as the ambiguous center of many worldly perspectives. For instance, the buffoon in Lear displays a tenacious loyalty to his master in the face of adverse circumstances. Yet, he knows enough of the ways of politics to try to dissuade his master from the disposition of his kingdom between his rapacious daughters. But the identity of folly and wisdom in the buffoon is an immediate one. He is in this world, cognizant of its ways, yet not of it. He retains something of the serious otherworldness of the holy fool as he pursues his laughter into the realm of fantasy, where the monstrous, the grotesque, and even the impossible, are elements of an alternate order of reality - a reality

which, if not transcendental in the specific connotation that suggests 'above sense,' nevertheless, bears no relation to the organization of sensual experience within a quotidian framework. His sudden appearances, his exaggeration of character, his disconnected songs and quips, function as a kind of confounding disruption of causal connections, bringing to light certain glimpses of truth that elude all rational construction.

The buffoon represents the paradox of the identity of folly and wisdom, but he does not re-present this contradiction in terms of its practical resolution within a living social context. For the buffoon, like the idiot holy fool stands outside society. And although, from his disinterested vantage point he is able to fathom the whole of reality, he does so with that indistinct feeling that compels one to pronounce what a situation is not in the face of what it ought to be. The fluent unmediated persistence of folly into wisdom reveals a form of judgment upon the world that is purely subjective in the sense that it is spontaneous. The glimmering of truth, rendered in cryptic fragments of speech, in desultory commentary removed from sustained dialogue, is still "ideal" - a truth that finds its way in and around the obtrusive shapes of perverse individualism in the world of affairs. In Lear the buffoon can be of no practical aid to the king. As the drama unfolds, we see him gradually recede from the thick of the action to become, towards the end, a superfluous agent that finally expires.

The penultimate proverb provides the middle ground as

the context of experience through which the individual recognizes that wisdom grows in and through the multiplicity of conflicting follies. Wisdom involves the tragic insight that all is folly. The fool sees that his folly consists simply in his having acted in the world, even if the content of that action is to be inactive. Every posture taken in life is a disclosure of a particular point-of-view whose imposition upon another calls forth that other as the injured party demanding vengeance and recompense.¹³ And, so, the other party is also aroused from a state of inchoate ignorance to one of explicit antagonism and knavery. Lear recognizes that he, as the fool who was victim to a knave, has become so because he was knave to someone else (Cordelia). And Cordelia, by refusing to submit to a public confession of her love for her father, inadvertently commits the knavish (or foolish) act of handing her father over to her predatory sisters.¹⁴ The proverb "Folly is the cloak of knavery" suggests that both folly and knavery, each in its own turn, constitute the exterior of the other's interior or implicit state. The other's point-of-view is both annulled and preserved as the consequence of being the objective actuality upon which the first inscribes the content of its action. The moment of action, then, raises the particular ego from indeterminate immediacy, or from a state of pure undefined attitude, to the point at which such attitude, as it becomes posed in alien externality, is changed through the reciprocity of action and reaction between itself and the external other. Thus, "the selfish smiling fool (knave) and

the sullen frowning fool (victim) shall both be thought wise, that they may be a rod." Each polarity, then, in coming to a recognition of the opposite end as its outward self-expression, undergoes a modification (negation) of its initial view, and is compelled to move towards the middle point, the ground of wisdom through which the two ends are brought together in the true measure of their differences. The immanent presence of the whole, in both the inner essence and the outer show, resolves itself into an energy or a force that compels each to become reflected into the other as the concretely real.

When Lear plaintively announces that "we are come to this great stage of fools," he is indicating neither a world of sin which has fallen from a transcendent standard of goodness, nor a barren earth embroiled in a mortal conflict of fools duping one another. As we traverse the spectrum of our own experiences, the ideal and the real, the inner and the outer, become inseparable parts of an identical content of consciousness.

The last set of proverbs brings the present discussion to a fitting end by redirecting our attention to the nature of language itself. Blake speaks of the word in its relationship to the plow.

Drive your cart and your plow over the bones of the
dead.

The cut worm forgives the plow.

As the plow follows the word, so God rewards

prayers.

Prayers plow not. Praises reap not. (MHH, 7:2; 7:11;
9:4; 9:20)

The image of the plow driving over the bones of the dead suggests the advance of the autonomous individual against ritual and the petrification of law. The absorption of life into the minutiae of the letter of the law becomes associated with the "dead man's bones" of Christ's accusation against the Pharisees: "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you are like white-washed tombs which outwardly appear beautiful, but within they are full of dead man's bones and uncleanness" (Mathew 23:27). The hard inorganic world to which life returns at death is symbolic of revelation that is relegated to the irrevocable past - a past impervious to the continuing amendments of speech shored up by the substance of living deed. Thus, the law becomes the instrument of alienation by which the substance of the ethical deed is perverted into hypocrisy. The ability to re-enact another's plight in the imagination becomes stifled as the individual merely enacts the correct response in the blind zeal of external observance. Thus, the individual is turned against himself in that the law allows him to recognize the good (or an objective universal) without, however, allowing him the possibility of carrying it out in the world. It leads to the sense that nothing is ever done in the infinite approximation of laws to the primal revelation: for the world is a perverse place unwilling to follow ancient "ought-to-be." Thus, the

law, in attempting to justify the individual, creates that hellish abyss between the individual and the ground of his identity. The individual becomes aware of himself in sin, which comes not from the transgression of the law, but from the need to justify himself in the law.¹⁵

The first reaction of the individual, then, is to throw off the dead weight of the law which inhibited the full expression of his autonomy. He uses the plow to cut the furrow into the soil for the new seed or new word to grow.

"The cut worm forgives the plow" suggests the transformation of a "vengeful expiation" imposed by God from on high. The individual, who now conceives of himself as the measure of his actions, learns to undertake expiation as an "educative" travail through which he can regain the ground of his identity.¹⁶ For although the cut worm illustrates the divisive activity of the autonomous ego on the raw material of the world, the cut worm is, in fact, two worms, illustrating also the world's reintegration in the form of a heteronomy. The cut worm reinterprets reality as the dialogic relation of distinct but co-operating individuals - the invocation of man to man which prevents either from lapsing into the status of a mere object of observance.

Thus, the word in the next proverb is inextricably bound with a common human endeavour. The prayer of supplication, adoration and confession, ordinarily addressed to the God up there, is now addressed to a "thou" who is here in this world with me. Reward, then, is granted to those who earn it through a genuine labour of love and forgiveness. "Prayers"

and "praises" offered up to God in the hopes of reward are counterproductive. "Prayers plow not, Praises reap not."

We have dealt with a group of signs (joy and sorrow, the fool and the wiseman, the plow and the word) that, for Blake, have a special capacity to carry the weight of his poetic vision. The movement, in which these signs appear, elevates the sensual and the emotive to the intelligible, without thereby losing sight of the sensual and the emotive. This pattern of intelligibility forces the reader to recognize the sign of signs, or the metaphor that is saturated with the meaning of Blake's vision of man. It is the metaphor of the circle, within which is incorporated the metaphor of the ground, and that of the home coming.¹⁷ It is this circular pattern that asserts itself when man undertakes a journey of self-discovery. For Blake, Milton had undertaken such a journey of self-discovery, and it is towards Milton that we must turn to discern his importance for our reading of Blake.

Notes

1 In his commentary on Hegel's Logic, Errol E. Harris is deprecatory of formal logicians who think of the Concept as an "abstract universal." "Consequently, both judgment (or more usually propositions) and syllogism were treated as loose conjunctions of concepts, or as expressing relationship between classes, mutually exclusive, or partially or wholly coincident" (227).

2 Harris says that "the judgment is not a proposition, if that means simply a form of words or a symbol, but is what the words mean in actual live thinking. So 'a carriage is passing' has to be the answer to a question, not just a 'statement' or a 'sentence' (229).

3 Stephen Carr argues that Blake's attempt to perpetuate a logic of difference by positing several perspectives subverts the hegemony of the self as the author-itative center from which emanates the single-minded vision of linear meaning. We are told that Blake disperses its centralized authority among unappropriated otherness. But the devolution of authority from the single-minded vision of a "transcendent" self to the multiple single visions of non-integrated otherness, simply allows that otherness, by virtue of its isolation, to usurp the central position and to exert a new totalizing influence of its own. Although Carr recognizes what Blake is doing, he fails to see why. The seemingly incommensurable perspectives testify not to the abolition of the self, but to its restoration within the greater divine humanity. The "transcendental self" takes on a new connotation, that suggests not the isolation of the ego over and against others, but the appropriation and transcendence of egoity within a network of other centers of consciousness. The simultaneous sounding of several voices, the conflicting temporal perspectives, the shifting identities, and the intrusive punctuation work to re-enact the drama of a living discourse in which the self comes into full possession of itself through the recognition of the opposing perspective as the necessary complement. Linear logic is replaced by the circularity of utterance and counter-utterance through which the self realizes its potential nature through its own other. See Carr 177-96.

4 Hegel writes about the various categories of judgements and syllogism in the "Doctrine of Notion" in HL 235.

5 Harris claims that when Hegel is referring to intuitionism in this context, he is alluding to Jacobi. See Harris 236.

6 No doubt Hegel has in mind Bacon, Hobbes, Locke and Berkeley. For a good exposition of scientific language or the scientific judgment, see Cassirer, PSF 133-13.

main categories of cognition and feeling. But I found that I have been able to do this without detracting from the truth or complexity of Hegel's argument.

8 Hegel talks about testing the law in the light of the validity of individual experience in the PS, pp. 256-262.

9 The significance of Blake's use of the word "fiber" is treated exhaustively in Hilton, LI 79-101.

10 In the dialectical movement of the syllogism, Hegel rotates each of the elements in the occupancy of the mediative ground and the two peripheral points, allowing each to return to itself in the simultaneity of identity with itself and the other. Hence, we are presented with: $I=P=U$; $P=U=I$; $U=I=P$.

11 Enid Welton provides a good description of these kinds of fool in the chapter entitled "The Fool as Poet and Clairvoyant" (76-112).

12 William R. Elton talks about the emergence of Machiavellianism in terms of the notion of the fool. See his chapter on Pagan Atheism."

13 Hegel describes this as the tragic. See his interpretation of Antigone in the PS 279-89).

14 The opening act in Lear exhibits the pomp and circumstance of an official royal proclamation, in which the abdication of royal responsibility with a simultaneous retention of power, demonstrates his full regal authority. There is nothing to anticipate the calamitous denouement to these proceedings until he demands the protestations of love from his daughters. In much the same way that Hegel interprets the tragedy of Antigone as the conflict between the public and private realms, so Lear is amenable to such an interpretation. The king, in a very awkward moment of spontaneous emotion, allows the intrusion of familial concerns into what is to be a purely public ceremony. Cordelia's muted response, in contrast to her sisters', demonstrates her right to allow love to stand on its own terms, in the unspoken honesty of its feeling, without becoming privy to the base cajolery of her sisters; without, that is, becoming part of the public demonstration of love for the sake of public gain. The King's monarchical pride has been wounded publicly, and so, he must redress his public image by reapportioning what belongs to Love to the forces of deceit and knavery. In as far as Cordelia has been compelled to jealously guard the right to the privacy of her emotions, she had inadvertently committed the knavish act of giving her father over into the hands of her unscrupulous sisters. Justice (Heraclitus' measure) demands that the king, who committed an act of knavery in the unremitting assertion of his authority, must himself be stripped of all remnant of authority, until he becomes no more than the demented fool wandering on the heath. For a similar

interpretation of Lear see Bransom 1-10.

15 Ricoeur writes about this phenomenon. in the context of St. Paul's existential torment with the dilemma of the law. He says that "St. Paul's brings to light a dimension of sin, a new quality of evil, which is not the transgression of a definite commandment, but the will to satisfy oneself by satisfying the law." (TSE 141).

16 Ricoeur discusses the distinction between "vengeful" and "educative" expiation with reference to his section on "Guilt:" "In becoming ethical and no longer only ritual, the interdiction raises up a subjective pole of responsibility that can no longer be only one who answers for the sanction, one who is responsible in the elementary sense of a subject of punishment, but a center of decision, an author of acts" (TSE 103).

17 An insight into the relationship between the metaphor and the concept would involve an independent study of its own. Ricoeur provides a summary of this debate in his RM 284-89. His recognition of the sun as the meta-metaphor, within which all other metaphors are generated, provides the meeting point with conceptual language. With the sun, "metaphor has begun." "The metaphors of light, of looking or glancing, of the eye are pre-eminent figures of idealization, from the Platonic eidos to the Hegelian Idea" (289). The heliotropic pattern of the circle fits in with our own recognition of the "circumference of energy" as the central focus of meaning in Blake's poetry.

Chapter IV

Milton's Ascent Into Light

Blake's progressive radicalization of traditional Christian beliefs begins as early as the Songs where man is first seen to be wholly identified with the divine nature of Christ. In deceptively childish verse, in which the naive simplicity of its rhyme and imagery betrays all the more effectively the difficulty of the thought behind it, Blake brings to refinement his doctrine of the Godhead as characterized by the dynamics of kenosis.¹ That is to say, the inherent structure of the Godhead itself is determined precisely by its capacity to empty the contents of that divinity into the meagre receptacle of finitude through an infinite pity and love, to give up its exclusive eternality in the extrinsic other-being of sorrow, death and mortality.

Can I see anothers woe,
And not be in sorrow too.
Can I see anothers grief,
And not seek for kind relief. (SI,27:1-4)

In the last two stanzas of this same poem, the "I" becomes explicitly associated with the Christ who was the one God become man. Because he once appeared among men, the once becomes an always once ("I will be with ye always"), the one man becomes every man.

Think not, thou canst sigh a sigh,
And thy maker is not by.
Think not, thou canst weep a tear,

And thy maker is not near. (SI, 27: 29-32)

O! he gives to us his joy,
That our grief he may destroy
Till our grief is fled & gone
He doth sit by us and moan (SI, 27: 29-36)

The "Can I see" of the first stanza is thus made possible through the hypostatization of Christ in the divine community as the determinate "we" of mutually reciprocating selves, as the dialogue of love between mother and child, friend and friend.

In this passionate avowal of the immanent presence of God in every man, Blake is able to summarize the purpose of his radical theology as a study of the "divine humanity." He anticipates in these early Songs the later, conceptually more sophisticated, formulation of the doctrine of kenosis, in which substance and subject, God and man, are emptied into one another to form, not so much the primal unity of God as Man, but an integral condition of being that contains each in its own other: "God becomes as we are, that we may be as he is." The real meaning of the Trinity is exposed from beneath the layers of doctrinal obfuscation; the transcendent Father and the historical Jesus are transposed into each other through the mediation of the Spirit, thus allowing each man within the spiritual community to become a member of the "Divine Jesus" (J, 91:30).²

1. Milton's Three Classes of Men

How this takes place within the actual world is demonstrated by the Three Classes of Men who are: the Reprobate, the Elect, and the Redeemed. Each class is engaged in a peculiar form of activity in and through the other two, creating a dialectical fusion of various human aspects that duplicates the structure of the tri-une Godhead in the matter of history itself. This dialectical movement, in the specific Hegelian sense of sublation, allows for the simultaneous retention and dissolution of class distinctions; it allows for the interdependence of distinct components in much the same way that the organs or members of a body are both separated and integrally united with the others of the same body.

The recognition of an embracing unity, without dissolution of distinction, demands that we review an "innocent" notion of love. For if divine love is to move towards its most complete epiphany, it must first plumb the depths of its potentially destructive nature. And it learns to work out the destructiveness in the unfolding of its paradoxical content as a love informed, limited and enhanced by the moment of wrath. Thus, the fearful tiger must be recognized with the lamb if love is not to sink into the insipidity of pure homogenization, of nirvanic dissolution of egoity into another. The initial giving up of one's self into another, whether it be expressed as the anguish of love God suffers as he dies the death of man, or the pity that one individual feels for another's plight, must be partially

reversed in the reaffirmation of unique identity. For how could one establish an empathic connection with another's unique situation if one does not have a point of reference in one's own unique situation? By implication, then, wrath, too, is partially annulled in its uninhibited expression of egoic energy. For the fearful symmetry associated with the tiger, testifies to desire redirected and organized by a whole of mutually contending and, ultimately, reciprocating desires. Thus, love and wrath feeding into each other create a uniqueness of identity, which has discovered its ultimate power of self-enhancement through the genuine experience of its relationship with an other.

The moment of wrath, as the moment of defiant difference, must emerge to prevent the complete and debilitating incursion of otherness into the sanctity of individual being. But such wrath becomes the power of the negative so deepened into itself, that it destroys its own destruction, and affirms all difference in love.

The wrathful Reprobate, the loving and compassionate Redeemed, and the rationalizing Elect, are religious personalities Blake has borrowed from the poetry and prose of John Milton. Blake's inversion of the order of values assigned by Milton to the three classes reveals the complexity of Blake's response to Milton - a response which is, at the same time, reflected in Los' creation of a psychic system counter to the Newtonian world-view.

John Milton's Three Classes of Men are based upon a religion of divided consciousness. The structure of God's

providential plan, whereby God, as the aboriginal, transcendent creator, brings about creation through divine fiat, and whose imposed will creation is compelled to obey, necessarily results in a state of alienated consciousness between the here and the beyond. Consciousness suffers a split between election, which is based upon subservience to a moral imperative whose source is the transcendent God, and reprobation, whose very feasibility depends upon the assertion of the world's autonomy (its capacity to conduct its own eternal generation) vis-a-vis God (the Satanic). Thus, the result is belief rather than faith and love, subjection under the law rather than fullness of life within the law. Milton's restoration of right reason as the voice of moral autonomy, or as the attempt to personalize law, fails to secure man ultimate independence. For such reason, which is connected with its source in an unknowable God, becomes an authority within the person no different from any other external authority. In the end, it proves to be inadequate to the task of annulling the division between justice (reason) and mercy, good and evil (wrath).

Would Milton, poet of freedom, exalt tyranny in his poem had he been aware of what he was doing? John Milton's genius lay not with philosophical pursuits, but with poetry. Blake and his contemporaries saw that he knew what he was doing at an imaginative level.³ Blake realizes that Milton's genius allows him to take philosophical premises, abstractly and prosaically laid down in Book III of Paradise Lost, and, through a dramatization of their hidden implications, subject

them to a dialectical movement that partially reverses their original content. Milton's poetry illustrates Blake's contention that only in the imaginative reformulation of a doctrine does that doctrine assume a distinctly human voice, and thereby become involved in a transformative dialogue with its own other. Through the poetic depiction of the "error," Milton is able to reveal, and thereby to invalidate, the logical fallacies that are not only inherent in an antiquated Christian doctrine, but characteristic of any ideological system that purports to be the sole conveyer of truth.

Thus, we are concerned, as is Blake, not with what Milton meant, but with what he means. We, as a collective body of readers with changing sensibilities, can become engaged in a dynamic interaction with the text that changes Milton's intended meaning, while still remaining faithful to the text.

Let us look more closely at the nature of Milton's divided consciousness, which conceives a universe torn between creator and creature, the elect and the reprobate, justice (wrath) and mercy (love), man and woman. For it is only through the depiction of this error, as the radical difference between self and other, that Blake is able to envision an embracing unity without doing violence to either self or other.

2. Milton as the Poet-Prophet: The Meeting Point of Light and Darkness, Infinitude and Finitude

The infinite, for Milton, is located only in the one God. For it is only in the quality of "oneness" that divine authority can be seen as the "Highest Supremacy of Heaven (PL,3:205), Omnipotent, / Immutable, Immortal, Infinite, / Eternal King: Author of all being" (PL,3:372-75). But this "oneness" sets into motion a ruthless "feudalistic" logic in which God's being, conceived as the center of authority, is dispensed to individuals under the stipulation that they repay the loan with the sacrifice of other entities. This original "oneness" presupposes a form of reality in which the interchangeability of one with the other is made possible by the reduction of both to the same limited quantified being (Bracher 4).⁴

God "retracts" from the self-containedness of primordial oneness into a condition of exclusive singularity which is thereby opposed to another (See Appendix 2). In positing himself as something other than or outside himself, he has withdrawn into a particular location, at which point he is forced to quantitatively determine himself as a one that must jealously guard its integrity in the face of another one. And so, Milton's God must perpetually maintain the logical opposition of the other to secure the singularity and exclusiveness of his identity. But that other one, by the same logical casuistry that permits no escape, assumes a parodic role in which it becomes the inverted image of its adversary. This other one, regarded by God as a part of his own divided being, can only claim ontological reality in the paradoxical affirmation of itself as the negative abstraction of the other's positive essence. Hence, despite Satan's

compulsion to negate God as that other which stands in contradiction to himself, he must continually recreate God's presence as the necessary object of an undying vengeance that provides the only immediate sense of himself as real. Satan, then, as the product of a creation that stands at a point of unmediated difference to God (for he is the being who has experienced expulsion from the seat of Being in the most direct way) recoils into the particularity of his own self in which he becomes no more than the discrete unit of his immediate bodily presence. As God has negated him for all eternity, so Satan, in the efforts to indefinitely sustain such presence must continually recreate God so that he can negate him.

We have in creation, then, an affirmation of determinate being whose source of affirmation lies outside. From this, we may infer that election is an order or way of being posited (the positivity or naive affirmation of objective substance) from the outside and from the beginning that continues without change (without being informed by an evolving subjective content). Such a radical displacement of one's self to the elective material of one's being in another place, necessarily involves the simultaneous casting aside of reprobation as that adventitious or accidental element which is here with creation itself - that element which remains coeval with creation as the primal fall into plurality, or which expresses the most frightful aspect of creation as the progressively advancing state away from the one of God into the fragmentation of individualism(s).

The description of the setting in Book III, before the celestial council takes place, establishes, as a correlative to a universe ordered according to a system of spatially demarcated provinces or segregated spheres of influence, the idea of light or divine inspiration originating from the beyond. The scene begins with a description of the enthroned Deity who, from his vertiginous height "bends" down his eye "His own works and their works at once to view", thereby establishing the spiritual supremacy of heaven with reference to the earth and hell that lies beneath in a dim prospect. He then casts his glance "behind him" to the angels which stand as transparent "Sanctities" (PL,3:60), whose vast numbers populate the skies as thickly as stars. And then he looks to his right side at his Son, in whose countenance is reflected the radiant image of his being, invoking associations of the "transfiguration of Christ in the Gospel," and the image of "the mirror reflecting the light" of the sun. His view returns to the earth, there to take notice of "the wearied Satan stooped beneath heavy wings" as he approaches the earth (Broadbent 155). In the last phrase, all possibility for dramatic movement and dialogue seems crushed beneath the weight of Milton's ponderous and expressionless language. God's contemplative stance turns back on himself and becomes a pure unmediated self-reflection in which all temporal determinations are compressed into the single spatial determinacy of God's eternal presence. "His own works and their works at once to view/Him God beholding from his prospect high/Wherein past, present, future he beholds" (PL,

3:77-78).

It is with the invocation to light, at the beginning of Book III, that Milton feels inspired to undertake the arduous ascent to the rarified regions of metaphysical construction, and then to make those spiritual truths correspond to things perceivable by normal men. For light is that image that denotes the pure self-manifestation of Deity, or the rapidity of his thought that encompasses all of eternity. It not only provides the illumination for the broad paradigmatic structure within which a certain kind of metaphysical meaning becomes intelligible, but it also provides the element in which the spatial and temporal relationality of events in Paradise Lost are made to correspond to their substantive metaphysical ground. The invocation itself captures this movement of light as an "undulating rhythm:"⁵ first, as the descent of light from the coldly intellectualized region, where it is designated the power "increate" (PL,3:6), and then to its manifestation as that created physical light, or as that immanently active and envitalizing influence that allows the confused heaps of benighted chaos to assume an organic and spiritual intelligibility, and finally its reascent again, as if to reassert the predominant spirituality of heaven. For that light, which follows the command of God's voice ("And at the voice/Of God, as with a Mantle didst invest/The rising world of waters dark and deep" PL,3:10-11), returns to its authoritative center after having done its bidding.

This same undulating movement is made to describe the descent of Deity upon Milton himself as the sudden flash of

epiphanic vision that dispels the dross of "normal sight," and the reclaiming of Milton to itself in the reassent towards the purity of its undisturbed abstraction. For the source of Milton's revelation, as something that remains transcendent, always returns to the original point of its unbroken unity. It never compromises its original sublime isolation, even as it condescends to make an appearance.

Despite the poetic beauty of the passage, however, there is an essential problem that this paean to light forces upon us. The transition from the intimate details of Milton's life and blindness to the coldly rational and objectively rendered account of light, is rather abrupt and unconvincing. But this is not so much a deficiency in the integrity of the poem itself, as in the kind of poem which has as its central theme Milton's subjective certainty of what he deems to be an objective truth. The song to light, so poignantly associated with the want of light in his own life, promotes an uneasy transition to the Platonic form of the Good, to Plotinus's creative and unifying energy emanating from the one, and to the Zoroastrian distinction between the light of good and the darkness of evil. The agonizing distinction between himself, as the poet of beauty who cannot see beauty, and the world who sees it but does not understand or appreciate it, leads him up to an abstracted beauty, and thereby allows for the sordid insinuations of a dualism to enter into the consciousness of both the poet and the reader. For the reassent to a pure and undisturbed divine light suggests not so much the taking up of the particular life-form which light has brought into

brilliant relief by its unimpeded expansiveness, as the leaving behind of these forms in their stark externally present condition - or as the leaving behind of a world in a confused finitude uniformed by a divine intelligence.

This cold and etherialized light, which is commensurable with the infinite goodness and substantial unity of the Godhead, stands alongside the darkness without ever fully absorbing it. Light can only become manifested when it has struck something that is dark or outside itself. And with this abstract self-determination of light, in which God (and Milton who receives the divine effluence in the isolation of his formal inwardness) becomes the good externally opposed to evil, the ontology of presence becomes vigorously reinforced. The abstract subjectivity of Deity and prophet, then, has its determination outside itself, or in another that remains an inscrutable and impenetrable presence of unappropriated otherness - an otherness which does not yet belong to God and Milton as his own other.⁶

Let us look at the invocation from the perspective of the poet who is actually invoking the muse of light. In finding himself up against the inaccessibility of Deity shrouded in a blinding light, Milton turns away, and rests his eyeless gaze upon the present condition of his blindness. He devotes some twenty-three lines of the most beautiful poetry in the English language to an expression of longing for those sensuous things in nature which will forever elude him. Thus, Milton, afflicted as he is with blindness, unable to see the ordinary things of life, will content himself with no less

than achieving a point of access into that primal or highest source of light, that light of all lights, and to see deeply into its secrets. Just as the nightingale seeks out the "shadiest covert" (PL, 3:39) to sing its song, so Milton finds his most eloquent prophetic voice in the darkness that surrounds him. He will learn to descry that distant ray of spiritual light beyond the immediate circumference of his visible darkness, and he will dedicate his song of light to a God whose perception is not contingent upon the ability to see. By identifying himself with the illustrious line of blind poets, Milton sees that the very limiting condition of his blindness will enable him to divert his attention away from the limitations attached to finite existence generally, and to focus upon those stable and boundless truths of a luminescent spirituality:

Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers
Irradiate, there plant eyes, all mist from thence .
Purge and disperse, that I may see and tell
Of things invisible to mortal sight. (PL.3:52-54)

Like Tiresias before him, he will be able to fathom the unfathomable depths of God's mysterious nature, to perceive the outer boundary of his inexpressible height, and to render an account of such a revelation in terms that are wholly negative.

Immutable, Immortal, Infinite, Eternal King

Fountain of Light, thyself invisible. (PL,3:372-75)

God is defined precisely as the logical inversion of those conditions that are an integral part of finitude as immediate presence. In placing God at a point beyond the actual "here," thereby leaving the here intact as sheer immediacy, Milton has fallen into the "observational" (empirical) standpoint of the Urizenic intellect. In resigning himself to the inevitability of his blindness, he claims to see what others cannot see. What he sees is a god constituted precisely in the way in which Milton is not. Because Milton is conscious of what he is not, he can apprehend God's nature as what it immediately is as the is not of Milton's is not. What we have, in this juxtaposition of two negatives, is a God who is Milton's blindness apotheosized to the level of divine seeing: a seeing whose field of vision lies somewhere beyond the boundaries of normal human vision; a seeing, then, that assumes as its point of departure the transcendence of precisely those sensuous things that Milton has been forced to consider inconsequential because of his blindness. And, in fact, the invocation is followed by the introduction of God as omnipresent eye, whose single glance, cast down from an unapproachable height, is able to encompass the simultaneity of past, present and future in one eternally present moment.

Now had th' Almighty Father from above,

From the pure Empyrean where he sits

High Thron'd above all highth, bent down his eye,
His own works and their works at once to view:...

God beholding from his prospect high,
Wherein past, present, future he beholds
(PL, 3:56-59; 77-78)

Milton's divine object of contemplation, then, can only be determined by contact to what Milton's himself is in the particularity of his finitude. God is the infinite only, which, in the end, can be nothing more than another abstract finitude that begins where the other terminates, or, is situated at a point beyond this one as the being who is immediately present in his absence. Milton, then, is halted before the eternal fixedness of his finite condition. His longing to see those sensuous things of nature compels him to go beyond nature to the non-nature of God's transcendence. Yet, his going beyond is never more than an attempt to satisfy the yearning for an infinite, which, as the outright negation of the perceptual content of finite being, simply sustains that very finitude in its entrenched immediate presence.

The infinite (God) can only be characterized through an antithesis between itself and the finite that is necessarily determined as the negative abstraction (or shadow side) with reference to itself. For, if, as in traditional theologies (and we shall argue that despite certain radical tendencies in Milton's thought, he ultimately lapses into a traditional framework), the seat of being is ultimately situated in that radically alien other, then finitude remains on this side of

existence, simply by referring to the ground of its existence as somewhere else. In other words, in the longing to maintain a certain fixedness of itself as a particular finitude, it posits an unattainable other by which it is determined, and, through which determination it becomes the dependent or negative component in its unity with the infinite. It becomes a finitude that is unable, on its own account, to determine the infinite in a way that would allow it to become something other than itself.⁷

This arrangement of being, in which the determination of "ultimate reality" in one fixed point makes all else a mere "appearance" of that reality, is rendered even more clearly in the image of light as that which allows things to appear only in its foreign or extrinsic substantiality. The appearance of things is an appearance in so far as it has its substantive core in the borrowed ray of light from somewhere else. Light, then, associated with the substantive unity and goodness of God's being, compels all things to assume the characterization of a derivative or imperfect shade of goodness, which merely varies in the degree of its approximation to the ultimate standard of goodness, depending on the point of distance from the light source it occupies. Evil is simply considered as something which, in itself, does not exist, or as a state of being which can only be paradoxically defined in terms of a want of being, a bereavement of goodness and light. At one extreme end of the spectrum, there is God, whose "excessive brightness" (PL, 3: 380) makes him so unapproachable that his angelic host can only stand before him with veiled eyes. At

the other extreme of the spectrum, there is Satan, whose eclipsed brightness indicates the extent to which he has fallen from the luminous goodness of God's being. His dark and base mortality is emphasized at the beginning of Book III, where he wings his way through the "dun air" (PL,3:72) and where he is also seen to hover outside the "Precious of light" (PL,3:88) as an uninvited guest. And somewhere in the middle of the spectrum, there is the poet-prophet Milton, whose mediative role entails the negotiation of being as the exchange of one kind of seeing for another, or as the simple transposition of one into the other without essentially changing their respective structural contexts.

Through a blind faith, Milton transforms those emotions of a debilitating self-pity and bitterness into a graceful acknowledgement of their importance in securing him the position of elective representative of the "viso dei." What initially appears to be an indictment against the God who arranged the circumstances of his finite existence to include the fact of blindness, becomes a lyrical praise of God's mysterious ways ultimately working towards the betterment of all human situations.⁸ It becomes an acknowledgement of the divine cunning which turns seemingly bad conditions into good, or the workings of eternity which manipulates the stuff of finitude as putty in its hands. Thus, Milton has successfully transcended the fate of the embittered and resentful Satan, whose rejection of the divine light (his speech to the Sun) has excluded him from God's good graces forever. Milton rises to the occasion as the vessel awaiting fulfillment, or as the

divine amanuensis pliantly receiving the dictations of eternal wisdom. He is able to say "Blindness be thou my sight," and claim the jurisdiction of infinitude to be his own.⁹

The means by which Milton is elected to the sight of God equally provides Satan his point of access to the darkness of damnation (the unregenerate reprobate). For Satan, too, is an "I," which, as this immediate bodily presence, claims to be in possession of ultimate truth, while the content of this universal knowledge is merely the arbitrary certainty of his own particular will. As Milton "shuts himself up within himself"¹⁰ in God's light, standing intractably opposed to the dark which is outside, so Satan claims exclusive possession of his kingdom of darkness against the light in the zenith regions. Although the dark or shadow underside of being can only realize itself as a finitude which stands in the diminished position of an appearance to the infinite, it nevertheless stands to itself as the only fixed and tangible reality before the infinitely receding or vanishing presence of eternity. The Satanic consciousness realizes that the various configurations of reality that have distinguished themselves from the "non-I" have occurred within its own particular consciousness. Because Milton has been compelled to draw a sharp line of distinction between what cannot be seen (divine light) as opposed to what can be seen (the darkness of the outer world), he has predetermined the nature of Satan's hellish policy as the affirmation of a sensuous world bereft of any spiritual content. Satan reverts to a subjective idealism or determination of reality according to

his own immediate bodily ("corporeal") sight. The darkness, for which Satan stands as the clearest embodiment, becomes the ultimate category of reality, without which light has no existence of its own.

Let us now turn to Satan's speech to the Sun, which is clearly a parallel to Milton's own invocation to the muse of light. Satan, like a bird of prey, is perched on Mount Niphates' top. He casts an envious glance towards the Sun from whose light he is excluded, and then, with the same envy, looks down upon Eden, bent upon its destruction. He is determined that if he cannot be God himself, sitting pre-eminently among his own dominion of stars, he will, in an act of perverse defiance, make of himself an opaque block of bodily presence impervious to all light. He will consolidate his own infernal region of darkness from where he will conduct his warfare upon the light of God's creation. Thus, he will be unto himself, by a process of self-election, his own God, asserting his egoic consciousness to be the ultimate point of the dark "originary" matter of reality, elevating the discrete moments of his finite particularity into points of primary or infinite significance. He will, in other words, by a continuously contrived inversion of God's created order, become God's anti-God or the anti-creator, acting in the recognition that such an order is no more than the vanishing vaporous substance of his own undisciplined imagination. Hence, the speech to the Sun acts as the culmination to that series of memorable quotations from Satan which affirm the solipsistic orientation of his perspective: namely, that space

and time, heaven and hell, good and evil are solely determinations of his own prolific mind.

Thus, the reprobate plunges into the abysmal depth of his soul, determining himself as naked monad and rendering the the distillation of his essence in such phrases as: "Myself am Hell" (PL,4:75); "One who brings the mind not chang'd by Place or Time" (PL,1:252-3); "Evil be thou my Good" (PL,4:110). In positing himself as his own good that is determined precisely as the good that is God's evil, he is nevertheless displaying a reliance upon the idea of the good (light), in the same way that Milton depends on the darkness of his own blindness to affirm the divine light. But Milton recoils into the bare abstractness of his immediate being with God. His solitary conscience, as the seat of God's right reason, takes him beyond himself to God's light, while nature, existence and the world is left to Satan's dark destruction.

The goal of Satanic creation is the "uncreation" of God's creation. It is to lay waste God's creation by converting God's good into the evil which is Satan's own good. By virtue of claiming for himself the point of absolute beginning (the original darkness of chaos) from which all things succeed in an infinite regression of fading importance, he achieves, in the same way that God (or Milton) did, an infinite formal subjectivity. He is true being, but as particularity in whom all content vanishes as quickly as the caprice and contingency of his thoughts, his will and his feelings. All things are judged good and evil according to their relative position with reference to himself. Hence,

God, being at the farthest end of the dark/light spectrum, is judged as the utter nullity of evil, whose false good must be converted to the means that would ultimately concede to Satan his end.

Milton claimed to have surmounted Satan's temptation by choosing to be neither "creator nor imitator" (Kerrigan 147). His epic song was to have been a completion of the divine creation, realizing within the finite scope of its pages the outer boundaries of an unknowable infinite, recreating God's original act of spontaneous creation. But we see that his private conscience, as the voice of right reason heard alone amidst the bacchic dissonance, sets up the conditions for Satan to see himself alone amidst an ungodly universe. Milton has, indeed, succumbed to the Satanic temptation of hubris. There is no standard, objectively out in the world, to allow any judgement but his own.

That Milton feels a strong identification with Satan has been supported by many critics, the most significant of whom is William Kerrigan. Kerrigan refers us to Marvell's introductory poem to Paradise Lost where he expresses "at once delight and horror" at Milton's grandiose undertaking. "The sheer ambition of the poem," in which Milton attempts to tell of things untold before, places him in the extremely precarious position of having to balance himself on the edge of the precipice, of "dazzl[ing]" his readers with the possibility of success, or of horrifying them with failure as he topples to the ground from his hubristic height (Kerrigan 129).¹¹ Kerrigan locks into that constellation of images

that deal with darkness and light, the godlike view of vertiginous heights and true divine seeing. Kerrigan cites several examples in Paradise Lost from which he formulates the view that, although Milton was subjected to the various temptations of Satan, he successfully avoided Satan's fate and returned to the clear calm insight of the true prophet as servant of God. He essentially argues that these examples re-enact and "redefine the plot of Satan." "To illuminate what he was Milton created, in the figure of Satan, what he was not" (156). We shall argue, however, that these examples lie overwhelmingly on the side of a man who dealt with his dark side only by half measures; his final peace with God is an uneasy peace. Although Kerrigan argues that Satan displays a kind of prophetic seeing which is an inverted parody of Milton's true vision, it is, nevertheless, what the truth is not, the other side which must exist in its unresolved opposition if Milton's truth is to remain paramount. Satan's rejection of the Sun (an allusion to his rejection of the Son of God) parallels the movement of Milton's invocation to light in Book III, and the invocation to Urania in Book VII. And although this movement culminates with Milton's commitment to God, it also permits the structural dynamic which leads Satan, in his speech, to the final avowal of reprobation.

Let us now turn to the invocation to Urania which Kerrigan uses as the focal point in his argument (126-142). Milton invokes the name of Urania by whose power he is lifted far above Olympian heights to which the winged horse of poetic inspiration takes his rider Bellephron. By claiming to be the

recipient of a superior inspiration to that of the Greek muse, he thereby discountenances any affiliation with the actual name of "Urania," preferring rather to focus upon the power of the meaning behind the name: "The meaning, not the name I call" (PL, 7:5). Thus, Kerrigan states, Milton disclaims any magical power over the word, asking rather that we understand his language to embody the essence of a purely significatory function (126). But it is this very relegation of language to such a limited function which already displays a tension of opposing attitudes. On the one hand, Milton audaciously follows the voice of Urania beyond the ken of normal human experience into the rarified reaches of eternal wisdom, and, on the other, he asks us to dwell upon the strict meaning of the name whose power, while it lies beyond the means of a simple invocation of the name, nevertheless is limited to the translation of eternal wisdom into a body of linguistic signs. He reinforces this initial tension by comparing his bold and adventurous journey to Bellephron's. Wishing to avoid the fate of the mythical boy, he implores his patron to guide him back down into the safer regions of a quotidian plane of reality - "but narrower bound/Within the visible Diurnal Sphere;/Standing on Earth, not rapt above the Pole (PL, 7:21-3). Just as in Book III, then, where the comprehension of Infinity is cautiously relegated to a description of what finitude is not, so the creation of the song about creation is undertaken in the spirit of a gracious acquiescence to the promptings of the heavenly powers in what they deem fit for man to know. The creation of the song is

undertaken in compliance with the word of God as presented in the Scriptures, lest, as in the case of Bellephron, he be sent wandering on the barren plains, divested of all divine and poetic insight - a man utterly and uselessly blind.

Kerrigan states that, for Milton, the essence of the prophetic experience consists in the combination of a voluntary movement of the soul toward divine knowledge, and in the absolute passivity of the inspired soul in the reception of that knowledge (159). The elected prophet, then, stands above all men in his privileged proximity to God. He is able, by virtue of such election to circumvent the ordinary laws of man. But, and this is a very emphatic "but," he must remain completely compliant to the directing influence of God's beckoning will. He must make absolutely sure that the source of his inspiration is God and not some daemonic displacement of a self-inflated ego. The initial voluntary openness to the divine influence must not exceed its bounds to suppress the necessary moment of involuntary submission before the invasiveness of God's universal will. The opportunity for individual expression must not assume the monstrous proportions of an unbridled egoity expropriating all divine authority to itself. The line which separates the elect from the reprobate is dangerously thin, and Milton, by comparing his attempted flight with that of Bellephron's, was poignantly aware of how vulnerable he was to the temptation of crossing over that line himself, and becoming the Satanic reprobate.

The dizzying heights of divine seeing to which Satan aspires, and whose allurements Milton is compelled to resist,

is reflected again in Eve's hauntingly beautiful, but ominous, dream (Kerrigan 144). The dream is not inspired by God, but by Satan who grotesquely crouches down beside her in the form of a frog and whispers temptations into her ear. As a grim foreshadowing of the fall, Eve dreams that she is led up by Satan to fly high above the earth, to see as the gods would see ("and see/What life the Gods live there, and such live thou" PL,5:80-1), and then, in mid-flight, to be abandoned by her guide, from where she sinks back down into her bower.

There is, according to Kerrigan, an example in Paradise Lost of true prophetic seeing (145). It involves the encompassment of great vistas of reality which is, however, channelled through means divinely ordained as appropriate for reception by the human mind, and which is clearly sanctioned by Biblical precedent. In the last two Books of Paradise Lost, Adam is led by Michael up the highest mountain in paradise, from whose apex Adam is granted divine vision. Unlike Eve's audacious flight, Adam is "safely" led up the mountain by Michael, never abandoned by his guide to be left wholly to his own devices, never straying from a cautious and plodding path up toward the apex of divine vision. Adam's eyes are "instilled" by "three drops" from the well of life (PL, 11:416) - an allusion to Psalm 26 where God is praised as being the source of this life-giving fountain, as well as the light through which we shall see light ("In thy light shall we see light"). As with Milton in the opening invocation to Book VII, here Adam occupies a wholly subordinate role in his participation in divine vision. By Book XI and XII, however,

Adam is laid low by the recognition of his utterly fallen and dependent nature with respect to God. Infinite knowledge remains an inaccessible mystery, and is only allowed to penetrate the film of obscurity overlaying man's fallen sight in a manner that is made proportional to fit the capacity of the knower to know. Thus, the prophet learns to react to the impetus of God's message. He learns to discern the spiritual reality immanent in concrete events as the paradox of an unreconciled infinity forcing itself upon the weak and pathetic determinations of history.

The prophet must recognize, as with all fallen men, the unsurpassability of his finitude. Such a recognition would thereby make of his prophetic activity one largely determined, within the context of certain imminent existential and historical events, as a voluntary involuntary response to the unbearable impact of God's initiative. The prophet detaches himself from himself, thus achieving the point of view of the disinterested seer who sees himself as the empty vessel through which God conveys, in a manner made to fit the determinate shape of the vessel, the effluxes of his spiritual meanings. And so the prophet must not mistake the ecstatic condition of poetic inspiration as the god-intoxication of Bacchic dissonance ("drive far off the barbarous dissonance/ of Bacchus and his Revellers" PL, 7:32-3). Through a complete abandonment of themselves to the capriciousness of their impulses and erratic wills, the revellers create a congruence of unrelated sounds. The Bacchic dissonance, associated in invocation with the unruliness of Bellephron's journey,

implies the blindness of self-will as a fallen departure from the calm and clarity of divine vision - the aberration of distorted fantasies in contrast to true prophetic seeing which can only be quietly instilled by the "purposed" and rationally organized will of God.¹²

3. The Limits of Milton's Prophecy

We now return to the difference between the Elective and Redemptive categories of religious experience. Such difference, "prophetically" seen, is one of degree and not of kind. According to the chapter in the Christian Doctrine entitled "On Predestination," "All those who should believe in God," through Christ, "and continue in such faith" (919) are privileged with election. However, the bestowal of grace upon those who are faithful is not uniformly distributed. "He [God] undoubtedly gives grace to all, though not in equal measure, yet sufficient for attaining knowledge of the truth and final salvation" (926). In the subsequent chapter "On Renovation and Vocation," Milton distinguishes between a general and special calling. God's general calling invites all mankind, in various ways, to knowledge of Deity. The special calling invites particular men, both elect and reprobate, in preference to others, to the advancement of God's providential plan toward its goal, toward its final denouement in the end of history. What we are left with, then, is a clear division between election and/or redemption on the one side, and reprobation on the other. There is no dialectical interaction

between the three, the result of which would embody the completion of each in the other two within the whole that binds their differences together. As it is, the reprobation of an individual, by which he is excluded from the pale of God's salvic action, is determined solely by his obstinancy in refusing to believe in God (through Christ), or what is the same thing, in persisting to acknowledge only himself as the main center of volitional activity. Conversely, the elect and the redeemed are granted salvation if they willingly defer to the will of God.

Eschewing all connection with a world largely exposed to the changeability of temporal affairs, Milton chooses rather to affirm that inner pneumatic core in his self that establishes an unbroken unity with the good of God that is not the world. Within the invocation to Book VII, there is a moving passage describing the plight of Milton's earthly situation. Milton laments that he has "Fall'n on evil days,/On evil days though fall'n, and evil tongues;/In darkness, and with danger compass round,/And solitude" (PL, 7:25-7). The vicissitudes of politics, in which Milton finds himself a victim, prevents him from achieving personal satisfaction out in the world, and he is compelled to transfer all possibility for happiness into that part of himself that is not himself at all, but is the non-finite, or that which is susceptible of election by God.

The elected individual, then, wholly abstracted from any societal affiliations, stands naked and isolated before the awful majesty of God's presence. In the contraposition of

itself to the radically "other" in which it becomes negatively self-related, or in its contradictory sense of itself as something that is divided against itself, it is compelled to undergo an internalization of itself that produces both conscience and consciousness (what Milton calls right reason or that "Umpire Conscience" PL,3:195). I am painfully aware of myself and my actions precisely in so far as I am also aware that the ground, which constitutes both myself and my actions, is posited from someone and somewhere else. In the acknowledgement of its true identity as the other of itself (what is abstracted from worldly connections), the elected "I," then, has still not apprehended that other as an other which is its own. It is another which steadfastly remains the insignificant externality of its worldly being and actions. But in denying its acts, the elect relinquishes all claim to independence, to a working through of what is reprobative within itself. It relinquishes its autonomy in the sense that it is never able to return out of its actions to itself, handing them over to the discretion of God's mercy or justice.

Thus, Milton deals with the reprobative element within himself in a way that entails no genuine act of regeneration or quickening of consciousness to a higher level. For regeneration can only complete itself if that clamouring of wills, to which Milton's person had once belonged as a member of the world, is taken up and seriously dealt with as the necessary precondition of one's elective self, as that part with whom one forms a negative unity as in a harmony of creative dissonance. Improvement thereby becomes the taking

up of the entropic tendency of the reprobate, or that tendency toward the dissolution of unity upon the perversity of individuality (this or that individual), and re-integrating it within the "I" that has become the organizing agent of a wider range of relationships taken from the world. We see Milton, on the contrary, seeking the infinite within that part of himself that lies beyond the finite of the world. We see him, in other words, determining the nature of election as contingent upon the leaving behind of the reprobative element, and so leaving the reprobative there in its unaltered condition - in the condition which abandons the world to its seething conflicts, unmediated by the organizing intelligence of the human spirit.

Satan's increasing degeneration, to the point where he is beyond the call of redemption, testifies to an element inside Milton himself that remains an area of unresolved tension. And we, as readers, see Milton in these two invocations precariously poised between two worlds, forever struggling to keep them apart only so that they remain in unproductive opposition to one another. We see him perpetuating that false infinity that is the finite forever determining itself as what it is in utter distinction to what it is not, or in distinction to what is forever on the other side of self. We now turn to see Milton as Blake re-created him in the poem Milton.

Notes

1 I am referring here to Altizer's term for Blake's notion of creation. A good description of the mechanism of kenosis is found in his book NA 63-75.

2 Altizer claims that Kenosis formed the basis of the earliest notion of incarnation in the Christian Church. It was adopted by the Eastern Church, and forgotten by the West, until Blake and Hegel. Thus, Blake and Hegel are, in this respect, mutually enlightening. There is no doubt in my mind that Blake's aphorism is amenable to a "speculative interpretation." See PS 453-78.

3 Stuart Curran has said as much with reference to Shelley and Byron's relationship to Milton. See his article "The Seige of Hateful Contraries" 209-230.

4 Curran has also noted this form of ruthless logic at work throughout Paradise Lost. God's election of one son provokes the envy and antagonism of another. The atonement can only be seen in terms of the satisfaction of an exacting justice in which the Son must die so that man will not die. Eve's plan to commit suicide is "forestalled by Adam," as he reminds her of God's promise that the seed of one of her progeny shall bruise the head of the serpent. Death "tears" his way out of Sin's womb, but returns "to gnaw at her bowels" as "a grotesque" parody of the spurned son returning to retaliate against the Father (Curran 223-24). We shall see this logic being brought to its ultimate conclusion when Satan commits himself to the project of making evil of God's good, while God constructs his entire providential plan around the securing of good from Satan's evil. This same pattern of "locked" antagonism, in which the assertion or success of one position necessarily calls forth the opposition of another demanding vengeance and recompense, is extended to the bleak picture of the future that Michael presents to Adam in Books XI and XII.

5 Broadbent has noted this same "liturgical [or] undulating movement." He sees the light gathering all of creation into a unity. I, on the other hand, will emphasize the unbroken unity of the divine light over and against a pluralistic world. See Broadbent 96.

6 Hegel in the PS refers to the religion of light as the first ray of consciousness which sees itself as being all truth and reality in the form of a mere empty idea that opposes itself to the dark night of essence. The relevant sections are 418-20. This discussion on light is also found in DR where he discusses the light of the good and the darkness of evil in the Persian Religion (Zoroastrianism). Although Milton's sense of religion is far progressed beyond the primitive dualism of the Persian religion, there is a certain appropriateness in suggesting that his use of the imagery of light and darkness leads to a God which is a unity

idea opposed to the darkness of night.

7 Hegel employs a similar discussion on this sort of spurious form of infinity. See HL 136.

8 William Kerrigan is also concerned with the implication of Milton's blindness for the shaping of the poem's dramatic content. His term "viso dei" suggests that divine insight which is predicated upon the suspension of normal human vision. But, as the reader will see, my approach and my conclusions are very different from Kerrigan's. See his chapter entitled "Visionary Song: Zealous Prose" 125-87.

9 I have borrowed this phrase from Kerrigan, although my use of it occurs in a different context. See Kerrigan 155.

10 This phrase is taken from Kierkegaard's notion of the daemonic 110. Kierkegaard's description of the "daemonic" is not unlike Hegel's "Law of The Heart and The Frenzie of Self-Conceit" in PS 221-27.

'1 The examples I will be referring to are taken from his chapter "Visionary Song, Zealous Prose." I will summarize them in a way that fits my own scheme of interpretation.

12 Harold Knight states that the Hebraic prophetic consciousness claimed two streams of influence. The predominant one was divinatory, which was indigenous to the Hebrew tribes. It emphasized divine seeing and hearing in the clarity of the calm and open moment. In this way, the prophet holds on to his sense of being simply a man, who, by divine choice, becomes a messenger of God. The second subordinate influence came down from the ecstatic tradition, which was borrowed from the surrounding Cananite culture. As the name itself suggests, it emphasizes the working up of the prophet to the point of ecstatic abandonement. Losing all sense of limits, he actually begins to believe that he partakes of the divine essence. The latter influence was, with time, castigated by the main Hebrew culture as being a manifestation of false prophesy. See Knight 3-50. These two classes of prophesy can be compared to Nietzsche's cultural divisions of the Apollonian and Dionysian. The invocation to Urania in Book VII reveals the prophet of the Delphi Oracle rather than the prophet of "Bacchic dissonance."

Chapter V

Milton's Descent Into Darkness

The conclusions to the Bard's song in Blake's Milton brings with it a resolution in Milton to "go [to his] eternal death," to be drawn into the depths of divine passion and pathos which has as its ultimate end the abnegation of selfhood in the form of presence.

I will go down the sepulcher to see if morning breaks!
I will go down to self-annihilation and eternal death,
Lest the Last Judgment come & find me unannihilate
And be seiz'd and giv'n into the hands of my own Selfhood
(M, 14:21-24)

The allusion to the resurrection of Christ with the break of morning, elevates the life and death of every individual to the level of a divine drama, in which death becomes transformed into the chrysallis of self-transformation. The mists of obscurity surrounding the traditional doctrine of atonement (those mists caused by "the clouds of Jehovah and the winds of Elohim"), in which selfhood persists in its most opaquely present form, is here dispelled forever, for the resurrection of the self is no longer associated with the resuscitation of a particular bodily self, but with the spiritual essence in all of us that interconnects each with the all.

The passage culminates with Milton's recognition that the Satanic selfhood which, in Paradise Lost, had been banished to the peripheral point of an unredemptive alienation, is, in fact, a part of his own psyche consigned to

a hell of his own pernicious design.

I in my Selfhood am that Satan: I am that Evil One!

He is my Spectre! in my obedience to loose him from
my Hells

To claim the Hells, my Furnaces, I go to Eternal
Death. (M,14:30-3)

The evil of the opening line has been recognized as an internal evil. Milton does not limit the Satanic element to the figure of Satan but intends it to encompass the whole system of selfhood that perpetuates the presence of God as well as Satan. His acute sense of self-presence had been projected onto a theocentric universe in which Deity's monopolization of Being (Deity's selfhood) subordinates beings to a mere show of Being. The "clouds of Jehovah & the winds of Elohim" (M,14:26) surrounding the sepulcher are now recognized by Milton as a sign of the reduction of the atonement to a crude justice, in which the barter of one bodily presence for another continues the general competition of all for a limited portion in the reservoir of Being.¹

The reprobation, which Milton saw as a deflection from the ultimate center of Being, is designated by Blake to be that whole aberration of thought which arrogates to a certain part of reality the quality of "ultimacy" in the first place. The Miltonic elect are the real culprits who violate the sense of true being as all beings. Their fragmentation of

reality into those parts which conform to "ultimacy" and those which break their peace with it, reflects the condition of contending selfhoods for the position of dominance. In the poem Milton, Milton's descent can be seen as a reorganization of being that will stress the imperishable qualitative uniqueness of all individuals as each is enhanced through every other. His descent into the tomb of eternal death, then, is the death of one's immediate actuality, from whose remains will arise the phoenix of a new body and soul - the body of a spiritual community founded upon the mediated actuality of all beings in space and time.²

1. Descent and its Possibilities

At the very start of the descent, Milton enters his shadow, "mournful form double; hermaphroditic: male & female/ In one wonderful body" (M,14:37-8). The word "hermaphroditic" suggests a state of fractured being that marks a fallen departure from the perfect Edenic state of androgyny. Yet, the word, for all its negative implications, holds a sense of ambiguity and paradox that suggests the emergence of something more positive. The sterility of sexual union implied by opposites incompatible to one another, is, nevertheless, a grotesque parodic form of true union. Its very shaded (replicated) existence intimates the means by which finite existence is welded to the infinite. What is too perfect in Eternity, or what adheres too well to the hollow abstractness of geometric exactitude, must be enriched and corrected

through the asymmetrical determinations of time, through the painful ambiguities of mortal existence. Thus, Milton enwraps himself with those hard twisted roots of an unyielding vegetable world (generational world) that, under salubrious conditions, burgeon into a warm foliage. Those hard resistant structures of an inanimate nature are put up against something equally resistant, and still produce an internal soft illumination.

Milton descends into multiple levels of actuality as a simultaneous (fulfilled) experience, thus recreating himself as presence dispersed through a whole of presences. The several contemporaneous layers of self-experience become obvious in the following passage:

As when a man dreams, he reflects not that his body
sleeps,
Else he would wake; so seem'd he entering his Shadow:
but
With him the Spirits of the Seven Angels of the
Presence
Entering; they gave him still perceptions of his
Sleeping Body;
Which now arose and walk'd with them in Eden, as an
Eighth
Image Divine tho' darken'd' and tho walking as one
walks
In sleep; and the Seven comforted and supported him.
(M, 15:1-7)

Milton carries with him throughout his earthly sojourn a prophetic sense of his eternal nature as immanently active within the conditions of finitude. This double awareness of himself, as both eternal and finite, is exemplified in the fact that his shade is presided over by the Seven Angels of Presence. These angels compress within their persons the multiple layers of partial vision accumulated throughout history, thereby conveying the sense of Eternity moving in time. But more than this, this double awareness is made apparent in the very insubstantiality of the shade into which Milton has entered. Its very lack of fixed or solid presence allows for the possibility of its being filled with actual processes. The shade is an altered presence whose influence gains an autonomous existence beyond the immediate individual, allowing the works, the words, the thoughts and feelings of that individual to exist "posthumously" as it changes others and is changed by others.³ Such altered presence, then, assumes the status of the universal self which, although it contains process within itself, is not itself the process. It is the non-being of infinite potentiality which implicitly contains the whole process, and not the broken down moments of separate self-constituting presence. The lack of consciousness with which Milton enters his shadow ("As when a man dreams, he reflects not that his body sleeps,/Else he would wake") conveys that sense of remoteness the infinite self has from the actual processes of generation. And the consciousness bestowed upon Milton when the Seven Angels grant

him "still perceptions of his sleeping body," emphasizes the importance of living through the various states on the road to a universal consciousness.

As Milton embraces the shadow of mortal life, he learns to transcend selfhood even while he assumes its various delusional forms. Let us look at Milton's encounter with Urizen, who epitomizes one such selfhood.

Silent Milton stood before
The darkened Urizen: as the sculptor silent stands
before
His forming image; he walks round it patient
labouring.
Thus Milton stood forming bright Urizen, while his
Mortal
part Sat frozen in the rock of Horeb: and his Redeemed
portion
Thus form'd the Clay of Urizen; but within that
portion
His real Human walkd above in power and majesty
Tho darkened; and the Seven Angels of the Presence
attended him (M, 20:7-14)

Milton stands before the inchoate material of the "darkened Urizen" in much the same way that the artist stands in a state of uneasy preparedness before the blank canvas or the formless clay. He paces around Urizen in the anxious anticipation that is the moment suspended between non-being and being, inertia

and activity, potentiality and actuality. Here, however, the object of Milton's creation is himself, just as the "darkened Urizen" who stands across from him invokes the image of the shade to its real counterpart, the reflection to its original, the particular to its universal model. But rather than attempt to resurrect the whole Platonic system of transcendent forms of which perceivable reality is only a dim copy, Blake here is intimating a course of development in which the subject and the object, or the artist and his work stand to each other in the mutually reciprocating relationship of means and end. In other words, the *nisus* which underlies their relationship is a syllogistic teleology⁴ which permits each to be completed in the other rather than be consumed in the other. Their respective one-sidedness is annuled in the activity which binds them together as universal in particular. The allusion to Blake's relationship to John Milton, and his Paradise Lost, reveals that both Blake and Milton are changed through each other to form something greater than what they were apart.

The passage reveals the creative ambiguity of Blake's poetic images that suggest a radius of seemingly contradictory possibilities emanating from the single image. Thus, darkness is neither positive nor negative, but both at the same time. The dark shade, for Blake, is suggestive of both the hard opacity or unyielding positivity that is immediate presence, and, the insubstantiality of the shade given off by such presence. Each kind of shade forms a necessary complement to the other. The shade, then, is the means that allows presence

to continue to be itself in the manner of single self-reflection, and the basis of a new means that diffuses original presence beyond itself to achieve fulfillment as mediated presence. The relationship of the darkness to light, then, is not one of straight forward opposition, but richly ambiguous. The shade signifies the darkness of the opacity impervious to light, and the darkness of the shade that depends upon the presence of sunlight. It is shade from sunlight, however, not as a mere spectral counterpart to the object illumined by the sun, but as emanation in the Blakean sense of the term, which suggests that which the object is not yet, or what it could be in the totality of possibilities implicitly adumbrated within itself.

Thus, Milton (Blake) stands before Urizen (the old Milton) as both creator and created, as both the production and the productive force. In his contemplation of the darkened Urizen, he begins as presence aspiring to perpetuate itself in dim reflection, and becomes, through the transmission of the spark of inspiration, that ubiquitous shade that absorbs all that Urizen has and will become in the expansiveness of his being. Real regeneration has taken place as the old Milton, represented by Urizenic abstraction or positivity, and the new Milton, embodied in the mutating shade of negation, come together into a higher creative synthesis.

Darkness, for Blake, is not, as in Milton's exposition of the subject, an image exemplifying a state so impoverished of its own intrinsic worth that it is dependent upon an external source of sustenance as the mirror upon the lamp.

Here, non-being is, as its very name suggests, being and not-being at once.⁵ The emptiness of the darkness denotes the capacity to encompass all, leaving nothing outside itself, and yet "being not" associated with any one particular thing, as such an association would violate the purity of its undisrupted hollowness. Being inclusive of all, and yet excluding all, the shade carries within itself the possibility of its own negation. But it is an affirming negative which resides in the very becoming of itself into something it previously was not. The looming shade, which is the terror of untried things already implicit within the familiar, provides the principles of a progressive changeability which interlocks the spheres of being and non-being, infinitude and finitude, light and darkness. It represents the change through which each component fulfills its vague premonition of itself, its imaginative projection of itself onto the future, through its own other. But as its own other, it promotes a continuity between what it was and what it will be. The subtlety of the transition from the "darkened Urizen" to the "bright Urizen" compresses the apocalyptic nature of Milton's descent, rendering the account of his journey as the swift stroke which blends all opposition into chiaroscuro. Or like the tail end of a comet, he brings with him all of where he was to where he will be, blurring the spatial distinction between light and darkness with the great speed of his descent into time.

Milton forms the bright Urizen in the descent from the world of potentiality to the multiplicity of actual possibilities. As a sign of such transition he leaves stranded

in the rock of Horeb that part of himself receptive only to the immutable law that resists the fluid invasiveness of futurity. The rock of Horeb symbolizes the elective element, whose adherence to the law of the one God as the law of the one self, both consolidates its position as presence fixed within itself, and defeats that position when it is forced to acknowledge the other totality of determinations which enable its presence to be posited at all. Such retrenchment of energy into immediate self-interest is, at the same time, however, an expansion of self into the ambience of a world which supports its individuality. It allows the "Redeemed portion" to carve a world out, or to make a space out of the fluctuations of time, which would reflect back to it the familiar image of its visage. But as it permits the class of Redeemed to pursue a relationship of creative tension with the materials on hand in the world, it inadvertently engages in a transformation of itself that necessarily reflects the change in the world.

Here, Blake favours the image of the sculptor, who uses clay as that material sufficiently malleable to be moulded into something other than itself, yet sufficiently solid to resist complete dissolution into the former indefiniteness of its darkened mass. Thus, the Redeemed, as that locus or permanence in restless activity, mediates between what is given (the rock of Horeb which is also the opacity of the darkened Urizen) and what is to be (the amorphous shade of infinite potentiality) as conceived in future projects. The resolution of the differences between being and non-being into

the negative unity of the present, achieves a certain semblance of stability within the work of art.

The work of art represents that relatively durable entity through which space and time interpenetrate and paralyze one another. But it must inevitably give itself over to the erosion of time, or to that power of an awful unattenuated negation, which swells up once again out from under it to undermine its tenuous equilibrium. However, if the visionary inspiration, which initially precipitated the coagulation of time into the symmetry of stone, is broad enough in its scope to encompass a radius of influence beyond the stone itself, it becomes a seminal influence sprouting new works in the collective heart and mind. It becomes, in other words, an oblique presence within a grander collective design, or a presence situated as a cornerstone within the carefully wrought symmetry of the human spirit. It attains to a genuine "eternal permanence" far greater than is the fate of all objects which, in themselves, can only aspire, at best, to a state of duration or "relative permanence."⁶

Blake writes that within the "Redeemed portion" emerges "his [Milton's] real human" which "walk'd above in power and majesty, tho darkened." What emerges is clearly the emanative shade that signifies, in part, a return to the unformed Urizen at the beginning. But now, as the shade which is portentiously accompanied by the Seven Angels of Presence, it is the sum, not merely of what Milton is, but of what he could be. It represents the universal in particularity in which both space and time stand to each other in the mutual relation that is

the sublation of their separate abstractness within the whole of human activity.

Although no explicit mention has been made of the reprobate, we can infer from the direction of the preceding argument that if he is seen merely as the isolated creative genius, he does not contribute anything of lasting value to "man" as such. As Frye has astutely observed: "It is not the man creating which is so important, but the total form of his creation, his art regarded as his vision of life, and as an individual part of the archetypical vision which is the word of God" (Frye, FS 135). The wrathful reprobate is the personification of the necessary power of negation which allows being (and the elect who vouch for it) to pass over to non-being, and which, thereby, gives being leave to assume higher creative forms. Although the wrathful poet-prophet is close to Blake's heart as the highest to which an individual can attain within his single life-time, Blake also knows that he makes no sense without the whole of the human spirit redirecting his wrath towards a universal divine love. His individual aggression can only be justified if it is absorbed within the greater "archetypical vision" that is the redemptive affirmation of the whole of life; or if the power of his negating wrath is mitigated to the extent that it becomes an element interdependent with other elements, making for an organic concrescence of oppositions, the mediation of immediate presences that is the negation of negation.

The simultaneity of multiple perspectives, which allows Milton to diffuse his presence beyond his immediate existence, is reinforced in the passage referring to the vortices. We have already stated in Chapter I that the metaphor of the vortex reveals the structure of experience underlying all primal encounters. The individual who travels through eternity initially assumes the posture of immediate presence with reference to the other, in that the other is perceived as something radically different, as mere object. And, as the vortex "rolls backward behind his path," it is perceived as belonging to a systematic whole of interrelating parts in which both he and the other are able to attenuate their differences through the common ground that mediates between them (See Chapter 1, pp. 29-30).

The vortex symbolizes the apparent disorder in order. For the vortex, from the point-of-view of the traveller who is about to enter it, appears as the conduit through which the coincidence of oppositional forces occurs only as a collision. There is, however, at the other end of the vortex, at the apex of the cone, the "prospect of the whole," which brings with it a certain "providential calm" (Fox 74). The gaping maw of the vortex reveals forces of conflicting direction meeting in a whirlpool of activity; but the traveller who emerges at the other end achieves the equilibrium of rest-in-activity. He contemplates the vortex roll back behind him in the ultimate reconciliation of eternity and time, where all distances and clashing encounters are made to fit into a galaxy of vortices

that are systematically linked. Let us look at another passage from Milton which repeats this fundamental structure of experience.

First Milton saw Albion upon the Rock of Ages,
Deadly pale outstretchd and snowy cold, storm
covered;
A Giant form of perfect beauty outstretchd on the
rock
In solemn death: the Sea of Time & Space thunderd
aloud
Against the rock, which was inwrapped with the weed of
death
Hovering over the cold bosom, in its vortex Milton
bent down
To the bosom of death, what was underneath soon seemd
above.
A cloudy heaven mingled with stormy seas in loudest
ruin;
But as a wintry globe descends precipitant tho' Beulah
bursting,
With thunders loud and terrible: so Miltons shadow
fell
Precipitant loud thundring into the Sea of Time &
Space (M, 15:36-49)

As one commentator has suggested, "what seemed a stormy covering beneath him becomes, as Milton descends through the

vortex in the bosom of fallen man, "a cloudy heaven mingled with stormy seas": "what was underneath soon seemed above." The passage through the vortex incarnates Milton, whose shadow, or earthly portion, can enter into the mortal being of Blake. Thus, yet another dimension of the vortex is established; it is the conical womb through which beings pass from eternity to time" (Fox 74).

Thus, Milton has broadened such a context, in which presence establishes its cohesion with its other in the purely hermaphroditic sense (the immediate besideness of oppositions), to include the flow of time that would allow presence to meet with and become its other. Reprobation, then, is never repressed or banished to some unassimilable rock of hell. Its presence is never taken to be the single repository of all that is deemed to be undesirable in the sin of Satanic selfhood. Rather, it is lifted from the abstractness of its single actuality, and its immediacy is dispersed through an integrative relationship to other single actualities in Milton's character. As a result of Milton's journey into space and time, Election, Redemption and Reprobation have come to reflect, in their respective activities, each other as the indispensable presences through which their respective projects achieve concrete reality. Their clashing meetings become, through the passage of time which mediates between their differences, the recognition of their former antagonists as friends of their own true selves.

Milton's encounter with Enitharmon is an attempt on the part of Blake to dispel the illusion of the abstraction of

space from time. The confrontation with Enitharmon, who, in Hegel's terms, is the figure embodying the "indifferent asunderness of space," forces Milton to see the error in Paradise Lost and to redress it (Hegel, PN 30). As the female shade to man (Milton), she reveals the hermaphroditic "besideness" of the Miltonic universe in which creator and creature are mutually exclusive terms of being. Because Milton is in a moment of transition, Enitharmon welcomes him under the misapprehension that he remains unchanged from his former self. She believes he has come to free her from Los (time), who threatens to engulf the dead perfection and security of her world. It is Los, however, who allows Milton to pass from the mere recognition of the error into a full acceptance of time. Los enroots himself into the ground, hoping that his fibrous strength is sufficient bulwark against Milton's further advance. Once again, Milton learns to discern, through Los' resistance, the salubrious effects of time as the contraction or limitation (the simultaneous presence of another body) which relieves spatiality of its abysmal indefiniteness.

As in Paradise Lost, the images of light and darkness, height and depth, reprobation and election, figure prominently in the landscape of Milton's internal journey toward self-regeneration. We see, however, that Blake's insistence upon time as the necessary adjunct to space, allows these images to convey meaning sufficiently ambiguous to reflect the process of human activity. For activity is the darkness of reprobation that is the disjunctive encounter of the "I" and

the alien "other," and it is a retiring in upon itself in the light of speech, as the common endeavour of a "redeemed election." These images convey the sense of ambiguity as the circular unity of time and space, where all distinctions restlessly vanish at the axial point of rest, where the endpoint converges with the beginning.⁷ The forbidding darkness of the waves crashing against Albion's rock becomes, with a quick adjustment of perception, the stars that move with Milton as he precipitously falls through the heavens to join with Blake; what was above is now below and vice versa; what was reprobation is now the context through which election returns to itself in the highest form of its expression.

3. Space Abstracted from Time: Entering the Mundane Shell

Let us turn to Milton's journey through the Mundane Shell in terms of the peculiar determinations which adhere to space and time. We shall see that space and time are joined such that the abstract "side-by-sideness" of the point as the discrete "here" and "now" is eliminated. The endless succession of moments disappearing through a rectilinear path, is "curbed" to introduce the circularity of motion (the conjunction of place and time) that ensures the continuity of all moments as each is returned to itself out of another.

Before his encounter with Enitharmon and Los, Milton descends through the Mundane Shell which presages the nature of Enitharmon's jurisdiction as "indefinite space" (M,17:24). It is an indefinite space, however, which allows matter to

contract into itself into the hard rocky masses of the Mundane Shell. How does this happen?

In Visionary Physics, David Ault describes this paradoxical association between void and hardness, light and opacity, as the form of Blake's response to Newton (87). According to Ault, Newton asserted that it is only in the conjunction of the spatial void (spatial indefiniteness) with solid particles that opacity arises. Opacity is not produced by the solid parts of bodies, which are themselves somewhat transparent, but rather, by the void spaces between the solid particles. Blake draws out the implications of this theory for his own poetic purposes. This connection between the solid, and the spatial indefiniteness left over by the exclusiveness of such a solid, becomes the formation of Satanic opaqueness or his own hermaphroditic union. The abstract logical determination of such a petrified body necessarily implies the shaded existence of its opposite, the space which closes it off from its other (puts it beside or outside its other). This is reinforced by Newton's contention that hard matter is, in "some measure transparent," or in possession of an internal core of emptiness, which, although capable of reflecting light, is indicative of the dark emptiness which is its logical counterpart (Ault 81).

At the trial of Palambron, Satan provides a picture of that disingenuous prophetic seeing to which the old Milton fell prey. He provides us with a manner of seeing which, as mere election that stands apart in spatial solitude, is the burning fire that makes the darkness more visible.

Thus Satan rag'd amidst the Assembly! and his bosom
grew

Opake against the Divine Vision: the paved terraces of
His bosom inwards shone with fires, but the stones
becoming opake!

Hid him from sight, in an extreme blackness and
darkness,

And there a World of deeper Ulro was open'd, in the
midst

Of the Assembly. In Satans bosom a vast unfathomable
Abyss. (M,9:29-35)

What does it mean that the paved terraces of his bosom burn with fires, but the stones themselves become opaque? Having already explored the connection between solid and void, light and opacity, the contradiction of these images loses its apparent confusion and acquires a paradoxical coherency. The transparency Newton would attribute to a solid object in its capacity to transmit light, is that which would allow us to see the object with the physical, and not, with the imaginative eye. Thus, the object is seen as mere object, the sensible bulk of hard matter which, in its sheer weight, displaces other bodies and creates the limit of spatial void. The object is transparent because, as its etymological sense would suggest, the object appears (is seen) through or across a barrier, the quality of opacity being attributable to the void which one cannot see.

This is given poetic persuasiveness in the images of the hard lifeless rock or the block of ice which burns with a fire that neither consumes its body, nor generates heat and light beyond itself to other bodies. In the same way, Satan's bosom waxes opaque against the divine vision while he also contracts involuntarily into himself with the fires of self-conceit. These fires lock the person within himself, creating that bulwark of "visible darkness" impervious to the divine influence. So Blake says that Satan becomes "hid from sight in an extreme blackness and darkness." He becomes, in the same breath that identifies him as those burning terraces reminiscent of Milton's heaven (in Paradise Lost), that opaqueness of unfathomable abyss that shields his God from view.

Here, Satan is the Milton we became acquainted with in Paradise Lost. The infinitude, which is apprehended by Satanic propheticism (election), justifies the content of its vision through the observational perspective. Infinitude is invoked through the quantification of reality in which the endless expanse of space offers itself to the eye as its most awesome manifestation. Such a manifestation, however, soon reveals itself to be the tedium of the bad infinite unable to exhaust a meaning of the infinite which satisfies the human mind. But, this being so, the observational point-of-view opts for an alternative which is only half a solution. The human eye craves something tangible to see, and thus, the monotony of infinite unbroken spaces is relieved only if it is seen beside the contraction of a finite object into itself.

Prophetic seeing is rendered intelligible, then, according to the standard of an object's perceivability to the empirical eye (what it is) - that is, it finds the abstract limitation of its finitude in an endless or transcendent infinity. Infinite space, then, is made apparent by the appearance of the formal serialization of an infinite number of such finite bodies whose tenuous link to each other are the holes of space between them. Hence, through the propagation of a moral law bearing the message of an atomized individuality (the law of the one God), Satan tunnels a place out for himself in the immensity of space which hides him from sight.

True prophetic seeing allows the individual, as atomic particle, to become "a Grain of Sand in Lambeth that Satan cannot find/ Nor can his Watch fiends find it: tis translucent & has many Angles" (J,37:15-16). How, then, do these solid particles become the many internal angles reflecting a soft translucency of light? The full range of the potentialities of a particle are displayed only through the displaying of the full range of potentialities of every other. And this is possible only if the particles are taken as a self-relating circle of mutually reflecting lights. Each particle both refracts light and is itself a light refracted. As the single ray of light enters at one angle and comes out at another it is broken down into its constituent components. The refracted beam then enters other particles at other angles to emerge anew in its unity. The process of displaying and being displayed would wind a circle of revealing and concealing light - a circle of self-relatedness that Blake would indicate

by the term "translucency," and that we have hitherto called "ambiguity."

The grains of sand, which cause the internal angles of translucency, undermine the illusion of the mutual independence among the objects of reality. The externalized structure of the mechanical universe is progressively reabsorbed and made internal to itself, the stark spots of reality made over to an integrated and self-reflecting whole. Mechanism, indeed, gives itself over to teleology, or to a human time in which all processes unite to maintain themselves as their own end.

But how does Time lead to a self-relating circle of human activity? Space by itself, in its absolute abstraction from time is, to use Hegel's words, a wholly "ideal side-by-sideness" which does not yet harbour the structural determinations of its explicit negation. Breadth, height and length, point, line and plane, are as yet only latent possibilities which, without the onrushing negativity of time, fade into the positivity of endless expanse (Hegel, PN 28-29). Thus, time, introduces into space an explicit negation, or the limit and otherness of determinate place. In the mutual interpenetration and paralysis of space and time, we have space demarcated and zoned or space determinately organized.

The Mundane Shell, as space without time, is "an immense/ Hardened shadow of all things upon our Vegetated Earth/ Enlarg'd into dimension & deform'd into indefinite space (M,17:22-4). It has not, as yet, transmuted the "in-itself-negativity" of space⁸ into the self-relating

negativity of succession by which determinations are permitted to come to the being of their differences. But the image of the Shell also indicates that time without space is equally a form of abstract externality in which time exists only by continually extruding itself upon what is not (Hegel, PN 34). In allowing time to stand outside or in a separate dimension from itself, the Shell becomes a kind of shadow world to the vegetable realm of generation, which reflects the endless oscillation between what is and what is not as the spatial Here and the temporal Now. But this here and this now are completely abstract determinations which, although bound to the succession of every other place and moment, only do so as the abstract here and now of every other here and now. Therefore, the relationship of the Mundane Shell to the vegetable world, regarded as space abstracted from time, represents the hard opacity produced by the immediate juxtaposition of solidity (space) and void (time) that is the pendulum swing between being and non-being (present and past or present and future, here and there), without the necessary collocation of their differences. The standing apart of each from the other is simply the pure quantity of self-existent difference which refuses to step outside its respective dimension and become a negation of negation or a "self-relating negation" (Hegel, PN 34).

So far, the Mundane Shell remains that incrustation of error or the twenty-seven layers of opacity from which Ulro, the land of the dead, takes its rise. Curiously enough, however, the Shell is not simply a place of rectangular

proportions detached from everything above and below it, but a huge concave vault ("vast Concave Earth" M,17:21) forming a semi-circle around the vegetable world much like the huge barrel vault that overarches Raphael's "School of Athens." It borders the circumference of Chaos, which, in turn, gives way to the circumference of Eden. Located at the heart of the vegetable world is the palace of Golgonooza that forms the central point of energy from which the ever-widening concentric circles of the vegetable world, Mundane Shell, Chaos and Eden, move outward to encompass the possibilities of both space and time. Golgonooza, then, as the palace of art which employs both Enitharmon and Los in their respective capacities, forms the basis of all possible organizations of artistic activity in the fallen world. This circle within the circle refers us back to the image of the whirling vortex or that hole in space where Eternity and time are drawn irresistibly to one another through the pull of the center. Thus, Milton falls precipitously through the vortex of Albion's bosom.

The important thing to remember here is that force, which appears, from the edge of the vortex looking down, as some extrinsic gravitational pull, is, in fact, from the central point of the vortex, an intrinsic part of the finite being itself. For the real expression of force is achieved through the relation of space and time, which is itself constitutive of the very being of finitude in the world. Hegel tells us that the intrinsic force of a being in space increases proportionately to the increased time elapsed, and

the being's place within a particular spatial context is ascertained as that which has returned to itself from a particular place (Hegel, PN 43). That is to say, it bears the occupancy of another place solely in terms of the force gathered from where it was, restoring place, not in its unmoved immediacy, but as the point of increased velocity that signifies place returned to itself out of alteration. Hegel contrasts this notion of "moving" motion with Zeno's paradox, which would conceive of the rectilinear motion that is precisely the restoration of place as the unmoved here and now (43). For Hegel, real motion is the return of the line to itself as the now, before and after, each of which succeed each other as different moments, but which become indifferent as they close together in the universal point that is both beginning and end - that closes in upon itself though the central point which allows motion to assume progressive direction into the future as progress made from the past, as the past that is rediscovered in the future.

Thus, the circle allows space to revert into itself through time as synchronic time. It allows for the supercession of the differing moments within the radii of the circle as synthetic motion, which, through the explicit negation of time, compels the point to become the other of itself in the line, the line becoming the other of itself in the plane, and the plane closing in upon itself as the completed space that is the circle - the circle of self-revolving activity (Hegel, PN 31).

The solidity of a contracting body, which excludes

other bodies from the space it occupies, and the resulting opacity, are terms of reference which Blake has taken from Newtonianism and altered through their limitation in time. For space and time together allow individuals to compromise the immediacy of their bodily presence - the abstract "hereness" and "nowness" of their existence which is dispersed through the whole of present existence. Such presence loses its malevolent influence when it sees itself as part of a community of presences whose integrity of life occurs through the "archetypical" vision (the collective artistic project) mediating between past and future.

What makes such a vision, such mediation, a possibility in the world? For this answer we must proceed to interpret "desire," a word central to both Blake's and Hegel's interpretation of human possibility. In the next chapter we examine desire in its placement in history.

Notes

1 Here, I am indebted to Bracher for his interpretation of Blake's view of the divine passion. That "'disk of blood' [signifies] another quantity of being (bloody coin) that has reverted to its lender (Jehovah or the Elohim) upon foreclosure, and that serves as a ransom allowing Christians to retain their own lease on being" (Bracher 77).

2 Bracher says that "this false identity [immediate actuality] must, in Milton's view, be totally destroyed by death before one's true individual being can attain fulfillment" (77).

3 Bracher defines "posthumous presence" in this way: "It is through annihilation that the presence of Milton's being reaches the actual world of our experience where it is free to grow apart from the limitations and constraints of Milton's conscious Selfhood or self presence" (Bracher 81). There is a tendency in Bracher to undermine the importance of one's self-present consciousness. The point I am trying to make in this section, and throughout my thesis, is that egoic consciousness is a necessary moment. Although the death of one's selfhood is ultimately important, it is also the life one's selfhood, in all its peculiarity, that contributes to the vitality of the Divine Humanity. Otherwise, there would be no identity in difference or concrete universality.

4 A syllogistic teleology is simply that structure of experience explored in the third chapter. The subjective aim unites with the objective fulfillment through the mediation of activity -an objectification of subjective feeling and the objective means made instrumental to subjectivity.

5 According to Hegel, Being and Nothing are intuitions which it is the task of philosophy (logic) to make articulate. Nevertheless, without these ghosts (or shades), we could offer no analysis of becoming (generation) which, since Heraclitus, has usually been grasped as some form of struggle between two such opposed principles. As they appear in the HL, Being and Nothing are indistinguishable, wholly abstract, completely indeterminate terms which, however, quickly interpenetrate one another to issue in a determinate negation or a positive content. See Hegel, HL 127-134.

6 These are distinctions which Hegel makes in his discussion of Time in the PN 36.

7 Hegel often compares human activity to the motion of a circle. In PS, there is a description of circular activity which bears an uncanny resemblance to Blake's vortex: "Action has the appearance of the movement of a circle which moves freely within itself in a void, which, unimpeded, now expands, now contracts, and is perfectly content to operate in and with its own self" (237).

8 Hegel says that "space is this contradiction, to be infected with negation, but in such wise that this negation falls apart into indifferent subsistence" (PN 34).

Chapter VI

Desire and History

The main focus of the first part of this chapter will be Milton's encounter with the Shadowy Female and Orc interpreted through the dynamics of desire. Having already dealt with the images and concepts integral to the notion of a circle of destiny, this confrontation will follow desire through its revolution towards its greatest epiphany as love. The second part of the chapter will apply the insights of this personal confrontation and development to the greater panorama of history and the Three Classes of Men.

Temporality reaches the level of self-referential significance only as human time, or time, which, as the negation of space fully extended as opaquely resistant matter, is human desire annulling the substance of its given or present state. In his famous commentary on Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit, Alexander Kojève states that the negative activity of time assumes its fullest form only in the human desire to relinquish being to the nothingness of an only dreamed of future. It establishes, thereby, an existence not only extended in space, but one in which in its very essence is a being deferred. The desire, then, which is no longer a mere unreflective reactivity allows, on the basis of an imagined future, the weighted given-ness of the present to sink into the nothingness of the past. But the nothingness of the past is still a determinate nothingness - a negative substance which informs our continuing idea and uses of the past. Hence, it is the uniquely human structure of desire to seek to realize an as yet only anticipated future, but always upon the remembered substance of the past (Kojève 100-50).

It must be emphasized, however, that in this condensed formulation of the circle of destiny, we have a desire that begins only as the outward movement toward the consumption of the other (that begins as the desire merely to maintain the existing arrangement of spatial objects standing external to one another), and ends as the desire returning to itself through its idea (future) as the object of its own desire, thus eliminating all barriers or resistant objects in "nature" (its past). For desire must be brought to desire something radically different from what is given in a world populated by "objects" (its present). It must desire what is integrally shaped by the phenomenon of desire itself, the nothingness of its very being, or the desire desiring, not another object, but another desire. Thus, the particularity of the desire is reflected back into itself as a universal desire. It sees another desire as something which is not itself, yet it binds itself together with it as its possibility or ideal (as its own other which is its potentiality revealed in the course of time (love)).

It is within the context of such a discussion that we learn that the movement of time does not set one class (the elect) ontologically prior to another, but brings all three together within the syllogism or circle of desire.

1. The Shadowy Female and Orc

Throughout his life Milton struggled with his female forms (his three wives and three daughters). Unable in his

lifetime to establish a harmonious relationship with them, they appear in Milton as a looming spectral presence to which Blake simply refers as that nameless "Shadowy Female." For Blake, these female figures are the fallen form of Ololon - the eternal Female who achieves the form of human perfection when Milton finally recognizes his need for her. But as the shadow-side of the hermaphroditic being Milton has become, these females assume the guise of the mysterious goddess of nature whose coy guile and withdrawal from humanity inflicts a sense of alienation and suffering. Her words of consolation have been petrified into ritualistic cant which are the "Writings written all over in Human Words/That every Infant that is born upon the Earth shall read/ And get by rote as a hard task of a life of sixty years" (M,18:12-14). Ololon demonstrates a sense of continuity with, and difference from, the Shadowy Female when she laments her loss of Milton in "words distinct" (M,37:4). Her need for infinite love, expressed in "anxious thought" and "mild voice" (M,37:4-5), contrasts with the blank terror with which the Shadowy Female infects mankind in the somnambulistic repetition of the written word. Both convey themselves in garments of language, but Ololon's garment is written with words on both the outside and inside - Blake's symbol for the composite female who, with "literal expression," stands in the full possession of a world in which her mind gives and is given shape. Both feel pity and love. The Shadowy Female's emotion, however, destroys while Ololon feels a true empathy for the irreducible qualitative existence of all beings.

As the guardian of the twenty-seven layers of opacity, the Shadowy Female announces herself as a follower of Enitharmon, the female radically dirempted from her male counterpart, or the depth of Space without the extension of time.¹ Her veil, to which we have already alluded in Chapter 1, is that material of analysis that interposes between beings the illusion of absolute (abstract) separateness and self-sufficiency. And, to that extent, it can be made as well to invoke the image of the "veil in the temple." For that veil, too, reveals only the concealed depths that separate man from God, and from the feminine now relegated to the role of the elusive whore. It conveys that sense of divisive desire through which man sees himself as irreparably torn from the best of himself, or lost from what he could be as "revealed" through his own other. Thus, the veil is symbolic of a concealed nature, in whose depths man is immersed in a sluggish and dumb desire caught in the infinite tedium of objects to be consumed so that it can indefinitely subsist in its immediate presence. It is unwilling to emerge into a poignantly new act, whose content is as much extended out in time in the form of the pointlike or temporal self, as it is hoarded again or remembered within the spatial covertness of repleteness with another.

Such an act becomes possible when Ololon assumes a larger role in the poem. The veil's fraud is transformed, thereby, into the garment whose folds follow the natural contours of an individual's mind and body, as that individual moves freely through its spatial context. Ololon descends upon

the clouds with Milton into Felpham garden, her garment the "Woof of Six Thousand Years" that binds together rather than divides. The literal expression, formed from the composite of the letter of the externally written word on the one hand, and the internally subjective act of creating a new word or thought from an old one, is an expression of openness to another - the willingness to imagine what one could be.

In the Shadowy Female's main address to Milton, we find her support for all religious and political systems which sustain their sway of power through a direct appeal to an exclusive or formal individuality.

I will have Kings inwoven upon it, & Councillors &
Mighty Men
The Famine shall clasp it together with buckles &
clasps
And the Pestilence shall be its fringes & the War its
girdle (M,18:15-17)

Forming the foundation of these systems of religious belief and political ideology is a natural will still confined to what is (to the thingish objects of nature). The purpose of life is the exploitation of an environment in terms of what it can yield in pleasure. But the formidable paradox which grips man in the single-minded pursuit of such an end is that he becomes thwarted by reality at every point, and by certain internal repressive measures which help him to cope with these externalities.² For pain follows from the condition of

mutually antagonistic desires. As a particular desire is driven toward the appeasement of only itself through the inhibition or annihilation of another, so it too cringes with the effect of the pain it feels at the hands of another. Life, then, regarded as the random and wasteful display of arbitrary wills embroiled in conflict, never exceeds the primary operations of the immediate discharge of pure pleasure, followed by the physical retention of pure pain. Unable to gather itself for the serious labour of love, or for the affirmation of difference within common identity, life quietly breeds the pestilence of difference that consumes every difference.

Thus, the Shadowy Female greets Milton with a lamentation expressive of the varying degrees of pain to which man is typically subjected.

I will lament over Milton in the lamentations of the
afflicted

My Garments shall be woven of sighs & heart broken
lamentations

The misery of unhappy Families shall be drawn out
into its border

Wrought with the needle with dire sufferings of
poverty pain & woe

Along the rocky Island & thence throughout the whole
Earth

There shall be the sick Father & his starving
Family! there

the prisoner in the stone Dungeon & the Slave
(M, 18:5-11)

She appeals to Milton's own sense of having been wronged during his life time ("I will lament over Milton"). As the reader may recall, he recoiled from the "barbarous dissonance" of public life, in order to salvage what comfort he could in the dark intimacy of exile. "Kings," "Councillors" and "Strongmen," although players in the game of politics and religion from which he felt compelled to withdraw, nevertheless provide a pattern of tyranny that makes isolation one of the inevitable outcomes. These figures are "interwoven" within the fabric of this hapless existence, each offering its own reward to those selected number of people who can play their "game" well enough. But, even with respect to those few who can play well, the resolution is no more than a restoration of desire to its "pre-wordly" state. That Milton rejects these figures is not as important as the consideration that his forced exile merely perpetuates that desire in its purely nascent state, retarding all genuinely human or societal ("wordly") relationships.

The strong man simply represents the ascendancy of the strongest man in the contention of wills, whose fate it will be to succumb to yet another stronger than himself. The primitive ideology of the political strongman, then, reserves the possibility that one man may at least give unimpeded vent to his appetite if he is in a position of unquestioned supremacy. The King, as a kind of Hobbesian Leviathan,

superadds the rule of law upon the primal process of desire. Nevertheless, the nature of desire itself remains unchanged, a timeless and other-worldly process, which, in the face of an increasingly obtrusive world presence, is compelled to postpone its immediate gratification and learn to tolerate a certain unpleasantness along the indirect road to pleasure. Here, in the Hobbesian market place, such desire is modified only to the extent that it assumes a cunning or uneasy peace with the contingency of other desires, that it remains in a tension of unharmonized co-existence with another under the force of law.

The counsellor and/or the priest promises personal immortality, or the return of pleasure in a later life for unflinching abstinence in this one. Conversely, if one remains tireless in the pursuit of pleasure in this life, one is condemned to a state of eternal torment in the next. The renunciation of the desire for pleasure proceeds here through the fear of aggression on the part of an external authority (God), or through the fear of the loss of that authority's love: "For I will put on the Human Form & take the Image of God/ Even Pity & Humanity but my Clothing shall be Cruelty" (M,18:19-20). Thus, what follows is "Repentance for sin & sorrow & punishment & fear/ to defend me from thy terrors" (M8,18:24-25). Here, and in every other aforementioned case, the desire for pleasure is kept in abeyance or rendered innocuous by internalizing itself. It is sent back to where it came from or directed toward the individual's own ego.

Thus, guilt, repentance for sin, and fear of punishment,

become a function of a direct internal transposition of the demands of an external authority. But the original condition of naked want remains intact. For the source of aggression, although "introjected,"³ still remains extrinsic to the desiring agent; it remains internally unsublated. The nature of the kind of desire avidly sought for, and simultaneously condemned, remains what it was in its pristine condition, although now kept in chains.

The after-life comes to represent the stasis of individual identity. Identity is relegated to the given content of a past no longer affected by the evolving conditions of a worldly process. Despite its ostensible denigration of pleasure, the notion of an after-life clings to the idea of a "transcendent" pleasure - one not affected by a world of desires, each of which has its own claim to recognition. The idea of an after life implicitly holds the principles of a punitive moral education through which the individual is forced to register or superficially acknowledge the basic structures of an existent world, and the necessity of complying with the "realistic" demands of that world, but only as an extrinsic layer of secondary functioning atop untouchable other-worldly processes. But Blake tells us in his notion of "self-annihilation" that it is only in relation to a world that frustration, postponement and renunciation become intrinsic to the principles of pleasure (joy) itself, and the direct derivatives of that context of the world become determinations through which the organism can define and regulate the immediate gratification of pleasure for a

self-imposed or holistic discipline that is conducive to the greater joy of all.

Thus, the love, which the Shadowy Female claims to feel for humanity, is one in which the subject assumes an immediate relationship to the object of its love, in which the hermaphroditic besideness of each to the other dissolves the sacred boundaries defining qualitative differences between them. The reader is reminded of Milton's distorted relationship with his six female counterparts, and the projection of that relationship in Adam and Eve. Eve's sense of personal worth is secured to the extent that she also maintains her subservience to the will of Adam. Adam is prepared to behave as if "I" and "you" were indeed an identical unit, an immediacy of combination suggested by the indiscriminate accretion of one to the other (one on top of the other in the hierarchy of traditional metaphysics Milton relied on). The psychical consequence of this binding is the return of autonomous self-consciousness to the immediacy of seamless self-identity. Where there is no consciousness of other discrete consciousnesses, where there is, in other words, no consciousness of self's own internality or capacity for free reflection and judgment (that is, reflection into one's self through the another), the parties concerned are captivated within the immediate and self-contained circle of libidinal satisfactions. The nature of their relationship is

ruled by arbitrary will, no matter how benevolent, since the individual can only respond to the other according to his sense of being nothing apart from the other.

Thus, the Shadowy Female proves to be a willful and capricious consort who endeavours to win man's devotion by leading him to believe that he is dependent on her for the relief of the suffering she has in fact caused. To borrow from Orc's own description of her, "he loves as she "consumes" in man's (Orc's) "consummation" (M,18:28). Her struggle to put on the image of a loving humanity is defeated by the jealousy and fear that are the means to bind that love more exclusively to herself. She can avoid this fate only if she is willing to give up something of herself. For one is truly able to love and be loved only if the object of one's love is not merely an object, a thing to be consumed, but another independent subject in whose free gift of love one can reciprocate a truly human love, or realize one's truest potential. But, we must recognize that she has become shade to man (Milton), because man has also disincarnated himself from her as "spectre." She entraps Milton within the superficiality or "shadowiness" (otherworldiness) of her arbitrary will in the same way that Milton has been unwilling to concede to her an autonomous will. Therefore, she takes her vengeance within the framework of a relationship whose terms have been already set into motion by him. In a parody of true religion and human politics, the Shadowy Female (who is man suspended from himself) weaves a system of tyranny that takes its rise from the contention of the sexes and the duplicitious form of love

they adopt to cement their power over the other.

In a further reflection upon the distinction between true and fraudulent love, Blake describes the latter as an identification with the object of love fixated on the oral or cannibalistic phase of libidinal development.⁵ The subject devours its beloved in the same way that an infant appears to be devouring the mother's breast. Blake symbolizes this stage by Urizen's tongue which "flames" out in "hunger" and "thirst" (M,3:22), assimilating (consuming) the environment to himself. It is an attempt on the part of the undeveloped ego (Urizen is a developing fetus) to overcome its limitation, its contradiction in the face of another, while itself remaining unaltered. This identification occurs on the basis of what one would like to have, as opposed to what one would like to be like. For the latter, unlike the form of relatedness which leaves the nature of desire untouched, is a mediated perpetuation of the other in self through which desire is necessarily transformed and educated. The sense which Blake uses to convey this mode of mediate identification with another is the eye. For it is through the eye (not "with the eye") that one discerns the other at a distance, while becoming more aware of one's self with reference to that other. Only in this other does desire discover both an ideal image of itself and the frustration and discipline by which it eventually reclaims this image as a realized self. Los becomes or realizes himself as what he sees, and he sees what he becomes.

That self, which indulges in the form of love that is

only self-love, is unable to comprehend within the insularity of its consciousness that self and other constitute a relationship of identity in difference - of the "I" and "Thou." The Miltonic elect, then, is that "I" which withdraws from the worldly process or never goes beyond its attachment to the oldest object "Cathexes"⁶ (in this case it is Milton's God the Father - another shadowy notion abstracted from the context of man's concrete existence). It refuses to release its beloved to the larger divine community of mutually reciprocating desire.

Let us now turn to Orc's response to the Shadowy Female. We see in the following passage that Orc, the demon reprobate, compels the Shadowy Female to release herself and her cohort back out into the world, where desire assumes the shape of its indigenous worldly medium. He tells her that she must not "consume" in man's "consummation," remaining what she is in the hidden depths of her nature. She must be drawn out to "redeem" (reclaim) her self-image from another, through which relationship alone she can truly realize the best that she is. The covering of the whore of Babylon, which separates being from being, will be transformed into the garment of Jerusalem, which intermeshes Milton (Albion or Man) with his counterpart (the Shadowy Female turned into Ololon):

Orc answered. Take not the Human Form O loviest. Take
not
Terror upon thee! Behold how I am & tremble lest thou
also

Consume in my Consumation; but thou maist take a Form
Female & lovely, that cannot consume in Mans
consummation

Wherefore dost thou Create & Weave this Satan for a
Covering?

When thou attemptest to put on the Human Form, my
wrath

Burns to the top of heaven against thee in Jealousy &
Fear.

Then I rend thee asunder, then I howl over thy clay &
ashes

When wilt thou put on the Female Form as in times of
old

With a Garment of Pity & Compassion like the Garment
of old

His garments are long sufferings for the Children of
Men

Jerusalem is his Garment & not thy Covering Cherub O
lovely

Shadow of my delight who wanderest seeking for the
prey (M,18:26-38)

Orc responds to the lamentations of the Shadowy Female with a "wrath" that "burns to the top of heaven." His wrath is fueled by the "jealousy" and "fear" that upsurges before her presence consuming its way into the field of his autonomous volition (she "who wanderest seeking for the prey"). His enraged response, then, is desire demanding to be

unleashed upon the world and thereby to achieve a place of mutual recognition with other desires. But Orc is also a flaming pubescent youth who is often depicted as returning to the parent power of nature and tapping into the reservoir of energy beneath the earth. His attitude to nature is complex enough that it is neither an unequivocal opposition, nor obsequious deference; but a guarded respect that recognizes nature as the birthing place of desire to which one must periodically return.

The vehemence of Orc's objection to the Shadowy Female can be explained by her attempt to absolutize the moment of nature - to make it the ultimate repository of being in contrast to which individuals are seen as adventitious things that imperfectly illustrate the idea of the genus. Those generative powers of nature, through which the individual passes in and out of existence within the collective life of the species, testify to the pain of death as the inescapable complement to the pleasure attending the conception of new life. And thus, within a system of being in which identity becomes entirely associated with our particular bodies (we pass in and out of existence only as our bodies appear from and disappear into the dark unfathomable womb), we desperately cling to those meteoric pleasures that sustain the generic body image (eternal youth). We hope to put off or forget the inevitable for as long as possible. Ironically, the existence of pain becomes necessary if pleasure is to continue to be the opium into which we recoil. It is understandable, then, why Orc cannot abide a love and pity that perpetuate suffering.

But from Orc's response, we know that there is a form of love and compassion which truly alleviates suffering: "A Garment of Pity and Compassion like the Garment of old." Suffering is, indeed, very real and worthy of our compassion. For it emerges from the conditions of finitude through which one feels the sense of alienation, contradiction, and conflict. Orc insists, however, that suffering is exacerbated by that kind of false commiseration which only temporarily relieves the pain. But with the kind of love gratuitously given, we are moved beyond ourselves by force of the empathy which binds us to another in common sorrow. We learn to deal with frustrated expectations by changing the nature of expectations to fit the broader human reality. We can rise above the pain, and make good of a bad situation by making it good for all concerned (including one's self).

The identity between pleasure and good, pain and evil, no longer holds in a world inhabited by others through which we necessarily become transformed and strengthened in our pain and frustration. We redirect the power of the negative internally, changing ourselves to accommodate the other. But it is an accommodation which, in combination with the assimilative process, allows us to both give ourselves over to being that is still possible or imagined, negating our present actuality, and to consolidate this desired possibility, grasping and embracing it, so that it becomes one with our identity - identity now grown into the synthesis of a wider range of relationships taken from the world. Within the communal "we," the individual as discrete finitude (pitted

in painful contradiction against another discrete finitude is sublated, becoming a moment and losing, thereby, its apparent self-subsistence. The pain does not vanish, but becomes transfigured as the contradictions come to represent legitimate differences within a transcending unity. The pain becomes transformed into the discipline of self-cultivation. Evil is diminished into a single feature within a totality in which its effects are no longer construed as ultimately frustrating or debilitating.⁷

The Latin root of the name "Orc" is "Orcus," which means hell. He becomes associated in our minds with the Demon Red, or the arch-reprobate in the Marriage who uses his libidinal energies to precipitate revolution. He, therefore, becomes the harbinger of the return to another time. Thus, as demon, he is also the serpent whose tail in its mouth invokes the meaning of a self-devouring through which futurity comes to be, through the restructuring of one's past (what one is). To the extent that Orc is involved in a restructuring, and not in an annihilation, of the past, the self-devouring is not a complete self-evisceration. The snake is able to grow the missing part back to fill the circle. It is rather an involution or the coiling back of the negating process upon itself. The negating process, which begins as self devouring self, wreaks its ultimate devastation on itself, retrieving all previous losses within an immanently based or circular totality. Something of positive value, purged from all the incidentals of our lives - those half truths, delusions and frustrations which fall away like dead skin in our advance

through time - is raised as an integral element within the common activity.

Time allows the absolute nothingness of the past to emerge as a moment of negated given-ness, or as the nothingness that reappears as wisdom reflecting upon the past in terms of the something that is to follow. Simple negation evolves into a double negation: the conformity of an object to the desiring subject is surpassed in a process whose result is the adequation of desire to the idea of desire. Not some abstraction hidden in the pneumatic depths of man's being, the idea of desire acquires the significance of the divine passion only through the increasing breadth of its human or dialogic context. Thus, the desire for the infinite, or the desire for desire, is established through the act of remembrance, which weaves a web of articulated experience, the common ground of reference through which different sides of ourselves are recalled to the foreground. The human dialogue sets down a passage out of our unrevealed depths to the shown potentiality of determinate being, only if we let ourselves die at every instant, if we cease to exist in the present so as to be annihilated in the past "as past" (Kojève 141).

Re-membrance, then, is a redemption to the extent that we recall the way we were in the affliction of our sin and error (reprobation); and in this very recalling, our afflictions become expiated and expiated in the unfolding of the common task, taking us out of our hidden silences through an engaging dialogue with our own other. The word, as dialogue, allows remembrance to take its leave of that naive

memory in which the recovery or disinternment of the grim and bare fact defeats our every effort to make it live again for us.

The self-winding circle, or self-devouring snake, is the Time which opposes the mute succession of moments that mechanically replace one another, or which refuse to move in the gathering kinetic force of the growing of one upon the other. Orc, as the self-devouring snake also becomes the image of the dragon or the fiery comet following its circular trajectory above the earth, its tailend the languishing dust that marks the trail. Or, to adopt another image used by Kojève, Orc can be likened to the permanent rainbow above the water fall, which redeems the essence of the precipitous rush of events into the nothingness of the past (142).

2. The Three Classes of Men: Separation and Reconstitution in History

The condensed formulations of the previous section unfold to accommodate the richly articulated drama of history. In the Bard's tale of history (the Bard's Song), characterization is animated and varied. The plot hurries from one episode to another, organizing itself in terms of the urgencies which inform daily struggles. Thus, the disorientation, the disjunctiveness of the dialogue, the digressions and oblique encounters, suggest the sense of immediacy attending the unexpected details of daily life. Yet, the tenuous connections between episodes, usually

contrived by verbal resonances, releases the reader's imagination to take that leap beyond the immediate to the totality or universality through which the immediate dissipates itself.

Christ becomes Satan so that the Satanic may be effectively dealt with. "The Miller of Eternity" must be made "subservient to the Great Harvest/That he may go to his own Place Prince of the Starry Wheels/Beneath the Plow of Rintrah & the Harrow of the Almighty/In the hands of Palambron (M,3:41-42; 4:1-2). Satan is not to be banished to hell, but restored to his rightful place among the stars. He retains his identity as a member of the Elect, but the prototypical action of his class will help to yield the greatest harvest only from "beneath" the salutary action of Rintrah's plow and Palambron's harrow. The above of heaven and the below of earth lose their spatial distinctiveness as they converge to become different moments related by an underlying process of spiritual growth.

By itself, however, the class of the Elect prove to be, as with all truncated realities, inhibitive of spiritual growth. The "Starry Wheels" become black industrial wheels which mechanically grind down the diversity of individual identities to a homogeneous substance.⁸ The "Wheels of Eternity" degenerate into the incessant churning of the bad infinite under which an individual becomes infinitely interchangeable for another in the general disposability of nature (Bracher 23). Whether it be the moral edict, the religious dogma, the political ideology, the scientific

paradigm, all such forms of reductionism work in the same way. All individuals, being broken down into the smallest component, each is agglomerated or made to produce a monotone cast of behaviour. The interiority of the individual suffers diminishment as he comes to consist merely of the perfunctory observance of the externalized ritual or the moral imperative, of the lip service that is paid to any set of presuppositions. Thus, the elect, as a class deracinated out from under the other classes, becomes trans-fixed in that inflexible substance created from "before the foundation of the world" (M,7:1). As such its existence in the world is empty existence, uninformed by the process of existing in the world - an existence which, if lived as existence, would allow the law to become an internally posited element in the developing relationship of "I" and "Thou." It remains undeveloped except as an accretion added upon the rudimentary (and extrinsic) substance of creation. As a result, the Elect needs to be "created continually" (M,5:11) for it is unable to create itself through itself.

Mark Bracher suggests that the description "Miller of Eternity" resonates with several meanings. Does Satan grind down Eternity into its elementary components? Or does he work on behalf of Eternity, gathering the various moments into one generalized content amenable to the perfect uniformity of his sterile brand of eternity? Or does he simply grind away forever and ever, doing one and then the other without achieving a satisfactory resolution? Bracher does not provide a clear answer beyond the fact that the ambiguity of the

phrase suggests that Satan assumes "a fundamental function in the universal scheme of things" (22). In what sense, then, does the ambiguity imply that Satan must be included within the grander scheme of things?

In a way, the interpretations implicit in the phrase come to mean, within a fallen perspective, the same thing: the grinding down of Eternity into the bad infinite of endless discrete moments, and the working for Eternity as the various moments are being indiscriminately harvested under an infinity that is beyond, are variations of the same reductive process. But when Satan performs his function in adjunct with the other agrarian activities, the milling process becomes both a grinding of and for eternity in a way that is the perfect resolution of the different kinds of Eternity. Eternity becomes open to the kenotic potential of creation through which Satanic identity becomes the basis, within its measured place, for the emergence of qualitative differences. Bracher himself suggests, in the context of a discussion of Satan's relationship to the other two figures, that one could not even begin to contrast with another without having the basis of comparison in a common frame of reference. More than this, one could not change into something else, if one were not, at some level, "interchangeable" with another. The refinement of the grain, after it has been harvested, becomes the "death that feeds the living" (Bracher 23). And to that extent, Satan can indeed be called the "Prince of the Starry Wheels." He is the figure of the Enlightenment without whose meticulous classifications and prosaic reasoning we would return to the

barbarism of undifferentiated belief.

Satan's function as Miller of Eternity becomes more clearly understood when seen in the context of Rintrah's plow. Rintrah, the prophet of wrath, gives vent to a range of attitudes whose power base is formed precisely in its oppositional pull away to the Satanic modality of being. The Satanic elect (Milton's God and his universe) represent the spatial dimension divorced from the temporal, substance abstracted from its subjective expression, or essence petrified out from the flux of existence. Rintrah, on the other hand, is pure existence. His identity is wrapped up with his own brief lifetime. He resembles the Biblical prophet whose wrathful energy was used to inveigh against the iniquities and delusions of his times. But having done away with the overbearing pressure of God's divine presence, Rintrah's wrath is rechanneled as the genius of character or as the Romantic indulgence in idiosyncratic personality. He plows through anything that stands in the way of realizing his peculiar revolutionary vision. Like the lion of Nietzsche's Zarathustra, he disburdens himself of the camel's weight of established law (the law of the elect), setting himself up as the sole arbiter of what is just. He is, in effect, Milton's Satan in Paradise Lost, for Satan, too, is the prophet without a god, or the prophet whose sense of reverence for divinity has been transposed into himself alone. Unlike Milton's Satan, however, Rintrah is open to the possibility of self-transformation through which all sense of personalized divinity is dissipated in and through everyman as everyman.

The plow of Rintrah thus performs the necessary but limited function of breaking the resistant clods of soil and eliminating all foreign growth (weeds). Thus, while the Satanic elect engage in a form of destruction which reduces reality to its elementary components, Rintrah altogether destabilizes (negates) the given structure of the natural landscape, so that a new complex structure can take its hold there.

Palamabron (the Redeemed) succeeds in partially neutralizing the destructive tendencies of the other two classes. He recaptures something of the complex forms of nature, although in the shape of cultivated vegetation. This negation of negation is accomplished through the action of the Harrow which recombines the soil into an even bed for the reception of new seed. While the breaking down of the soil into a finer texture resembles Satanic reductionism, it differs to the extent that the greater cohesiveness of the soil is able, at the same time, to accommodate difference in the shape of new seed (Bracher 24). Thus, the breaking down of the soil, as the death upon which life feeds, is analogous to the process of assimilation. But it is that kind of assimilation which establishes the ground of cohesion through which difference is accommodated to other difference. Substance and Subject, Essence and Existence, Space and Time, become mutually interdependent in the same way that the soil nourishes the seed, bequeathing verdent life to the surrounding fields (Blake's "breathing fields" M,5:2). The "Harrow of Sheldrie" is the "invisible scheme of Human conduct"

(4:12-13) which destroys only so that the essence of a thing can be preserved in its mediated relationship to the other. The Redeemed are those men who take the promulgated word of the prophet, that unprecedented law that breaks out of the past, and place it within the life of the community in the form of a universal concrete law -- a code of love that makes its peace with the past, while transcending it through a rediscovery of the spiritual essence behind the letter of the law.

There are two main story lines which illustrate the nature of each class with reference to the other two. The first centers around the event of Satan's expropriation of Palamabron's harrow. The final restoration of the harrow to Palamabron marks the moment when Satan as "mathematical proportion" becomes "subdued by Living Proportion" (M,5:44). In the second story, the conflict between Palamabron and Satan is recreated in terms of the conflict of their respective emanations for the love of Palamabron.

With deceptive mildness Satan entreats Los to allow him free rein over Palamabron's horses and harrow. For fear of appearing angry, Palamabron agrees to hand them over. The result is a perversion of order which brings about ruin. Palamabron and Satan exchange roles for an eternal day, the result of which reverberates across a thousand years of fallen history. Because Satan's pity is not tempered with wrath, it promotes a reductive usurpation of individual being. Likewise, Palamabron's love and pity, without that same corrosive wrath, becomes a murky diluted substance that weakens and dissolves

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Appendix I (Sublation)

Hegel provides the most extensive definition of the word "sublation" in The Science of Logic. He says that

To sublate" and "the sublated" constitute one of the most important notions in philosophy. It is a fundamental determination that occurs throughout the whole of philosophy, the meaning of which is to be clearly grasped and especially distinguished from nothing. What is sublated is thereby not reduced to nothing. Nothing is immediate, what is sublated on the other hand is the result of mediation; it is a non-being but as a result which has its origins in being. It still has, therefore, in itself the determinateness from which it originates. "To sublate" has a twofold meaning in language: on the one hand, it means to preserve, to maintain, and equally it also means to cause to cease, to put an end to it. Even "to preserve" includes a negative element, namely, that something is removed from its immediacy, and so from an existence which is open to external influences, in order to preserve it. Thus, what is sublated is at the same time preserved; it has lost its immediacy but is not on that account annihilated. The two definitions of "to sublate" which we have given can be quoted as two dictionary

The labour of history is elevated to an ethical/juridical setting where historical events pause in an ordered reflection of their content. We are told that "two witnesses" (M,9:8) are brought before the Assembly - an allusion to the two witnesses whose testimony would have exonerated Christ before the Sanhedrin (Mosaic law) and the prophesy of the two martyred witnesses in the Book of Revelation (11:3-10). Thus, Blake allows the reader to evaluate the testimony of the various characters in several ways, all of which are applicable to the story at hand.

The two witnesses suggest testimony in the sense of "testament" or divine decree attested in the Scripture. However, it is divine decree which is being brought into question in the narrative of Christ's trial. No two witnesses whose testimony agreed could be brought forward in defence of Christ before the Sanhedrin (Mark 14:56). Thus, Christ standing before the law now stands against the law. He himself comes to bear witness to the abrogation of truth based upon its empirical verification in the letter of the law. In a way similar to the prophets of the Old Testament, he brings to the highest point of tension the need to reconcile the polarities of "infinite demand" with "finite commandment."¹⁰ He espouses a righteousness which, although implicit in the written law, is not exhausted by it at any one time or place (but in all times and places).

The two witnesses of Revelation, however, do appear as consolidation of the era ushered in by Christ's death and resurrection. The sackcloth they wear reveals an instant of

the infinite measure of divine will through which the old law will be replaced by one that responds to yearning repentance with love and forgiveness. The Bard is not a judge who mediates between various testimonies to arrive, first, at an objective determination of truth, and then to see whether such a truth is the truth or a crime committed in explicit violation of the written law. The Bard's prophetic oracle conveys the wisdom of the generations, which is distinct from the mere truth of the matter (truth here being used in the sense of correctness). The law, interpreted by the judge, appears when the word of prescription detaches itself from the basis of dialogic interchange, and becomes a disembodied voice of imperative command. The Bard, on the other hand, admits testimony as confession in the sense of a disclosure of one's inner being as it violates not law but another being. Through his testimony of testimony, the Bard promotes a dialogic exchange as the basis of the primordial word from whose midst sin breaks forth from itself in the form of naked confession.

"Mine is the fault" (M,8:19) and "I am the author of my Sin" (M,11:35) are admissions of guilt which push the "dumb despair" to the outside, rendering it comprehensible through the very expression of its incomprehensibility. The loss of meaning that comes with the recognition of sin draws attention away from the fault itself to the meaning it derives from its expiation and expatiation within the greater whole. The confessional address makes explicit the contradictions of sin and its intended resolutions.

Leutha's re-enactment of her impurity through the confessional address allows her to penetrate to a sphere of reality wherein "her God" is the image of concerned humanity. Her humbled posture takes the "before God" of traditional religions, and changes it into a projection pregnant with equivocation, so that the other can be seen as an emanation redressing the incompleteness of the sinful posture.

O Divine Vision who didst create the Female: to
repose

The Sleepers of Beulah: pity the repentant Leutha.
(M,12: 49-50)

The wrath of God, which signifies an alienated infinity outraged at the expressions of finitude, and the ensuing silence, which signifies divine holiness too awful for words, is transformed into the human God humbled to an admission of his own guilt and the willingness to forgive.¹¹ For when Leutha says "I humbly bow in all my sin before the Throne Divine" (M,13:3), the Divine Throne responds with the face of "the Divine Pity" who Supported her" (M,13:7). But more than this, the following passage bears witness to Eternity joining with Leutha in the common admission of sin and guilt. The first person singular becomes the third person plural.

All is my fault! We are the Spectre of Luvah the

murderer

Of Albion: O Vala! O Luvah! O Albion! O lovely
Jerusalem

The Sin was begun in Eternity, and will not rest to
Eternity

Till two Eternitys meet together (M,13:7-10)

We have, then, within the secondary thread of narrative, a parodic variation of the "Allegory of Sin" in Paradise Lost. As in John Milton's poem, the blame for sin is placed upon our succumbing to the weak, soft and delusional side of our feminine nature. But this can only happen if one extracts the feminine out from the core of one's being, allowing it to degenerate into that insubstantial shadowed form.

Like sweet perfumes I stupified the masculine
perceptions

And kept only the feminine awake. hence rose his soft
Delusory love to Palambron: admiration joined with
envy (M,12:5-8)

Whereas in the preceding story Rintrah's wrath was seen as the crucial agent that separated out the different modes of being so that they could be brought together in balanced form, so now love and pity are emphasized as the unifying process within which differences are mutually affirmed. Both wrath and pity are allowed their turn within an overall rotation of elements that regulates the dramatic movement of Blake's

poetry.

The consequence of this romantic interlude spins itself off into other realms of activity. Satan's preoccupation with taking over Palamabron's role is, Leutha confesses, inspired by her own obsession for Palamabron. Spurned by Elynittria, Leutha makes Satan feel her love for Palamabron. And it is this love which stealthily enters his dreams, and "stupifies" his masculine senses so that he can only deal with reality by softening all hard and fast distinctions into a uniformly grey mass. His love is that false love which steals being from another in the same way that the theft of Palamabron's harrow signified a dereliction of one's unique role. The constellation of images, which suggests the vicious round of marriage, infidelity and adultery, becomes correlative to the images of election, pride and arrogance (reprobation) in the traditional notion of good and evil. For man or woman who oversteps his/her marital or sexual bounds, stealing something that belongs to someone else, summons up the ontological impotence of one who attempts to transgress those limitations that define one's peculiar being in the world.

But the impasse of sin is broken by the primordial word of confession. The awful face of God turns its other side to reveal an infinite and abiding love. The silence is interrupted by dialogue found at the heart of the web of confessions, through which the mutual implication of guilt, and reciprocity of forgiveness, annuls all alien otherness. The premature reduction of the word to the moral commandment, to the disembodied voice of the legislator, is raised up again

into discourse which becomes analyzable into utterance and counter-utterance, into the reciprocity of vocation and invocation between man and man. The Bard, then, as the poet-prophet, rather than as the judge, does not recite codes and precedence; he does not command and pronounce sentence. But he sings, groans, and exults. The web of confessional addresses is framed within the poetic cadences of the Bard's song which raises sin from its nascent state into an expression of itself groping beyond itself. For, in poetry, sin is caught in a system of symbols (marriage, adultery, infidelity, defilement, being lost or led astray) that wells up from the guarded stability of the sacerdotal code to the creative interchange of dialogue. And, as such, the poetic symbol provides the middle ground through which tension is inaugurated between the external command and the loving heart, the resolution of which yields the internally posited law of I" and "Thou."

Notes

1 Kojève uses the terms "depth of space" and "extension of time" (164).

2 I find that, at this point of the argument, Freud's concepts of Eros and Thanatos, guilt and other forms of repression, help to provide a coherent account of Blake's philosophy of love. But I have taken Freud's flexible terms beyond the point that Freud had intended them to go. To borrow Ricoeur's own words in his study of Freud, "Hegel and Freud each stand as a separate continent, and between one totality and another there can only be relations of homology. I will try to express one of these homologous relations by discovering in Freudianism a certain dialectic of archeology and teleology that is clearly evident in Hegel" (461).

3 A definition of this term can be found in EI: "When it happens that a person has to give up a sexual object, there quite often ensues an alteration of his ego which can only be described as a setting up of the object inside the ego....It may be that this introjection..." (368).

4 Milton reveals the hierarchical nature of Adam and Eve's relationship when he says, "though both/ Not equal, as thir sex not equal seem'd/ For contemplation hee and valor form'd/ For softness shee and sweet attractive Grace,/ Hee for God only, shee for God in him" (PL, 4:295-99). The fall becomes an inevitable fact when Eve, taking her separate way, makes a subtle, but unequivocal gester towards her independence away from Adam, and, by implication away from God. And likewise, Adam, by indulging in an excessive uxoriousness, by placing himself in a subordinate position to Eve, has, in effect, lost the God in himself and makes the fall an irreversible fact.

5 Freud says that "the first of these (the stages of sexuality) is the oral or, as it might be called, cannibalistic pregenital sexual organization. Here sexual activity has not been separated from the ingestion of food; nor are opposite currents within the activity differentiated. The object of both activities is the same; the sexual aim consists in the incorporation of the object" (OS 116-17).

6 It is a ubiquitous term in Freud. It generally means projections of libidinal energy.

7 Hegel deals with the problem of evil in a similar fashion in HL 56.

8 It was Bracher who suggested to me that "The Starry Wheels of Heaven" become, within a fallen perspective, that process of destruction which reduces being to a homogeneous substance. He contrasts this with Rintrah who engages in a form of defensive destruction. I prefer to describe Rintrah's wrath as the more belligerent form of an offensive destruction.

His affiliation with the wrathful prophets of the Old Testament places him within the tradition of rebellion that breaks the old lifeless law so that the voice of God may be heard anew. See Bracher 22.

9 The precise words that Blake uses are that he "soft intreated Los to give him Palambrons/station" (M,7:6). The mildness or softness of Satan's pleading is meant to convey an emasculated love, one that guilefully steals being from another.

10 According to Ricoeur, these are the polarities of tension the prophet is always trying to overcome. "Infinite demand" and "Finite Commandment" are the subject of a chapter in Ricoeur's study of SOE 54-63.

11 Ricoeur writes: "So the veridical representation of God that corresponds to it is "wrath:" not that God is wicked, but that wrath is the countenance of holiness for sinfulness" (SOE 63).

Conclusion

In the invocation at the beginning of Milton, Blake eschews any notion of reality beyond the scope of human experience. He reveals the source of his inspiration to be his own mind, through which is revealed the greater mind of "humanity." He summons the muses "From out the Portals of my Brain, where by your ministry/The Eternal Great Humanity Divine...(M,2:7-8).

This same idea receives further amplification in the Bard's Song which speaks more generally about the creation of the world and man:

Three Classes are Created by the Hammer of Los, &
Woven

By Enitharmons Looms when Albion was slain upon his
Mountains

And in his Tent, thro envy of Living Form, even of the
Divine Vision

And of the sports of Wisdom in the Human Imagination

Which is the Divine Body of the Lord Jesus.(M,2:26-30)

The juxtaposition of the different tenses in the first two lines suggests that creation and fallenness are both an "abrupt" and original act, and a "continuous" process which underlies all human endeavour (Fox 34). Los' incessant hammering recreates the act of dissolution and regeneration

for all time. Thus, the phrase "envy of living form" is both the immediate contingent cause which precipitated the fall of Albion into the ruins of chaos, and it is the internally necessary cause in the indefinite process of creation.

The intended ambivalence attached to this phrase confirms our notion of creation as kenosis or as the process by which emptiness drives a creature on to appropriate something else other than itself so that it can become full again; and when this process is carried to the furthest extremity it recoils back on itself - it allows the creature not merely to have something else but to become itself something else. Both meanings are suggested by the fact that the reader is not quite sure whether "envy of living form" alludes to the object of envy, that which is consumed as Albion was slain upon the mountain, or to the subject of envy, which is exemplified by Los and Enitharmon creating living form in the sense that it becomes like other living form.¹ The movement of the passage suggests that Blake accepted both interpretations as indispensable to one another. The "three classes [that are] created by the [hammering] of Los," and "Albion [slain] upon the mountain," are done through "envy of living form" whose ultimate result will be the "Divine Vision/And the sports of Wisdom in the Human Imagination/Which is the Divine Body of the Lord Jesus." Albion's falling into dismemberment is a necessary moment implicated within a total system of creation and regeneration. The necessity of form and the contingency of content converge to specify an original determinate nature - a human nature continuously realizing

itself through a circle of finite possibilities.

Thus, the Urizenic creation myth ends in the same way that it begins, with reference to the three classes created by Los. While a dark and horrific vision permeates the Urizenic creation myth, it, nevertheless, is refracted by the broad scope of Blake's vision into a ray of hope. Blake's vigorous poetic line conveys that sense of dynamic movement which compels even Urizen's dreadful underworld of ice towards its transformation. We feel that energy most palpably when Los resolutely strikes the anvil in the forging of Urizen's body. The sparks that fly off are the alchemical moments of labouring vision that bring about the coalescence between imagination and temporality, possibility and actuality. Urizen's body, which becomes infused with the energy of its creator, is the locus of both a regressive and progressive movement. Like a throbbing globule of blood ("Red Round Globe" M,3:30), it expands to the same proportion as it contracts. Harboring the afflictions of a sinful humanity, it recoils more densely into itself, attempting to resist definite form. But it is this very binding of infinity which allows it to become part of a sequence of events that will draw it out of itself into a world of other forms, thereby becoming that definite form.²

As with the early stages of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit, so in Urizen's Seven Ages, the self becomes conscious of itself as it affirms itself against other finite selves. While the opposition of this finite individual to the universal ethical spirit creates the milieu for evil to

flourish, it is, nevertheless, a necessary state or moment along the road to a freer form of ethical life. For the ability for free untrammelled action gives the individual a sense of his unique spiritual worth that should not be abused or destroyed by another. But, at the same time, such freedom, which is expressed as that indeterminate ability to choose whatever one likes, becomes a negation of freedom as one is swept first by this impulse and then by that desire. The subject must limit himself, choose one thing, and thereby suspend all forms of arbitrary willing before the necessity of carrying out the original choice. And, this striving after a goal until it has achieved actuality in the world, necessarily changes the nature of that goal as it comes to incorporate the contingency of other choices operating in the world. Thus, the ability to choose presupposes the recognition of another's claim to that same freedom. In this way, the seeming profligacy and randomness of individual choice is converted into the truth of necessity as necessity becomes the truth of contingency. In the Christian Religion Hegel says that "this dependence of necessary things is the opposite of what is seen to be the independence of contingent things, but just as contingent things are in fact completely dependent, so it is in necessity alone that we find the independence of things" (110).

I have argued throughout this thesis that Blake's resolution to the contradiction of necessity and freedom is desire as it achieves its highest manifestation in love. Love is free for it is never externally compelled. Yet one needs

to be with the beloved in a response that springs from the beloved's being. One's subjectivity is rediscovered in the feeling of loving unity with the beloved. I have also argued that such love reaches its consummate expression within the divine community. For it is only within the context of a non-exclusive community that the oneness of all finite life is fulfilled, transcending without destroying the particularity of each individual.

Los' hammering out time, and Albion's fallen departure into time, suggest perspectival shifts in time consciousness which belong together. The former, involved in a continuously present event, and the latter, recalled from the annals of a completed past, elicit from each other the progressive ground that allows the mortal vestiges of Albion's fallen person to become a micro-cosmic moment within the scheme of a regenerating humanity.

This structural blueprint suggests beginning and end as separate but continuous moments within a circular congruity of meaning. In traditional narratives, the allegorical arrangement of events places the end at the end of a concatenation of contingent or immediate causalities. The resolution of the plot might have occurred in several ways because the form of the narration stands in an external relationship to the content. In the poem Milton, however, the end is the beginning and vice versa. The plot is necessary to the extent that the mode of expression is constitutive of the content. The notion of creation is brought forward through the very act of creating a poem about

the creation of a poem. The various forms of reunion that take place at the end are brought together within the all-encompassing unity of Blake's "brain" - an explicit reference to the way the poem began. The loving openness to the others, which Blake learned in the course of creating this poem, is, in fact, a manifestation of God's inexhaustible openness to himself in the different forms of his creation. The removal of the ontological priority of a transcendent God allows the weight of the future to exert its influence upon the present, through which the past consummates itself through its own self-development.

Notes

1 A number of commentators have pointed out this ambiguity. But none have suggested how the different meanings implied by this ambiguity belong together as a coherent whole. See for instance Bracher 15 and Fox 34.

2 Many commentators have viewed the Urizenic creation myth as confirmation of Blake's gnostic position. By contracting into himself, Urizen has formed an adversarial world in which the perfect unity of Eternity has degenerated into a warring dualism. Los' attempt to confine Urizen merely perpetuates this adversarial system of split oppositions. See, for instance, Kay Easson's commentary on The Book of Urizen and the Urizenic creation myth in Milton. I have tried to argue, on the contrary, that it is precisely from the fallen world that regeneration will take rise. Altizer takes a similar position. See for instance his NA 88.

Appendix I (Sublation)

Hegel provides the most extensive definition of the word "sublation" in The Science of Logic. He says that

To sublate" and "the sublated" constitute one of the most important notions in philosophy. It is a fundamental determination that occurs throughout the whole of philosophy, the meaning of which is to be clearly grasped and especially distinguished from nothing. What is sublated is thereby not reduced to nothing. Nothing is immediate, what is sublated on the other hand is the result of mediation; it is a non-being but as a result which has its origins in being. It still has, therefore, in itself the determinateness from which it originates. "To sublate" has a twofold meaning in language: on the one hand, it means to preserve, to maintain, and equally it also means to cause to cease, to put an end to it. Even "to preserve" includes a negative element, namely, that something is removed from its immediacy, and so from an existence which is open to external influences, in order to preserve it. Thus, what is sublated is at the same time preserved; it has lost its immediacy but is not on that account annihilated. The two definitions of "to sublate" which we have given can be quoted as two dictionary

meanings of this word. But it is certainly remarkable to find that language has come to use one and the same word for two opposite meanings....Something is sublated only insofar as it has entered into unity with its opposite; in this more particular signification as something reflected, it may fittingly be called a moment (106-7).

Appendix II (Milton's Order of Creation)

We see dispersed throughout Milton's work, both in the poetry and the prose, a belief in a peculiar order of creation that takes its rise from the creative initiative of a God that stands forth as the great "I am" of Biblical culture. To envision an absolute beginning or an unprecedented act of creation is to presuppose the existence of an absolute subject to which such an act can alone belong.¹ To speak of creation as genesis, as opposed to the cyclical patterns of sexual generational myths in archaic cultures, is to presume the existence of a subject in whose freedom of will the creation of the world was decided upon at some determinative point in time, and in whose omnific word that creation actually "happened" as the cataclysmic disruption of a unique and unrepeatable event. We have, then, in creation the sublime manifestation of the great "I am," in which God reveals himself in his concealed depths, or in which he exalts himself above the material in which he has chosen to make his appearance. To assume that the world was not born, but made, or made suddenly to awaken from its slumberous state to the animating light of consciousness is to assume that the creator stands radically outside his creation from where he does his making. In order to protect the absolute sovereignty of God, in order to ensure the abysmal gulf that separates creator from creature, Milton says in the Christian Doctrine that, although God bequeaths something of his spirit to his creatures, he nevertheless remains essentially apart from

them:

We may understand from other passages of the Scriptures, that when God infused the breath of life into man, what man thereby received was not a portion of God's essence, or a participation of the divine nature, but the measure of the divine virtue or influence, which was commensurate to the capabilities of the recipient. (979)

In Denis Saurat's book on Milton's thought, we have an interesting, if controversial, examination of Milton's account of creation in terms of its ethical implications for man. Saurat rests his entire argument on one seminal passage found in Book VII of Paradise Lost:

My overshadowing Spirit and might with thee
I send along, ride forth, and bid the Deep
Within appointed bounds be Heav'n and Earth,
Boundless the Deep, because I am who fill
Infinitude, nor vacuous the space.
Though I uncircumscrib'd myself retire,
And put not forth my goodness, which is free
To act or not, Necessity and Chance
Approach not mee, and what I will is Fate.
(PL, 7:164-73)

According to Saurat, this passage reflects the movement of

"God [withdrawing] his will from certain parts of Himself, and delivers them up, so to speak to obscure latent impulses that remain in them. Through this retraction, nature is created; through this retraction, individual beings are created. The parts of God thus freed from his will are persons" (102-3). Thus, being is conceived as something which is itself inherently free. The ability to choose between good and evil is an ontologically given fact.

I think that Saurat is correct insofar as he has applied an interpretation to the passage that would have complied with Milton's intentions. However, in his attempt to render the passage philosophically intelligible, Saurat fails to carry his argument far enough to include a critique of those logical inconsistencies that necessarily lead to a spurious or abstract form of freedom.

For we see that the matter which God has left behind in his track, as he progressively withdraws into himself, is not the matter by which he will realize himself in and through the free activity of determinate being. This is the logical precondition for the exertion of his creative power - the necessary condition which will allow him to assume the position of lordship over his creatures.

Our interpretation of the retraction is born out by an excerpt from the Christian Doctrine where Milton says that

Since no agent can act externally, unless there be some patient, such as matter, it appears impossible that God could have created this world out of

nothing; not from any defect of power on his part, but because it was necessary that something existed capable of receiving passively the exertion of the divine efficacy. (976)

This receives poetic expression in Book VII of Paradise Lost where God first bids his Son to ride forth into the deep and impose bounds upon the matter, and then to endue those segregated "things" with a living soul. This raw material, from which creation eventually takes its rise, is God's voluntary self-expulsion, an exiling of those certain parts to peripheral points in space which are thus determined according to where and what God is not. Left as something which is utterly profane, or divested of any trace of God himself (it is where God is not), it becomes an internally unmotivated or passive material upon which God exerts his "divine efficacy."

Saurat claims that it is this hot bed of potentiality, this segment of undigested reality uninformed by God's will, that provides the ground for the spontaneity of movement in living things, and ultimately, for uninhibited moral choice in man. Yet, such matter is, by itself, only "chance and necessity" and its seeming riot of finite wills does not effect or "approach" God's will which is "fate." God's fate or providential plan is a form of telos whose end is somewhere other than the means employed (the finite wills which are chance and necessity); an end which is God himself in the jealously guarded sovereignty of his will: "Necessity and

Chance/Approach not mee, and what I will is Fate."

What is truly real, what is actual being, continues to reside only in the one God. For, instead of a kenosis or an emptying of himself, this God has chosen to retire himself from certain parts of infinitude, which means that he has effectively withdrawn his essential being from those parts as well. That matter, posited by God, subsists in a form of unmediated otherness, which can only affirm itself in first affirming God as its ultimate source. For despite its palpability, this matter remains a dependent finitude, which, as the broken reflection of God's exclusive singularity, is merely the show or semblance of true being. God, then, in claiming the numerical superiority of an abstract "oneness," which is logically prior to all else (the absolute beginning), has attained the position of undisputed lordship and power over the manifold of his creation. This matter, which lies in an external unmediated heap awaiting the animating spark, has no claim of its own, and whatever goodness it possesses, it is still a potentiality ("And put not forth my goodness") that is fulfilled in the conformity of each and every creature to the end that is only God. As the beginning who is not also the result of creation, God does not involve himself in a process that allows him to sustain his creation internally, or which allows him to pass over into finitude so that the finite can correlatively pass over into the Infinite.²

Milton's notion of history, as outlined in the last two books of Paradise Lost, continues this form of creation. The promulgation of those impregnable truths forms an arch over

the poem, binding together what is inchoate, superimposing a symmetrical design on the asymmetry of man's imponderable nature and history. The final triumph of good, that "evil [finally] turn[s] to good" (PL, 12:471) is asserted in a way that projects the good outside the process of history to some remote endpoint. The unprofitable tension between good and evil is resolved in the denial of the tension itself, in which all temporal processes are utterly negated by the apocalyptic endpoint. Evil (reprobation) remains what it is, undaunted until the end of time, uninformed by the good (the elect), which always remains a distantiated unappropriated otherness;

The World shall go on.
To good malignant, to bad men benign,
Under her own weight groaning, till the day
Appear of reparation to the just,
And vengeance to the wicked, at return
Of him so lately promis'd to thy aid"
(PL, 537-542)

In Book XII Adam and Eve walk "hand in hand" as they make their "solitary way" through Eden (PL, 12:648-9), conveying more an impression of precarious courage in the face of pervasive evil, as they pursue their "paradise within," than any acclamation of the victory of good over evil. That wilderness, which is laid out before them, is reminiscent of the chaotic mass that was the universe in its initial state. The vision of the fallen world as wilderness, which symbolizes

the errancy of evil uninfluenced by the directing reason of God's good, is simply the state of the world that follows from its original ontological condition of being the other of God. The tedious recurring pattern of events in Biblical history testifies to the fact that the good makes its sporadic appearances only to be swallowed up again by what is otherwise a history dominated by the unimpeded growth of evil. There is no detectable progression of the good in the matter of history itself. The good, then, deferred as it is to some remote endpoint, or originating from some remote beginning point, remains abstracted from the evil, unengaged in a dialectical transposition of itself with evil, to form a good which is integrally involved in the matter of history - a good whose final appearance at the end reflects the coming of man to own his own good through the appropriation and displacement of evil in and through the good.³

Notes To Appendix Two

1 The notion of an absolute beginning as something which marks the emergence of a new and differentiated consciousness from the compact cyclical patterns of mythological consciousness has been noted by several modern theologians and critics. See primarily Altizer's History as Apocalypse; Gertard von Rad's The Message of The Prophets; Eric Voegelin's Israel and Revelation.

2 In DR, Hegel speaks of a withdrawal of Deity from certain parts of the universe which leads to the form of bad infinite here mentioned. See the section entitled "God as One."

3 Many commentators have suggested that the last two books seem incongruent with the rest of the poem. It is my contention, however, that this ambivalent mood runs through out the poem, and merely culminates in the last two books in an explicit dualism.

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