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## *Dramatic Movement as a Structuring Device in Blake's Jerusalem*

by JANE McCLELLAN

THE CRITICAL SEARCH for a single, clearcut structure in William Blake's *Jerusalem* has not yet brought to light one pattern that all or even most critics will agree upon. Part of the problem has been defined by Mollyanne Marks, who notes that the majority of structural analyses "detect consistent patterns of development through time."<sup>1</sup> Such time-based patterns are uneasily imposed upon a poem in which incidents from one time context are repeated in a different framework in a later passage. Indeed, in *Jerusalem* Blake relies heavily upon a perception of all moments of time as continually occurring. In Chapter 1, Plate 10, Los "stands in London building Golgonooza" (10:17; K 629).<sup>2</sup> In Chapter 3, Plate 53, he "builds Golgonooza," which is "continually building & continually decaying" (53:15 and 19; K 684). Present and past thus merge into a state of continuing existence.<sup>3</sup> Time itself becomes important not as a linear sequence, but as a fallen reflection of eternity—a duration, to use Newton's term in a Blakean sense.<sup>4</sup>

Yet despite the continuing nature of all time, *Jerusalem* dramatically builds toward the climax of the Last Judgment. The poem may depict man's fall, his life in the world of experience, and his redemption as ever-present occurrences, but in the linear progression of the poem a climactic point is reached. When Blake announces, "Time was Finished!" (94:18; K 742), duration is transformed into eternity. Many readers would agree with Northrop Frye that the change is rather sudden. In his analysis of *Jerusalem in Fearful Symmetry*, Frye states:

Most of the fourth part is given over to defining the Antichrist, and as we continue to read about him, we discover that we are on our way toward an apocalypse, which flashes on us

1. Mollyanne Marks, "Self-sacrifice: Theme and Image in *Jerusalem*," *Blake Studies*, VII, no. 1 (1974), 46 n. Marks also notes Edward J. Rose's comment that a time-sequenced analysis is "doomed to failure." See Rose, "Blake's *Milton*: The Poet as Poem," *Blake Studies*, 1 (1968), 16–38.

2. All quotations from the text are identified by plate and line references to William Blake, *Blake: Complete Writings with Variant Readings*, ed. Geoffrey Keynes (1966; rpt. London: Oxford, 1969). Page numbers follow, prefaced by the letter K.

3. Hazard Adams sees a similar blurring of chronological time even in Blake's earlier works: "The Marriage [of Heaven and Hell] suggests an idea of culture as embodied in words and, perhaps, an idea of history as more real when located in or as a verbal structure than externalized as a past. Indeed, the latter is quite impossible without making a verbal structure indulging the fiction of pastness, which in turn becomes itself a presence. Blake's idea of verbal presence, the only real existence of the past, he no doubt took from his reading of the Bible." See Adams, "Blake, *Jerusalem*, and Symbolic Form," *Blake Studies*, VII, no. 2 (1975), 149.

4. Whether because of his abhorrence of Newton's science or because he was unfamiliar with the term, Blake does not use a single "duration" in his writings.

only in the very last plates of the poem. Blake seems to mark his crisis only as it is frequently marked in music, by an intensification of the original theme. We look back to see where the reversal of perspective occurred, but find nothing very tangible, and after so much churning, the mere silent appearance of the expected butter may seem almost an anticlimax. Remembering that it was precisely in the approaches to the apocalypse that *The Four Zoas* foundered, we may see in this suppression of crisis the key to the structure and meaning of the whole poem.<sup>5</sup>

The phrase "an intensification of the original theme" does allow that some build-up is apparent. The possibility exists, then, that the crisis is not so much suppressed as it is unfelt.

In attempting to read through the labyrinthine mazes of Blake's complex symbols and numerous allusions, the reader is quite likely to lose any sense of a build-up toward a crisis. To add to his difficulties, the build-up that Blake presents is not the linear, action-based plot common to Western drama. Instead, Blake may be relying on the dramatic device of word repetition favored by the biblical prophets he allied himself with. Through a repetition of key words and their concepts, the theme of *Jerusalem* is intensified until the climax bursts upon the reader: a "deathlike silence" abruptly descends when the "Ocean black, thundering" pauses and "Time was Finished!" The key words that significantly contribute to the dramatic movement in *Jerusalem* include words that critics have long recognized as having very special meanings to Blake: love, labor, weep, rage, pity, forgive, create, watch, and despair. When the biblical context of these words is considered, their meanings in *Jerusalem* become allusive and evocative. Most important, these key words become the active elements that compose the one state of mind essential to salvation: faith.

In *Jerusalem* Blake relates the story of all mankind as the fall, the suffering, and the redemption of Albion. Albion's redemption is effected through the labors of the apocalyptic agent, the poet-prophet Los. Salvation may rest in God, but its attainment is, for Blake, a human act of what Mary Lynn Johnson calls "an heroic, active obedience."<sup>6</sup> Salvation eludes Albion because he turns away from God and lies down in a passive state of repose. Los then assumes the task of "active obedience" so that the dramatic movement inheres in the sequence of his actions as they occur in the poem. To Blake, redemption and eternity are states of mind. Los, the embodiment of intellect and imagination, thus enacts the key-word concepts that are the stages in man's thinking in the process of salvation.

Los's first action reveals his divine love for Albion. Christ said, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). Los's actions, and thus the possibility of and the

5. Northrop Frye, *Fearful Symmetry: A Study of William Blake* (1947; rpt. Boston: Beacon, 1965), pp. 357-58.

6. Mary Lynn Johnson, "'Separating What Has Been Mixed': A Suggestion for a Perspective on *Milton*," *Blake Studies*, VI, no. 1 (1973), 17.

justification for the poem itself, begin in the Frontispiece when Los enacts the ultimate self-sacrifice by entering the Door of Death for Albion's sake. From the perspective of Los, Chapter 1 is not, then, merely a prelude, as some critics have said. Instead, it is essential for Blake to set up a situation that is genuinely threatening to Los's life. All of Los's actions in Chapter 1 build to this point.

The major action in Chapter 1 and throughout the poem is labor, which is mentioned more than twice as often as any other action. Yet Blake is not hereby stressing works over faith in the traditional sense of the terms. Blake's belief in the inefficacy of "good works" and charitable actions is apparent when he has the fallen Albion perversely insist: "By demonstration man alone can live, and not by faith" (4:28; K 622). Instead, Blake uses the term "labor" in the same sense that it occurs in I Corinthians 15:58: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." The work of the Lord is to bring man into eternal life: "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life. . ." (John 6:27). In Blake's illustrations to the Book of Job, one plate depicts the hypocrisy behind Job's "charity" in giving a loaf of bread to a beggar; the line below the plate reads, "Then went Satan forth from the presence of the Lord."<sup>7</sup> In order for labor to be Christ-like, it must be aimed at man's soul and mind rather than at the needs of his body. Thus Los labors to embody error so that man can see and reject it. He labors to give man a world of experience, a world where, in David V. Erdman's words, "The robin sobs, the little boy and the emmet get lost, [and] . . . The poor remain poor. . ."<sup>8</sup> The only escape is through transcendence, which is achieved by a labor of the intellect and imagination, Los's kind of labor: ". . . the labours of Art & Science, which alone are the labours of the Gospel" (77: K 717).

As Blake labored to create the forms of his art in *Jerusalem*, so Los labors to give form to concepts. In Chapter 1, the first hint of the threat to Los's life—his wholeness of being—follows his first laborings when his Spectre and Emanation begin to divide from him. Los weeps as he labors over this division, and he continues to weep as the various characters divide into being in the condensations formed by Los's furnaces. In the Gospel of John, we are told that "Jesus wept" when he heard of Lazarus' death (11:35); this weeping, like Los's, is related to embodiment. In the case of Lazarus, Jesus restores him to a life of the body; in the case of Los, bodily forms are thus given to his Spectre and Emanation, the Sons and Daughters of Albion, Los's own Sons and Daughters, and Erin. In the last instance, Los weeps with joy. For even though

7. William Blake, *Blake's Job: William Blake's Illustrations of the Book of Job*, intro. and commentary by S. Foster Damon (1966; rpt. New York: Dutton, 1969), p. 21.

8. David V. Erdman, *Blake: Prophet Against Empire*, rev. ed. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1969), p. 128.

embodiment is a sorrowful sign of division, it is also the sign of new hope: when man falls into an earthly body, he can then enter the world of experience and labor to attain salvation. Erin signals this by symbolizing "... Blake's belief in the holiness of the body and its instincts."<sup>9</sup> Thus Los weeps at the divisiveness but joys in the hope of redemption.

In Chapter 1, "labor" is more often associated with "rage" than "weep." Critics have long recognized that rage (wrath, anger) has a double meaning in Blake. In one sense, rage is destructive and cruel; in another sense, it is the cleansing fire of revolution that effects purification and change. Both meanings occur in a relevant passage from Isaiah: "Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate . . ." (13:9). Here the prophet is speaking of the coming destruction of Babylon that will necessarily precede the restoration of Israel. In the same context, Los is laboring to destroy the death-repose of Albion in order that Jerusalem may be restored. That a period of wrath will precede the Second Coming is, of course, thematic in the Book of Revelation, but a verse from Romans seems to particularly relate to Albion: "But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God . . ." (2:5). For in the opening lines of Chapter 1, Albion rejects the Saviour and "... away turns down the valleys dark" (4:22; K 622), thus displaying his "hardness and impenitent heart." Then Albion, like Job, sinks down under his soul-sickness. Unlike Job, however, or at least, unlike Blake's Job, Albion lacks the quality of rebellion and rage. Whereas Job can turn against his persecutor and reject him for a belief in a better "Redeemer . . . whom I shall see,"<sup>10</sup> Albion lies down and gives up. The essential quality of rage is then assumed by Los and is, in Blake's theology, essential to Los's role as the unsleeping and undying Human Imagination.

The function of imagination united with rage is to construct the imaginative and physical worlds the divided, fallen humans will inhabit. Thus, Los rages at his furnaces to produce Golgonooza, the Mundane Shell, the Vegetative world and its nations. But Los's rage is also destructive. He rages against his Spectre for suggesting murderous thoughts against Albion, and this rage further divides Los and his Spectre. Then, in a dramatic foreshadowing, Los turns his fury against Albion's Sons and sends his Spectre to deflect the seductive advances of Albion's Daughters "... lest he be consumed / In the fires of their beauty & perfection & be Vegetated beneath / Their Looms in a Generation of death & resurrection to forgetfulness" (17:7-9; K 638). The threat of physical lust will become, in the poem's final chapter, the dramatized threat to Los's life—the jealous destructiveness of earthly love—on which the

9. S. Foster Damon, *A Blake Dictionary: The Ideas and Symbols of William Blake* (1965; rpt. New York: Dutton, 1971), p. 128.

10. Damon, *Job*, p. 33.

integrity of the poem depends. Thus Los states the paradox of rage here in Chapter 1: wrath divides and brings "terrors of self annihilation" (7:61; K 626), yet Los's wrath is an "inspired fury" (8:35; K 627) that leads to revelation and thus to a reunion of the divided selves. For the self must be annihilated through self-sacrifice in order for mankind to reunite within himself and with God:

And if God dieth not for Man & giveth not himself  
Eternally for Man, Man could not exist; for Man is Love  
As God is Love; every kindness to another is a little Death  
In the Divine Image, nor can Man exist but by Brotherhood.  
(96:25–28; K 743)

The act of self-sacrifice is an act of divine love that combines both pity and forgiveness. Twice in Chapter 1 Los prays for God's pity. The first time, he asks for pity on his divisive wrath; his second request follows the embodiment of Erin. Both incidents point to the female as an image of division through which a new union can be attained. Erin's "holy" body can be the pure source of regeneration because in holy love a bodily union of the sexes can be, in its highest expression, both a loss of separate selfhoods and a forgiveness:

O holy Generation, Image of regeneration!  
O point of mutual forgiveness between Enemies!  
Birthplace of the Lamb of God incomprehensible! (7:65–67; K 626)

In a sexual union that is also a spiritual union, the selves forgive one another for all their differences. According to Paul Miner, "Ultimately, in Blake's symbolism, the act of coitus becomes a propitiatory offering, a sacrifice of the selfhood . . ." in which man is the Old Testament Ark residing in the secret tabernacle of the woman.<sup>11</sup> In sexual communion, the man and woman follow Christ's injunction to "forgive men their trespasses" (Matthew 6:14) and thus receive forgiveness also from God.

Outside the realm of forgiveness lies Ulro, the mental state of hell that divided man is prone to. Immediately following the passage on "forgiveness between Enemies," Los turns on his Spectre and threatens to create a hell for him if the Spectre is not obedient. Ironically, however, it is not the Spectre who is responsible for Los's state of Ulro but Los's Emanation, Enitharmon. When the Spectre later rebels against Los, the Spectre merely creates the serpent-monsters of natural reason (reason without the divine imagination). But when Enitharmon refuses to obey Los, the "holy Generation" of sex becomes perverted to religious chastity and is thus used as a weapon against man instead of a means by which regeneration can be attained. In order to prevent this perversion from separating man from God permanently, Los performs one major act of creation in Chapter 1, "a System" to prevent man's being "enslav'd by another Man's" system (10:20; K 629). M. H. Abrams identifies the

11. Paul Miner, "William Blake's 'Divine Analogy,'" *Criticism*, III (1961), 50.

system as Golgonooza itself,<sup>12</sup> the city of Los's art in which the male and female aspects of perfect, androgynous man are represented in the separate bodies of generation. Golgonooza is built in Los's furnaces from the system that Los creates; it is the antithesis of the Spectre's hell.

Yet it is a delusion of Los's imagination that effects the climax of Chapter 1 and foreshadows Los's near Fall in Chapter 4. Los looks on Enitharmon and perceives her, not as his own emanation, but as a separate being. Los calls her the "Piteous image of my soft desires & loves" (17:19; K 639). Damon points out that "pity separate" is a "false pity," a delusion.<sup>13</sup> It is not the biblical combination of love and pity found in the redeeming Messiah: "In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them . . ." (Isaiah 63:9). Instead of taking Enitharmon back into himself (literally, redeeming her), Los objectifies her. This begins the sexual separation that will result in Enitharmon's ascendancy over Los. For when she is objectified, Enitharmon exerts her own separate will to become an individual free of Los's domination. She becomes "a red Globe of blood . . . Self-living" (17:51-55; K 639). Los's "groans & tears" over the separate existence that his beloved Emanation is assuming are his final actions in Chapter 1.

Thus, in Chapter 1 Los's sacrifice of himself for Albion's sake indeed leads Los into the valley of the shadow of death, an illusory world of phantom Spectres and the Female Will. In subsequent chapters Los learns to temper his pity with rage against earth's Urizenic, destructive order. But in Chapter 1 pity and rage are not united. The importance of this union is more significantly featured in *Milton* than in *Jerusalem*, but the stress is the same: rage and pity are contraries essential to man's progress in a fallen world. In *Jerusalem* this union does not occur until Chapter 4, Plate 80. Separation begins in Chapter 1, but the breach continues to widen as man's fallen condition intensifies. For once Albion separates himself from God, only further separation to the limits of "Opakeness" and "Contraction" can allow man time and space enough for the mercy of redemption.

In Chapter 2 we are shown that the separation of Los from his Spectre and Emanation is not yet complete (that this is true and not just a matter of Blake's repetition of events becomes clear later in the poem). When the Spectre, here named as Urthona, and Enitharmon flee from the "Moral Virtue and Law" that Albion has set up in order to vengefully judge men, Los takes them "Into his Bosom" (30:17; K 656), an act of pity and forgiveness, of Messianic rather than false love and pity, that is antithetical to Albion's judgmental laws. In contrast to the separation emphasized in Chapter 1, Chapter 2 stresses Los's strength and the singularity of his

12. M. H. Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature* (New York: Norton, 1971), p. 67.

13. Damon, *Dictionary*, p. 327.

divine purpose. Los is elevated to the heroic stature needed for his subsequent near-death to be dramatically climactic at a mythic level.

Los's ability to pity and forgive leads him to follow Albion out of Eden into a world of the sacrificial atonement a legalistic religion exacts. Los follows Albion "in lamentations," for like Lazarus, Albion is entering the tomb of earthly existence from which only Los's labors can restore his singular form. After searching Albion's heart (the towns and cities of England) and finding nothing but the stony desolation of "... every Minute Particular harden'd into grains of sand" (31:20; K 657), Los cries out that only pity, not vengeance, can help the sinner. This impassioned plea against the legalism of Albion's religion identifies Los with the Messiah of love and pity, and so intensifies the identification of Los with Christ as the redemptive agent of and with God.

The redemptive actions of Los—his increased, almost frantic labor when he sees "the petrified surfaces" of Albion and his own "Furnaces in ruins" (32:5–6; K 658)—move him away from lamentations to the fiery purgative of rage, the note on which the chapter ends. The rage-filled Orc of Blake's earlier works, an Orc whom Edward J. Rose describes as "a symbol of thwarted creativity,"<sup>14</sup> is transcended in Los, the artist-prophet of Golgonooza and the Mundane Shell. That Los's "inspired fury" is grounded in a foundation of spiritual strength is demonstrated in his exchange with Albion. Los does not extend a blanket of mercy and wholesale forgiveness to his recalcitrant friend, but undergirds these with the iron of "Righteousness & justice," of defiance in the face of Albion's threat toward the "little ones" under his dominion. When Albion's response is to send Hand and Hyle to murder Los, the divine stature of Los is made explicit: "Los stood before his Furnaces awaiting the fury of the Dead, / And the Divine hand was upon him, strengthening him mightily" (42:55–56; K 671). The divine mission of Los in the redemption of mankind is then clearly signaled in Plate 44 when "the representations" appoint him to be the Watchman, "the Spirit of Prophecy, . . . Elijah" (44:31; K 674). Not until Los can unite pity with rage does he achieve prophetic status.

Los's role of Watchman is crucial to an understanding of the subtlety of the climax of *Jerusalem*, for the Second Coming is, to Blake, synonymous with the redemption of Albion. In the biblical sense, the Second Coming is both expected and unexpected. The Old Testament prophets have foretold it, and Jesus has said, "I will come again, and receive you unto myself" (John 14:3). But the hour of Christ's coming is not known. Jesus makes this clear in the Parable of the Ten Virgins, and in the Book of Revelation he says, "... I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee" (3:3). In the Parable, Christ's coming is "cried" by the watchman: "at midnight there was a cry made,

14. Edward J. Rose, "Good-bye to Orc and All That," *Blake Studies*, IV (Spring 1972), 135.



Behold, the bridegroom cometh" (Matthew 25:6). This extends the imagery of the watchman in the Old Testament, who, from his literal function of watching over the city at night to warn the people in case of trouble, came to symbolize the righteous in a world of iniquity: "My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning . . ." (Psalms 130:6). In the New Testament these connotations add an emotional depth to two significant scenes, Christ's birth which is heralded to the ". . . shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night" (Luke 2:8), and Christ's agony in Gethsemane, when none of the disciples obeys His request to ". . . watch with me" (Matthew 26:38). In the role of Watchman, Los then bears the weight of the righteous: he must watch over the divine goodness in man so that it will not be destroyed by stealthy marauders, and he must watch over Christ's agony, the divine soul in all men that suffers under the iniquities of the fallen world. In preparation for the subtle climax in Chapter 4, Los is, in Chapter 2, elevated to be the anointed Watchman.

In Chapter 3 Albion has fallen into his death sleep. Los's first action here is to weep for Albion and then to labor to build Golgonooza. Again he builds it "in rage and in fury," as he did in Chapter 1. But now his rage is intensified by the increase in stature given to him in Chapter 2 so that when "the Great Voice of Eternity" calls out, "Saying, 'Who will go forth for us, & Who shall we send before our face?' " (55:68-69: K 687), we know that it is Los who will answer the call. This question underscores Los's role as a prophet of God, for the question echoes Isaiah's call: "Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me" (Isaiah 6:8). Los answers by "chanting" his song as he continues to labor.

Next, Los transforms his labor to the creation itself and hammers out the sun and moon to measure and pace time by. This is, of course, an essential task in Blake's belief that both time and space were created to save man from falling into the nothingness of the Abyss. In keeping with these paired limits, Los then goes on to create space, the world of Generation; but between the creative acts, Los reminds us of his mission by referring to himself as "Albion's Watchman" (56:32; K 688). Thus a time for watching and a place for watching are featured, and their creation becomes a meaningful element of prophecy. For the prophet is one for whom time does not exist in an ordinary way. By seeing the past and future simultaneously with the present, the prophet cuts across the paced sequence of time: "I see the Past, Present & Future existing all at once . . ." (15:8; K 635). Such a sweeping view must, of course, cut across space in the same way. Yet without time and space, no prophecy could exist because the prophet speaks from a particular place in his own time. This same mixture of simultaneity and chronology is reflected in the structure of *Jerusalem* so that Los is, in a state of simultaneity, no more a prophet than all men can be; yet in the chronological sequence of the

poem's actions he is the prophet who leads those bound in time, out of time into eternity. This complex symbology is set up in Chapter 3 to prepare for the climax in Chapter 4.

The creation of space is coincidental with Los's labor of shaping and forming the Contraries, "the Masculine and Feminine." The difference between his "creating" and "laboring" may be too fine to be a valid distinction, but creating seems to result in more abstract or archetypal products: Los's System, time and space; later, the Limits of Opakeness and Contraction, and the States. The products of labor tend to be more concrete and individualized—particular persons and places. This division finds an admittedly faint parallel in the biblical use of the words. In Isaiah it is foretold that the Messiah will "create Jerusalem a rejoicing" (65:18), an abstract image of a redeemed people. Yet Christ's ministry is a labor among concrete individuals. In *Jerusalem* the distinction between "create" and "labor" is blurred not only by Blake's symbolism, but also by his inclusion, as products of labor, of things not really concrete. But the abstractness of such concepts as Golgonooza and the Mundane Shell were highly particularized and more nearly real to Blake than the concepts of time and space.

After Los divides the Contraries, he labors to fix Hyle and Skofield as stars in the sky, to form Vala's veil, and to demolish Natural Religion. Unlike time and space, these three products are, to Blake, the dread negatives of fallen life. All of them are associated with Blake's image of "wheels": stars are wheels of the constellations, Vala's veil is woven on the wheels of the loom that weaves earthly bodies, and Natural Religion is a system associated with wheels. Hyle in particular is associated with the "Starry Wheels" of war (18:41–44; K 641). Vala's veil is in one sense positive, for earthly bodies enable fallen man to be redeemed. In *Jerusalem*, however, her veil is associated with the negative chastity of Natural Religion, a veil that man must rend in order to destroy the pall of mystery that obscures true religion.

Yet Los labors to fix the stars and form the veil, for as God's prophet, he knows that man must endure the negatives in order to turn against them and thus toward God. At the same time, he labors to destroy Natural Religion—over and over again—because it teaches man to passively endure rather than to rebel against the negatives.

As Los labors, he weeps. When "Jerusalem lies in ruins" (71:54; K 711) and the nations are themselves dividing, Los's weeping is strengthened by a return of "fury and despair." From this renewed intensity Los creates "the Limit of Opakeness, Satan, & the Limit of Contraction, Adam" (73:27–28; K 713), and the States that will preserve man from Eternal Death. These creative acts alternate with Los's labors to destroy Natural Religion, which is tainted with the blood sacrifices of the Druids. The Limits are more fully treated in *The Four Zoas*. According to Damon, they are created "... as an act of mercy by the Saviour, to put bounds to

error.”<sup>15</sup> Man may err only so far; he cannot err into total destruction. The States also help to preserve man, for they ensure that though an individual prophet or genius may pass away in the flux of earthly time, the state of prophet or genius will transcend time: Jeremiah will be replaced by Ezekiel, Milton by Blake. But man may be preserved and yet prevented from achieving redemption by the negative strictures of Natural Religion, which is basically any religion built on “ritual and dogma” to the exclusion of revelation. As George Mills Harper explains, ritual and dogma are, to Blake, “man’s chief means of perpetuating” the obfuscating mysteries that prevent man from seeking the truth.<sup>16</sup>

Chapter 3 ends with Los’s rage and grief. Yet in this chapter Los has accomplished a mighty work: he has ensured the arrival of the apocalypse. That conditions on earth have greatly worsened during this chapter is simply a fulfillment of what another man of the prophet state foretold in the Book of Revelation. For the New Jerusalem cannot descend until earth has suffered under her antithesis, “Mystery, Babylon the Great” (Revelation 17:5), the chaste whore of Natural Religion.

Chapter 4 plunges us into Los’s continuing labor and lamentation, but here the focus is on the “Feminine Affections,” the female principle through which Christ will be born. The Spectres of man’s reason are threatening to destroy this channel of salvation: they are “raging against the Lamb and against Jerusalem” (78:13; K 719). Jerusalem’s long lament emphasizes her critical plight:

I walk in affliction. I am a worm and no living soul!  
A worm going to eternal torment, rais’d up in a night  
To an eternal night of pain, lost! lost! lost! for ever!” (80:3–5; K 721)

Vala’s lament, which follows, relates Jerusalem’s plight to the threat of an “unreviving Death,” an eternal death without redemption, for all mankind. This is the nadir of Albion and the test of Los.

Los responds on a higher spiritual level than he has reached before: he drives the Rahab-following Daughters of Albion into dispersion, but this time he acts from the divine combination of love, pity, and rage. Los has come to understand experientially that love and pity are not a “soft repose,” as Albion thought. Los knows that if love and pity are true rather than false, they must combine with wrath in order to purify the errors of fallen man. Los was close to this combination when he chastized Albion to the point that Albion wished to murder him. But not until Los has created the States to preserve man from Eternal Death (at the end of Chapter 3) can Los safely include wrath with divine love and pity.

This spiritual growth enables Los to react with a harsh justice when Gwendolen incites the Daughters to dominate men and reduce them to

15. Damon, *Dictionary*, p. 241.

16. George Mills Harper, *The Neoplatonism of William Blake* (Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1961), pp. 173–74.

"winding Worms." Los seizes Cambel, the first to envy Gwendolen, and forces Cambel into his furnaces to labor. In the artisan-realm of Los's furnaces, Cambel is able to accomplish what Gwendolen had hoped to do but, because of her selfish pride, could not: Cambel transforms her male counterpart, Hand, into an Infant instead of a Worm. This act frees the feminine principle from selfhood into self-sacrifice. Cambel's envy is "ameliorated," she gives up "her beauty to another," and she continues to labor until her example draws all the Daughters "... to give their souls away in the Furnaces of affliction" (82:61, 69, and 79, respectively; K 726–27). Thus Los ensures that the Lamb will be born into an Infant body that is more than the seventy-inch Worm of earthly existence, the Worm of Eternal Death.

The divine purpose of the Daughters' labors in the furnaces is implicit in Blake's use of the word "Wine-press" as a synonym for furnaces (82:64; K 726). In Isaiah, the prophet heralds the Messiah by asking, "Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat?" The Messiah answers, "I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in my heart, and the year of my redeemed is come" (63:2–4). Blake fittingly makes women, the tabernacle-womb of the Lamb, the Saviour's helpers in purifying the sin from the sinner. This is the major turning point in the dramatic movement of *Jerusalem*. From this point on, all action moves inexorably toward the apocalypse. Frye explicates this imagistic import when he identifies both the mill and the winepress as "... modulations of the furnace symbol" and adds: "But there is no image of an inscrutable fate which may not also be an image of creative power, and the winepress and mill may represent not only the disintegration of form, but the reuniting of all nature into the body and blood of a universal Man. Thus the gathering-in of life to prevent its death may be a symbol of the apocalypse."<sup>17</sup>

This turning point is marked by a rededication on Los's part. When he sees that the Daughters can also labor in love, Los is "comforted" so that he can identify himself with his eternal self, Urthona, and yet choose to remain Los who labors with "pangs of love" for Albion (82:80–85; K 727). Immediately following this rededication, however, Los plunges into despair. He fears he will "forget Eternity" and calls himself "The labourer of ages in the Valleys of Despair!" (83:53; K 728). Unless the biblical context is taken into account here, Los's despair will seem highly arbitrary and dramatically unmotivated. However, we must grant Blake his purpose, which was not to write the first apocalyptic prophecy, but to add to and clarify, in the light of the worldly changes wrought by the

17. Frye, pp. 289–90.

passing of time, all past prophecies. That Los's despair immediately follows his commitment is in keeping with the gospel accounts of Christ's agony in Gethsemane. Only when Christ has committed himself to Judas' betrayal does Christ despair: "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me . . ." (Matthew 26:39). This reference may be alluded to in Los's words, "... nail them down on the stems of Mystery" (83:13; K 727), and is reinforced when Los, like Jesus, then goes on watch (83:61, 75-80; K 728-29). In the next three plates Los's function as Watchman is repeated over and over with attention to the thickening darkness so that suspense builds toward the next event.

At the end of Plate 86, the suspense is broken; Los approaches the repose of death, the forgetfulness of Eternity, that he had earlier feared in his despair. For Enitharmon appears before him as "a faint rainbow," a sign of hope. And as Christ himself had to descend into the womb-tomb of the grave in order to overcome death in the resurrection, so Los must descend to the womb-tomb of sexual lust for Enitharmon in order for Holy Generation to become Regeneration. In the interchange with Enitharmon, Los loses his will to hers: he wants to bind himself to her bosom, but she refuses and forces him to be bound to the Womb that she creates beneath her bosom.<sup>18</sup> Then she makes Los's degraded position clear to him: "You are Albion's Victim; he has set his Daughter in your path" (87:24; K 733). Her speech dramatizes the complete separation of Los and Enitharmon into "Two Wills . . . , Two Intellects" (86:61; K 732). The death-dealing separation of Los and his Emanation that began in Chapter 1 is complete.

Los's response to Enitharmon is, like fallen man's response to his deathlike world of rigid order, based on reason. He explains to her, by analogy, that because men cannot unite in "mutual exchange" in heaven unless their Emanations first "comingle," neither can Albion be restored until Los and Enitharmon are one (88:3-13; K 733). This use of reason unites Los with the wrong part of himself—his earthly Spectre—as Enitharmon realizes when she retorts, "This is Woman's World, nor need she any / Spectre to defend her from Man" (88:16-17; K 733). Thus both his Spectre and Emanation gain ascendancy over Los, leaving him divided, "the victim of their love / and hate" (88:46-47; K 734).

Los is saved in a reversal of the fallen Albion's statement that "By demonstration man alone can live, and not by faith" (4:28; K 622). For Los's labors have not been "labours that prove but chaff" (24:16; K 647), but labors in the work of the Lord. His labors have been, in effect, faith, and continue to be so even at this lowest point: "The blow of his Hammer is Justice, the swing of his Hammer Mercy, / The force of Los's Hammer is eternal Forgiveness" (88:49-50; K 734). Although his continued labors are performed in an increasingly disintegrating world, Los's seeming

18. The use of "create" elevates Enitharmon's Womb to the level of Los's works, such as Golgonooza and the Mundane Shell.

defeats are the darkness before dawn, the monster-filled turbulence that presages the apocalypse.

His love for Enitharmon having been scattered to create a womb for the Lamb of God in Jerusalem, Los turns again to labor more frantically at his furnaces. He seals the separateness of the male and female so that they must turn to sexual union; he weeps and pleads with man to turn to friendship and love in order to be able to see the coming Saviour; he overcomes his ascendant Spectre and puts it away from him, for in a time of spiritual wrath and deluge, in a time of Babylon and the Antichrist, man's reason can only add monsters to the monstrous. Faith alone—the faith that can say with the poet, “We who dwell on Earth can do nothing of ourselves; every thing is conducted by Spirits . . .” (3; K 621)—can sustain Los's labors.

When Los thus completely subdues his reason, the final turning point is reached. He sees the divided nations begin to unite in his furnaces and knows that this is the beginning of Albion's redemption. The upward movement toward the Second Coming is signaled when Enitharmon observes the uniting nations and says, “The Poet's Song draws to its period . . .” (92:8; K 739). When she laments that her own identity will then be lost, Los speaks out to all who are in fear: “We shall not Die! we shall be united in Jesus” (93:19; K 741). Then, recalling his role as the appointed Watchman, Los points to the terrors about them and asks, “Is it not that Signal of the Morning which was told us in the Beginning?” (93:26; K 741). With these words, the scene immediately shifts to where “Albion cold lays on his Rock . . .” (94:1; K 741).

After the turbulent blood and fire imagery, Blake turns to icy images of death where Albion lies washed by the “roaring seas” and blown by the “howling winds.” Earthly events seem far removed; they wheel about Albion as distant as the constellations. The climax is rendered in solemn isolation: there is a last scream of an Eagle, the last howl of a Wolf, the last thundering of the sea, and then—“deathlike silence.” At this still point of climax, the poet exclaims, “Time was Finished!” (94:18; K 742), recalling Christ's last words in the Gospel of John, “It is finished” (19:30). As Christ gave up the ghost on an earthly cross of death, so Albion receives the “Breath Divine” of eternal life.

In the denouement, Los continues to labor, but now he labors as his Edenic self, Urthona. Moreover, Albion recognizes in Jesus that “. . . the Divine Appearance was the likeness & similitude of Los” (96:7; K 743). Los is, then, mythically identified as one with Christ because Los sacrificed himself for Albion as Christ sacrificed himself for mankind. Both Christ and Los endured the very real threat of death, which is the descent into a physical existence. That the quality of self-sacrifice can spread until all men become as one with Christ is demonstrated when the Saviour suddenly disappears, leaving Albion alone and “in terror, not for himself but for his Friend” (96:30; K 743). Albion's battle with Selfhood

is over: he re-enacts Los's self-sacrificing labors by turning to the furnaces with all his thought centered on protecting Los. At this unselfish act, the "Furnaces of affliction" transform into "Fountains of Living Waters," and Albion stands "Fourfold" before Jesus—a whole man at one with Christ (96:35–43; K 744). Los's labors in faith have not been in vain; though he could do nothing of himself, his labors for others have brought redemption to mankind. When the voice of God speaks to the poet, "Awake, Awake, Jerusalem! . . . For lo! the Night of Death is past . . ." (97:1–3; K 744), Los's task as Watchman is also finished. He passes from the poem, leaving the finale to Urthona, one of the fourfold aspects of the whole, redeemed man, Albion.

In *Jerusalem* Blake's answer to the prophet's question in Isaiah—"For who shall have pity upon thee, O Jerusalem?" (15:5)—is to rephrase the question: who will forgive Jerusalem? For to Blake, divine love is forgiveness; it is the self-sacrifice of Christ's "crucifixion," his birth into a fleshly body. This theme lies behind the controversial section in Chapter 3 in which Blake depicts Mary as a harlot whom Joseph must forgive in order to fully love; it lies behind the seemingly perverse image of Jerusalem as a Harlot. To forgive is, then, to *act*: "The force of Los's Hammer is eternal Forgiveness . . ." (88:50; K 734). The quality of forgiveness as a subjective feeling rather than an eternal act is pity, which tends toward assimilation—"they become what they behold"—rather than salvation. This is the thematic web that supports Los's role as the agent of redemption while, at the same time, he suffers the near-fall into lust that is similar to the *felix culpa* in Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Unlike Adam's fall to a force of evil working through Eve, Los's fall is to Selfhood—his possessive love of his own Emanation, Enitharmon. For only through the separation this brings can the feminine womb essential to Christ's incarnation be created. And, in the ever continuing present of *Jerusalem*, Christ's birth, crucifixion, resurrection, and Second Coming are, in eternal vision, one and the same event.

For redemption, to Blake, is an event of the intellect and imagination rather than an external event in history. And faith and love, the requisites of salvation, are the actions that embody the intellect and imagination. Thus, it is the prophet-poet Los who must labor at the "great task" to penetrate our minds with the message of salvation just as Blake labors at the "great task" of embodying this message in the words of *Jerusalem*. The dramatic structure of the poem inheres in Los's actions—the loving, laboring, weeping, raging, pitying, forgiving, creating, watching, and despairing that are the integral elements of faith. Los is the divine Human Imagination who gives form to the Holy Ghost so that earth is transformed to the city of the redeemed, the New Jerusalem. This is the drama of *Jerusalem*.

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