

BLAKE'S HISTORIOGRAPHY AS PRESENTED
IN THE LAMBETH BOOKS

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Document Blake's historiography is as fully evolved in the Lambeth books as it is in The Four Zoas, though one must take the liberty to rearrange their order, whereas his mythological history appears chronologically in the latter poem.¹ I say chronologically only in a relative sense, for if one visualizes a chronology of events as a linear continuum, Blake's history will not fit the pattern.² Graphically, the Blakean time line is a series of mountains and valleys. At the lowest point to one's left, one may visualize the beginning of an historical period or era. The line then ascends until it reaches the greatest intensity of that time sequence, and then descends sharply, reaching the lowest point once again in apocalypse and rebirth. One may also visualize this sequence of events, or continuum, in a series of gyres, as did Willian Yeats. In fact, Blake uses the conically similar image of a vortex in Milton 15:21-24, "The nature of infinity is this: That every thing has its/ Own Vortex; and when once a traveller thro' Eternity/ Has passd that Vortex, he perceives it roll backward behind/ His path, into a globe itself infolding...."³ But despite this and certain other similarities in the two poet's historiographies--both are cyclical processes that continue until the "centre cannot hold" and both are microcosmic/macrocosmic--and some Blakean influence, it is likely that any further comparison would prove more muddling than revelatory.⁴

Translating the visual to the conceptual, history begins with the creation as rendered in The Book of Urizen, The Book

of Los, and The Book of Ahanian.⁵ Recorded history starts in The Song of Los, with the rise of civilization in Africa and in Asia. Almost 1800 dark years pass before the reign of oppressive religion is threatened by the American Revolution in America and apocalypsed in Europe by the French Revolution,⁶ a revolution which spreads to all of Europe and makes possible the rebirth of a new era. The pre-Christian world, i.e., the world before the dark years, had as avatars Rintrah and Palamabron, eldest sons of Enitharmon and representatives of the Hebraic prophets and lawgivers.⁷ Jesus, avatar of the 1800 centuries during which Hebraically rooted Christian religion holds sway, is brother to Orc, Rintrah, and Palamabron, all of whom are incarnations of revolutionary spirit in various temporal and spiritual forms.⁸ Like Jesus they are immortal. Pitted against these rebels are the "fiery kings," or earthly tyrants, who are Vala's progeny.⁹ She wishes for a stabilized history, and thinks that if there were a world of female dominion she might be free of the suffering she feels in the ceaseless reincarnation of her sons, who are constantly at odds with Enitharmon's rebels. As revolutionary doctrine solidifies into establishment tradition, the rebels who have been eclipsed by new spirits join forces with the tyrants to combat a new wave of revolution.¹⁰ And so the cycles evolve.

In an endeavor to limit the scope of this paper, it was necessary to focus the discussion primarily upon this struggle as it is portrayed in Europe, using the other Lambeth books

only as aids in the explication of certain obscure passages and as prefacing outlines of the preceding history. Europe seems to be the most pertinent in a review of Blake's historiography for several reasons. As the last book, mythologically, in the Blakean history, it not only allows for comparison with the first dawn of history depicted in The Book of Urizen, but it also summarizes, or recounts, events which The Book of Urizen doesn't even foreshadow. In other words, while the prophecy, Europe, includes several lengthy references to the creation, The Book of Urizen does not consider the apocalypse. Europe also relates the two latest historical cycles, those of Jesus and Orc, and is the only Lambeth book which does so.

One of the most interesting facets of Blake's historiography is that he applies it not only to universal human history, but to individual human history as well. Just as Albion, once named simply "the Man," is a microcosm/macrocosm, so is Blake's history.¹¹ Following the eponymic interpretations of scripture by such antiquarians as Jacob Bryant (for whose mythological study he furnished engravings),¹² Blake had ample convention to deal "with the progress of the individual soul" and "the history of human development" as "mutual symbols."¹³ In one poem the history may be drawn on a double scale as panoramic as the contention of gods or as concentrated as the human psychology. One may be aware of both levels of meaning simultaneously. We do not become confused because an

atom mimics the solar system, nor do we (after all) find it unnatural; why should we balk at the idea that personal history echoes world history? While one mustn't force Blakean history unjustly into a false mold,¹⁴ the general pattern, the "Circle of Destiny," from innocence to experience and back to innocence applies to its cyclical nature, both psychologically and universally.¹⁵

THE BOOK OF URIZEN--BLAKE'S GENESIS

Blake's history begins, as does the Biblical history he so often emulates or parodies, with a creation myth, The Book of Urizen. It is fitting that the "Bible of Hell" so begin, since Urizen and the prophetic books, which I shall discuss later, are primarily concerned with religion and its diminishing effects upon the human race.¹⁶ Blake had referred to such a document in The Marriage of Heaven and Hell; "I have also: The Bible of Hell: which the world shall have whether they will or no." In effect the Lambeth books are the Old Testament of that Bible, beginning with creation and ending in the promise of a new order to come. Yet as well as evincing Biblical comparison, Blake's work also recalls the tone and language of Milton's great epic, Paradise Lost.¹⁷ However, Blake, unlike Milton, does not condone religion, but condemns it. Compare, for instance, Urizen 2: 1-7 with Paradise Lost, Book I, ll. 1-10:

Of the primeval Priests assum'd power,
 When Eternals spurn'd back his religion;
 And gave him a place in the north,
 Obscure, shadowy, void, solitary.

Eternals I hear your call gladly,
 Dictate swift winged words, & fear not
 To unfold your dark visions of torment. (Urizen 2: 1-7)

Of Man's first disobedience, and the fruit
 Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
 Brought death into the World, and all our woe,
 With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
 Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,
 Sing Heavenly Muse, that on the secret top
 Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire
 That shepherd who first taught the chosen seed
 In the beginning how the heavens and earth
 Rose out of Chaos.... (Paradise Lost, I, 1-10.)¹⁸

One can readily see, from syntactical arrangement alone, that the two passages are quite comparable. When one compares what they each convey, however, it becomes evident that Blake's purposes are the exact opposite of Milton's' for Blake does not "justify the ways of God to men." Rather, he means to blame Urizen, his own Jehovah, for mankind's fall and for all the resultant misery. Not only did Urizen paradoxically create this world by limiting it in a withdrawal from eternity, but he also may be identified as the "primeval Priest" who uses his "assum'd power" to create the "Net of Religion," the basis of all mans' misery and repression. What is not limited by creation is henceforth circumscribed by religion, Hebraic in origin and manifesting its most hateful, Puritanical form in Druidism.

Hebraism is all wrong in its tenents such as Urizen

formulates them and inscribes them in "the Book of brass," a parody of the Ten Commandments. His greatest mistake is the denial of contraries--"Without Contraries is no progression" (M.H.H. 3:6). Urizen desires "a joy with no pain," eternal life with no death (heaven), and "One command, one joy, one desire,/ One curse, one weight, one measure/ One King, one God, one Law." (Cf. M.H.H. 24:9, "One Law for the Lion & Ox is oppression.") By giving expression to Sin in language (Urizen 4:30) the "primeval Priest" gives it existence. His "one Law," forbidding the sins he himself gave birth to, is impossible to follow, "...no flesh nor spirit could keep/ His iron laws one moment" (Urizen 23: 24-25). Death also becomes reality when Urizen acknowledges "that life liv'd upon death" (Urizen 23:27). Los, the "Eternal Prophet," Urizen's contrary and warden, feels pity for the fallen eternal and, like Adam, gives birth to a female form, called Pity (Enitharmon), a perversion of love. When Los attempts to embrace her for the first time "she refus'd/ In perverse and cruel delight" (Urizen 19: 3-4). So the complete man is divided and his other part refuses him. Sexual repression thus has its inception and is perpetuated by the "Net/or "Web"/ of Religion," which is itself a "Female in embryo," The creation is complete when the offspring of Enitharmon, i.e., the human race, originally Titans¹⁹ (see Urizen 20:45), shrink up from existence and forget their eternal life (Urizen 25: 40-43).

Plate 28 of The Book of Urizen then recounts, in Blakean

terms, the beginning of civilization in Egypt and the scattering of the races from the time of the Tower of Babel up to the Deluge. During this period, sorrow, death, and "laws of prudence" are all introduced. As a result, all mankind "shrink/s/ together/ Beneath the net of Urizen" (Urizen 28: 12-13), and they cease to "discern,/ Their brethren of other cities" (Urizen 28: 16-17). The children of Urizen, demi-gods perhaps, leave the earth, "And the salt ocean rolled englob'd" (Urizen 28:23).

Up to this point, Blake's treatment of the creation myth is not historiographically too unusual except for his ironic process of creation by limitation. Though his interpretation of myth is unique, Blake's chronology follows the Bible and mythologists such as Jacob Bryant, whose book, An Analysis of Antient Mythology,²⁰ he helped to illustrate. The particularly relevant considerations for our purposes are his depiction of religion's growth, its repressive tactics, and its female nature. As we shall see, these elements continue to be important for an understanding of Blake's historiography in the prophetic books. Sexual repression and female dominance become increasingly a part of religious oppression cultivated through the adoration of the Virgin.²¹ As man continues to strive with the other sex toward a life and after-life with no contraries, his senses become more and more limited and he continues to fail to see the immortality and divinity which were always his could he only perceive them.

THE RISE OF CIVILIZATION: AFRICA AND ASIA

Africa, from The Song of Los, also deals with the spread of religious oppression, especially the dispersion of Hebraic religion. To do so Blake must go back chronologically to incidents related in The Book of Urizen because, of course, he had not yet written that prophecy. Otherwise the poem proceeds historically from Plate 28 of that poem and tells of the rise of civilization in Egypt.

An important concept to present before we proceed to an explication of Africa, however, is that Blake believed all religions derived their bases from Hebraic roots. Many of his historiographic concepts of this nature may have come from An Analysis of Antient Mythology,²² in which Bryant painstakingly fabricates a history of ancient peoples, concentrating on the growth of nations from the dispersion of Noah's sons after the Deluge and on the displacement of nations after the rout from the Tower of Babel. From an etymologically based argument, Bryant expands upon Biblical accounts to create a myth of his own. It's just the sort of system Blake would have admired, comprehensively and imaginatively executed, and it seems likely that he borrowed from Bryant in several places. In Africa, for instance, it would seem that Blake was not only speaking philosophically, as he did in his pamphlet, "All Religions are One," but quite literally as well, following Bryant's thesis. I think a similar literalness is intended some other places in the Blake corpus where most critics have derived only an

allegorical meaning, e.g., the Titans, "an enormous race," (Urizen, 20-45), and the Hebraic ancestry of the Druids (esp. as in Europe, passim), are treated similarly in An Analysis of Antient Mythology. This influence is especially important in Africa, where much of what Blake says may well be taken literally, as well as allegorically.

Africa outlines quickly the whole history of the human race from the time of Adam to the Gospel of Jesus in the first 27 lines of the poem. Noah and Adam receive Urizen's "Law to the Nations" from "the children of Los," Rintrah and Palamabron. Adam and Noah "shrink from existence," while Rintrah disseminates repressive religion to the East, Moses receives the Ten Commandments on Mt. Sinai, and Palamabron founds Greek philosophy, Hermetic, Pythagorean, Socratic, and Platonic. One should note here and again later in the poem when Newton and Locke are mentioned, how closely philosophy and religion are associated in Blakean thought. "The sons of Har," i.e., Adam's sons, are engulfed in the flood of time and Orc, like Prometheus, is bound on Mt. Atlas.

Lines 22-27 are perhaps the most important of the poem, for they herald the birth of a new era, the Christian era. Oothoon, who we first learn about in Visions of the Daughters of Albion, is the incarnation of chastity and virginity. One will remember her lamentation over her rape at the hands of Bromion, a god. The character bears more than a passing resemblance to the Virgin Mary. Oothoon "hovered over Judah &

Jerusalem" and "Jesus heard her voice." With Jesus as the new avatar, born of an immaculate conception, the female web of religion grows larger and stronger; as "A man of sorrows," he represents the prudery, the joylessness, the self-sacrifice (and thus human sacrifice) of Puritanism, Hebraism, and Druidism, all of which are interchangeable terms in Blake's system.²³ Jesus' Gospel is received from Oothoon's betrothed, Theotormon, who in Visions of the Daughters of Albion, Blake characterizes as jealously Puritanical. Though Bromion has raped Oothoon, through no provocation on her part, Theotormon refuses to accept her as his wife. His selfishness and narrow-mindedness is indeed despicable in comparison to Oothoon's show of love and desire for forgiveness of a sin in which she truly was not instrumental. Her true spiritual virginity at any rate is by no means sullied, and her physical virginity is taken only by brute force. It is plain then why the doctrines which Theotormon has delivered to Jesus "cause the human race to wither"; sexuality dries up and "the disease'd only propogated."

The false doctrine of chastity and virginity propogates at a rabbit's pace, for Antamon, "a spirit of graphic art" (Bloom),²⁴ calls upon Leutha, goddess of the vale of chastity,²⁵ to present her to the East as another manifestation of the religion of virginity, obviously a doctrine of sterility (Africa 3: 28-29). At the same time in the North the religion of war is founded (Africa, 3: 30-31). Yet the worship of war, and

thereby death, is not so different from the worship of the virgin, both are non-prolific and non-productive and they each strive for victory over contraries--army over army, female over male.²⁶

In the next two stanzas the cult of virginity establishes itself as a governmental power, some forms of which, such as hospitals, seem to be beneficial, but this is only deception, and ruthlessly serves to further limit mankind's perception of its own immortality. To create false immortality, man places his hopes in temporal institutions, which will supposedly live long after his own death. In lines 5-12, the separation of male and female, which began on earth with the fall of Adam and Eve--Har and Heva²⁷--continues to grow wider and more materialistic, "creeping in reptile flesh" and results in the shrinking up of Nature, or at least in man's perception of it. Perhaps this is because he becomes more animal-like. As the poem closes, "the terrible race of Los & Enitharmon," i.e., Rintrah, Palamabron, and Jesus, bind mankind more closely to narrow perceptions, until Newton and Locke, Rousseau and Voltaire, as men of Deistic, natural religion and natural science enable these philosophies to cover the earth.²⁸

Asia does not figure as importantly as does Africa in Blake's historiography, because it is an admonishing prophecy of the imminent revolution portrayed in Europe and America. However, one part of the poem which bears upon this discussion foretells of the melting of Urizen's "Books of brass iron &

gold." One will note that all three of these metals are traditionally used to designate ages of man. In The Book of Urizen his tablet is composed of brass alone. The addition of iron and gold surely indicates a passage of time, but we still lack one of the metals in the traditional sequence, silver. Though Urizen loses much of his power, he still retains the tablet of silver, if indeed we may assume the set is complete.²⁹ From this small clue one may only tenuously surmise that Orc's ascendancy is not the end of all cycles, and that the closing of Europe does not signal the apocalypse of all history. Like the ending of Europe, the symbolism is ambiguous.

Not much else may be said about Asia here, for it is not primarily meant to carry the "plot," as it were, any further, and as a prophecy it covers ground which we will examine in discussion of America and Europe. Perhaps because of its almost purely hortatory nature, however, Blake had the latitude to compose more poetically and rhetorically than in the other poems. As a result, Asia is probably the most lyric of all the Lambeth books.³⁰

OVERT REVOLUTION--AMERICA

The prophecy section of America has as its first line the last line of Africa, and its history takes up where Africa leaves off. However, the "Preludium" section of America is similar in some ways to the "Preludium" of Europe. For instance, the first lines of the two poems are almost identical. In

fact, the two pieces as a whole treat much the same time period, from the American revolution to the French. Nevertheless, the focus differs substantially.³¹ America focuses on the first rising of the power of Orc, whereas Europe concentrates on the spread of revolution into Europe, especially into England. Europe is historically later than America by virtue of its prophesying an English revolution, and yet it is chronologically earlier as well, because it exposes the historical origins of the very evils which are threatened in its prophecy.

Orc's rape of Vala in the "Preludium" of America foreshadows the colonies' defeat of Albion's Angel later in the "Prophecy." Vala is a "dark virgin," and like the chaste huntress Diane, she carries a quiver and bow. Her unsullied loins are concealed by clouds of mystery and she serves Orc nourishment from iron utensils. A Freudian might view the iron receptacles as vaginal images representing suppressed sexuality, but even without that interpretation, Vala is clearly a representative of the repressed sexuality caused by Hebraic religion.³² Orc subsequently rids her of this limitation, and "she put aside her clouds & smiled her first born smile" (America 2:4). Ironically, Orc's rape has invested her with the innocence of a new-born babe. As a result, Vala can perceive that revolution has become a reality and that the North American continent is feeling the first pangs of revolutionary fire (America 2:10-17). Symbolically, Orc, the

"Bard," dashes his harp to pieces realizing that poetry is now ineffectual and that he must become a creature of violent action, suffering much pain.

The "Prophecy" itself is very topical and refers to actual historical events, but more importantly Blake gives us some insight into what he really thought were the underlying causes of the American Revolution, a revolution, as we see in Europe and in the closing of America, that was to encompass the entire world (cf. also Asia 6:1-7). Sexual oppression and religious suppression, mutually complimenting and abetting, are at the base of all man's miseries no less than those delimiting powers of government; for that institution, as well as the church, unjustly retains its power through sexual and religious deceptions.³³ Of course sexual and religious repression are ultimately caused by the initial limitation of man's perceptive powers. As does the "Preludium," the "Prophecy" shows those repressions weakened by revolution, and it is this challenge to which Albion's Angel, the King of England, responds. Monarchy, which supports its claim to power through the doctrine of divine right, fears destruction of those social institutions that give credence to such a doctrine. Because the doctrine of divine right is upheld by the church and because the church's authority is maintained through a religious repression that is dependent on powerful sexual taboos for its strength,³⁴ the rape of Vala is the first in a series of actions that ends in the destruction of the British theocracy. Orc's action makes

the King of England "tremble," and the Spectre of revolution "stains" the temple with blood and makes it shake. In Europe, as we shall see, this temple is Druidic, a manifestation of Hebraic slavery.

Not only do Orc's actions hold premonitions of doom for the establishment, but his speech, Plate 8, predicts the apocalypse. Orc proclaims, "The times are ended... that stony law [of Urizen] I stamp to dust: and scatter religion abroad/ To the four winds as a torn book & none shall gather the leaves... That pale religious letchery, seeking Virginity,/ May find it in a harlot." In other words, sex will cease to be shameful and letcherous once the Puritanical taboos are removed, and all shall be able to appreciate the spiritual chastity of even a prostitute. Thus religion, and the "letchery" that supports it, will be destroyed by the "Fires [of revolution that] inwrap the earthly globe," in which "man is not consumd." He is instead renewed "Amidst the lustful fires." Man's "feet become like brass,/ His knees and thighs like silver, & his breast and head like gold." While not perfected by revolution alone, man at least escapes the iron age, the age of ultimate debasement.³⁵

Albion's Angel retaliates, but America's thirteen angels, the thirteen colonies, are adamant. Like Boston's Angel, they have regained the insight lost in the fall. The Angel of Boston proclaims:

What God is he, writes laws of peace, & clothes
 him in a tempest
 What pitying Angel lusts for tears, and fans him-
 self with sighs
 What crawling villain preaches abstinence &
 wraps himself
 In fat of lambs? no more I follow no more
 obedience pay. (America 11: 12-15)

Albion's Angel sends plagues of war to quell the Americans.
 But like King George, he handles the situation clumsily, his
 actions backfire on him, and the plagues "recoil" back to
 England.

"The doors of marriage open" like the doors of a prison,
 releasing its prisoners, and "the Priests in rustling scales/
 Rush into reptile converts" (America 15:19-20) and, like the
 fallen angels in Paradise Lost, they finally reveal their
 true serpentine essence. Yet all is not won. The partial
 victory is manifested almost solely in sexual freedom (see
America 15: 22-26). At this point Urizen intervenes, counters
 fire with ice, and checks the spread of revolution for twelve
 years until "France receiv'd the Demons /Orc's/ light"
 (America 16: 14-15). From there the revolutionary fire
 spreads to Spain and Italy. "The bands of Albion" try to
 preserve their "law-built heaven" by shutting "the five
 gates," that is, by further limiting the perception of the
 English people. Their attempt is futile, however, and
 revolution succeeds.

EUROPE--THE APOCALYPSE

In Europe, Orc's revolution triumphs not only over sexual repression, but also over the divine right monarchy, established government, religious repression, and natural science. Europe and America, as has been noted, treat approximately the same time span, but the focus is different. America may have been the birthplace of revolution, but for Blake the consequences in Europe and England were more important. The satiric purpose of America is more topical and local than that of Europe, which is more general; whereas in America Blake was more conscious of alluding to historical fact, such as naming the principal rebels, referring to the Boston tea party, and utilizing historical settings such as "Bernards house," in Europe he became much more psychologically oriented and attempted to put the drama into increasingly universal terms through the use of more symbolism.³⁶ Thus the stage is bigger in Europe, and Blake shifts the emphasis from the American people in America to all mankind in Europe by utilizing the symbolic everyman, Albion. Blake must have realized, as an observer of the French between 1793 and 1794, that the revolution could have no far-reaching effects if it were only politically based. It must be personally regenerative as well.³⁷ By the time Blake wrote Asia and Afric, 1795, his vision had broadened even more, and in The Book of Urizen, written shortly after Europe, the poet concerned himself almost exclusively with psychological and intellectual

meaning. Perhaps the Reign of Terror in France disillusioned Blake as it had Wordsworth and other revolutionaries.³⁸

Whatever the cause, Blake seems to concentrate more intensely upon personal revolution in the later poems than in the first works, placing less faith in political reformation than previously.

The reformation that Blake hoped for most was a reposition of the senses, so that man could regain some of his lost immortality. He believed sexual repression was one of the most powerful instruments wielded by religious and political institutions to restrain mankind from his rightful freedom.³⁹ For Blake this matter was doubly serious, because he saw manifested in the sense of touch, especially sexual sensations, man's most undegraded ability to perceive the eternal reality, and yet here it was, seriously constrained by the selfish interests of church and state. It is thus fitting that Europe opens with a reminder of our limited sensory perception, both symbolic and symptomatic of repression. "The Fairie's Song," of which I speak, also serves to foreshadow the portrait of Albion and of the Stone of Night, his head.⁴⁰ The Fairy in the lyric serves as Blake's prophetic muse and imagination, dictating Europe and giving authority for the prophecy to come. Indeed, this poem is more of a prophecy, in the sense that we normally use the word, than is America, for Europe goes beyond the American revolution and the mounting fear of revolution in England, perhaps even beyond the revolution

in France, to foretell events in the fall of the English monarchy.⁴¹

The "Preludium," in fact, is Vala's lament that Enitharmon's sons have been destroying her progeny, the "all /devouring fiery kings." These tyrants "roam in dark and desolate mountains/ In forests of eternal death, shrieking in hollow trees" (Europe 2:45). They are monarch/priests in the Druidic tradition,⁴² holding their power by force with iron laws and human sacrifice. They, like Moses and Jehovah, are of the mountains (the Ten Commandments were received on Mt. Sinai). They are associated with trees, symbolic of Druidic sacrificial rites, after which the victims, like Fuzon, were hung from a sacred oak. Vala begs her mother for a cessation of revolution. She asks, "...who shall bind the infinite with an eternal band," (Europe 2:13-14) if the "fiery kings" are defeated?⁴³

Now that the themes of the poem have been suggested in the "Preludium" the narration proper begins. In "A Prophecy" the history takes up where Asia leaves off. Lines 1-8, reminiscent of Milton's "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity," speak of the coming of Jesus, and thus harken back to the inception of the era which is about to end.⁴⁴ As do the other cycles of history, the Christian epoch begins in triumph and joy. But even then Urizen, "unloos'd from chains/ Glows like a meteor in the distant north" (Europe 3:11-12), gathering his strength to oppose Jesus. Orc is bound, "the hour of bliss"

has arrived, and peace is upon the earth. Enitharmon is about to enter into an 1800 year period of sleep, which seems to be a part of the normal cycles of history, but first she sends Rintrah and Palamabron to pervert the newly established religion along Urizenic lines. They are to infuse into the new religion adoration of the Virgin and the promise of an afterlife, thus corrupting it. "Go!" she says, "tell the Human race that Woman's love is Sin!/ That an Eternal life awaits the worms of sixty winters/ In an allegorical abode where existence hath never come" (Europe 6:5-6).⁴⁵ Still another Puritanical element intrudes--Rintrah and Palamabron are to "Forbid all Joy."

Then Enitharmon sleeps. Eighteen hundred years is one of her nights, and Christian history is her "Female dream."⁴⁶ The reader enters into that dream, as it were, in medias res, epic style, just as revolution threatens from America and the Angels of Albion, i.e., Members of Parliament, take symbolic refuge in the establishment, "that hall," Westminster. It no longer provides security, so the Angels retreat to the deepest roots, urging religious support for their position. Blake, equating all religion with Druidism, uses the serpent temple at Avebury to symbolize the government's past foundations (Europe, Plate 10).⁴⁷ This becomes the central image of the poem. It projects the reader into the dark Urizenic past.⁴⁸ The temple which "stretches out its shady length along the Island white" is symbolic of that past at the same time it

represents the Anglican Church, whose leader is traditionally the King, the modern incarnation of Druid priesthood. The King seeks sanction in the church for divine right monarchy after governmental means of justification fail. Silently he travels to Verulam, home of Bacon, and temple of Deism.⁴⁹ The temple at Verulam is undoubtedly modeled after Stonehenge; "form'd of massy stones, uncut/ With tool.../ Plac'd in the order of the stars...." Built when the "five senses whelm'd/ In deluge o'er the earth-born man," it eventually served to turn "the fluxile eyes/ Into two stationary orbs, concentrating all things...and the nostrils golden gates shut" (Europe 10: 7-15). Deistic religion, even more so than Anglicanism, promotes Druidistic repression, for it is founded upon science, and, as we learn in The Book of Urizen, science was the earth-covering tent of the eternal which first impaired man's vision (Urizen 19: 1-9). Man's senses, the "venerable porches," are "oak-surrounded," enclosed by the non-sensual Druidic forests, which revel in human sacrifice.⁵⁰ The senses are now "barr'd and petrify'd against the infinite."⁵¹

Because man thus lost his divinity he must find a substitute. Out of this need the temple is built, and in lines 16-23 of Plate 10, Blake draws a very complex history of that process.

Thought chang'd the infinite to a serpent;
that which pitieth:
To a devouring flame; and man fled from its face and hid
In forests of night; then all the eternal
forests were divided

Into earths rolling in circles of space,
 that like an ocean rush'd
 And overwhelmed all except this finite wall of flesh.
 Then was the serpent temple form'd, image of infinite
 Shut up in finite revolutions,
 and man became an Angel;
 Heaven a mighty circle turning;
 God an tyrant crown'd. (Europe 10: 16-23)

It is a history of the gradual diminution of man's sensual powers and of the diminution of the church's divinity. This passage merits a bit of explication since the imagery and symbolism is very complex and full of double entendre. The serpent, for instance, has a number of implications. Not only is it associated with Satan, but Blake uses it as a symbol of materialism. Furthermore, the snake has been considered the most debased form of life, since it must crawl about on its belly. Thus when Blake writes, "Thought chang'd the infinite to a serpent," he intends several meanings--(1) The truly infinite, or divine, cannot be wholly perceived by man in his lessened state, thus he creates religion, crystalizing the limitless with contraining theology, and in the process of diminishing sensory perception, that once "pure" religion becomes a twice removed shell, the earthly church. It is only a distorted reflection of something dimly perceived at best. (2) The human body, as the Bible tells us (I Cor. 3.16.) is also a temple, the temple of God. Blake's temple image is doubly appropriate, for it is a temple of God in two ways, both of which are corrupted. (3) Furthermore, the temple is "serpent-form'd" and, as it covers the entire "island white,"

it represents the new religion of materialism, Lockean philosophy, created by the thought, or over-dominant reason, against which intuitive spirituality no longer has any value as a valid kind of perception. All of these evils are placed under one nomer in Blakean symbolism, Druidism.⁵² The original Hebraic religion, which perverted love into pity, causes man to fear, for it became a "devouring flame," from which he ran and "hid in forests of night." Now when Blake speaks of forests one may be relatively sure he has reference to the Druidic worship of the oak,⁵³ groves of which had been commonly identified as primitive Druidic temples since Pliny.⁵⁴ This evasive action resulted in further restriction however, represented by the "circles of space," the circle being a sign of limitation for Blake. Because man fails to see God's true nature, God himself is limited to a role as tyrant, a role Blake must have had reinforced by the Grand Patriarch of Paradise Lost. Man falls from an entity created in the divine image, to a mere Angel--from his position of immortality, to the mere promise of an afterlife.⁵⁵ Heaven becomes "a mighty circle turning," a mechanistic mirage.

At this point, line 24, as if the poet were returning after an epic digression, the narrative resumes with the flight of the king to the southern porch, representing reason (at least during Urizen's residence there). However, the physiological symbolism continues as well, for the "trees of blackest leaf" clue the reader that he is looking at the

hair on the head of Albion, representative of all mankind. Albion may be thought of as the island itself, laying its length with his head at the south. Urizen, the intellect, has, however, left his rightful place and tried to usurp the north, region of the passions.⁵⁶ Therefore, the head or mind is fallen and described as the Stone of Night, "image of that sweet south/ Once open to the heavens and elevated on the human neck,/ Now overgrown with hair and cover'd with a stony roof /One may recall Urizen's stony roof, Book of Urizen 5: 28-29/⁵⁷ Downward 'tis sunk beneath the attractive north that round the feet/ A raging whirlpool draws the dizzy enquirer to his grave" (Europe 10:27-31). The "dizzy enquirer" is Albion's Angel, and we are aware at this point that he is doomed to be defeated by the very force, reason, he had hoped would save him. The Stone of Night is a fine image since it recalls Plato's caves,⁵⁸ and on another level of interpretation, symbolizes the mixing of spirit and reason in its fall that results in error, especially religious error, for religion is a thing of the spirit and is destroyed by attempts to subject it to reason. The fall also does away with a state of contraries, necessary for a balanced man.

Plate 12 and Plate 13, up to line 8, recount the last struggle. "Clouds & fires" represent the forces of Urizen and Orc in conflict. "Grey mist," the deceiving clouds of Urizenic traditional law, covers all institutions, "Churches,

Palaces, Towers," because Urizen has "unclapsd his Book." But the youth of England see through the foggy deceit to become the progenitors of revolution. Even with senses "clos'd from thought" they recognize both Albion's Angel, like a vulture over London, and the "Serpent temple lifted above." Unable to abdicate the monarchy ("his furr'd robes & false locks/ Adhered and grew one with his flesh") and unsupported by his army ("all the soldiers fled from sight"), the king flees. This engenders the "howl" of revolution to be heard "thro Europe," causing Orc to rejoice in spite of Rintrah and Palamabron, who, sent, by Enitharmon, resist him, as representatives of the Puritanical religious element.⁵⁹

Meanwhile, Enitharmon rejoices to see woman's repression of men carried out through the church and its institutions, particularly marriage, which makes "Every house a den, every man bound..." in the prison of his house, the "windows wove over with curses of iron." Druidic mottoes are in the home, "Thou shalt not" and "Fear"; city and rural dwellers alike are in plight.

Orc, in desperation, threatens to destroy "Albions Guardian," but he can't blow the "Trump of the last doom." Ironically, and sarcastically, Newton, scientist, questioner, explainer, and limiter of God, blows the fatal trumpet. Reason, the very last power which upheld the King, also undermines divinity, and thus blows the whistle on divine right monarchy.

At this point, 13:5, the end of an eighteen hundred year cycle of history, Enitharmon awakens. In a parody of the Biblical last judgment, she calls up her daughters of deceit, false saints, all of whom are representative of sexual repression or deception of some nature.⁶⁰ The daughters are Ethinthus, "queen of waters," who may suggest Amphitrite, mother of Triton, and thus great mother of all changeability and deception; Manathu-Vorcyon, with her "flames of soft delusion"; Leutha, deceptive sexuality (cf. Visions of the Daughters of Albion) and "lureing bird of Eden," she is "sweet smiling pestilence"; Antamon, who represents sexual gratification through pictorial art containing only "lineaments of gratified desire" and not the reality; Oothoon, arch-virgin; and Sotha and Thiralatha, deceptive sensuality through music. The last two daughters, perhaps all of them, are ordered to seduce Orc.⁶¹ Unlike true sexuality, deceptive sexuality may divert man from fulfillment, much as it may make Orc stray from his mission, but he overcomes the temptation, thus defeating female dominion. When Orc beholds "the morning in the east," i.e., the American Revolution,⁶² he is inspired to bring his flame to "the vineyards of red France," and escape "from the heights of Enitharmon."

The remainder of the poem abounds in ambiguity. Though one may interpret the middle part, Enitharmon's dream, as containing two meanings congruously, i.e., both a prophecy of an English revolution, and a partial account of Christian

history, the conclusion of the piece may be interpreted as either the end of the Christian history alone, and the beginning of a new cycle, or as the end of all history and the final apocalypse.⁶³ Perhaps, one may only answer that Blake meant for this particular moment to be cloaked in ambiguity. It is likely, in 1793, at the height of the Reign of Terror, that Blake felt no assurance that the revolutionary spirit was to be our savior; it might be just another period which has its inception in joy and triumph, then begins a downhill path. As Percival puts it: "The Spectre in him [Blake] pointed out the power of error to renew itself. Where Babylon ends Babylon might begin again. Generation might not be swallowed up in regeneration."⁶⁴ Looking at history from our advantageous perspective we can, of course, observe that revolution still exerts a powerful influence over our modern world. At the same time we must realize that from his own limited vantage point Blake had enough insight and reality about him to truly foresee the far-reaching effects of the French Revolution, probably the most important single event for nineteenth-century history.

FOOTNOTES

¹Milton O. Percival, William Blake's Circle of Destiny (New York: Columbia U.P., 1938), p. 5. "The early prophetic books carry the formulation into the field of myth, but even these were apparently regarded as inadequate, and the Four Zoas, which followed immediately upon their completion, recounts the tale with much greater deliberation and complexity."

S. Foster Damon, William Blake: His Philosophy and Symbols (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1924), p. 154. (Hereinafter referred to as Symbols.) "Just such an 'allegory' was the Four Zoas, in which he intended to combine all that was best in the minor Prophetic Books, to expand their various myths, and to add all the links between them which he had previously omitted. It was to be the complete account of the Fall and the Resurrection, and was to be read with a double meaning: as the history of the cosmos, and as the psychology of every individual."

²Northrop Frye, Fearful Symmetry: A Study of William Blake (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton, U.P., 1947), p. 111. (Hereinafter referred to as Symmetry.) "The meaning of history, like the meaning of art, is to be found in its relation to the same great archetype of human existence. The inner form of history is not the same thing as the progress of time: a linear chronicle is a wild fairy tale in which the fate of an empire hangs on the shape of a beauty's nose, or the murder of a noble moron touches off a world war. . . . The true epic is a cyclic vision of life, and the true drama, including narrative and heroic poetry, is an episode of that cyclic vision."

³William Blake, The Poetry and Prose of William Blake, ed. by David V. Erdman (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1970). All subsequent quotations of Blake's works will be from this edition and reference to plate and line numbers shall be given in the text.

⁴Harold Bloom, Yeats (New York: Oxford U.P., 1970), p. 72.

⁵Damon, Symbols, p. 62. "The first three books deal with the Fall. The Book of Urizen and The Book of Los tell the same story from the opposing standpoints of Reason and Poetry (Urizen and Los): while The Book of Ahania continues the study with an account of mystical Revolt and further Fall, ending with the rise of civilization in Asia."

⁶Frye, Symmetry, p. 187. ". . . there are three poems which are evidently intended to form a single group; America, Europe and The Song of Los, the last of these being divided into two parts called respectively 'Africa' and 'Asia.' America is clearly a revolutionary poem; so is 'Asia'. . . ."

⁷Ibid., p. 261. "In history Los's first-born son Orc is succeeded by a series of other sons who are the agents of human civilization, related to it as the 'angels' are to the churches in the Apocalypse. First among them are Rintrah, the vision of the isolated prophet, especially typical of Semitic and Indian genius, and Palamabron, a gentler spirit found in Hellenic culture."

David Erdman, "America: New Expanses," in Blake's Visionary Forms Dramatic, ed. by David Erdman and John E. Grant (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton U.P., 1970), p. 112. (Hereinafter referred to as "Expanses.") "As history moved on, the Orc that appeared 'in the vineyards of red France (Europe 15:2) became Napoleon; by 1804 Blake, instead of Humming "ca ira," was arguing that "Resistance & war is the Tyrants gain," that the "iron hand" which "crushed the Tyrants head . . . became a Tyrant in his stead" (The Grey Monk)."

⁸Frye, Symmetry, p. 129. "Orc is regarded as an evil being by conventional morality, but in Blake the coming of Jesus is one of his reappearances."

⁹See Europe 2:1-4.

¹⁰Frye, Symmetry, p. 210. "If Orc represents the reviving force of a new cycle, whether of dawn or spring or history, he must grow old and die at the end of that cycle. Urizen must eventually gain the mastery over Orc, but such a Urizen cannot be another power but Orc himself, grown old."

Erdman, "Expanses," p. 112. (See footnote 7.)

¹¹Peter F. Fisher, The Valley of Vision: Blake as Prophet and Revolutionary (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1961), pp. 28, 31.

¹²Jacob Bryant, An Analysis of Antient Mythology (London: printed for J. Walker [etc/], 1807.

¹³Damon, Symbols, p. 62.

¹⁴Erdman, "Expanses," p. 112. "Northrop Frye wrote a brilliant mythopoeic chapter on the 'Orc cycle,' and the term is now so current that some people father it upon Blake (Frye, Symmetry, ch. 7, esp. pp. 206ff.). Frye ranges through the Lambeth works but with his focus on the America pattern. Recent criticism often focuses on the Napoleonic cycle, implying the corruption of revolutionary energy (equated with 'power') into tyrannic cruelty. To call this the 'Orc cycle' and then read that kind of corruption into America is to wander far astray."

¹⁵Percival, p. 12. "The path of experience is therefore

circular. When the error which may be described as Nature and Natural Religion becomes formulated in man's mind, the cycle over which it is destined to run takes shape and begins to move. This cycle, which descends from Beulah into Ulro and ascends from Ulro by way of Generation into Beulah, where it joins the supernal cycle, is the Circle of Destiny."

Damon, Symbols, p. 9. "All history fell into this order: first there was the 'Innocence' of unfallen Eternity; then the 'Experience' of the Fall; next the appearance of the spiritual revolutionist, Jesus; Whose doctrines were misinterpreted during the 'Dark Night' of the following eighteen centuries; which was, however, about to end in the new revelation of Truth and the redemption of Mankind."

¹⁶Both Percival and Frye center their expositions on this basis.

¹⁷Carmen S. Kreiter, "Evolution and William Blake," Studies in Romanticism, 4:2 (Winter, 1965), 110-118. Ms. Kreiter argues very convincingly that some of the symbolism and diction in The Book of Urizen comes from Blake's association with Jack Hunter, Jack Tearguts in Island in the Moon, and Hunter's studies in early evolutionary theory growing out of his interest in embryology.

¹⁸John Milton, Paradise Lost, ed. by Merritt Y. Hughes (New York: The Odyssey Press, 1935).

¹⁹Bryant, vol. IV, pp. 75-193, says that Titans first populated the west, i.e. France.

Frye, Symmetry, pp. 128-129, 173. "Blake follows Davies and another antiquary named Stukely in identifying the original world culture with Druidism. According to Davies, the Druid culture began with the dispersion at Babel; Stukely, who was the first important antiquarian to pronounce Stonehenge a Druid temple, thought it began with Abraham. Neither suggests that the Druid culture was pre-Adamic, but the idea that Druid civilization as titanic, or rather gigantic Blake may have taken over from Davies."

²⁰Frye, Symmetry, p. 173. "This mausoleum of misinformation and bad etymology is referred to by Blake as authority for his (all Religions are One) thesis; but the present writer has read it with sufficient care to hazard the guess that Blake had not." /One could perhaps compare Blake's reading of Paradise Lost and say it too is erroneous but nevertheless seminal./

Albert S. Roe, "The Thunder of Egypt," in Essays for S. Foster Damon, ed. by Alvin H. Rosenfeld (Providence, R.I.: Brown U.P., 1969), p. 173. "Blake, as Basire's apprentice, was of course familiar with these plates, and from the

connection suggested above and his reference to Bryant in his Descriptive Catalogue it is now evident that he had read the text as well."

²¹Frye, Symmetry, pp. 75-76, 134, 263. "In Blake's symbolism the two great symbols of the female will are the Madonna and Child, the infant imagination wrapped in the arms of a mother, and the Court of Love code with its curious reversal of sexual roles in which a coy mistress is the 'lord.';" "With the coming of Jesus or the seventh Eye the finale of history begins. The first consolidation of tyranny established to meet this new threat was the 'Church Paul,' absorbing Jesus into the old Pharisaic legalism. Next comes his further absorption into the Classical tyranny, represented by the Church Constantine, then the establishment of the female-will culture of the Middle Ages, the chivalric code and Madonna-worship associated with Charlemagne and Arthur."; "Now when Orc revives in human life and another great cycle of history begins, Vala, or nature on earth, is 'bound down for his delight.' But Enitharmon is still an inviolate virgin-mother, and before long begins to oppress the religion and art of the new cycle. Not long after Jesus a 'coy mistress' began to make her appearance, inspiring a code of love which was inseparably connected with a code of war. Such axioms as 'None but the brave deserve the fair' usually mean by 'fair' a statuesque, aloof and rather stupid beauty, who has little animation or friendliness or capacity for companionship, but is, like most divinities, an unwearied poseur. The fallen Enitharmon in Blake is typically the mistress of chivalry, spiritually inviolate because wrapped up in herself in a way which makes devotion to her a teasing mockery of love, a frustration of life to be expressed in murder."

²²See footnote 20.

²³Peter F. Fisher, "Blake and the Druids," JEGP, 58 (1959), p. 596. (Hereinafter referred to as "Druids.") "Blake saw in Druidism the prototype of all systematic theology which attempted to explain the paradoxes of spiritual life in the rational terms of fallen man and his world of nature."

²⁴Harold Bloom, "Commentary," in The Poetry and Prose of William Blake, ed. by David V. Erdman (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1970), Africa 3:28-31, p. 819. (Hereinafter referred to as "Commentary.")

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Frye, Symmetry, p. 262. ". . . war is a perversion of sexual impulse."

²⁷Ibid., p. 242. Frye suggests that Adam and Har are not to be equaled, though Eve and Heva may be. However, for my purposes I accept Bloom's reading (Bloom, "Commentary," p. 819) that Har is the father of all mankind.

²⁸Ibid., p. 54. "We shall never understand why Blake so hated Deism unless we understand not only what it was to him, but what he saw that it would soon become. That is, we must accept in Blake a certain amount of prophecy in the literal sense of anticipating the probable future, and must see in his conception of Deism a mental attitude which is still with us, the monstrous hydra which is the perverted vision of human society as an atomic aggregate of egos instead of as a larger human body. The closer man comes to the state of nature, the more he clings to the "reason" which enables him to deal with nature on his own terms. The natural society, whether we see it in primitive tribes or in exhausted civilizations, is a complicated mechanism of prescribed acts which always have passion energy, insight or wisdom. The natural man is not the solitary majestic lion that he would like to be: he is a buzzing and spineless insect, a flying head cut off at the neck, like the cherubs in Reynolds, equipped with a venomous sting and a stupefied sense of duty. So at least he appears in Blake, both as the Deist of Blake's time and as the "Druid" which Blake predicted he would soon become."

²⁹Bryant, vol. IV, pp. 210-213, discusses the "metallic" ages of man on both historical and personal levels.

³⁰Bloom, "Commentary," p. 818. "Of Blake's revolutionary prophecies, this /The Song of Los/ is the weakest, because of the merely pedestrian Africa section that begins it. Yet Asia . . . is a remarkable and very effective poem in its own right."

³¹Michael J. Tolley, "Europe: 'To Those Ychain'd in Sleep'," in Blake's Visionary Forms Dramatic, ed. by David V. Erdman and John E. Grant (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton U.P., 1970), p. 139. "Blake's continuation of his historical narrative /In Europe/ is a restatement, in somewhat different terms, of reactionary measures described in America."

³²Frye, Symmetry, p. 252, interprets the iron utensils as Los' "work" or handicraft but gives no explanation of their significance.

³³Ibid., p. 60. ". . . if . . . there were no divinity to hedge the king /he would be destroyed/. Tyranny requires a priesthood and a god first, and these make it permanent. . . . /False/ religion /is/ invented only to buttress the status quo, it is always "state Religion, which is the source of all Cruelty." /Frye quotes from Marg. to Bacon: k2, 172./

³⁴Tolley, p. 122. "Enitharmon's injunction /Europe 6:5/ 'Go: tell the human that Womans live is sin,' an attempt to restrict men and women by making them fear moral condemnation unless their union is legitimized by priest and king (Palamabron and Rintrah), perhaps draws fuel from the notion of the virgin birth."

³⁵Cf. Percival, p. 248. "With Deism the wheel of Natural Religion, which began its circuit centuries ago, has swung full circle, and must now submit itself to Christ or swing around once again. Which will it do? Will the world today, having come to the edge of the abyss over the path of mutual fear, renounce that policy and enter into the ways of peace? Are we purged and pure--true gold--or must we be cast, as dross, once more into the furnaces of affliction?"

³⁶David V. Erdman, "Blake: The Historical Approach, 1950," in Explication as Criticism, ed. by W. K. Wimsatt, Jr. (New York: Columbia U.P., 1963), pp. 154, 155. (Hereinafter referred to as "Blake.") "The warning of Europe, in 1794, is more veiled and less specific in his prediction /than that in America/ Nowhere is his private nomenclature more puzzling than in Europe;"

³⁷Fisher, Valley, p. 144. "In his youth, he was an enthusiastic revolutionary who saw in the American and French revolutions the dawn of a new age and the historical analogy of his own cyclic myth with its stages of fall, oppression in the fallen state, last judgment and redemption In his later prophetic books, however, he emphasized the necessity of individual redemption before any political revolution could hope to realize the renewal of any nation or people. But this later development was one of clarification rather than change, for he did not limit man's possibilities to the conditions of his social environment. The fundamental ground of revolution in human affairs lay in the visionary state of the individual, and the root of all tyranny and oppression was ultimately man's imprisonment in the circle of historical destiny. Blake's notion of liberty could hardly be restricted to the overthrow of a traditional monarchy in favour of the rights of 'man.'"

³⁸Frye, Symmetry, pp. 66-67. ". . . if it abolishes tyrants altogether, it can only do so by establishing a tyranny of custom so powerful that the tyrant will not be necessary, as in the ant-republic. An inadequate mental attitude to liberty can think of it only as a leveling-out. Democracy of this sort is a placid ovine heard of self-satisfied mediocrities. Blake watched this tendency growing as he became more disillusioned with the French and American revolutions, and at the end of his life he was still protesting. . . ."

³⁹Percival, p. 195. "In terms of Blake's sexual symbolism the natural man is subject to chastity, cruelty, deceit, all those qualities by which woman retains her dominion over man. Do away with the selfish will and make man's feminine qualities serve the interest of humanity as they once did, and the illusions they foster will cease to be.

⁴⁰Tolley, p. 138. "The Stone of Night is the human brain pan." Harold Spicer, "Biblical Sources of William Blake's America." Ball State University Forum, 8:3 (1967), p. 26, on the other hand, offers the interpretation of the Stone of Night as the law.

⁴¹Erdman, "Blake," pp. 154-155. "And its warning is that the trumpet of British power has marked the end of all royal power, for the war now raging is Armageddon, and the bloody sun now rising in France is the light of Christ's Second Coming."

⁴²Fisher, Valley, p. 158. "The concept of the state as a copy of the civitas dei was an error of the totalitarian theocracies which Blake calls 'Druidism,' and deism is the secular precipitate of Druidism. Deism had survived in the form of 'Greek Philosophy' which taught that the natural man would be both virtuous and free in his political life. . . ."

Frye, Symmetry, p. 61. "It is in the God of official Christianity, however, invented as a homeopathic cure for the teachings of Jesus, that state religion has produced its masterpiece. This god is good and we are evil; yet, though he created us, he is somehow or other not responsible for our being evil, though he would consider it blasphemous either to assert that he is or to deny his omnipotence. All calamities and miseries are his will, and to that will we must be absolutely resigned even in thought and desire. The powers that be are ordained of him, and all might is divine right."

⁴³Tolley, p. 117, compares Europe as a whole to "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity," and finds here, and in the previous line, a reference to the infant's "swaddling clothes" in "swaddling /and "eternal"/ bands."

⁴⁴Northrop Frye, "The Drunken Boat: The Revolutionary Element in Romanticism," in Romanticism Reconsidered, ed. by Northrop Frye (New York: Columbia U.P., 1963), p. 6.

"Europe surveys the history of the Western world from the birth of Christ to the beginning of the French Revolution, and in its opening lines parodies the Nativity Ode."

Tolley, p. 117. See footnote 43.

⁴⁵Tolley, p. 122. "Enitharmon seems . . . to be deliberately perverting Christ's offer of a more abundant

life (as in John 10:10) to one of 'pie in the sky when you die,' aiming here to make men feel that what happens in this life can be endured, to postpone fatally all thoughts of revolutionizing the present system."

⁴⁶Frye, Symmetry, p. 216. "The seventh Orc cycle, from Jesus to our own time, is described in the very lovely and subtle poem of Europe, which outlines its progress from Orc's appearance as Jesus to its decline into a political tyranny based on an inner exhaustion of vitality, eighteen hundred years after Jesus' time. . . ."

⁴⁷See footnote 34.

⁴⁸Tolley, p. 135. "I regard Europe 10 as an interpolated page. The narrative passes naturally from pages 9 to 11, and page 10 is the only Europe print that was not etched on the back of the copper plate. Blake decided for the sake of completeness to hold up his contemporary narrative of events following the American War to recapitulate his version of the creation and fall."

⁴⁹Fisher, "Druids," p. 600. "He came to see in Druidism the original of contemporary Deism with its remote unapproachable Deity whose laws were to be found in natural order."

⁵⁰Percival, p. 246. "The symbol was taken for the reality and blood of sacrifice reddened the earth. Druid temples and Druid oaks flourished."

⁵¹Fisher, "Druids," p. 607. "Blake treated the decline from the 'Patriarchal Religion' to the 'Druidism' as fundamentally a degeneration in man's powers of perception, and hence, a falling off of his imaginative genius which integrated perception and was the root of his very existence."

⁵²Ibid., p. 606. "Blake made Druidism into a comprehensive symbol of all the perversities of fallen existence which were respectably hidden in the 'Religion of Generation'."

Roe, p. 159, points out that Blake used 'Egyptian' in much the same way as 'Druidic.' ". . . Egypt and things Egyptian are subject to consistent interpretation as symbols for Blake of the Fallen World of materialism and spiritual annihilation."

⁵³S. Foster Damon, A Blake Dictionary (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1971), p. 305.

⁵⁴Nora Kershaw Chadwick, The Druids (Cardiff: Wales U.P., 1966), passim.

A. L. Owen, The Famous Druids (Oxford: Clarendon

Press, 1962), passim.

Stuart Piggott, The Druids (London: Thames and Hudson, 1968), passim.

⁵⁵Another interpretation of "Angel" would be to think of the term in its ironic sense, e.g. "Albions Angel."

Cf. Frye, Symmetry, p. 38. "... usually the term 'angel' or 'spirit' in Blake, when not used in an ironic sense, means the imagination functioning as inspiration, and the fact that inspiration often takes on a purpose of its own which appears to be independent of the will is familiar to every creative artist."

⁵⁶Percival, pp. 15,16. "The head of the unfallen cosmic man is in the south, the loins in the north, the heart in the east, the body in the west. . . . He has fallen into an upside-down position indicative of a complicated spiritual confusion."

Damon, Symbols, p. 68. "He took the North, which we instinctively think of as the highest, for the region of the Spirit. . . . The North is now frozen solid, since the Fall has taken place. Opposed to the North is the South, the region of the Reason."

⁵⁷Percival, p. 22. "To suggest . . . degeneration, Blake makes use of physiological change. The brain, which once was expanded on every side (as the Kabbalah says), is now confined in a dark cave, roofed over with a stoney skull. The image merges the kabbalistic skull with the cave of Plato. The restricted mind of the walled-in skull delivers man to the corporeal life of the Platonic cave, in which only imperfect shadows of reality are perceived."

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹See footnote 7.

⁶⁰Even the sons are manifestly affected by the "female will."

⁶¹Bloom, "Commentary," Europe 13:9--14:36, p. 818.

⁶²Frye, Symmetry, p. 205. "The American Revolution was already firmly in its place as the significant sign of a dawning Last Judgment, and he regards the French Revolution, although the poem he wrote about it is earlier, as merely the inevitable sequel of a far more crucial event."

⁶³Damon, Symbols, p. 62. "America, of course, follows; then Europe, which describes the outbreak of the French revolution. Here Blake ended the series of the Lambeth books, for the

cycle seemed complete; Eternity was practically reached in the liberation of mankind."

Erdman, "Expanses," p. 112. "As history moved on, the Orc that appeared 'in the vineyards of red France' (Europe 15:2) became Napoleon; by 1804 Blake, instead of humming 'ca ira,' was arguing that 'Resistance & war is the Tyrants gain,' that the 'iron hand' which 'crushed the Tyrants head. . . became a Tyrant in his stead' (The Grey Monk)."

Fisher, Valley, p. 53. "The apocalyptic counterpart of this withdrawal is the recurrent act of revelation in the form of each of the Seven Eyes of God--an act which reaches its culmination in the Incarnation of Jesus Christ."

Frye, Symmetry, pp. 202, 260. "The fall of the French monarchy, like the fall of empires in the prophecies of the Bible, is significant only as the sign of an approaching Messianic kingdom of liberty . . . science and law in Blake's day seem to be proceeding to some kind of historical finality, simultaneously with the decline of the Christian historical cycle into Deism."

Percival, p. 2. "The world of the Enlightenment was for him no less than a world ripe for a Last Judgment. In Blake's vision of the cosmic scheme the temporal wheel had almost come full circle."

Spicer, p. 25. "The Prophecy [of America] sets up the same struggle as Blake saw it taking place in human history. The American Revolution symbolized to him this great spiritual purgation."

Tolley, pp. 136, 143. "In this system, revolution is only a turning round of the wheel: those who subscribe to the system thus entirely miss the millennial potential in each struggle of the people toward liberty. To Blake the prophet the words 'French Revolution' must have been a libel: by accepting the implications of the words, the French cheated themselves. Blake wanted continual uprising that would be limited in the end only when desire was satiated: his message is, however, primarily addressed to the English, in order that they may join in the vision, beyond politics or national boundaries, to see their enemies as the governing, reasoning, and religious powers only. . . . The second coming remains implicitly; Blake wished to prophesy liberation and independent war, not the reimposed law of an external power."

⁶⁴Percival, p. 248.

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BLAKE'S HISTORIOGRAPHY AS PRESENTED IN
THE LAMBETH BOOKS

by

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Blake's historiography is fully evolved in the early Lambeth books. By taking the liberty to rearrange them out of their order of composition and in spite of some overlapping material, a close explication of the text reveals a chronologic and coherent world history. Concurrently, Blake applies his universal human history to individual human history in his metaphoric chronicle of the microcosmic/macrocosmic, Everyman figure, Albion. In man's universal and individual history he suffers from a decay of his five senses, a shutting up of the imaginative and spiritual faculties, effected by traditional institutions. The universal history, however, focuses primarily on the decline of Hebraic religion in western culture into the Deism of Blake's day. The decline of such an institution and the decline of the individual show a reciprocal relationship. Blake makes it evident that religious oppression, underpinned by sensually restricting sexual suppression (as in the adoration of the Virgin), is the basis of all man's miseries. Religious oppression, in turn underpins the limiting powers of government. The pattern of history is cyclically shaped by the constant battle between the conservative forces of repression and the revolutionary forces of liberation, represented respectively by the sons of Enitharmon--Orc, Rintrah, Palamabron, and Jesus--pitted against the "fiery kings," or earthly tyrants, both ecclesiastical and secular. One force is always in the ascendancy, one on the decline, as the revolutionaries grow conservative in order to retain their power and

are eclipsed by new rebel forces. This same battle, internalized in Albion, becomes a struggle between the heart and the head, passion and intellect.

Blake's history begins with the creation as rendered in The Book of Urizen, The Book of Los, and The Book of Ahania. Recorded history starts in The Song of Los, with the rise of civilization in Africa and Asia. Almost 1800 dark years pass before the reign of Hebraic religion is threatened by the American Revolution in America and apocalypsed in Europe by the French Revolution, a revolution which spreads to all of Europe and makes possible the rebirth of a new era. There is, however, no guarantee that the new era will arrest the cycles of history. Blake, writing Europe in 1793, at the height of the Reign of Terror, probably felt no assurance that the revolutionary spirit was to be our savior.