

**TRAVELLING "WITHOUTSIDE": EXPERIENCING
BLAKE'S "MILTON" EXPERIENCING**

by

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"Milton" Experiencing

Abstract

The impetus behind this thesis is a dissatisfaction with the limitations, and occasional dishonesties of critical stances--towards the literary works of William Blake--which assume an *objective* distance from the poems themselves. This critical conceit often illuminates its own method at the expense of the poem, and creates a critic/text dualism.

The thesis begins by employing Blake's concept, contrariety, in order to break down this dualism, and put in its place a practice of reading which attempts to stay inside the poem's workings and pay close attention to these internal movements. This is accomplished by paying particular attention to how Blake's language works to break down and build meaning in the final three plates of "Milton," Book the First. By keeping the concept of contrariety, as a creative principle inside language, in my reading/writing mind, an exegesis is produced which provides many insights into the condition of language and meaning inside what Blake terms the fall.

Part two moves to produce several similar exegeses of passages from Book the Second which focus on the experience of Ololon and provide redemptive contraries for the fallen experiences of Book the First.

The Afterword examines some of the insights concerning Blake's use of poetic language that my earlier exegeses explore. In particular, Blake's use of the word "prophetic" is discussed in relation to the extreme unsettled nature of meaning that the thesis illuminates. This inability to settle the meaning of the

poem creates a liberating experience which frees the critic and Blake from final authority over the text, and informs Blake's sense of a prophetic voice as a poetic force in time.

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FOREWORD

The task of writing about Blake is nonsensical. The objective conceit that *about* implies becomes laughable the moment it engages the poetry. Certainly, the necessity of flattening and generalizing the poem cannot be overcome altogether, but a methodology must be found that balances this necessary evil with the living force of the poetic process itself. The search is for the critical contrary.

A "contrary" would be an opposition in which the distinction itself (or the reasoning that creates it) is on one side, and on the other is the denial of the distinction in favour of the identity of the two things in the term "energy," with neither side negated.¹

Can the anxiety produced by the recognition in myself of the critical Urizen rend the fabric of my selfhood, and allow the occasion of my composition to be a living event; Blake's redeemed space and time?

The experienced reader of Blake will recognize echoes of the poem "Milton" in my choice of vocabulary. This is appropriate for two reasons: first, because I intend to ground my arguments in "Milton"; and second, because in this work, Blake, himself, wrestles with the condition of the fall and the implications that his knowledge holds for his language. Blake's poetic voice in "Milton" recognizes how it is trapped by its own epistemology. That is to say, he recognizes that his means of understanding – and he says that his means of saying – are confined and defined by his personal and cultural history. This is the point at which my thesis begins. The crucial ideas necessary in an understanding of Blake are clearly expressed in "Milton," but the direct

¹Hazard Adams, Philosophy of the Literary Symbolic, (Tallahassee: Florida State University, 1983), p. 7.

transmission of those ideas to a reader is itself a purely Urizenic project. If the poem did that alone it would be reduced to the thing it professes to despise: dogma. Blake's art attempts to escape its own bounds by giving itself over to the flux and possibility of contrariety. There is no certainty, no direct transmission. Language is denied a stable referent and is thus freed from vulgar allegorizing. If meaning occurs in the reading of "Milton," it occurs as an exchange *between* the reader and the text. This relation is no more stable than any other set of contraries in a Blakean enterprise, and as a result the poems themselves are opened even further.² If a method can be found (a critical contrary), then it must recognize and embrace the openness of the poem's form and strive to enter, rather than control, its "mental fight." The form of "Milton" holds a vast multiplicity of insights and meanings, and can easily accommodate a few wayward readers in its mass of living relations. Form is alive and we must experience it.

Given that the poet and the reader (critic) share the same linguistic and cultural trap, then the mystery and centre of Blakean poetics is that the poem is both in and out of the trap. But if language is the material of the trap then how can it simultaneously be an escape? "Milton" invites us to celebrate the uncertainty of experience, to "put off Self,"³ and allow form (space in time) to

²This distinction between referential and inferential language is crucial in Blakean thought, but engenders its own paradox in turn. The very process of distinction-making, even in such important matters, is Urizenic in nature. It is a tool of the referential system even as it denies its validity. This problem of meaning's collapse has to do with entropy and is a trap that cannot be avoided. It testifies to the life of language and form, and the giddiness/despair of freedom.

³William Blake, The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake, ed. David V. Erdman (Garden City, NJ: Anchor-Doubleday, 1982), p. 139. All line references to "Milton" will appear in the body of the thesis as plate number, line number. This reference would appear as (38,49). Other Blake works will be noted by page number only.

emerge, collapse, re-emerge, disintegrate, reintegrate, *ad infinitum*. The intention of the methodology I propose is to join in the freedom and confinement of the poem's form, and in so doing experience the poem's process as clearly as possible. The critic disappears (becomes clear) and a reading, the residue of the process, remains.

Blake's ideas are carried in his poetic process (this itself is such an idea), and I hope to experience his ideas as I experience the poem's form. For example, the difference between contradiction and contrariety is the point at which my thesis begins, and the textual evidence I intend to present is not a proof of the validity of this Blakean concept, but rather an instance of it. Part one will employ this methodology of specific close reading in order to actually experience the condition of the fall as presented in the final three plates of "Milton", Book the First. It is in these plates that the poet and his language are most clearly implicated in the fall. The poem's voices experience the idea of contrariety and carry in them all of the conceptual problems that an objective discussion cannot easily deal with or even see. An objective critical stance engages in a game of make-believe, imagining itself outside the poem's uncertainty, and conversely the epistemological trap of its (the poem's) asserted certainty. The convenience of this stance does not offer sufficient compensation for its blindness. Such objective critical studies, while often the occasions of fine and illuminating Romantic philosophizing, seek different rewards from those of the present undertaking. This is not to say that I intend to retreat into the poem entirely, for I believe the form of the poetic processes in "Milton" holds

cultural, political, and religious (as well as personal) de-constructions⁴, and as such acts as its own critical subject and method.

The multiplicity of meanings that the text generates (and through contrariety propels) provides readers with rich opportunities to explore the nature of poetic language through their experience of Blake's poetic operations. As readers, we experience the fall of our certainty in language as Blake, Milton and Los do. The question is, how do we manage also to experience moments of clarity and "vision" during the process of our descent into darkness and error? How does each poetic moment escape this seemingly inevitable negation? The answer lies in Blake's use of and experience of contrariety. To restate the problem: how does a reader accept the radically unstable condition of contrariety and escape the trap of returning to the dualistic procedure of determining constituent pairs, spacializing an opposition, and negating the *weaker* of the pair? It is doubtful that this cultural habit can be completely overcome. The best we can do is to be alert to this limitation of ourselves as participants imaginatively within the text, and to explore the multiplicity of relations to the text that meet us in our experience. For example, in Blake's song "The Little Girl Lost," the closing line of the first quatrain reads, "(Grave the sentence deep)" (p. 20). I, as a reader, first experience this line intellectually. It leads me to meditate on the "deep" seriousness and consequences of humanity's fall from grace (the gravity of our mortality). Punning on "grave" leads me to a more immediate physical anxiety as I gaze into the depths of my own grave to which I've been sentenced by birth. These two simultaneous

⁴By de-construction, I mean the process by which a person's or a text's strategies are made known through the use of a negative epistemology; the process of achieving honest self-knowledge.

readings create a powerful intellectual/psychological resonance in the parenthetical aside Blake directs to his readers, but the line does not stop there. Blake simultaneously calls on us/himself to create a poetic space with him as he holds his graver and "grave[s] the sentence deep." The tone of the intimate meditative aside flips into an imperative. Create now. The multiplicity generated by this single line excites (incites?) the reader and demands high levels of awareness and energy as we are propelled into the rest of the poem. The other lines in turn change, modify, and challenge the meanings of the line and in so doing create anew. For example, how do the multiple readings above relate to the idea of the "prophetic" that Blake explores (who is the prophet?); how are they related to the poem's biblical imagery of the fall from the garden (or the fall from human innocence to experience); how are they related to Blake's ongoing meditation on the nature of innocence and experience, etc.? The result of our initial acceptance of the poem's multiplicity of meaning and energy as a condition of language itself frees us into an endless and exhilarating experience of the radical relational nature of the text. Of course, this excitement creates its own contrary as the impossibility of a settled sense of meaning causes some critics/philosophers to lament language's failure to be transparent. The freedom/entrapment contrary that our experience of Blake's language generates is always with us and serves as the epistemological underpinning of this thesis. When Paul Ricoeur writes that "opacity constitutes the depth of the symbol, which . . . is inexhaustible,"⁵ and discusses "the paradox of showing and hiding,"⁶ he explores not simply a paradox but the central contrariety of language itself. Part two of this thesis will

⁵Cited in Adams, Philosophy, p. 374.

⁶Cited in *ibid.* p. 374.

examine/explore/experience the experience of Ololon in Book the Second and in so doing present a redemptive contrary for Book the First's (and part one's) dualistic fall into error.

The Afterword will gather the critical insights produced to that point and attempt to recast them as a ground on (in) which to examine Blake's use of prophetic speech. What is prophecy? How does Blake *see* ? How does the proliferation/condensation contrary that characterizes the condition of the narrative voice in the poem carry meanings which are/are not Blake's/ours. In short, how does Blake's text mediate between self and other, and what is the status of the intellectual residue that our reading produces?

PART ONE

One of the central events of "Milton," Book the First, concerns the ironic inversion and ultimate subversion of John Milton's religious classes of men. As the reader contemplates Blake's arguments against Milton's poetic vision, it is easy to assent to and join in the critique. I will not examine the details of these Blakean de-constructions at this point, but rather examine how his critique forces Blake to experience the contrariety of his language and further forces him to build anew out of his new sense of knowledge. Near the end of Plate 26, Blake makes his final arguments against Milton:

. . . the various Classes of Men are all markd out determinate
In Bowlahoola; & as the Spectres choose their affinities
So they are born on Earth, & every Class is determinate
But not by Natural but by Spiritual power alone. Because
The Natural power continually seeks & tends to Destruction
Ending in Death: which would of itself be Eternal Death
And all are Class'd by Spiritual, & not by Natural power.

And every Natural Effect has a Spiritual Cause, and Not
A Natural: for a Natural Cause only seems, it is a Delusion
Of Ulro: & a ratio of the perishing Vegetable Memory.

(26,37-46)

Blake's poetic assertions take the form of a series of three connected syllogisms. The first states that "Spiritual power alone" determines class. Natural power is not Spiritual. Therefore Natural Power cannot determine class. The argument follows that anything which ends in death cannot determine class. Natural power ends in death. Natural power cannot determine class. The final syllogism moves to connect the process of determining class to the process of determining cause. It repeats the major

premise of the second syllogism by saying that causality cannot be determined by "a ratio of the perishing Vegetable Memory" (26,46). Natural power ends in death. Therefore, natural power cannot cause.

These arguments combine to repudiate the ultimate validity of human reason, and, as a result, denounce Milton's greatest sin: Satan's pride. An extraordinary complication occurs when the reader realizes that Blake's arguments are an instance of his pride. The content of the syllogisms reads like a manifesto denouncing the power of their own form. Making contraries of form and content entraps the poet as he sets out to convince his reader while simultaneously warning against the validity of the argument. While railing against Milton's selfhood, Blake comes face to face with his own. After facing the all-pervasiveness of contrariety (it entraps him in his own language), Blake completes Book the First by entering and exploring this, his own, condition. He attempts to think/compose in contraries and not in contradictions and negations. For example, despite the fact that his apparent manifesto on class and cause reads as an eloquent argument, it also participates in entirely unBlakean practices. The distinction between spiritual and natural is the work of Urizen alone. All readers of Blake know the dangers of the deification of this sole aspect of the human mind. One of the binary pair created by the distinction must be negated. In other words, the natural is destroyed as the spiritual claims all authority. The best that can occur in such a system of thought is a contradiction which does not resolve itself into a negation. Surely a more Blakean approach would be to see, through contrariety, that natural classes and causes may be expressions or human apprehensions of spiritual classes and causes. Like the first line of the Tao Te Ching, "The tao that can be spoken is

not the eternal Tao⁷," Blake's language strives to be about our connection to, rather than alienation from, the eternal.

The force of Blake's convictions leads him to desire complete transparency in his language as he strives to convince, but he cannot believe in or condone the products of that desire. He is confined by his knowledge that transparent poetic language cannot be produced. Out of the human limit of this inescapable opacity, he attempts to create a contrary freedom to engage his confinement. The search for a true contrariety of confinement/freedom as a condition of language represents one way in which the poem "Milton" can be read. This is the new knowledge Blake desires and Milton requires. Blake's attempt to think/compose in contraries, which close Book the First of "Milton", provide a series of experiences into which we, as readers, can attempt to follow his mental fight into the life and struggle of contrariety.

The opening word of Plate 27 places us in Blake's and our dilemma. "But" (27,1) sets up a mode of contradiction in which assertions are made and then opposed by other contradictory assertions. Those oppositions are opposed by others and so on. The effect of following such argument is to swing from side to side on a dualistic pendulum. The poem sets out to overcome this habit and the danger of negation which it implies. Blake moves to redeem "but" by opening up the inner contrariety of each argument or assertion or word, and as a result move towards "but's" contrary "and". If this can be accomplished then Hazard Adams' definition of a contrary (*op. cit.*) will become completely operational inside the poem's language. In other words distinction/identity will

⁷Lao Tsu, Tao Te Ching, trans. Gia-fu Feng and Jane English (New York: Vintage Books, 1972), p. 1.

become a contrary and the temptation to negate one in favour of the other will be overcome.

The first "But" leads us into the activity of "the Wine-press of Los" (27,1), and provides us with a series of challenges to our human philosophical and physical limits. The wine-press is placed "eastward of Golgonooza, before the Seat/Of Satan" (27,1 & 2). "Eastward" suggests that its processes may be antecedent to those of Golgonooza. Golgonooza itself represents an energized knot of contrariety. It is a place and process of creation. It suggests Golgotha, the place of the crucifixion (Christ's material death), and *zoa*, Blake's word for the living forces of the universe. The mount of Golgotha spatializes the moment of the crucifixion, and the central Christian mystery of achieving eternal life through material death. Blake's word event sounds the miraculous process as *Golgotha* merges into the *new zoa* (Golgo noo za). Death and life, space and time, temporal and eternal exist in a contrary flux, which itself stands as an instance and exemplar of Blake's creative principle. The wine-press processes – or "state" in Blake's vocabulary – are placed "eastward" of Golgonooza's creative processes (state), and represent part of the road we must travel in order to think in such a creative flux and not about it. "Eastward" may also remind us of where we are placed after the fall from Eden⁸, and thus cause us to meditate on Golgonooza's energy as an Edenic possibility.

The wine-press is also placed "before the Seat/Of Satan" (27,1 & 2). "Before" carries forward the spatial/temporal ambiguity of "eastward". The scene suggests an object brought before an enthroned monarch (Satan in his ironic delusion of thinking he is Jahweh), but also suggests the wine-press as a

⁸Genesis 3:24, The Bible.

Blakean state antecedent to the Satanic state. There can be no certain causality established because the word "before" can suggest two opposite movements in time. Furthermore, the states themselves are not stable intellectual plateaus to be achieved (made static) as the violent flux of Golgonooza amply illustrates. The problematic of "east" as a static place pushed into process by the addition of the suffix "ward", and "before" as a specific location and simultaneously a description of temporal process, continues to develop in the poem's next sentence: "Luvah laid the foundation & Urizen finish'd it in howling woe" (27,2). The problem reframes itself around Luvah and Urizen. Luvah places the wine-press into process by beginning it ("foundation"), and Urizen denies it further process by finishing it (bringing it to an end). The relation of Luvah's original impetus to its containment by Urizen, or, crudely put, love dominated by reason, creates the conditions we see in the wine-press. Urizen reduces things to constituent pairs so Luvah's creation becomes all love or all hate, all pleasure or all pain. The first creation of this destructive dualism is an ambiguous "howling woe." The life of Luvah's creation cries out in protest at being "finish'd," or/and Urizen's action extends to himself and causes him immediate torment.

As the scene unfolds we see further evidence of a contradictory dualism at work:

How red the sons & daughters of Luvah! Here they tread the grapes;
 Laughing and shouting drunk with odours many fall o'erwearied.
 Drown'd in the wine is many a youth & maiden: those around
 Lay them on skins of Tygers & of the spotted Leopard & the Wild Ass
 Till they revive, or bury them in cool grots, making lamentation.

(27,3-7)

The poet exclaims at the sight of the sons and daughters covered in wine/blood. They appear as impassioned agents in the process of human mortality. We are

the human grapes they tread upon. Our blood stains them. The human passion seen in their "laughing" intoxication suggests a primal dionysian sexuality. They are overcome by the absolute frenzy of these undeterred desires and "drown" in the wine/blood they have produced. Such absolute blood-lust must arise in a system in which absolutes (all love or all cruelty) are demanded by the reason which governs it. The fate of the drowned continues this absolute dualism as they either recover from their violent (sexual) passion on the skins of the devouring "Tyger", "Leopard", and "Wild Ass"; or are entombed and lamented over. This either/or reflects the precarious nature of our mortality as our primal natures overwhelm us and we become the devouring, but also lose our ability to avoid finally becoming the victim. After all, the sons and daughters await their human fate in the wine-press as well. The "cool grots" where these victims of their own passions are buried reminds us of the Holy Sepulchre and of Christ's Passion and His victimization and sacrifice. The suffering of Christ's mortal body moves towards the eternal possibility, and as such refutes or refuses to assent to the dualism of pure overwhelming pleasure or pure overwhelming torment and death. The knowledge carried in the fragment "cool grots" works as an instance of contrariety (life and death as an identity within a larger possibility) in the midst of the contradictory choices of these images of human suffering and consummation (the sexual sense of this word or its double death). Passion is the body's suffering, is blood-lust, is Dionysus, is Christ's eternal possibility -- all in a knot of contrary energy.

Urizen's contradictory realm extends to language and the creative process as the "Wine-press is call'd War on Earth" (27,8). That is to say that our mortal suffering and struggle are an absolute conflict: human life as warfare. Language participates in this fallen condition through the process of naming.

Once our experience is "call'd War," it has been fixed as such and life and death conflict (the realm of contradiction) entraps us. Los, as our creative portion, cannot escape this fallen condition either, and the wine-press becomes his printing-press. The mechanical process of Los setting his type produces another image of contradiction as he "lays his words in order above the mortal brain" (27,9). We see him engaged in an abstract ordering in which creation is alienated from ("above") the human. The process is described in mechanical terms "[a]s cogs are form'd in a wheel to turn the cogs of the adverse wheel" (27,10). This image of a creating machine run on contradiction (conflicting forces) serves as a metaphor in Blake's mind for the Urizenic madness he saw at the centre of the industrial revolution. Blake's poems were produced by the physical force of his body engraving the plate. He printed them, painted them, arranged them. Nothing separated him from his art. This metaphor extended to his quarrel with Newton's mechanical universe in which scientific theory served as an alienating force between *man* and *the universe*, and thus created the dualism of man and the universe. Pushed further, the metaphor ends up back in the poem as the dogmatism of Milton's religious system. Science's alienating force is analogous to the false mediation of religious dogma. Humankind alienated from God, as he or she was from the universe, produces the need for secular and religious priesthods, and makes separate centres of individual minds. This alienated place houses the selfhood, Blake's (our) enemy. The poem sets out to ex/implode these dualistic processes and the hubris (Satanic forms) they create.

Blake surrounds the wine-press with the dance of nature. The music of "[t]imbrels and violins sport round" (27,11) the scene. Music is the most processive of artistic forms; dependent as it is on movement through time. And,

thus, Blake's imagery of music and dance creates an elemental, sensual creative force in the nature he goes on to describe. The sense of the elemental is reinforced as he begins his description with "the little Seed" and "the sportive Root" (27,11 & 12) which suggest the animating ("sportive") source driving natural creation. These two plant images are joined in the dance by "[t]he Earth-worm, the gold Beetle, the wise Emmet" (27,12). Each of these additions challenges our human perception. The earth-worm engages in the fundamental task of turning the soil, creating the ground of life in its processes, but these processes inevitably include the material disintegration of our own bodies. The image of the worm's dance through our flesh cannot be ignored, nor can the horror it creates in us. The earth-worm embodies a fundamental contrariety as the processes of life and the processes of death become indistinguishable. The involuntary shudder we feel, our anxiety and fear, tempts us to deny such contrariety and separate the good works of the earth-worm from the bad (the elemental image of our death and disintegration). The "gold Beetle" continues this contrariety as the insignificance (in human terms) of an insect joins with the preciousness and permanence associated with gold. The image describes the ornamental scarabs placed in the Pharaoh's caskets, and in so doing brings us back to the contemplation of our own graves. The scarab's contrariety arises out of its role as a dung beetle creating life out of excrement. The practice of artistically expressing this natural power in a gold ornament leads to the further contrary of precious/excremental, and a contrary sense of permanence defined as exuberant and continual process (our permanent state). The "wise Emmet" continues the challenge presented to us in this dance. Blake's ant/sage attacks the hubris which places the human at the centre of individual universes (selfhoods), and denies humanity a place above or outside the whole of nature. The emmet's wisdom comes from its absolute

integration into the natural whole. Its life and activity serve as an emblem of social co-operation free of individual selfish motives. Blake creates rich irony in this ongoing contrariety, as the behaviour we would name stupid (in our separating human terms) also presents an image of an enlightened human possibility free of the anxiety of our individual power inside it and the destructive fear of our individual deaths.

The dancers around "the Wine-presses of Luvah" (27,13) include the burrowing centipede, ground spider, and mole as Blake presses on with images of material disintegration and renewal. These participants in that process work the soil, destroying matter in order to enrich it. Many of the creatures are described in human terms. "The ambitious Spider in his sullen web" (27,15) displays human characteristics. The "sullen" fruits of his ambition present an image of the psychological result of the selfhood's drive towards purely individual goals. This human interpretation of nature's behaviour breaks out in a passage which otherwise moves towards a neutral amoral view of nature, and demonstrates how difficult it is to stay inside contrariety and not move towards negation through judgement. The nature Blake chooses to show us makes our task that much more difficult as it keeps our own deaths in sharp focus. "[T]he tender Maggot emblem of immortality" (27,16) provides us with an image of spontaneous regeneration out of decay just as the scarab emerging from the dung informed the imagination of the Pharaohs, but it is difficult nonetheless to accept the sense of the word "tender" which suggests kindness or even mercy when our bodies are the material feeding the process. We struggle with the knowledge of our individual deaths as a necessary part of continuous life. Blake lists the parasites (flea, louse, tape-worm) which create such dis/ease in us ("vegetating Man"), and again reminds us of the "[v]isible and invisible"

(27,18), material and psychological, challenge of such a process, and challenges us to share in his contrary, neutral perspective. He presents an exemplar for us in the beauty and simplicity of "the Grasshopper that sings & laughs & drinks:/Winter comes, he folds his slender bones without a murmur" (27, 19 & 20). The strength and joy to be found in discovering and yielding to one's *moira* in this way is the reward which motivates Blake, but is a perspective difficult to sustain. "The cruel Scorpion" (27,21) image that follows falls out of contrariety and into the limited human perspective as it renames the process "cruel." Attributing malice to nature serves contradiction as it divides the individual from nature and thus contradicts any potential value the scorpion could have by positing the selfhood as the sole centre in determining good or evil: value determined by the pleasure or pain experienced by a central I (the selfhood's negating power).

Blake closes this descriptive passage by examining more examples of contrariety within nature. The image of "the Serpent clothd in gems & gold" (27,22) combines the traditional sense of the serpent as tempter with Blake's critique of purely material values. We are tempted by ornamentation, our souls exchanged for trinkets. The poet moves to "throw off their gorgeous raiment" (27,23), and strip them (the forces and inhabitants of nature) down to their essential details. In this state they join in a Dionysian revel, "naked & drunk with wine" (27,24). Their nakedness precludes deception and they appear as they are in an immediate contrary flux of creation and destruction. Blake also strips the corruption of human communities from the images of plants around the scene. For example, the "Thistle: whose bitterness is bred in his milk:/Who feeds on contempt of his neighbour" (27,26 & 27) shows us a natural scene corrupted by human interpretation and analogy to become an image of the petty

jealousies of our most banal human intercourses (gossip, rumour, moralism, judgement, etc.). Blake moves to strip this hurtful social ornamentation away as well, to allow the whole of the natural community to join in, "[n]aked in all their beauty dancing round the Wine-presses" (27,29). In other words, we are invited to let go of our judgemental ways and see things in their "naked beauty." Blake moves us to a place in the passage, a perspective, from which we can view the possibility of seeing the beauty of nature's processes. This perspective can be achieved only if we let go of the fear of our individual deaths and the influence that anxiety holds over our ability to see. We must strip away the ornamentation of our selfhoods in order to experience the contrary nature of the processes of death/life and destruction/creation.

Despite the short polemic, such bravado proves short-lived as the next "But" moves the reader back towards a limited human perspective:

But in the Wine-presses the Human grapes sing not, nor dance
 They howl & writhe in shoals of torment; in fierce flames consuming
 In chains of iron & in dungeons circled with ceaseless fires.
 (27,30-32)

The perspective shifts from the contrariety of nature's processes to the enclosed body in the torment of undergoing such processes. The "But" again fuels contradiction as the "human grapes" refuse to assent to the necessity of their mortality and thus struggle to place themselves outside nature. Human fate becomes a prison as the body falls victim to "the pits & dens & shades of death" (27,33), and is tormented by the implements of torture ("The plates & screws & wracks & saws & cords & fires & cisterns" (27,34)). The selfhood perversely interprets sexual desire as torture, "cruel joys of Luvah's Daughters lacerating with knives/And whips their Victims" (27,35 & 36). In such a contradictory, two-fold state desire becomes all pleasure or all pain: the beloved reduced to a

desired material object. The selfhood externalizes such desire and names it torture. Human sexuality as a negating dualism shocks us with its cruelty:

They dance around the dying, & they drink the howl & groan
 They catch the shrieks in cups of gold, they hand them to one another:
 These are the sports of love, & these the sweet delights of amorous play
 Tears of the grape, the death sweat of the cluster the last sigh
 Of the mild youth who listens to the lureing song of Luvah.

(27,37-41)

Love under the power of negation takes the form of cruel "sports," and the pleasure of one can be achieved only through the pain of the other. The body, abstracted away from the world by our dualistic reason, suffers under the misinterpretation and suppression of its own processes. Thwarted or contained sexual energy produces perverse forms and inevitably ends on the rocks, pulled there by "the lureing songs" (27,41) of reason's internal siren. Luvah under the law (Urizen) creates the psychological/social conditions which make jealousy, pain, rage, etc. inevitable impediments to a true, mutual, reciprocal human relationship.⁹

The next "But" of Plate 27 shifts our perspective again from the human body in the Wine-press to the complex poetic space "Allamanda" (27,42). The sound play on *all a man does* tells us that we are in a place of purely human activity, and the phrase, "call'd on Earth commerce" (27,42), confirms this. Allamanda is further identified as

. . . the Cultivated land
 Around the City of Golgonooza in the Forests of Entuthon:

⁹An account of the autobiographical aspect of this human struggle can be found in the standard Blake biographies, (Gilchrist or Wilson). Blake's strained relations with Catherine and Hayley at Felpham are reconstructed and described there in some detail.

Here the Sons of Los labour against Death Eternal; through all
 The Twenty-seven Heavens of Beulah in Ulro, Seat of Satan,
 Which is the False Tongue beneath Beulah

(27,42-46)

This passage complicates our reading in several ways. The use of prepositions directs us through a spacial flux which proves disorienting. "Allamanda," "the Cultivated land," is "[a]round" Blake's city of art, and thus separate from the potentially redeeming creative activity that occurs there. Blake then places both Golgonooza and Allamanda "in the Forests of Entuthon" (27,43). An image of a landscape results; a city surrounded by cultivated fields surrounded by a forest, but this natural scene also metaphorically describes the inner workings of a body with Allamanda, "the Sense of Touch" (27,47), serving as the nervous system inside the skeletal structure of Entuthon (we hear *into* and *enter* in the name). The confusion of inner and outer perspectives (in and out of the body) cannot be settled, but rather remains a perspectival flux. The constant poetic building of internal landscapes and contrary external bodies creates what, in discussing Blake's painting, could be called the anti-perspectival. It provides us, as readers, with direct experience of contrariety. The rest of the prepositions push us "through" a series of heavens which are in turn "of" Beulah, contained "in" Ulro, which is the "Seat of Satan," and "beneath" Beulah. In this flux of Blakean states we are "of" something and "beneath" it simultaneously. Heaven, as a state, appears as a 27-stage process, but this heaven is contained by the potentially three-fold but limited (cut off from the eternal) state of Beulah. This Beulah is "in" Ulro, the state representing the nadir of the fall in Blake's mythology, and thus part of the Satanic realm. The final complication, "beneath Beulah," places us in Beulah beneath Beulah, a logical contradiction of course, but undeniably our location. This seemingly impossible flux can be thought if we allow there to be many heavens in the process of heaven, many Beulahs in

the process of Beulah (Beulah as perceived from the fallen state of Ulro for example), etc. This produces an epistemology so in time that it is provisional moment to moment. What we know depends on where we are and where we are going. The resulting unstable spacial relations suggest the absolute contrariety that Blake characterizes as the permanent condition of four-fold eternity (mental fight). Our experience of this condition, as a maddening flux, leads to contradictory attempts to separate and settle the multitude of swirling elements into various stable states or positions. Blake's text makes it impossible for us to employ this method and settle our eye (I).

Inside this complex condition "the Sons of Los labour against Death Eternal" (27,44). Their cultivation, as a reason driven, human centred, enterprise, allows them to put off the thought of their mortality. They labour to acquire material goods (commerce) as a means of extending and expressing their limited power, and thus ignore or even deny death. Blake suggests they are aided and abetted in this fallacy by a fallen religious order "in Ulro" which is totally without eternal vision and under the power of a human egocentric authority ruling from the "Seat of Satan." Under such a system material death and eternal death are the same as the sons cut themselves off from any vision of true eternal possibility. They are busied with material goals, the fulfillment of which they confuse with evidence of their elect status. This corrupt fruit of institutionalized religious practice is characterized as the result of following the Satanic teachings of a "False Tongue": contained, limited and tormented speech. The activity of Allamanda "is the Sense of Touch" (27,46), a system of knowledge dependent on a stable human centre, which Blake undermines with his anti-perspectival use of prepositions. Any elevation of a simply human perspective in these textual conditions ends in tormented failure. The

cultivation (social existence) of the Sons of Los degenerates into a scene of the final harvest which has no mediating vision to assuage its terror:

The Plow goes forth in tempests & lightnings & the Harrow cruel
 In blights of the east; the heavy Roller follows in howlings of woe.
 (27, 47 & 48)

Their husbandry proves sterile as they bring forth "blights," and the implements of their cultivation produce pain and cruelty. They produce "howlings of woe" in their victims (the earth, those not among the elect), in themselves, and in the processes of Allamanda itself. Blake represents their alienated human activity as an auditory condition which expresses the pain of-and-in its circumscribed nature.

"Urizens sons here labour also" (27,49), in this mad flux, and they attempt to create an order as well. These sons take the creative energy of the cultivation of the sons of Los and attempt to make stable reasoned forms. The Mills are an image of such form. Human activity is drawn into machines and becomes the fuel of "a wheel to turn the cogs of the adverse wheel" (27,10). The Mill abstracts the labour of the sons of Los into the generalized energy necessary to fuel its contradictory, violent, and destructive mechanism. The sons of Urizen act to facilitate this process as they produce an abstract theory to govern and contain the energy of the labour of the sons of Los. The resultant Mills are given to a God-figure named Theotormon. This name speaks of a relation to God more than a stable idea. We hear *Theo* (god) *torment*, the ultimate result of our assenting to the idea of an angry, judgemental, omniscient godhead (Jahweh); and we hear *Theo* (god) *tor* (law) *mon* (man), an expression of an oppressive hierarchy, and of the relationships that follow from such a theology. By connecting this figure to the Mill, Blake lays bare the worship of a

theological mechanism and illuminates its duplicity in the institution of oppressive social forms. The sons of Urizen theorize "on the verge of the Lake of Udan-Adan" (27,50) (formlessness). They make scientific theory which holds the formlessness of "the starry voids of night & the depths & caverns of earth" (27,51). They measure and calculate, control and contain. The whole universe becomes a revolving Mill. The cycle of "oceans, clouds & waters "(27,52) is identified and pronounced "ungovernable" (27,52). This pronouncement ironically leads to a form of governing through naming, and leads directly into a theoretical creation in which "the seeds of all things (are)planted/And . . . the Sun & Moon receive their fixed destinations" (27,53 & 54). "Fixed" contains (contradicts) "ungovernable" and moves to ease our fear of the infinite. No contrary exchange occurs as the goal becomes denial of complexity through finite (though complex) explanation. Blake thus succeeds in showing us a deep connection between Newtonian mechanics, the theology of Theotormon, and the political/economic mechanics of the Mill. This insight constitutes a powerful cultural critique.

The poem's next "But" rhetorically, and briefly, moves us out of the fallen state of Allamanda into eternity, but only long enough to show us what we have lost. "But in Eternity the Four Arts: Poetry, Painting, Music,/And Architecture which is Science: are the Four Faces of Man" (27,55 & 56). The human arts act through the four Zoas in eternity, and create expressions of a whole, integrated humanity. The four human faces take their place inside the four faces of the living creatures (zoas) around the throne of God through their unfettered (free) production of the four arts. Blake shows us the four-fold possibility within the creative act, but then reminds us of where we are:

Not so in Time & Space: there Three are shut out, and only

Science remains thro Mercy: & by means of Science, the Three
 Become apparent in Time & Space in the Three Professions
 Poetry in Religion: Music, Law: Painting, in Physic & Surgery.

(27,57-60)

We can see the arts, through science, as our intellectual faculties make them known to us in their fallen forms. Time and space promise eternity through contrariety, but we experience this connection as eternity's absence. Our knowledge of fallen art and our fallen knowledge of art simultaneously suggest limit and possibility. We are limited by our mortality and the historic movement towards a human centred universe, and our art is confined by these limits. Our systems of knowledge make art a profession (a human end unto itself), and thus contain its eternal energy. Poetry is found in Religion, but religious hierarchy uses poetic language to mystify and control. Poetry's energy becomes perverse as it is made to serve dogmatic ends. It becomes Theotormon's vocabulary of institutionalized verbal forms. Music is defined by Law. The song becomes abstracted into its mathematical relationships and notation: the music of the spheres replaced by the music of Newton's mechanics. Painting appears most debased by our knowledge as it becomes "Physic & Surgery" (27,60). The subject of painting is reduced to the body. Anatomy cut up into its constituent parts by the surgeon serves as a metaphor for the painter's use of mathematical single-point perspective to cut up his canvas. Both processes are confined by a purely human perspective. Blake thus sees Reynolds and his school as cut off from the eternal in their elevation of the egotistical human values of realism. By placing these debased appearances of art in a contrariety with eternity, Blake allows us to see them better and to see through them. They are limited (as science), but still serve as "mercy" in their reality as error. Making error, or the fall, apparent becomes the necessary process. In Blake's hands even the withering irony of this passage

becomes not an expression of superiority over the deluded, but an expression of faith. Our science creates our pride and fall, but creativity, no matter how debased, fallen, and filled with error, still connects us to the eternal. Mercy, the activity of Los, works, through poetic language, to enable us momentarily to reverse the flow in the process of the fall and to see back. This makes immanence a condition of language. When Blake describes the absence of the eternal in the fallen arts, he confirms the immanent possibility of its presence. In this way, Blake asserts that poetic texts provide spaces in which the possibility of the eternal can be glimpsed. Blake calls this immanence "Mercy," which provides a methodology for an ongoing critique of the human present.

Plate 27 ends with humanity determined by the processes of the fall. "Science derives every Occupation of Men" (27,62). Out of the three arts come priests, lawyers, and butchers as science reasons its way away from the eternal and into the body. When the mind/body split occurs, even it becomes contained in a material human form: "Science is divided into Bowlahoola & Allamanda" (27,63). The dualistic process of science divides itself, and the body is reduced to the gut (the bowels) and the mind is reduced to the role of recording nervous impulses within the body. As he moves into Plate 28, Blake brings mercy into this Lockian nightmare of human limit. The creative force of the Sons of Los prevents total abstraction by "[g]iving to airy nothing a name and a habitation /Delightful" (28,3). The previously asserted connection between architecture (science) and the eternal arts informs Blake's metaphor as the creation of "porches of iron & silver" (28,1) provides "form & beauty" (28,2), and prevents a further descent into the horror of the formless abstraction of science completely cut off from eternal vision (Ulro). The despair of "the dark regions of sorrow" (28,2) is held at bay by language's creative power. Abstract thought is given a

name to inhabit, and thus Blake's mercy (the immanent quality of language) creates a body for thought. This active contrariety moves to redeem Urizen by drawing him back into the eternal whole. This architectural process of containing or forming the abstract shows the human imagination's struggle to create "bounds to the Infinite putting off the Indefinite" (28,4). This Blakean phrase immediately confirms our sense of mercy as we image a process of building a human boundary to the vast emptiness of infinite space, but the infinite has a temporal sense as well, which complicates and undermines our certainty. "Bounds" suggest limits on the infinite which could land us back in the fallen state of a solely human perspective, and further assert that the buildings of mercy amount to no more than the products of the fear of our mortality. This is the darkness of contrariety and the immanence of Blake's language: redemptive verbal form is immanently connected to the fall. It is a single process with many and subtle directions. As humans we cannot move with absolute freedom into eternity, and contrarily we cannot fall into Ulro without creating instances of mercy along the way. The "bounds," for example, can also suggest an imaginative leap into knowledge of the infinite, and the "Indefinite" can image both the empty abstraction mercy (language) saves us from and, contrarily, the freedom of things outside of human limits (the undefined, the unnamed). The creative process builds out of this flux "most holy forms of Thought" (28,5). "[T]he power of inspiration" (28,5) (the holy agency) builds "the beautiful House" (28,7), but the product of that creation may be a fallen church designed to give comfort to "the piteous sufferer" (28,7) and thus implicated in the production of suffering. "[T]he beautiful House" (28,7) suggests a church, or the temple of our bodies, but also Blake's Golgonooza and ultimately Jerusalem. The range of possible content in the image (from the body to eternity) again insists on the immanent nature of language. The downward

direction of the fall becomes overwhelming if the images are taken as products. Creating, not our creations, connects us to the eternal . If a reader brings the selfhood's desire to attain or own something to the poem's images, fall must occur, but if the reader brings an intelligent curiosity to the processes to which the images give form, then he or she joins in the creating (for its own sake). Blake believes this processiveness connects us to the eternal, and he leads the way with the verbal energy of the words "creating," and "giving" (28,1 & 2) which describe the selfless impulse the Sons of Los follow as "[t]hey labour incessant" (28,6) to build the form of mercy (the redeemed body of thought). The processes of art produce "tears & afflictions" (28,6), as Blake's life had taught him, but the struggle must be undertaken nonetheless with the full knowledge that success or failure, redemption or damnation, freedom or constraint are differences of direction not kind.

Other Sons of Los build "Cabinets . . . of gold & ivory" (28,8) which bring to mind Blake's "Crystal Cabinet." That earlier poem also concerned the human form and the possibilities of human sexuality. As in the passage just discussed, any effort to hold or possess a three-fold creative process, such as that which is possible in human sexuality, causes a fall into single vision. The process of building the Cabinet has redemptive force, but the finished product contains "Doubts & fears unform'd & wretched & melancholy" (28,9). The cabinet as a decorative container also suggests the ciborium in which the host is kept. Seen in that light, the mystery of Christ's incarnation and mediation serves as a means of containing or controlling our human "[d]oubts & fears" (28,9). The promise of the host (eternal life through Christ's body) appears as mercy in the ritual process, but the contrary suggests that the dogma built around this Christian mystery creates a static container where "[d]oubts & fears unform'd"

(28,9) are given form and named sin. Knowledge of the host's promise also reminds us of the mortality of our own bodies. Blake recognized that the power to contain and control the promise of resurrection inside a dogmatic hierarchy produces (builds) corrupt churches. "The little weeping Spectre stands on the threshold of Death" (28,10) as fear brings us to the edge, to the mortal limit of our own existence. Ironically, the Spectre, as reason without body or thought without language, fears life as he fears death. The Spectre risks being lost in an abstract void, but fears the pain of incarnation. The "threshold" (28,10) suggests the "bounds to the Infinite" of line 4, and places us, as readers, in a moment of anxiety in the ongoing architectural process. Our dualistic training cannot serve us here as the Spectre's tenuous existence ("like lamps quivering" (28,11)) shows us. Reason's two-fold mechanism produces conflict out of fear as "often malignant they combat" (28,12). The fear of death creates this contest for control, and builds dogma as a means of denying death. The two Spectres appear as theologians locked in a violent doctrinal struggle. Out of the madness of these fear-generated abstractions the poem demands we create form. We must accept our mortality and consent to being given bodies. We cannot reject incarnation.

The creative principle (mercy) reappears in the hands of Antamon, a son of Los. Antamon's name reminds us of the proper relationship of the artist to his creations by emphasizing human smallness in *ant a man*. Humility, the recognition of our smallness, allows the creative process to act through us, and guards against a fall into the ego. The name also suggests the energy preceding the creation in *ante man*. This reminds us of the Spectres' unformed condition and connects Antamon to the agency of form which will save them from non-being. The Spectres are the clay that Antamon will take "into his

beautiful flexible hands" (28,13). He is the creative energy before the creative act. Antamon's name further suggests *anatomy* and *Adam*, and this recognition moves the creator and the created together. He is the agent of the building process, and its anatomy (the architecture of the human) as well. His connection to Adam makes this clear as it conflates the creation/creature dichotomy of the first human form. The emphasis then falls on the originating process, the condition or state of Adam, rather than the finished human product.

Blake employs two similes in showing us Antamon's creative processes. "As the Sower takes the seed, or as the Artist his clay" (28,14), Antamon creates the human forms. He molds and is the clay. His hands are described as "flexible" and "soft" suggesting the gentleness and love he brings to the creative act, but also suggesting the malleability of his own Adamic clay self. The sower simile emphasizes the originating power of the artist, but also suggests the potential energy flowing from the seed which moves beyond the sower/artist's act. The artist's gesture (of sowing, of drawing) is part of a larger process. The artist's form, as a poetic phrase, contains this contrary ambiguity of an agency/identity. Antamon's name implies the humility necessary to avoid falling into the trap of the artistic selfhood's desire to control or own form. By recognizing that we are all changing forms in time, the artist can facilitate his/her own creating. Taken together, the two similes show the reader both the potentiality of creation, and its natural power. The seed's potential proceeds out of its smallness and into time beyond individual human limits. This sense of emergent and infinite form creates a sense of immanence analogous to the language-based immanence of Blake's "mercy." Blake carried this argument into painting by denying the illusion of stability given by single-point perspective. He followed Michaelangelo in this aesthetic view, and in his use of

the curved continuous line as a form contrary to perspective's human centre. Blake's paintings produce an anti-perspectival flux¹⁰ in opposition to the school of Reynold's with its single-point egotistical illusion of a balanced, static, owned world¹¹. Blake believed that there is no potential in a painting of this kind; it assumes creation is finished, complete. Blake believed this hubris of the selfhood contaminated the creative act, and hoped that a clear consciousness of the selfhood's seductive power could allow him to act towards opening up the possibilities of form. The multiple voices in the poem create multiple perspectives and deny the authority of any single point of view. Leslie Tannenbaum points out the Biblical source of such verbal forms when he writes that: "The Apocalypse and the Old Testament prophecies were understood to be dramas in which different perspectives, rather than different characters, contended with each other."¹²

Antamon creates artistic forms for the Spectres to inhabit. He "draw(s) the indelible line" (28,16), and clothes reason in "sweet form" (28,18). The Spectre admires the permanence (indelibility) of Antamon's artistic design, and assents to his gift of artistic mercy. Antamon works "[f]orm immortal with golden pen" (28,17); the Spectre responds to these aesthetic values, and the selflessness of the creative act endows the process with its "sweet(ness)." Once his architecture is complete, Antamon can smile "bright thro his windows"

¹⁰Blake's various "Visions of the Last Judgement" serve as paradigms of this belief and technique.

¹¹See Blake's Annotations on Reynolds' Discourses, "Discourse 1" in Erdman p.642-4.

¹²Leslie Tannenbaum, Biblical Tradition in Blake's Early Prophecies: The Great Code of Art (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), p.48.

(29,18). He can see through the windows of his own creative vision, and the image further suggests that vision passes through him (through his agency) into the process of creation. Antamon's selflessness serves as the agent in an annunciation, just as Gabriel's creative agency carried the seed through a bright window and began Christ's incarnation. Despite the detail of Antamon's design, it is left to the daughters of Los to give life to his creation. They "look up from their Loom & prepare/The integument soft for its clothing with joy & delight" (28,19 & 20). The female body knits the new form in its womb, and, with the selflessness of "joy & delight," prepares to give it life through birth.

The vision in Antamon's artistic creations depends on his selflessness and humility. If the selfhood reasserts itself, then the creation becomes entrapped in its own materiality. The fallen creative Son of Los fears its own creation. When faced with the reality of female power (to form and give birth), male anxiety creates another "But." "But Theotormon & Sotha stand in the Gate of Luban anxious" (28,21). They wait at the vagina, the point of birth into mortal form, and "contend with the weak Spectres" (28,23). The divided Spectres resist and fear the agency of their alienated emanations.¹³ Theotormon and Sotha's contention becomes an institutionalized assigning of form through the law-giving process of Theotormon's name; and the thwarted sexual energy of Sotha provides them with the power of war as institutionalized violence.¹⁴ They usurp natural form from the female and give it social form. Their creative process never becomes one of providing a social contrary, however, as the contradictory

¹³See "Spectre" in S. Foster Damon, A Blake Dictionary: The Ideas and Symbols of William Blake (Providence, RI:Brown University Press, 1965), p.380.

¹⁴Sotha's mythological content develops in the "Four Zoas". See Damon, p.378.

language that characterizes it shows. "[T]hey fabricate soothing forms" (28,23), but "[t]he Spectre refuses" (28,24). As they contend with the Spectres their search for the means to control swings them in a contradictory flux as they seek power. When "soothing" fails, the poem says "he seeks cruelty" (28,24), but is "he" the Spectre or themselves in search of power and control? Clearly, the Spectre's abstraction constitutes "cruelty," yet the Sons of Los cannot escape being implicated in the fall even as they create the contrary mercy of incarnation. "[T]hey create the crested Cock" (28,24), and by extension the "malignant combat" (28,12) of a cock-fight. They pit the Spectres violently against one another, and produce mortal terror. The cock's crow starts human time each morning, and re-awakens a fear of mortality with its reminder. The cock image also reminds us of how fear produced Peter's triple denial of Jesus' incarnation. Out of this panic, "[t]errified the Spectre screams & rushes in fear into their Net/Of kindness and compassion & is born a weeping terror" (28, 25 & 26). The "Net" of organized religion is exposed as the agent of the fears it dogmatically calms, and presents us with an image of the fall of the body's contrary possibility into an abstract "Net" of moral anxiety (fallen love). The joy of birth is taken from the female, and "a weeping terror" (28,26) put in its place. This usurpation, the fear that motivates it, and the fear it produces provide rich psychological ground for the misogyny of our fallen and confining religious forms. Birth becomes death becomes sin in a mad causality of blame which limits and often destroys the joyous process of life (incarnation). Blake allows us to see through the "compassionate thunderings" (28,27) of an institutionalized moral law, and see the violence in the creation of the fallen "Lion & Tyger" (28,27) as instruments of warfare and fear. Theotormon and Sotha thus force the Spectres to "take refuge in Human lineaments" (28,28), (abstraction belongs to the body's limit even as contrariety belongs to the

body's limit and contrariety) and thereby hope to control them through the constant reminder of their mortality, and, if necessary, the violent enforcement of abstract moral law.

The fall of the creative process through the Sons of Los continues into the enclosed material vision of the Sons of Ozoth. "[T]hey stand glowing" "within the Optic Nerve" (28,29). They are completely enclosed within the human eye, and provide "delights to the man unknown" (28,31). Their "glowing," and the potentiality of the "unknown," connects the visual agency of the Sons of Ozoth to a four-fold eternal possibility, but here that agency falls into the dark abstractions of the Spectre. The contrary power of the body is lost in the Spectre's anxious materialism. The world becomes a series of material objects which the isolated subject enjoys. This absolute dualism of subject/object creates "artificial riches" (28,31) which Blake abhors. By showing us the extreme limitations (artificiality) of this selfish vision, the poet creates a critique of the cultural materialism of his time in which all values were increasingly determined by material wealth. The ultimate ends of such a value system are: "artificial riches/They give to scorn, & their possessors to trouble & sorrow & care" (28,32). The ultimate emptiness of this vision affects those under its sway by leaving them with the same inner emptiness. They are shut off from the universe's vastness and particularly, "the sun. & moon. & stars. & trees. & clouds. & waters./And hills." (28,33 & 34), and lose their sense of place. The periods that separate the items of the universal inventory indicate a hardening between them and the loss of their relations one to another. The exclusive vision inside the Optic Nerve hardens "into a bone/Opake" (28,34 & 35), and selfishness hardens into blindness. The fall from Antamon's humble sense of *ant a man* is complete, and human smallness becomes the delusion of the

simile, "like the black pebble on the enraged beach" (28,35). The universe shrinks into the deluded selfhood's self-referential darkness.

Against the artifice and delusion of materiality Blake places a contrary simile:

. . . the poor indigent is like the diamond which the cloth'd
 In rugged covering in the mine, is open all within
 And in his hallowd center holds the heavens of bright eternity
 (28,36-38)

The poor, free of material corruption, maintain an intimate and "hallowd" connection to the universe, and the diamond of their existence allows them the multifaceted vision of possibility. The encased diamond becomes an image of Blake's sense of immanence. Inside the suffering of the poor miner lives a realm of possibility generated by its absence in the realm of materiality. Blake uses the absence of justice to ex/implode injustice rather than sinking into despair. The poor are given St. Francis of Assisi's spiritual content as an empowering powerlessness. They form the contrary of the crass material content of the wealthy. Blake's coal miner is an historically specific figure, but this specificity need not distance us from the poem. The fall we experience in these sections of the poem takes place through a series of eternal states which we may potentially suffer through all times. For example, the oppressive human state represented by the wealthy cannot be far off when one considers how many present political jurisdictions operate under the implicit assumption that poverty indicates a lack of value in the impoverished.

The deluded Spectre, unable to experience the contrariety of Ozoth's vision, or his own incarnation, negates eternal possibility and imprisons

material vision in a protective mine. Inside the human skull,

Ozoth here builds walls of rocks against the surging sea
And timbers cramped with iron cramps bar in the joys of life
From fell destruction in the Spectrous cunning or rage.

(28,39-41)

Despite Ozoth's attempt to create a contrary place of possibility to balance abstraction, the Spectre transforms that creation into a visual prison.

Selfishness and fear lead him (the Spectre) to the bitterly ironic act of further limiting the already limited joys of material existence. We experience more irony as the Spectre "Creates/The speckled Newt, the Spider & Beetle, the Rat & Mouse,/The Badger & Fox: they worship before his feet in trembling fear" (28,41-43). Material vision creates a burrow to live in, and proclaims it a kingdom in which it has dominion over its burrowing beasts. The mine-owner, imprisoned by his own mine (mind), demands worship from the unlucky beasts imprisoned with him. The Spectre confuses worship and fear, as does much of organized religion, and in the end it is hard to determine whether the beasts are "trembling" or the enclosed God is "trembling" in its kingdom skull. The listed beasts, unlike the Spectre, can leave their burrows and enter the light above. They may enjoy moments of relief and release from the dark prison of their enforced worship. The image of the miner, dehumanized by his employer, refusing to worship before the accumulation of material wealth is not presented, but its absence (signalled by Blake's irony) suggests a process toward such rebellion not its impossibility.

The "But"-section that follows presents us with the movements of time the Spectres attempt to deny:

But others of the Sons of Los build Moments & Minutes & Hours
And Days & Months & Years & Ages & Periods; wondrous buildings
And every Moment has a Couch of gold for soft repose,
(A Moment equals a pulsation of the artery). (28,44-47)

After experiencing the oppressive architecture of bars and timbers we come into "wondrous buildings" of time, which suggest both structures and processes in a counter-perspective. The process of "building" spacializes time and creates a contrary of time/space. The basic measure of time becomes the visceral and immediate "pulsation of the artery" (28,47). Time is experienced as the regular rush of blood through us, and its units of measure build out of this concrete spacial knowledge rather than out of abstract seconds. Artistic creation, according to Blake, appears in time as architectural form, and this perception is carried to the description of time itself. The "Couch of gold for soft repose" (28,46) suggests the intimate detail of an inner sanctuary, and further suggests the possibility of a kind of restfulness inside the process of time. This possibility inside each human moment is eternally immanent and has a paradoxical permanence suggested by its "gold"(ness). The complex nature of Blake's "Moment" does much to deny the validity of seeing the permanence of the details of the process of time as a paradox. By asserting the physical nature of our experience of time, the poem both reminds us of our smallness in the largeness of time's movements, and also provides us with the most intimate of connections to those same vast movements. The poem's growing contrariety builds an architecture of time that moves towards inclusiveness and away from the contradictory exclusiveness of the Spectre's cramped cave. "But" is replaced by a series of lines beginning with "And every" (28,46) as the poem builds a contrary and rhythmic strength. The image of the "Daughter of Beulah" (28,48) who stands "between every two Moments" (28,48) provides us with a means of thinking about the mercy of the three-fold experience of Time. Inside our human counting of moments are spaces of rest characterized by the selfless love of

"maternal care" (28,49). Around this space a wondrous architecture builds:

And every Minute has an azure Tent with silken Veils.
 And every Hour has a bright golden Gate carved with skill.
 And every Day & Night, has Walls of brass & Gates of adamant,
 Shining like precious stones & ornamented with appropriate signs:
 And every Month, a silver paved Terrace builded high:
 And every Year, invulnerable Barriers with high Towers.
 And every Age is Moated deep with Bridges of silver & gold.
 And every Seven Ages is Incircled with a Flaming Fire.

(28, 50-57)

The simplicity and mystery of the central "Tent" builds into a beautiful ornamental church/fortress surrounded by walls, moats and, finally, flaming fire. This building of time displays the beauty of human artistry in its "carved gates" and precious materials which provide "bridges" for our perception. The largeness of time is made visible through the process of these buildings, and through the "appropriate signs" which poetically constitute them. An Edenic timelessness complicates the imagery within the lines when the "Flaming Fire" (28,57) brings forward an image of the closed and forbidden paradise. The poem's imaging of time allows us to think back inside the Edenic possibility, but the fire may as easily exclude as contain us. Language's immanence works in both directions. The Edenic possibility can fall at any moment into an enclosed materiality based on a single human perception of time (the selfhood). A continued attention to the poem's contrariety helps protect us from such a fall. The poem reminds us of our human limits by stating that "[n]ow Seven Ages is amounting to Two Hundred Years" (28,58), the length of seven human lives. A contrary is thus formed between the largeness of time and our ability to perceive it. Language creates a spacial body for time as the passage builds time/space into contraries. The linearity of time suggested by the progressive list of the measures of time receives its contrary in the encircling nature of the imagery. The passage moves out *and* around. Our human perceptions/constructions of

time "each has its Guard" (28,59) which contrarily moves it away from our ability to control it. They are "the work of Fairy hands of the Four Elements" (28,60), and outside our human powers under the guard of the "Angels of Providence on duty evermore" (28,61). The angels around the garden guarantee the eternal possibility, and "Providence" directs us toward time's ability to provide rather than towards a judgemental fate excluding us from Eden. "Evermore" suggests the contraries of time in the linear sense of *ever more* time, and in the cyclic sense of *evermore* as an eternal circumference around all time. "Every Time less than a pulsation of the artery/Is equal in its period to Six Thousand Years" (28,63), and reminds us of our true human scale. The poem conflates all of human time (six thousand years was the conventional theological counting of the time since the fall from Eden) into an instant smaller than even our physical reckoning. "[I]n this Period the Poet's Work (of imagination) is Done" (29,1). Providence provides time to work, and the poetic genius creates inside this gift. Blake sees Providence as an informing power that acts through the human will not against it. It *provides* poetic possibility. The imaginative instant acts as a seed from which "all the Great/Events of Time start forth & are conceived" (29,1 & 2). The passage closes a final circle as a "Period," the largest in the original list of times, becomes contained "Within a Moment" (29,3), the smallest in the original list of times. The "Pulsation of the Artery" (29,3), the experience of our mortality, contains the possibility of the perception of all times.

We continue to experience time and space as contraries. The poem states that "[t]he Sky is an immortal tent" (29,4) which reminds us of our smallness in relation to the expansive universe around us. The use of the temporal adjective "immortal" instead of the spacial adjective infinite creates a time/space contrary in the image. The Minute's azure tent (28,50) from the

previous section intensifies the contrary in our memories by supplying a similar spacial description of time to balance this temporal description of space. This new creation, "built by the Sons of Los" (29,4), surrounds and contains us, but also allows us endless (immortal) time and space. This contrary condition (simultaneous constraint and freedom) describes our relation to the universe, and the poem proceeds into a detailed discussion of the nature and meaning of that relation:

And every Space that a Man views around his dwelling-place:
 Standing on his own roof, or in his garden on a mount
 Of twenty-five cubits in height such space is his Universe;
 And on its verge the Sun rises & sets. The Clouds bow
 To meet the flat Earth & the Sea in such an ordered Space:
 The Starry heavens reach no further but here bend and set
 On all sides & the two Poles turn on their valves of gold.

(29, 5-11)

The human experience of space consists of a view from an impermanent centre which gazes around itself to define its universe and the limits of that universe simultaneously. The physical limit of material vision limits what we might call the known universe. Knowledge based on observation defines this passage as the poet sets up an experiment and draws conclusions from observable data. The height of twenty-five cubits, as the site of the experiment, creates irony as it employs the measure of Biblical space and transposes it onto a scientific landscape. The emphasis on the limit of individual perception develops through the repetition of "his dwelling-place," "his own roof," "his garden," "his Universe" (29, 5-7). The limited range of our eyesight creates universes true (actual) from our individual centres. A contrary vision, however, becomes possible through the recognition of our material limits. The recognition of our place (space) teaches humility in the face of our relation to large othernesses. By accepting the appearance (the evidence of our eyes) of "the Sun ris(ing) &

sett(ing)" (29,8), and the reality of "the flat Earth," we accept our place and the limit of our view (another implicit attack on Reynolds). By accepting ourselves as limited centres our "Starry heavens reach no further" (29,10), but the "two Poles" (29,11) of our individual universes revolve effortlessly "on their valves of gold" (29,11). The defeat of our hubris brings calm and clarity. We can see and accept even the temporary nature of each of our centres. When any one of us moves "his dwelling-place, his heavens also move./Wher'eer he goes & all his neighbourhood bewail his loss" (29,12 & 13). We are subjects, in a field of moving subjects, each with shifting, temporary, *objective* views. The recognition of our true relation to the other subjects in the field allows us to act out of mutual respect and love. The "neighbourhood" exists as a group of subjects who recognize and accept their human relations one to another, and act in respect and love towards neighbours. They "bewail [the] loss" of relations based on such mutual recognitions. Against this background, the poem describes the "delusion" (29,16) of scientific hubris:

As to that false appearance which appears to the reason,
 As of a Globe rolling thro Voidness, it is a delusion of Ulro
 The Microscope knows not of this nor the Telescope. they alter
 The ratio of the Spectators Organs but leave Objects untouched.

(29, 15-18)

This Newtonian vocabulary, "a Globe rolling thro Voidness" (29,16), is presented as a mad abstraction made possible by the scientist's failure to recognize his human limits. Science's tools change the appearance but not the substance of the scientist's view, and to extrapolate universal principles from such limited data appears as a most destructive and deluded kind of hubris. Against the false transformations of the microscope and telescope, the poem asserts the actuality of the transformations of language. We, as individual

centres of experience, become the sites of the mediating energy of tropes.¹⁵ The immanence of a contrary language operates in the outward process of synecdoche, "[f]or every Space larger than a Globule of Mans blood./Is visionary" (29,19 & 20), and in its inward process, "every Space smaller than a Globule of Mans blood. opens/Into Eternity" (29,21 & 22). The limited, perceptible outer universe is immanently connected to an eternal inner universe by the trope's verbal power to "open" into, and this connection provides the possibility of true vision. To recognize limit is to know more, and to know more is to recognize limit. We are part of "this vegetable Earth" (29,22), eternity's shadow, but by recognizing this we can see back out of the darkness. "The red Globule" (29,23) of our material blood allows us to perceive our relation to the cosmos. The creative mercy of Los provides us with "the unwearied Sun. . . /To measure Time and Space" (29,23 & 24) and allows us to observe time's passing. The promise of this process, as it "rises & sets" (29,8), is that perpetual loss contains its contrary, perpetual recovery and gain. The "unwearied Sun" (29,33) suggests the perpetual promise of Christ's "red Globule" (29,23) of blood, and its redemptive potential. The process of renewal thus defines our experience as powerfully as does its contrary, fall. Our perceptions are surrounded by our bodies as "Bowlahoola (the digestive system) & Allamanda (the nervous system) are placed on each side/Of that Pulsation & that Globule" (29,25 & 26). The time (pulsation) and space (globule) of our blood are contained by the "terrible power" (29,26) of materiality. Our human blood (life)

¹⁵Blake's belief in the power of tropes is most clearly expressed in his declaration of the power of synecdoche: "To see a World in a Grain of Sand/And a Heaven in a Wild Flower" (Erdman, "Auguries of Innocence", p. 490.)

experiences its limits with its cosmos, and we must digest this knowledge before the possibility of eternity can enter and *open* our humble selves.

A contradictory "But" ends our sense of possibility and precipitates a fall into the anxiety of human limits. "But Rintrah & Palamabron govern over Day & Night/In Allamanda & Entuthon Benython where Souls wail" (29,27 & 28). Our wrath and pity¹⁶ become instruments of judgement in this fallen world, and our bodies become hells "where Souls wail" (29,28) in complete alienation from eternity. As a result, our experience is reduced to the desires of our bodies. "Orc incessant howls burning in fires of Eternal Youth,/Within the vegetated mortal Nerves" (29,29 & 30), and our bodies become our prisons. The selfless social relations of the "neighbourhood" are replaced by the mindless appetite of "every Man born . . . joined/Within into One mighty Polypus" (29,30 & 31). The polypus as social organization forms an aggregate which promotes and enhances individual consumption within (without has disappeared) its larger whole. The bodies' appetites are totalized and totalizing in the "*One mighty Polypus*" (29,31 my italics) of Orc's burning physical desires. The social real, fallen, becomes the only real.

The fall into the body continues through another "But," and begins to define the human senses. "But in the Optic vegetable Nerves Sleep was transformed/To Death in old time by Satan the father of Sin & Death" (29,32 & 33). The power of metaphors falls along with our ability to perceive their energy. "Sleep" is "transformed" into "Death" by our preoccupation with our mortality. Our material vision reduces all experience, including our experience

¹⁶The mythological history of Rintrah and Palamabron becoming wrath and pity occurs in the Bard's Song. See Plates 4 through 12 inclusive.

of language, to Satan's realm. Our fear of "old time" places us under Satan's power and allows him to "father" "Sin & Death" in us. The fear in our minds transforms "Sleep" into "Death" as we enter Satan's processes and assent to his controlling abstractions (judgements). "Sin & Death" are the final judgements of the power of our fear over us. The poem continues by showing us the process of the fall through the psychological states of Orc and Luvah: "Satan is the Spectre of Orc & Orc is the generate of Luvah" (29,34). Satan exists as the abstractions derived from Orc's anxiety and fear. Out of the social reality created by Orc's physical appetite, Satan creates oppressive political/religious abstractions ("Sin") and final judgements ("Death"). The processes embodied in Orc are, in turn, derived and fallen from the love of Luvah. Cut off from its eternal aspect, love becomes desire becomes sin in the fall from Luvah to Orc to Satan. This psychological/social fall is inevitable if we cannot free ourselves from our selves as totalizing bodies.

The fall into the senses continues "in the Nerves of the Nostrils, Accident being formed/Into Substance & Principle, by the cruelties of Demonstration" (29,35 & 36). The contrary energy of the creative process still exists as it makes forms out of the smells it experiences, but in its fallen condition its agency is reduced to the debasement of scientific method. The chance events ("Accident") of the universe are controlled, *explained*, and finally reduced to stable "Substance & Principle"¹⁷. This process entails "cruelties" as it constrains and ends the life of the natural processes it observes. The "Demonstration" performed suggests the dissection of living creatures (processes) and, by analogy, the cruelty of the events of Christ's Passion.

¹⁷"Substance and Principle" bring to mind, in this context, Locke's vocabulary.

Science participates in a cult of sacrifice which asserts its own egotistical power over the divine. Perhaps this poetic event is located in the "Nostrils" so we can smell the carnage on the altar of the priest of science . The result of these experiments is a universe made "Opake & Indefinite" (29,37). The contrary energy of forming enters the poem through the agency of "the Divine Saviour" (29,37) who is able to overcome the lower-case "but" that introduces Him. He took "Accident," which had become "Opake & Indefinite" under science's power, and "Formed it into a Solid by Los's Mathematic power" (29,38). "Accident," the perception of entropy, had become unknowable under science's severe constraints, but the "Divine Saviour" enters the poem and asserts a process of form inside the processes of "Accident(s)." "Accident" becomes "Indefinite" becomes "Formed" (29,35,37,38). Entropy becomes a creative principle knowable through "Los's Mathematic power."¹⁸ The "Divine Saviour" "named the Opake Satan: he named the Solid Adam" (29,39). His verbal creative process (naming) exposes the fallen processes of making Opake products out of scientific/religious/cultural abstractions ("Satan"). The process of creating the material world he names "Adam," the first created body and the seat of our perception of materiality. "Los's Mathematic power" can name these creations because it works through the agency of the "Divine Saviour" inside the processes of the fall, contrary to Urizen's "Mathematic Power" of abstract explanation which operates under the delusion of being objective and outside the events it observes.

¹⁸For a brilliant philosophical discussion of this idea see: Michel Serres, Hermes: Literature, Science, Philosophy (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1982), pp. 79-83.

The "And" which begins the next section of the fall of the senses signals, through its inclusive potential, the contrary possibility of a redemptive turn in the creative process: "And in the Nerves of the Ear (for the Nerves of the Tongue are closed)/On Albions Rock Los stands creating the glorious Sun each morning" (29,40 & 41). Los creates inside our hearing because it is impossible to speak the eternal in our fallen condition (the culture of "But"). "Los stands" inside an auditory memory of Albion's eternal wholeness, and through his creative process allows us to share his hearing. This passage moves towards Blake's theory of a dictated language immanently carried in poetic forms. Against the abstractions of science, Los places anew a universe "each morning." He re-creates and composes the world around him in an ongoing force of creativity, and when he creates "the glorious Sun each morning/And when unwearied in the evening he creates the Moon" (29,41 & 42), he provides us with our means of perceiving material time without determining the sources of our perception themselves as material. "[T]he glorious Sun" resonates with Christ's promised return, and that promise conflates into the promise of our daily creative renewal. This sense of renewal and creative potential allows Los to undermine the perceived finality of material death, and the products of its accompanying fear. He creates the moon:

Death to delude, who all in terror at their splendor leaves
 His prey while Los appoints & Rintrah & Palamabron guide
 The Souls clear from the Rock of Death. (29, 43-45)

The "splendor" of the universe terrorizes humanity with its immensity and processiveness. The promise/potential of his creating works to "delude" death until the greater promise of Christ's return can be accomplished. Under his influence, Rintrah (wrath) and Palamabron (pity) work to renovate religious practice and "guide/the Souls clear from (the altar of sacrifice) the Rock of

Death." They work to overcome the fear-generated practice of insisting on and celebrating the mortality of the other in a mad effort to assert their personal power over death. Blake's vision of the four-fold possibility where the material and eternal meet is imaged as a place in time when "Death himself may wake/In his appointed season when the ends of heaven meet" (29,45 & 46). Christ's incarnation led to historical death, and his promised return will be the renovation of that death itself. It will contain new meaning, and the divided "ends of heaven" will "meet" in a processive four-fold harmony. Such is the vision of creating: a time/space in-and-of its flow where our labour is rewarded with new knowledge based on the process of creation itself instead of the fallen process of its *objective* analysis.

The vision follows that, free from our fear of death, "Los conducts the Spirits (yours, mine, ours) to be Vegetated, into/Great Golgonooza" (29, 47 & 48), and its redeemed and redeeming creative spaces. Life into art re-casts material existence, and allows us to see the material world and the fallen products of its institutions "free from the four iron pillars of Satans Throne/(Temperance, Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, the four pillars of tyranny)" (29, 48 & 49). Satan's false religion of judgemental moralizing is exposed as the product of fearful authority exerting its power and selfhood over others. Los's vision insists on a God of love not sin and judgement, and moves to protect us "That Satans Watch-Fiends touch them (us) not before they (we) Vegetate" (29,50). Satan's power (church authority) depends on our perception of time as the perception of our individual deaths. Out of the resulting fear comes religious and political authority, institutions, and violence (fallen form). The possibility of escaping from this trap, which we hear in the "Nerves of the Ear", provides us with an auditory glimpse of another way which remains

unspoken "(for the Nerves of the Tongue are closed)," yet arrives through poetic dictation.

This vision proves fleeting as another "But"-section moves us back into the fall. Maternal love and unconfined sexuality combine in a three-fold female process which sees "Enitharmon and her Daughters take the pleasant charge./To give them to their lovely heavens till the Great Judgement Day" (29, 51 & 52). Female power works inside the process of creation in order to provide material solace and pleasure through love until Christ's promise arrives. Their activity is part of the process of His arrival. "But" the influence of the fall prevails and "the Great Day of Judgement" becomes the day of our human birth (incarnation) and our mortality becomes Satan's judgement and our fate. "Rahab & Tirzah pervert/Their mild influences" (29, 53 & 54) in their fallen condition, and their weaving falls into the process of "the black Woof of Death" (29,56). Out of this fallen creation of mortality as death and judgement springs the psychology of the misogynist who believes the female plots against him and creates his destruction. Such fear creates a fallen vision of the female as a destructive force. The range of this *view* spreads from our limited "Three Heavens of Ulro" (29,55), or Beulah, into a landscape conflated out of elements of English and Biblical geography. By placing the created skeleton of "Entuthon Benython/In the Vale of Surrey where Horeb terminates in Rephaim (29,56 & 57), we can see the range of the fall in space (geographical) and time (from the biblical past to Blake's present). Such a conflation follows from a knowledge of the divine defined by "the Seven Eyes of God" (29,54) confined in a material heaven of sensual pleasure. Inside such a limited space, the "Seven Eyes" become the human history of our *views* of God, and their range in space and time. In other words, the idea of God becomes limited by our mortality and

cannot finally be known outside its historical context. Out of this condition flows a rising tide of blood and carnage in the combined metaphors of the weaving and washing of material existence:

The stamping feet of Zelophehads Daughters¹⁹ are covered with Human gore
 Upon the treddles of the Loom, they sing to the winged shuttle:
 The River rises above his banks to wash the Woof:
 He takes it in his arms: he passes it in strength thro his current
 The veil of human miseries is woven over the Ocean
 From the Atlantic to the Great South Sea, the Erythrean.

(29, 58-63)

The weaving spreads through the expanding generations, and the process becomes birth, suffering, death repeated endlessly. The blood of childbirth becomes connected to the blood ("gore") of violence and death in this fallen materiality, and the baptism imagery of the washing river does not cleanse and remove the "gore," but spreads it until it covers all human space and time. The mad necessity of reason's baptism of blood which informed Robespierre's terror is unleashed and becomes totalizing as it spreads into a great "Ocean." "The Erythrean" (red) sea engulfs us, and threatens to drown us in materiality. Inside the process of this overwhelming vision of blood we cannot locate the potential of Christ's blood. Terrorized by His and our incarnation, we are swept away by the institutions of sacrifice, and the promise/potential/immanence of His Passion is lost.

Book the First ends with a summary of the fall. "Such is the World of Los the labour of six thousand years./Thus Nature is a Vision of the Science of the Elohim" (29,64 & 65). The words "such is" suggest a completion or the

¹⁹In the Old Testament, Zelophehad's daughters had no brother to inherit their father's goods and so became, through petitioning for their birthright, an emblem of female will separate and divided from the male. See Damon, p.457.

conclusion of an argument. The final definition of the "World of Los" as the "labour" of human history ("six thousand years") shuts off the eternal possibility of his creation. The suggestion that the creation is complete further alienates this limited vision from the eternal by stopping its potentially eternal processes. The fallen vision of an overwhelming materiality of blood conditions our reading of "labour" so that we remember that fallen view of the female force as a force of inevitable and overwhelming death. Reason completes its argument by indicating "thus" that it (the creation) is over. The conclusion that "Nature is a Vision of the Science of the Elohim" confirms that we inhabit (at that moment) the material limit of Ozoth's potentially eternal vision. The Elohim is the name of the God who judged Adam (the first judgement), and his reasoned activity (science) defines human perception as limit. We create, limit and judge the world as we compose with our material eye (I). Our selfhoods, cut off from the eternal, take this limited (if totalizing) power and through fear create the institutions of judgement. Life is judged to be death. The female is implicated in life, judged to be an agent of death, and despised. Inside our individual closed universes (caves) all is ordered as we like and the possibility of Christ's love diminishes. Reason's power to judge becomes God. The "Science of the Elohim" presents us with the completed universe of an absent (from his creation) God. He stands apart and judges, and as a result furthers a dualism which leads to the absolute alienation of the God/man split. As fallen scientists we act to echo the process we worship and separate ourselves from the objects we *objectify* (create). Los creates. He runs the risk, created moment to created moment, of falling into a desire for stasis, certainty, order (fear) which builds the fallen architecture of judgement.

By bringing the principle and discipline of contrariety to the task of reading the last few plates of "Milton", Book the First, readers, momentarily, are able to overcome the absolute dualism of fallen/redeemed and to re-vision it as a single continuous process. We place ourselves inside that creative process, and attempt to let go of predestination and judgement. The selfhood extended as authority and judge pulls at us as we struggle to let go of our individual centre and thereby see the eternal whole (if only momentarily).

We ex/implode the perceived ideal of linguistic predestination (language going where we send it), and learn to experience language as the agent of a liberating and confining contrary of freedom/constraint. We let go of the selfhood's desire to direct (judge) meaning, and allow the poem to escape our grasps.

We act (mediate not direct) inside the energy of the poem's transformative tropes. When we temporarily overcome our desire to direct this linguistic energy, the multiplicity of the poem begins to emerge through our reading(s). These exegeses honour the text as generative, and serve as a guarantee of our intellectual honesty in relation to it.²⁰

As we become free of the selfhood, the multiplicity, uncertainty, possibility, potentiality, immanence – whichever term one chooses – of the poem's language allows us to see clearly the complexity and power of Blake's cultural critiques. Presence/absence ceases to be a dualism of despair and becomes a contrary condition of faith as the poem builds justice out of injustice,

²⁰Not all critics agree that this is an important discipline or a worthwhile goal. See Brenda S. Webster's chapter on "Milton" in Blake's Prophetic Psychology (London: MacMillan, 1973), p. 250, for her views on the "impracticality" of "parsing" the text.

neighbourhoods out of governments and so on. Part two of this essay moves to select and build such redemptive contraries out of the experience of Ololon in Book the Second.

PART TWO

In a search for a contrary for the fallen experience of Book the First this section will explore the experience of "Ololon" in Book the Second. Ololon appears in the poem as Milton's alienated six-fold emanation. She (the congregate of his wives and daughters) is *all alone*. This absolute split between male and female must be healed in order for Milton's vision to be redeemed. The changing, transforming relations, one to another, of Milton and Ololon thus serve as a visual way (for the reader) into the redemptive processes at work in Book the Second, and constitute a structural synecdoche for the redemptive contrary.

We begin in error, but with the fragmentary (momentary) knowledge that the harmonious human relations of Beulah must be extended (brought down) into the fallen processes of our (Ulro's) human relations in order to effect a renovation of our sexual/social/political lives. Beulah, as a place where "Contrarities are equally True" (30,1), provides a respite from the necessary struggle towards the annihilation of the selfhood, and as an end it becomes a false goal and delusion. Beulah's harmony must be placed in time as an incomplete informing mercy rather than remaining outside time as a desired ideality. Beulah's figures (metaphors as well as Ololon) must suffer the fall in order to inform it. They cannot escape the debased forming of the selfhood's (Milton's) reason.

Out of Beulah and into the fall comes the "Divine Voice" (33,1) which

pronounces its theological view of marriage.

When I first Married you, I gave you all my whole Soul
 I thought that you would love my loves and joy in my delights
 Seeking for pleasures in my pleasures O daughter of Babylon
 Then thou wast lovely, mild & gentle. now thou art terrible
 In jealousy and unlovely in my sight, because thou hast cruelly
 Cut off my loves in fury till I have no love left for thee
 Thy love depends on him thou lovest and on his dear loves
 Depend thy pleasures which thou has cut off by jealousy
 Therefore I shew my Jealousy & set before you Death.

(33,2-10)

The "Divine Voice" falls and becomes the male theological voice of a single selfhood. Selfishness moves through seven "my(s)," and demands absolute subservience through reason's causality. Her "love" and "pleasures" "*depend*" (my italics) on his desires which are distorted by his desire for personal power. His anxiety produces a fear of castration ("Cut off my loves") as sexuality becomes perverted by the selfhood's desire for control and power over its own incarnation and the other's. This passage sets up Milton's struggle to recover Ololon, and appears as the most fallen vision of the necessary movement towards reconciliation. They must be re-united, but the destruction of her autonomy ("Death") in the name of his "Jealousy" of power does nothing towards the annihilation of his selfhood. Under these conditions Milton exploits the male/female split, "intirely abstracting himself from Female loves" (33,17). Such enforced perversion appears to create a selflessness in the female as she "shall begin to give/Her maidens to her husband: delighting in his delight" (33, 17 & 18), but this is a false vision of free love as it contains no trace of mutuality. Instead this vision further enforces the fearful misogynist's divided view of the female as "*Virgin Babylon Mother of Whoredoms*" (33,20 my italics).

Under these conditions Ololon falls completely into the body's digestive tract, "named Or-Ulro" (34,13). The utterness of her fall is confirmed in Ulro's name. *Ul*, etymologically the final or last, and *row* or *road* combine to form a state which lacks any vision outside the body, and in this case is governed by *Or*, reason's dualistic mechanism. However, contariety operates even here. The image of the final row of the harvest prefigures an apocalyptic moment and the possibility of renovation. When she falls, Ololon submits to a fallen vision of marriage:

. . . Ololon sought the Or-Ulor and its fiery Gates
and the Couches of the Martyrs: & many Daughters of Beulah
Accompany them down to the Ulro with soft melodious tears
A long journey & dark thro Chaos in the track of Milton's course
To where the Contraries of Beulah War beneath Negations Banner.
(34, 19-23)

She submits to the view of her sexuality as "fiery Gates" which she must give up to her husband's power and pleasure. The "fiery Gates" also resemble the place of the reasoned burning of witches in a creation of female martyrs and the exertion of male power. The fallen view of the submissive wife becomes Milton's view as it follows his "course." Milton's "track" becomes Milton's *tract* as Ololon enters the "long journey & dark thro Chaos" of "Paradise Lost." The three-fold possibility of Beulah falls and "the Contraries of Beulah War under Negations Banner." Negation replaces contrariety as the male insists on his dominance and reduces the possibility of mutuality in marriage to "War." This fallen and debased view enjoyed the widespread support of established churches (as correct marital relations), and Blake indicts Milton's participation in developing such repressive theology.

Ololon's fall is related immanently to eternity, and thus out of seeming total defeat and error comes a vision of the world pregnant with knowledge of an eternal possibility. She speaks out of the fall in a composite female voice (of the wives and daughters of Milton, the daughters of Beulah, the children of the daughters of Beulah, and so on throughout generation as the potential mercy of incarnation) at the moment before her entrance (birth) into material time and space:

And Ololon looked down into the Heavens of Ulro in fear
 They said. How are the Wars of Man which in Great Eternity
 Appear around, in the External Spheres of Visionary Life
 Here rendered Deadly within the Life & Interior Vision
 How are the Beasts & Birds & Fishes, & Plants and Minerals
 Here fixed into a frozen bulk subject to decay & death
 Those Visions of Human Life & Shadows of Wisdom & Knowledge

Are here frozen to unexpansive deadly destroying terrors
 And War and Hunting: the Two Fountains of the River of Life
 Are become Fountains of bitter Death & of corroding Hell
 Till Brotherhood is changed into a Curse & a Flattery²¹
 By Differences between Ideas, that Ideas themselves (which are
 The Divine Members) may be slain in offerings for sin
 O dreadful Loom of Death! O pitious Female forms compelled
 To Weave the Woof of Death

(34,49-55 & 35,1-8)

In her downward descending view, Ololon can see fallen Ulro before her and remember Beulah and eternity behind her. In this moment she is a fearful Hermes between worlds and mediates between them by casting them in one another's terms. The "Wars of Man," in eternity, describe the four-fold processiveness of mental fight as they surround the "Visionary Life" with constant flux and exchange amongst the "External Spheres" of the eternal zoas. Ololon's mind balks at the idea that such eternally necessary conflict could

²¹Blake's relationship with Hayley falls under this category, and completely implicates the poet in the poem's fall.

become the violent end of material existence through the process (progress) of her fall into the human limit of "Life and (purely) Interior Vision." Interior/exterior cease to be contraries²² and become a static dualism which separates individuals into violent negating oppositions. Ulro, the realm of reason, presents things as ordered separated and static. The image of "the beasts & Birds & Fishes, & Plants & Minerals/Here fixed into a frozen bulk" describes the reasoned activity of the Enlightenment and Encyclopedists busily counting and categorizing the contents of the creation. As these contents become "fixd," they become "subject to death & decay." Naming includes them in our (Adam's) fall, and, by denying their various processes, ends their creation. Scientific categorizing presents "Visions of Human Life" cut off from the eternal, and carries out a fallen parody of God's original creation. These "Shadows of Wisdom and Knowledge" deny the creation its ongoingness, and, through our hubris, cause it to be "here frozen to unexpansive deadly destroying terrors." "War & Hunting," which in eternity are known to be four-fold mental fight and the intellectual/creative desire which drives it, "the Two Fountains of the River of Life/Are become fountains of bitter Death & of corroding Hell." This hellish dualism makes contradiction and negation inevitable, and as a result "brotherhood" becomes impossible. The love which should govern this fundamental human relationship disappears in the hidden conflict carried by "a Curse and a Flattery." "Differences between Ideas" must be violently resolved through negation in reason's realm, and "Ideas themselves," the body of the imagination ("the Divine Members") must conform to a system where they seek

²²In "Jerusalem" Blake coins the term "withoutside" which maintains the contrary energy of interior/exterior (Erdman, p.181, 1.3). *With outside* suggests the process of drawing the other in, while *Without side* suggests the abolition of limits (and dualism's sides) and the contrary process of moving outward into otherness.

total victory and risk total destruction. One of the pair must be privileged over the other which "may be slain in offerings for sin." The psychology of the sacrifice, as a means of asserting human power (in God's name), extends into all realms. Contaries fall into conflict and one must be named sin (wrong) and die. The *victor* participates in a parody of a God of judgement, and cannot allow himself to see his own mortality in the blood on his hands. Ololon laments at her lot in all this, and her reduction to becoming a "dreadful Loom of Death". She feels "compelled" by her fall "[t]o weave the Woof of Death" – created humanity. She enters Ulro and her creation encompasses "the Four Quarters of the World" (35,15) in a detailed geographical and historical conflation (see 35,8-17).

Ololon is able to speak her vision "in reminiscence astonished" (35,18) even as she falls. Her memory serves as mercy, and language allows her to give form to her vision. In fact, her fall into eternity's absence is seen as necessary in order to image eternity's presence. Mortals must fall and become "Vegetable in Sexuality" (35,24) before they can "behold Golgonooza" (35,19). Her creative vision is not possible "without passing the Polypus" (35,19), and experiencing its dark order. Not "without annihilation" (34,21) can Golgonooza be achieved and "viewed on all sides round by a Four-fold Vision" (35,23). The process towards that visionary end may produce moments of analogous vision in the renovation of human sexual relations. In other words, the potentially violent power which defines the Milton/Ololon marriage must give way to love (in a mutual annihilation of selfhoods) if vision is to be achieved in the midst of Ulro.

Ololon continues her part in their reconciliation by falling deeper into error (Ulro). She gives up her selfhood, but does so by "falling down/Prostrate

before the Starry Eight asking with tears forgiveness/Confessing (her) crime with humiliation and sorrow" (35,31-33). She gives in to Milton's selfhood (he is the Eighth) and suffers "humiliation and sorrow." She agrees with Milton and Christian tradition (the starry Eight²³) that she is the source of sin and deserves punishment. This tradition of error "rejoic'd to see Ololon descended" (35,34), and fails to see how they are implicated in her fall. They rejoice at their own fall as her humility does nothing to alter Milton's selfhood other than falsely to feed it in its all-consuming negation of her.

Ololon's humility, even though the product of error, creates "a wide road . . . open to Eternity" (35,35). the selflessness of her descent allows the immanent possibility of renovation to remain "open." She does not attempt to close the possibilities of meaning, and as a result she serves as a guide (Hermes) "reaching from Ulro to Eternity" (35,38). Ololon holds on to all her aspects (selves) throughout the process of her fall, and appears as "multitudes" (35,37) which through their openness hold "great sway" (35,38). Their influence, quite unlike the enforced and implicit violence of Milton's English insitutions, springs from the example of their selflessness. The female is recast as the selfless bearer of life, and the inhabitants of Ulro see "the Lord in the Clouds of Ololon" (35,41). This vision of Jesus' coming (re)birth reminds us of the mercy of his and our incarnation. Ololon bears Jesus which begins the process of His becoming the Christ, and in so doing connects the body to the eternal. This is the physical meaning of the "wide road" she "opens," and it prepares the way for

²³The Starry Eight (see Damon p. 134) represent Blake's rendering of the development of the Judaeo-Christian godhead with the eighth being the individual receiving the tradition (Milton, Blake, or the reader).

a vision of "a Moment" (35,42) which "if rightly placed" (35,45) enacts the renovation of the material world.

Despite the vision's momentary nature, it still contains the power to affect profound change inside mere change.

There is a Moment in each Day that Satan cannot find
 Nor can his Watch Fiends find it, but the Industrious find
 This Moment & it multiply. & when it once is found
 It renovates every Moment of the Day if rightly placed.
 (35,42-45)

The possibility exists in our perception of time to escape momentarily the Satanic determinism of our mortality (sin and death). "[T]he Industrious," engaged in mental fight contrary to material labour, allow the "Moment" to "multiply" as they "place" it within themselves. The sense of immanence and mercy that this placement provides renovates their knowledge of time by filling it with possibility. This is the knowledge that Milton's emanation brings with her (mediates for us) in her descent. "In this Moment Ololon descended to Los and Enitharmon/Unseen beyond the Mundane Shell Southward in Milton's track" (35,46&7). She *opens* our eyes inside the "Mundane Shell" of the fallen world, and returns the possibility of vision to the creative powers of "Los & Enitharmon." The rediscovery of their contrary natures one to another makes creative energy possible through their agency, and prefigures the desired reunion of Ololon and Milton. Ololon humbly follows "Southward in Milton's track" (implying the possible redemption of Urizen's realm), and "track" also suggests the desire of the hunt as it is understood in Eternity. She "track"(s) her emanation in this renovating Moment of her fall, and out of her movement and desire springs a vision of powerful contrary reconciliation and knowledge:

Just in this Moment when the morning odours rise abroad
 And first from the Wild Thyme, stands a Fountain in a rock

Of crystal flowing into two Streams, one flows thro Golgonooza
 And thro Beulah to Eden beneath Los's western Wall
 The other flows thro the Aerial Void & all the Churches
 Meeting again in Golgonooza beyond Satans Seat.

(35,48-53)

These images move to make contraries of time and space as the "Moment" is seen to contain "a Fountain" (flowing temporality in- and-of space). This "flowing" "Moment" "rises" from our perception of a transitory "odour." "Odours" are the most ephemeral of our sensory experiences. They are an invisible influence over us, and they begin (in the ordinary Moment of day) with the "Wild Thyme" (time). This moment of "Thyme" is free, undomesticated, uncounted, unregulated, "Wild." Our reason (Urizen) does not determine its duration, and it permeates all the states of creation. "[F]rom" it (out of the invisible) "stands" the "Fountain" and the flow of time. The "Moment's" spacial possibility appears as "a rock/of crystal" through which flows renovating time and (potentially) our vision. Time and our perception are joined in the crystal's translucent form, and its refracting possibility allows our escape from the linearity of space/time. One of the contrary "Streams" flows through Golgonooza and Beulah to Eden effecting a continuous flow through (rather than alienation from) separate states. These states come together in our momentary experience of them as continuous. They are in the realm of our bodies "beneath Los's western Wall"²⁴ as we see and smell the renovating moment. "The other (stream) flows" through the abstractions of "the Aerial Void" and returns divine content to "all the Churches." Fallen, abstract theology is renovated by a Moment (Ololon's) sprung from the selfless love which engendered it, and finally becomes the necessary contrary of the material realm it rules in fear. As the "two Streams" meet in Golgonooza's

²⁴In Blake's scheme the West is the place of Tharmas and our physical senses. See Damon, p. 399.

renovated architecture they produce a contrary which allows them to escape the trap of the fear of death and move "beyond Satans Seat."

The contrary power of the "Wild Thyme" to mediate between the visible and the invisible and space and time makes it an instance of Los's creative power. It "is Los's Messenger to Eden" (35,54) but in our "Ulro dark" (35,55) the Thyme's fragile odour reminds us of our own transitory natures and appears as "a small Root creeping in grass" (35,56). This image suggests the serpent in the garden, and thus colours our understanding of the nature of Los's "Messenger." The "mighty Demon/Terrible deadly and poisonous" (35,54&5) is the serpent sent to Eden, and also the Angel sent to expell the fallen couple. This double possibility implicates Los and his creative energy in the fall and judgement of Adam and Eve (Milton and Ololon, William and Catherine, Los and Enitharmon). The fall persists inside this redemptive passage because we cannot control whether Eden or Ulro governs our thought. Any attempt at such mastery plunges us into the Ulro as our language subverts us and escapes us. Immanent promise inside the final descriptions of the Thyme's place allows our understanding of the process of language to turn and create possibility as the contrary of subversion.

Therefore he appears only a small root creeping in grass.
 Covering over the Rock of Odours his bright purple mantle
 Beside the Fount above the Lark's nest in Golgonooza
 Luvah slept here in death & here is Luvah's empty Tomb
 Ololon sat beside this Fountain on the Rock of Odours.

(35,56-61)

The "Rock of Odours" may contain the fallen sense produced by the stench of the sacrificial altar²⁵, and the spilt blood of time's (Thyme's) sacrifice may appear in the "bright purple mantle" of the herb's flowers covering the stone, but the "purple mantle" also suggests the contrary energy of Christ's redemptive royal blood. The "fount" from which the contrary streams spring contains the redemptive promise of the waters of Baptism to reconcile us with the divine. Luvah (the zoa of redeemed love) took Jesus' place in the sepulchre and after the seeming of his "death" awoke and left an "empty Tomb." We (through Luvah) resurrect the "Moment" and enfuse it with Christ's promise and the infinite possibility of language (Blake's poetic prophecy). This ennobling experience is made possible by Ololon in her "Moment" of absolute selfless love. What began in error, through the agency of language's immanence, becomes the redemptive possibility. Ololon takes the place of the two Marys and contains their contrary female energies of virgin, mother, whore as they empty themselves and await the coming renovation (reconciliation, redemption).

The renovation is imaged as the process of a Lark moving backward through church history. As it proceeds the Lark informs each church of its errors by making those errors visible. The Lark begins this process by entering time through a "Crystal Gate" (35,61). This contrary birth through the clarity and potential vision of the gate brings the Lark to "the entrance of the first Heaven named Luther" (35,62). Luther's *Reformation* is the final church in our reckoning of historical time, but the Lark's contrary energy reverses this sense

²⁵Peter Taylor points out that "the word *Thyme* is derived from a Greek verb meaning "to offer a sacrifice," in his "Providence and the Moment in Blake's *Milton*", Blake Studies 4 (1971), p.56.

and begins a process back through theological time. The Lark operates as Hermes, "Los's Messenger" (35,63), as did the Thyme and Ololon before it. As it proceeds "thro the Twenty-seven Churches" (35,63), the Lark awakens the "Seven Eyes of God" (35,64) (the historical composite of our ideas and names for the Christian God), and shows each and all the "Satans Seat" within it. "Satans Seat" shows how the churches enthrone hierarchical authority and use it as a place of judgement. Blake believes that this is the fundamental religious error of organized churches, and he works to expose it in the hope that love may redeem judgement and human equality may redeem hierarchical authority. The poem does not negate our historical experience (the fall), with an attempt to replace it with eternal presence. Rather it employs a contrary epistemology in order to renovate absence. We *see* our churches as error, and this allows us momentary (fragmentary) knowledge of eternity. "[T]he Larks Nest is at the Gate of Los" (35,66) in Golgonooza, and it springs from this creative source. Language's capacity to create many meanings brings contrary energy to the Lark's process:

When on the lift of his light pinions he arrives
 At that bright Gate, another Lark meets him & back to back
 They touch their pinions tip tip: and each descend
 To their respective Earths & there all night consult with Angels
 Of Providence & with the Eyes of God all night in slumbers
 Inspired: & at the dawn of day send out another Lark
 Into another Heaven to carry news upon his wings
 Thus are the Messengers dispatched till they reach the Earth again
 In the East Gate of Golgonooza, & the Twenty-eighth bright
 Lark. met the Female Ololon descending into my Garden.

(36,1-10)

The two Larks meet and move in a contrary symmetry. When they "touch their pinions," we hear their contrary enactment "tip tip." They move in contrary arcs which return in reconciliation upon reconciliation as they "descend" through the fall of twenty-seven earths and twenty-seven heavens. At each point they

"consult with Angels/Of Providence" in order to renovate each theological space/time and *provide* "another Lark" at the rebirth of "dawn." They effect these processes in the imaginative dream time of "slumbers/Inspired," through the agency and cooperation of "the Eyes of God." They both renovate and rediscover divine vision within the fallen forms of our theological past/present. Each Lark proceeds "to carry news upon his wings" until all twenty-seven states have been informed/reformed. The process continues into the present with a "twenty-eighth" Lark "descending" with Ololon into Blake's "Garden" (the poem's present). The poem's action moves to the poet's intimate and limited space. This is how the "Moment" appears to Blake's "Mortal Eyes" (36,11), and he reminds us of the limitations of his view by asserting that through language's immanent holy content "the Lark is a mighty Angel" (36,12) that he, as a mortal, cannot perceive as such.

Ololon informs/reforms Blake's present with her descent along with "all (her) mighty Hosts" (36,16). "Hosts" suggests the Lark's contrary angelic powers, and the promise of Christ's body. She appears before the poet in a flash that defies time and space and exposes "Satanic Space" as "delusion" (36,20). Her descent informed/reformed Blake's creative past "in Felpham's Vale" (36,23) where he struggled to "write all these Visions/To display Nature's cruel holiness: the deceits of Natural Religion" (36,24&5). Ololon's selfless fall into Blake's (the poem's) present allows him to address her with new knowledge:

Virgin of Providence fear not to enter into my Cottage
 What is thy message to thy friend: What am I now to do
 Is it again to plunge into deeper affliction? behold me
 Ready to obey, but pity thou my Shadow of Delight
 Enter my Cottage, comfort her, for she is sick with fatigue.

(36,28-32)

Ololon has *provided* Blake with a vision of his own errors, and the news she brings allows him to escape the containment of his selfhood and stand "[r]eady to obey." His first thought is away from himself and towards Catherine, his "Shadow of Delight," who "is sick with fatigue" from her alienated struggle with him. Ololon's descent begins the renovation of Blake's marriage as it seeks the beginning of the renovation of all marriage (Los and Enitharmon, Milton and Ololon).

Ololon's descent into Blake's garden "to seek" (37,3) Milton begins a process in which Milton hears her selfless, potentially renovating voice, and as a result becomes apparent (visible) in his fallen form. "Mild was the voice" (37,5) of her agency inside the "anxious thought" (37,4) of her fall as she *provided* Milton with the news of her experience (and through growing contariety his own) "in words distinct." Milton heard and appeared:

. . . condensing all his Fibres
 Into a strength impregnable of majesty & beauty infinite
 I saw he was the Covering Cherub & within him Satan
 And Rahab, in an outside which is fallacious! within
 Beyond the outline of Identity, in the Selfhood deadly
 And he appeared the Wicker Man of Scandinavia in whom
 Jerusalems children consume in flames among the Stars.

(37,6-12)

His (Milton's) first response is to harden himself into a self(hood) -protective shell of materiality. The beauty and "majesty" of his material creation gives him confidence in his rulership and power, but his fallen nature inside this beauty becomes apparent to Blake. The poet penetrates the material facade of "the Covering Cherub" and sees "within" to "Satan" (Milton's enthroned reason) and "Rahab" (the alienated female). The "distinct" nature of Ololon's eternal speech allows Blake to move momentarily through the Satanic limit of the reasoned

opacity of language (the Covering Cherub), and see the "fallacious(ness)" of the inside/outside (self/other) dualism which projects the female as a dangerous adversarial whore (Rahab). Blake sees Milton's "Selfhood deadly," and the theology of sacrifice and error it produces in its alienated fear. Religion appears as "the Wicker Man," a cult of sacrifice for its own sake, which allows the participant a vicarious false moment of power inside his or her mortality. Blake views this as a murderous abstraction in which the children of Jerusalem are sacrificed in an abstract void "among the stars." This fallen religious form the poet identifies as inside Milton, and there "in him beheld/The Monstrous Churches of Beulah, the Gods of Ulro dark (37,15&16). Blake sees (and we see) the process and nature of fallen (falling) religion within Milton. A vision of the nature, range and duration of religious error (37,17-38,27) builds out of the moment of Milton's appearance (through Ololon's agency), and this view of his monstrous selfhood enables him to stand and face Satan within him:

Satan! my Spectre! I know my power thee to annihilate
 And be a greater in thy place, & be thy Tabernacle
 A covering for thee to do thy will, till one greater comes
 And smites me as I smote thee & becomes my covering.
 Such are the Laws of thy false Heavens! but Laws of Eternity
 Are not such: know thou: I come to Self Annihilation
 Such are the Laws of Eternity that each shall mutually Annihilate himself
 for others good, as I for thee
 Thy purpose & the purpose of thy Priests & of thy Churches
 Is to impress on men the fear of death; to teach
 Trembling & fear, terror, constriction; abject selfishness
 Mine is to teach Men to despise death & to go on
 In fearless majesty annihilating Self, laughing to scorn
 Thy laws & terrors, shaking down thy Synagogues as webs
 I come to discover before Heaven & Hell the Self-righteousness
 In all its Hypocritic turpitude, opening to every eye
 These wonders of Satans holiness shewing to the Earth
 The Idol Virtues of the Natural Heart, & Satans Seat
 Explore in all its Selfish Natural Virtue & put off
 In Self annihilation all that is not of God alone:
 To put off Self & all I have ever & ever Amen.

(38,29-49)

"Milton" (the poem and individual) speaks for its/himself. The mad violence engendered and concealed by the theology of "But" that I illuminated in part one of this essay becomes apparent and Milton sees Satan as a part of himself. He stops contradicting and thus escapes the perpetuation of "But's" debased and debasing form. Milton refuses to negate Satan and instead sees him as part of the selfhood he must annihilate. His growing contrariety (the recognition of Satan within himself, the knowledge of Ololon's alienated experience) prepares him to "[a]nnihilate himself for others good." An escape from the seemingly endless run of authority/fear/death/new authority and so on may enable humanity to see the "Idol Virtues" and limits of materiality (idol building). Free of the fear of death, the human may carry immanent possibility within its newly emptied form, and the poet's utterance may slip the leash and escape the selfhood's limits and control.

Satan cannot reverse Ololon's, and now Milton's, moment. The momentary vision of the eternal necessity of self-annihilation surrounds Satan and renders his reasoned threats and complaints powerless. Satan cannot escape the confines of his old fallen forms and he restates the principles of his corrupt theology which Milton prepares to annihilate as part of his selfhood:

Saying I am God the judge of all, the living & the dead
 Fall therefore down & worship me. submit thy supreme
 Dictate, to my eternal Will & to my dictate bow
 I hold the Balances of Right & Just & mine the Sword
 Seven Angels bear my Name & in those Seven I appear
 But I alone am God & I alone in Heaven & Earth
 Of all that live dare utter this, others tremble & bow

Till All Things become One Great Satan, in Holiness
 Oppos'd to Mercy, and the Divine Delusion Jesus be no more.
 (38,51-39,2)

Satan defines divinity as authority's power to instill fear, and enact judgement over the human. The possibility of humanity free of this system of fear (civil authority seen in the "Balances" and "Sword," as well as religious authority) creates panic in Satan as he attempts to limit the immanent power of language by asserting that a single religious meaning exists in the "dictate" of his "eternal Will." Satan's ideology of authority would have it that the dictation of the prophets is indistinguishable from religious dogma. In such a system interpretation is settled by negation which he attempts to enact with the "But" that begins this passage. The force of negation sounds in the poem as the alienated Satan repeats "I alone," "I alone." This voice of absolute dualism echoes in Ololon's name and reminds us of the alienated and perverse ends of its claim to total authority. It is Blake's hope that the coming annihilation of Satan within Milton will allow prophecy to escape the realm of dogma and become the language of possibility. Our ability to hear the isolated and fragile desperation of Satan's "I (eye) alone" suggests that we may share in Blake's hope, and become participants in the process of the dictation of the poem's multiplicity. Indeed, our participation is necessary in order to facilitate the further opening of the poem, and push it beyond Blake's authorial grasp. We are free to fall into error, momentarily know eternity, or fail to engage the poem's surface for that matter. Blake would not despair that our reading subverted his intention, but rather he would delight in the infinite and eternal life of language and meaning.²⁶

²⁶In his recently published Real Presences (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), p.84., George Steiner acknowledges Blake's understanding of the freedom created by the indeterminacy of his poetic texts. "There is always, as Blake taught, 'excess' of the signified beyond the signifier. In the poetic, this 'surplus value' is most evident."

The growing renovation spreads over the English landscape and penetrates Milton's view of Ololon as he "perceivd the Eternal Form/Of that Mild Vision" (40,1&2). Milton watches as she struggles towards self-knowledge in the renovating forms which surround her. Ololon sees Milton's struggle and says:

I see thee strive upon the Brooks of Arnon. there a dread
And awful Man I see oercovered with the mantle of years.
I behold Los & Urizen. I behold Orc & Tharmas;
The Four Zoas of Albion & thy Spirit with them striving
In Self annihilation giving thy life to thy enemies.

(40,4-8)

She observes Milton's struggle with his fear of the process of birth, life and death (Arnon)²⁷, and experiences a vision of Albion moving towards the wholeness of all four of his constituent zoas. Urthona and Luvah appear in their fallen (visible) forms of Los and Orc, and are seen together with Urizen and Tharmas in their true (potentially, immanently eternal) condition: "The Four Zoas of Albion." Despite her vision of the movement towards "Self annihilation," Ololon remains separated from the process. She is Milton's still alienated emanation, and as such cannot yet overcome the anxiety of her mortal fate as his "Feminine portion" (40,10). The mercy of her vision occurs when she is able to see her own role in fallen religious experience and openly question its validity and her agency in its creation.

Are those who contemn Religion & seek to annihilate it
Become in their Feminine Portions the causes & promoters
of these Religions, how is this thing? this Newtonian Phantasm
This Voltaire & Rousseau: this Hume & Gibbon & Bolingbroke
This Natural Religion! this impossible absurdity
Is Ololon the cause of this? O where shall I hide my face
These tears fall for the little-ones: the Children of Jerusalem
Lest they be annihilated in thy annihilation. (40,9-16)

²⁷See Damon, p.28.

She sees "Natural Religion" embodied in the figures of what Blake considered a false enlightenment which reduced humanity to his or her material body. In this vision she is able to see her own fear as the protective response of maternal love towards the threat of the death of her children, and she sees how this fearful response fosters the fallen tenants of Religious authority. Her recognition allows her fear to become visible as the female figure in fallen religious form:

"Rahab Babylon"²⁸ (40,18):

. . . in Satans bosom glowing:
 A female hidden in a Male, Religion hidden in War
 Named Moral Virtue; cruel two-fold Monster shining bright
 A Dragon red & hidden Harlot which John in Patmos saw.
 (40,19-22)

The "two-fold" alienation of Milton and his emanation creates a "Monster" of religious error which now becomes visible in Ololon's recognition of it. Her process of seeing herself as fallen moves her towards the prophetic possibility of a shared vision with "John in Patmos." This point will be explored in detail in the afterword.

Milton observes this developing vision and continues the process of "emanational exchange"²⁹ by turning "toward Ololon" (40,28). His view of her is still conditioned by the alienated distance indicated by "But" (40,28), yet in his

²⁸See Damon, p.338.

²⁹The Blakean phrase "emanational exchange" was coined by Clayton Escheleman in order to discuss the creative power of the poetry he translated in an edition called Conductors of the Pit: Major Works by Rimbaud, Valléjo, Césaire, Artaud, and Holan (New York: Paragon House, 1988), p. IX.

reply to her he is able to identify and overcome the processes and agents of fallen philosophical, cultural, religious, and artistic form.

... Obey thou the Words of the Inspired Man
 All that can be annihilated must be annihilated
 That the Children of Jerusalem may be saved from slavery
 There is a Negation, & there is a Contrary
 The Negation must be destroyed to redeem the Contraries
 The Negation is the Spectre; the Reasoning Power in Man
 This is a false Body: an Incrustation over my Immortal
 Spirit; a Selfhood, which must be put off & annihilated away
 To cleanse the Face of my Spirit by Self-examination.

To bathe in the Waters of Life; to wash off the Not Human
 I come in Self-annihilation & the grandeur of Inspiration
 To cast off Rational Demonstration by Faith in the Saviour
 To cast off the rotten rags of Memory by Inspiration
 To cast off Bacon, Locke & Newton from Albions covering
 To take off his filthy garments, & clothe him with Imagination
 To cast aside from Poetry all that is not Inspiration
 That it no longer shall dare to mock with the aspersion of Madness
 Cast on the Inspired, by the tame high finisher of paltry Blots,
 Indefinite, or paltry Rhymes; or paltry Harmonies.
 Who creeps into State Government like a caterpillar to destroy
 To cast off the idiot Questioner who is always questioning,
 But never capable of answering; who sits with a sly grin
 Silent plotting when to question, like a thief in a cave;
 Who publishes doubt & calls it knowledge; whose Science is Despair
 Whose pretence to knowledge is Envy, whose whole Science is
 To destroy the wisdom of age to gratify ravenous Envy;
 That rages round him like a Wolf day & night without rest
 He smiles his condescension; he talks of Benevolence & Virtue
 And those who act with Benevolence & Virtue, they murder time on time
 These are the destroyers of Jerusalem, these are the murderers
 Of Jesus, who deny the Faith & mock at Eternal Life:
 Who pretend to Poetry that they may destroy Imagination;
 By imitation of Natures Images drawn from Remembrance
 These are the Sexual Garments, the Abomination of Desolation
 Hiding the Human Lineaments as with an Ark & Curtains
 Which Jesus rent: & now shall wholly purge away with Fire
 Till Generation is swallowd up in Regeneration.

(40,29 - 41,28)

Obedience is not demanded by Milton, but is insisted upon as a necessary recognition of the eternal possibility which informs and speaks through him. All that remains is the final reconciliation of Milton and Ololon. She continues their exchange by describing the nature of their fall:

... our Human Power can sustain the severe contentions
of Friendship, our Sexual cannot: but flies into the Ulro.
Hence arose all our Terrors in Eternity!

(41,32-34)

When their existence is reduced to their physical bodies "the severe contentions" of their marital relations are expressed in purely "sexual" terms. Their relations one to another have no content beyond the physical desires and fears of their bodies. Ololon sees beyond their "sexual" limits and asks the final question, "are we Contraries O Milton, Thou and I" (41,35)? Her intimation of her contrary nature allows her finally to overcome her fear and declare her selfless understanding. "Thou goest to Eternal Death & all must go with thee" (42,2). This declaration ends the process Ololon began in error. Through the selflessness embodied in her willingness to fall into Ulro, a way of thinking and seeing was opened which enabled Milton to achieve the process of the renovation of his experience and vision. Through a series of "emanational exchanges" ³⁰ this process finally includes the reintegration of male and female elements into an enacting marriage of great renovating power:

... the Virgin divided six-fold & with a shriek
Dolorous that ran thro all Creation a Double Six-fold Wonder!
Away from Ololon she divided & fled into the depths
of Miltons Shadow as a Dove upon the stormy Sea.

Then as a Moony Ark Ololon descended to Felphams Vale
In clouds of blood, in streams of gore, with dreadful thunderings
Into the Fires of Intellect that rejoic'd in Felphams Vale

³⁰ *Ibid.*

Around the Starry Eight: with one accord the Starry Eight became
 One Man Jesus the Saviour. wonderful! round his limbs
 The Clouds of Ololon folded as a Garment dipped in blood
 Written within & without in woven letters

(42,3-13)

Ololon's influence divides and spreads as she provides twelve emanations to balance and correct the twelve Hebrew Patriarchs, and perhaps the twelve disciples (correcting the male priesthood). She gives up her selfhood and begins to renovate the suppressed desires of "Miltons Shadow," just as the dove Noah sent out selflessly searched for a new beginning, a new land (time and space). Her action ends in Blake's garden (the poem's present) with a powerful vision of Eternity. "The Starry Eight" (the history of our understanding of our relation to the divine) includes us as the present eighth, and reaches an all-encompassing vision of "one accord" in "One Man Jesus the Saviour." "Man", in my reading, refers to an eternal human possibility in which gender dissolves into an integrating four-fold vision.³¹ Surrounding our vision (our immersed selves) is Ololon's womb in a final vision of the renovated female principle of maternal love. Selfless Ololon acts as the dove of the annunciation (Hermes) as she allows the possibility of Eternity to speak through her and begin the process of renovation.

³¹This is not to say that we should ignore or forgive the use of gender-specific nouns in describing the eternal, but neither should we dismiss Blake's efforts to think and write his way out of the condition of cultural/psychological misogyny solely on this basis. Whether Blake's efforts succeed or fail (free or constrain) is an interesting and open question. Indeed, its openness follows from the poet's willingness to take it up.

AFTERWORD

The issues of contrariety, annihilation, and immanence which have occupied us as readers all speak to the further issue of the nature of prophetic language. At the end of Book the Second, when Ololon appears to us "as a Garment dipped in blood" (42,12) we are able to see and know something of her eternal possibility through her willingness to be annihilated. Through her we see prophetic language "[w]ritten within & without in woven letters" (42,13). She allows us to overcome our dualistic habits and join in a visionary "withoutside" which heals the violence of conflicting subjects and objects. Blake insists that this process occurs through language. He casts his images (written and engraved) as writing which reintegrates us into the *other* through its "woven" forms. Through the mercy of language's immanent power Ololon is able to act as the mediating agent in an annunciation (Hermes), and bring us momentary news of the eternal. When her speech is given form by Blake he inherits her prophetic power and process. As the poem says, "the Writing/Is the Divine Revelation in the Litteral Expression" (42,14&15). His struggle inside his poem leads him to a profound understanding of the necessity of the annihilation of the human selfhood, and his ability to assent to this poetic demand allows him to mediate for us in receiving the dictates of prophetic speech.

Blake and Milton are able to see the true in things (Revelation's revealing) through the *opening* Ololon's selflessness created. By emptying herself (annihilation) she allowed visions of the eternal to appear through her, and as a result she mediated for us in the tradition of prophetic mediation. She made visible a vision "which John in Patmos saw" (40,22), and renewed the promise of the possibility of Revelation.

When Milton says "Obey thou the Words of the Inspired Man" (40,29), they are not his "Words." He gives up his desire to own or control his speech, and into his emptied annihilated self is breathed new and infinite meaning. Through contrariety, a multiplicity of meanings springs from the capacity of poetic language. Out of the living flux of such multiplicity, contrariety allows us an immanent relation to all Blake's states (Ulro to Eternity). In this way poetic language provides us (as an agent of Providence) with momentary knowledge of our true relation to that overwhelming largeness we name the eternal. The very instability of such knowledge becomes its living form and the ultimate denial of the power of our hubris. When Milton declares, "I come in Self-annihilation & the grandeur of Inspiration" (41,2) he becomes part of the force of contrariety and is able to present (make visible) the products of cultural dualism in their true fallen forms, and by contrary immanent extension present (out of the invisible) the absent possibility of eternal forms. Free of the implicitly violent constraints of dualism, poetic language becomes the processes of Imagination given form by reason (writing, painting, etc.) but free of reason's totalizing conceit. Prophecy then is a processive way of seeing the world which acts towards a multiplicity or possibility of forms and away from an aesthetics of hierarchical interpretations (either from *high* to *low* art, or from *sublime* to *mundane* readings of a single work). Such radical relational power (freedom) works to undermine the validity of the idea of authority and the cultural forms it takes. Leslie Tannenbaum extends and enriches our understanding of these subversive processes through his work on the relation of Blake's "Prophetic Form" to that employed by the Biblical prophets.³² What is revealed to Blake is the necessity of religious, social, political, and artistic upheaval. His use of

³²Tannenbaum, pp. 25-54.

mirror writing (e.g. plate 30) visually demands that we join him in his creative reversal of fallen form through our participation in a contrary making.

Contrariety enlivens dead forms as it places them in their living relation to other forms. This practice builds powerful processive critiques of Blake's (and our) culture. Blake's prophetic voice carries the fragmentary voice of the tradition of Albion's dissent. He is the prophetic inheritor of the dictates of Milton's radical contemporary, Gerrard Winstanley. The historian, Christopher Hill, paraphrases Winstanley in rhetorical terms which sound remarkably similar to Blake's own:

Winstanley used Scripture language, but gave his own sense to the biblical stories. The Crucifixion, the Resurrection and the Ascension may or may not have been historical events ('it matters not much'): they are more important as metaphors for psychological transformations within men and women. The Christ who lived at Jerusalem is less significant for us than the Christ within. The establishment of private property had been the Fall of Man: its abolition, together with that of wage labour, would allow a return to the innocence of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Winstanley's God is not to be found above the skies after we are dead, but within each one of us, here on earth. There is no heaven or hell after death, no personal immortality. Heaven, hell, Satan, are all within us. The universe – as Milton thought too – had been created out of the substance of God. The Second Coming of Jesus Christ is the rising of Reason within sons and daughters, and Reason means awareness of the need for co-operation. Winstanley used the word Reason in preference to God. As Christ rises, so all men and women will come to see the necessity of co-operation. There is no other Second Coming. Ultimately all mankind, without exception, will be saved – i.e. brought into the haven of peace and rest on earth – not by the descent of a Saviour from the clouds but by the rising of communal consciousness within them. All men shall become Sons of God united by the Christ within. Universalism was of course highly unorthodox when Winstanley began to preach it in 1648: in his final version it was hardly Christian at all.³³

The rejection of transcendence in favour of immanence, the attack on social/political institutions as products of the fall, and the belief in the necessity

³³Christopher Hill, The Experience of Defeat: Milton and Some Contemporaries (New York: Viking, 1984), pp. 38-39.

of the renovation of the fallen actual instead of a hope in a heavenly hereafter are all beliefs shared by the two men. As Hill later states (p.42), it has been thought that Winstanley's writing was unknown during Blake's time yet the radical ideas fomented by the political prophets of the English Revolution undoubtedly find re-expression in Blake's prophetic books. The specific nature of such a transmission is impossible to reconstruct, but that uncertainty, in a sense, confirms Blake's belief in how prophetic ideas move through time as continuous instances of the immanently possible. The necessity of a cultural reversal based on Christ's love, and a societal reformation based on the tenants (Christian or secular) of co-operation existed during the Babylonian captivity, the English Revolution, the composition of Blake's poem, and our reading. What Blake's beliefs about poetic language do most powerfully is create imaginative space for dissent. When he annihilates his selfhood he shares with us an *opening* into cultural/political possibility.

Possibility plays out in the poem through the relation of narrative voices or perspectives. In Book the First, the historical and mythological figures of Milton and Los fall and are conflated into the human figure of Blake's body. This process constitutes a complex fall into human limit (see part one), yet it also constitutes the contrary movement of drawing the prophetic voices of eternity into the poet's mind. Blake, the poetic figure, struggles to allow those voices to speak through him as he struggles to "put off" his selfhood. Inside the outward appearance (body) of the fall exists the immanent contrary of our connection to (not alienation from) the eternal. This process of preparing oneself to receive the voices of prophecy extends out of the poem's body to the reader.

Professor Tannenbaum sees this process as an inheritance of Biblical prophetic form (Blake would view it as Ezekial whispering in his ear) and discusses how it is thought (by Erdman and others) to inform readers:

Blake's use of verse and illustration to create multiple perspectives in *America* and in his other prophecies, as Erdman suggests, makes his prophecies windows into or prompt books for a "mental theater" in which the reader achieves imaginative vision. In this perception and in his calling *America* "an acting version of a mural Apocalypse," Erdman approaches what we now understand to be an important inheritance from the prophetic tradition: the dramatic use of multiple perspectives within the prophetic or apocalyptic theater, which is originally located in the mind of the prophet and which, through the communication of his prophecy, is relocated in the mind of the reader.³⁴

By placing himself in his poem, Blake acts as a synecdoche for all individual human experience in relation to the force of prophecy and the largeness of eternity. His struggle to *open* himself to knowledge and meaning in all its immense diversity is our struggle. When the visionary moment arrives in his mind, he is (as a mortal being) overwhelmed. "Terror struck in the Vale I (Blake) stood at that immortal sound/My bones trembled. I fell outstretchd upon the path" (42,24&25). His human mind cannot grasp eternity (that is the definition of eternity), and he faints under the strain. Yet, he brought momentary knowledge of the eternal into his "Vegetable body," (42,27) and that fragmentary act has allowed him a vision of a renovated Albion. Ololon's vision of the renovating Lark and Thyme becomes, through the process of prophecy, Blake's vision of his material view. Out of the poem's "moment" comes an instantaneous redemptive force. "Immediately the Lark mounted with a loud trill from Felphams Vale/And the Wild Thyme from Wimbleton's green & impurpled Hills" (42,29&30). The process of "impurpl(ing)" carries the redemptive possibility of

³⁴Tannenbaum, p. 48.

Christ's blood into Blake's view of material creation, and informs us of the immanent potential of our own material views.

Blake (the poetic figure) succeeds in the momentary annihilation of his selfhood, and as a result language slips the leash of authorial determination and makes meaning free of human limit. As readers we may *open* ourselves to the multiplicity in Blake's language by "putting off" our rush to judgement in matters of meaning. We may participate in the contrary life (freedom and constraint) of language, and in lucky "moments," "if rightly placed," we may be filled with the breath of prophecy that poetic language immanently carries.

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