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Blake's Milton: The Bard's Song

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Fig. 12. Titian, Bacchanal, Museo del Prado
There are at least three basic levels of meaning in Milton. One of these is the level of the archetypes, representing universal psychological forces, and acted by god-like figures in and out of "Eternity." Since these figures are presented as personified fragments of the psyche of the fallen giant Albion, this connects with a second level where historical and biographical allegory is important. On this level, archetypal figures are perceived as sometimes acting through, sometimes representing, individual historical persons, countries, and events. On a third level, these same archetypal figures may be seen as acting within the psyche of William Blake, and as being personifications of parts of his psyche. In the following paper I shall trace the interworking of these three levels through selected parts of the Bard's song. I shall give particular attention to the third level in an attempt to demonstrate its importance.

All three levels interact because the same forces which motivate individuals motivate nations. As David Erdman has pointed out, "From his earliest interest in kings as accusers of adultery, Blake looked upon psychology as a phase of politics and upon politics as an acting out of mental strife." Sometimes a kind of magical correspondence seems to be asserted when, by writing about the interaction of archetypes, Blake refers simultaneously to the outworking of these forces in history, and in his own life.

I believe the focus of Milton is most directly and literally on events within Blake's own mind at a time of personal crisis. Milton is a very introverted work, but in no sense is it claustrophobic. Blake believed that his vision expanded when he looked within himself, using the eye of imagination. He believed that his "great task" (as he identified it in Jerusalem) was

To open the Eternal Worlds, to open the immortal Eyes
Of Man inwards into the Worlds of Thought: into Eternity
Ever expanding in the Bosom of God, the Human Imagination[.]

2. William Blake, Jerusalem, Pl. 5, ll. 18–20, as reprinted in The Poetry and Prose of William Blake, ed. David V. Erdman (New York, 1965), p. 146. All subsequent references to this edition are indicated by the letter E. Other abbreviations used in this essay: Milton: M; Visions of the Daughters of Albion: VDA; The Four Zoas: FZ.

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Blake's fulfillment of this task—his descriptions of many inhabitants, and important parts of the geography, of the "Eternal Worlds"—is a major theme in *Milton*, and a connector between the various levels of meaning.

Blake seems to have believed that all men are interconnected through the imagination. Thus, at a crisis in the poem, Blake reports:

> But Milton entering into my Foot; I saw in the nether
> Regions of the Imagination; also all men on Earth,
> And all in Heaven, saw in the nether regions of the Imagination
> In Ulro beneath Beulah, the vast breach of Miltons descent. (*M* 21:4-7, E 114)

Blake also believed that the imagination is largely unconscious, accessible primarily in dream and in moments of inspiration; therefore he continues:

> But I knew not that it was Milton, for man cannot know
> What passes in his members till periods of Space and Time
> Reveal the secrets of Eternity. . . .

I imagine Blake writing and engraving *Milton* over a period of years, first at Felpham, then in his rooms on South Molton Street, trying to understand and put in order psychological experiences which had nearly overwhelmed him.

*Milton* may be summarized as a series of crises. The first major crisis is when Milton enters into Blake's foot, and, in the vegetative world of time and space this occurs while the Blakes are still in Lambeth. The next crisis, when Los binds on Blake's sandals and becomes "One Man" with him, also happens while Blake is "Standing in the Vale / Of Lambeth" (*M* 22:10-11; E 116). After this, as Blake tells us later in the poem,

> . . . when Los joind with me he took me in his firy whirlwind
> My Vegetated portion was hurried from Lambeths shades
> He set me down in Felphams Vale & prepared a beautiful
> Cottage for me that in three years I might write all these Visions[.]
> (*M* 36:21-24, E 136)

The final crisis, when Milton confronts Satan in sacrificial "Self-Annihilation" (*M* 38:34, E 138), and then is triumphantly reintegrated with his emanation, Ololon, intersects with this world in Blake's consciousness while Blake is in the garden of his cottage at Felpham.

(The reference to writing "all these visions" in his "three years" at Felpham seems to have been written after the event, and thus is itself evidence that Blake did not finish writing *Milton* while at the shore. Other passages, also, seem to have been written later. For example, the reference on Plate 4 to the place "Between South Molton Street and Stratford Place: Calvarya's foot / Where the Victims were preparing for
Sacrifice..." probably was suggested to him when he lived on South Molton Street, near the approaches to Tyburn Gallows."

The poem centers around an "old Prophecy in Eden" which is twice recalled by Los:

That Milton of the Land of Albion should up ascend  
Forwards from Upro from the Vale of Felpham; and set free  
Orc from his Chain of Jealousy... (M 20:59-61, E 114)

Presumably this prophecy is fulfilled at the end of the poem, and at the end of the Blakes' stay at Felpham, when

Immediately the Lark mounted with a loud trill from Felphams Vale  
And the Wild Thyme from Wimbletons green & impurpled Hills  
And Los & Enitharmon rose over the Hills of Surrey  
Their clouds roll over London... (M 42:29-32, E 142)

Presumably, also, William and Catherine Blake return at this time with Los and Enitharmon to London, where Blake will continue his prophetic tasks, his strength augmented by the spirit of the reintegrated Milton.

Most of the time sequence of the poem covers Blake's three years at Felpham; however, time sequences cannot be taken too seriously in a poem in which so much of the action is outside of time. For example, Milton is inspired by the song of a "Bard" to descend from Eternity into the Ulro, and, as it happens, into Blake, while Blake is still living in Lambeth. Yet, as we read the Bard's song, it seems apparent that many of the events indirectly referred to therein took place during Blake's residence at Felpham, probably a year or more after he had left Lambeth. There are two possible resolutions to this apparent anachronism. First: although the duration of Milton's sojourn in Eternity is identified as "One hundred years" (M 2:17, E 95), while he was in Eternity he should have been free from the tyranny of time and space, and able to respond to a song which, from the point of view of time, had not yet been sung. Second (a less metaphysical suggestion): perhaps all the indirect references to temporal events in the Bard's song were not meant to be picked up. Perhaps the quarrel with Hayley, for example, may be more properly regarded as a private source of inspiration than as an obscure theme in a kind of satiric allegory.

In examining part of the Bard's song as examples of Blake's method, it should be noted that the Bard himself seems to represent Blake at his most inspired. At the end of the song, when some of the audience in Eternity question the song's truth, the Bard replies:

... I am Inspired! I know it is Truth! for I sing  
According to the inspiration of the Poetic Genius  
Who is the eternal all-protecting Divine Humanity  
To whom be Glory & Power & Dominion Evermore Amen  
(M 13:51-14:3, E 107)

3. For a detailed discussion of the problems of dating Milton, see E, pp. 727-730.
This affirmation is surely also Blake's, and tells us why he believed that he had won through to an understanding of some of "the secrets of Eternity."

If the Bard has something of Blake in him, so also does Los, the archetype of imagination and inspiration. In fact, as has already been noted, Blake becomes "One Man" with Los slightly later in the poem. In much of The Four Zoas, and in Jerusalem, Blake seems to identify with Los; however, in the Bard's song he seems to identify with Palamabron (who is, of course, one of the sons of Los).

Los has many sons and many daughters; "myriads" according to a passage in The Four Zoas (FZ 115:10, E 365). In the Bard's song,

First Orc was Born then the Shadowy Female: then all Los's Family
At last Enitharmon brought forth Satan Refusing Form, in vain, J
(M 3:40-41, E 97)

Thus all the principal actors in the poem are sons or daughters of Los, and, insofar as Los represents Blake, may be considered (among other things) to be personifications of parts of Blake's makeup. As integration proceeds through the poem, some of them are explicitly gathered back into Blake, and into Los.

However, to claim that Los's family is quite so widespread may approach apocalyptic excess on Blake's part. Los identifies the four sons of whom he feels sure on Plate 24:

Still my four mighty ones are left to me in Golgonooza
Still Rintrah fierce, and Palamabron mild & piteous
Theotormon filld with care, Bromion loving Science
You O my sons still guard round Los. . . . (M 24:10-13, E 118)

These four basic sons are an analysis of Los in the same sense that the four Zoas are an analysis of the giant Albion. And when, in the Bard's song, Blake identifies primarily with Palamabron, he is confessing to a falling off in power which will only be regained when he can identify consciously again with all of Los.

The conflict between Hayley and Blake was certainly an important stimulus to Blake's imagination in writing the Bard's song. However, he carefully wrote in terms of archetypes, so that the events at Felpham may be seen as a particular outworking of universal forces. Blake's partially ironic use of Calvinistic terminology is important to the perception of Satan as the appropriate name for the force which animated Hayley. Satan is identified as an example of "the Elect from before the foundation of the world" (M 7:1, E 99). The paradox which this presents to orthodox usage not only alerts us to Blake's satiric intentions, but also gives edge to the satire as it develops. Palamabron is given as an example of "the Redeem'd" with the ironic explanation "For he is redeem'd from Satans law" (M 11:23, E 104). Here orthodox usage...
ironically implies redemption from orthodox law. (Rintrah’s classification as an example of the “Reprobate” will be discussed later.)

Blake perhaps felt that he was too gentle and yielding in his relationship with Hayley. Thus it seems appropriate that he associates himself with the “mild & piteous” Palamabron. Blake must at that time have been subject to conflicting emotions, and led by his emotions to yield to the Satan/selfhood within himself, as well as to Satan/Hayley’s “intreaties.” (Los is the one who actually yields, and is said also to have been “blamable.” Palamabron “fear’d to be angry lest Satan should accuse him of / Ingratitude. . . .”) That Blake should for a time be ruled by his feelings is not surprising; Palamabron is identified as “the strongest of Demons” (M 7:45, E 100).

On the political level, Erdman suggests that “though the clues are slight, it is possible that the strife between Satan and Palamabron derives from the struggle between Cromwell and Parliament.” He goes on to suggest that Blake saw a parallel between the careers of Cromwell and Napoleon. While the confirmation of this depends (as does the more widely accepted identification of Hayley as Satan) upon the development of a pattern of corroborating detail, it is at least consistent that Blake/Palamabron should initially have had exaggerated hopes for the pseudo-revolutionary, Napoleon, as he had for the pseudo-artist, Hayley.

Palamabron is in charge of the harrow, which in the Bard’s song seems to represent an artist’s engraving tool. However, it is noteworthy that the Bard himself (clearly a less fragmented artist than Palamabron) uses a plow. (“Follow with me my plow!” [M 7:3, E 99] says the Bard fiercely, as he explains the “Three Classes of Men.”) Both plow and harrow are forged by all four of the basic sons of Los (or by the reintegrated Los/Blake) in London. The plow, as the edge which cuts deeper and more definitively, is assigned to the “fierce” Rintrah. The harrow as an archetypal symbol of pity (compare the medieval myth of the harrowing of hell) may seem more appropriate for the “mild” Palamabron. Thus the harrow may be thought of as the engraving tool when it is used to convey feeling. Perhaps the plow/burin cut the hard outlines, while the same tool may be called a harrow when it is used for cross-hatching and shading. Or perhaps Palamabron/Blake used the harrow altogether when he was illustrating Hayley’s sentimental ballads, or doing portraits. (Rintrah could not appropriately use his fierce plow in such genteel enterprises.)

The harrow, of course, is at the center of the controversy with Satan, since Satan wishes to drive it. When Satan “with most endearing love / . . . soft intreated Los to give him Palamabrons station” (M 7:5–6, E 99), we may imagine Hayley attempting to direct a particular artistic enter-

4. M 7:10–12; E, pp. 99-100. My interpretation of these lines has been aided by John E. Grant, who pointed out that the period (full stop) after “Palamabron” in l. 11 of the Erdman text is not to be found in the originals.

5. Prophet Against Empire, p. 424.

prise which Blake/Palamabron is executing for him. Perhaps we may imagine Cromwell trying to take over the function of Parliament. (On the political level, Erdman suggests that the harrow may represent “the leveling function of revolutionary legislation: it is abused in the tyrant’s hands.”) However, we must also imagine Satan as Blake’s own selfhood: as that part of Blake which wishes to follow Hayley’s directions. and thus to follow what he hopes is the main chance for commercial success. (This last reading seems particularly likely because, as we have seen, Satan is a son of Los. And Milton himself, shortly before he enters into Blake, recognizes, “I in my Selfhood am that Satan: I am that Evil One! He is my Spectre!” [M 14:30–31, E 107]. Thus, insofar as Blake identifies in this poem with Los and with Milton, Satan is a recognized part of his own makeup.)

However, the harrow proves an unmanageable tool for Satan. When he first asks to drive it, Los refuses in language which illuminates the forces at work:

Anger me not! thou canst not drive the Harrow in pitys paths
Thy work is Eternal Death. . . . (M 4:16–17, E 97)

And when Satan finally is allowed to drive it, Phaeton-like he makes a disastrous mess of the situation. The reason why Satan fails is complicated, and involves forces which Blake personifies as emanations.

Palamabron, as an aspect of Los, represents the conjunction of imagination and emotion. Elynittria, the emanation of Palamabron, seems to represent the principle of living harmony which can control imagination and emotion. Elynittria, in a sense, is Blake’s answer to those rationalists who fear that such powers cannot be controlled except by repression. Elynittria’s character as a representative of “living proportion,” or harmony, is made explicit when Satan (representing, among other things, repressive “Mathematical Proportion”) falls in love with her:

Charles calls on Milton for Atonement. Cromwell is ready
James calls for fires in Golgonooza. for heaps of smoking ruins
In the night of prosperity and wantonness which he himself Created
Among the Daughters of Albion among the Rocks of the Druids
When Satan faimed beneath the arrows of Elynittria
And Mathematical Proportion was subdued by Living Proportion
(M 5:38–44, E 98)

This episode contributes to the archetypal drama by helping to explain Satan’s motivations in his desire to take over from Palamabron. It may suggest the kind of erotic attraction felt by tyrants like Cromwell or Napoleon for the “Living Proportion” of the revolutionary institutions which they destroyed in the act of possession. It may allegorize the attraction felt by a would-be artist for principles of living art. And, on the
biographical level, the lines may suggest Blake’s suspicion that Hayley was sexually attracted to Catherine Blake.  

When Satan fails in his attempt to drive Palamabron’s horses and harrow, he fails because he does not have Elynittria’s humanizing and civilizing powers to help him. Emotions and imagination can be terrifying when unrestrained. The Bard suggests this by reporting that “... Palamabron’s horses. / Rag’d with thick flames redundant, & the Harrow maddend with fury” (M 7:43–44, E 100). Leutha attempts to help Satan, but, as an archetypal power, she is involved with his sexual desires, not with his artistic powers. She reports:

I sprang out of the breast of Satan, over the Harrow beaming
In all my beauty! that I might unloose the flaming steeds
As Elynittria use’d to do; but too well those living creatures
Knew that I was not Elynittria, and they brake the traces (M 12:10–13, E 105)

At this point, Satan may easily be imagined as the force within Blake which wishes to cooperate with Hayley. This Satan attempts to deal with runaway emotional and creative energies by means of repression. He

Compell’d the Gnomes to curb the horses, & to throw banks of sand
Around the fiery flaming Harrow in labyrinthine forms.
And brooks between to intersect the meadows in their course.
(M 12:17–19, E 105)

Next Leutha tells how the “thick flames” of passion from “the fiery Harrow” “orb’d us round in concave fires.” The result is to close Leutha and Satan together into what Leutha calls “A Hell of our own making” (M 12:21–23, E 105). Both Hayley, and Blake’s selfhood, may be imagined as inhabitants of this hell.

All this throws further light on Blake’s techniques of irony. There is nothing ironic in his identification of the ambitious, rational selfhood as Satan. He means it. And he is serious, too, in his identification of hell as the experience of that selfhood when it is overwhelmed by the dark flames of repressed emotion and imagination. The word irony can appropriately be used only to describe his technique of deliberately echoing, and reversing, the language of more orthodox writers—such as the historical Milton.

Satan was deeply disturbed by his inability to control Palamabron’s horses and harrow. However, he was equally disturbed when he returned to his own “Mills,” where Palamabron had been working, to find “all confusion.” He called Los, who came to see

The servants of the Mills drunken with wine and dancing wild
With shouts and Palamabron songs, rending the forests green
With echoing confusion. . . . (M 8:8–10, E 101)

8. Cf. the near-paranoid conclusion of Blake’s epigram “On Hayley’s Friendship”: “And when he could not act upon my wife / Hired a Villain to bereave my life” (E 497).
As Damon points out, this may suggest, biographically, that "Hayley finds the work he has given Blake quite disrupted with Blake's own ideas." However, perhaps Blake went too far in reaction to Hayley's outraged dullness. Both Blake/Palamabron and Hayley/Satan are upset by the quarrel: "all the Elect and all the Redeem'd mourn'd one toward another." Los—who, among other things, represents Blake's potentially more fully integrated psyche—calls for a day of "solemn mourning" (M 8:25,12; E 101).

Blake was severely divided against himself. Two of his four basic functions were on the side of Satan, Hayley, Napoleon, and his own selfhood. For when

\[\cdots\text{Satan wept over Palamabron}\]
\[\text{Theotormon & Bromion contended on the side of Satan}\]
\[\text{Pitying his youth and beauty; trembling at eternal death} (M 8:29–31, E 101)\]

Palamabron was sentimental, and too open to persuasion. Only Rintrah held out against the blandishments of Satan:

\[\begin{align*}
\text{But Rintrah who is of the reprobate: of those form'd to destruction} \\
\text{In indignation, for Satan's soft dissimulation of friendship!} \\
\text{Flam'd above all the plowed furrows, angry red and furious (M 8:34–36, E 101)}
\end{align*}\]

However, Blake never loses his perspective on Rintrah as a universal archetypal force. Thus, when Hayley (or Napoleon?) hypocritically suppressed anger, Blake was able to allegorize this by saying that Satan flamed "with Rintrah's fury hidden beneath his own mildness." He also tells us that

\[\begin{align*}
\cdots\text{Rintrah and his rage:} \\
\cdots\text{flam'd high & furious in Satan against Palamabron} \\
\text{Till it became a proverb in Eden, Satan is among the Reprobate.} (M 9:10–12, E 102)
\end{align*}\]

Erdman has suggested that Rintrah is also used to stand for Pitt in the Bard's song. This seems to me unlikely. Morton Paley has argued convincingly that Rintrah stands for revolutionary wrath in the "Argument" to The Marriage of Heaven and Hell.¹⁰ I believe the same identification holds for Milton. I suggest that Rintrah's anger at Satan represents, among other things, revolutionary anger at Satan/Napoleon's betrayal of the revolution.

This identification of Rintrah helps to explain his classification as "Reprobate." Again, Blake's irony is subtle, and reflects feelings which were no doubt mixed. If Rintrah is revolutionary wrath, he is the very force within himself which the respectable world had too often described as "Reprobate." Blake's self-division was genuine, and he no doubt some-

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times condemned this part of himself. However, as the inspired Bard he knew that Rintrah was an essential component of the integrated Los.

After things had gone very wrong, Blake turned inward and debated the issue in his imagination, in the presence of all the archetypal forces concerned, and in the light of eternity. This seems to have been the sort of process by which Blake maintained and strengthened his psychic balance, in spite of all the stresses brought about by his great imaginative sensitivity. Instead of continuing the quarrel, Palamabron calls down "a Great Solemn Assembly," after which, it is asserted, "all Eden descended into Palamabrons tent" (M 8:46,9:1; E 102).

This represents an important spiritual experience for Blake. However, he was not able to achieve it, and the insights which came from it, until Satan showed that he was something other than imperviously "Elect." As we are told later:

... Palamabron dared not to call a solemn Assembly
Till Satan had assum'd Rintrahs wrath in the day of mourning
(M 11:24–25, E 104)

I would agree with Erdman that this probably means that Blake dared not discuss the guilt of Napoleon/Satan until after the failure of the Peace of Amiens.11 However, I suggest that the wrath that flared up in Satan was the wrath of the old revolutionary movement—the wrath of the spirit of Voltaire, Rousseau, and others whom Blake was now coming to blame for starting the whole violent process.

Blake's attitude toward Rintrah is too equivocal—contains too much grudging approval—to apply to as cold a villain as Pitt. When Palamabron appeals for judgment to "all Eden," the judgment falls first "on Rintrah and his rage" (M 9:10, E 102). Blake/Los's sympathy for Rintrah betrays the fury of disappointment and betrayal: "Los in wrath curs'd heaven & earth, he rent up Nations," and caused many other catastrophes. But, insofar as Los represents Blake, he seems to have maintained some of the propieties, for "he clos'd up Enitharmon from the sight of all these things" (M 9:13–18, E 102). This and other references suggest that Catherine was not always informed of the complexities of William's doubts and conflicts.

Hayley may have been superior and moralistic in his response to the outward situation; the spirit of Blake's old revolutionary loyalties may have caused inner conflict:

For Satan flaming with Rintrahs fury hidden beneath his own mildness
Accus'd Palamabron before the Assembly of ingratitude! of malice:
He created Seven deadly Sins drawing out his infernal scroll,
Of Moral laws and cruel punishments upon the clouds of Jehovah
To pervert the Divine voice. . . . (M 9:19–23, E 102)

Satan’s assumption of rational, moral superiority involves an unsatisfactory attempt to repress wrath, and to cultivate pity. We have seen that his repression of emotional and imaginative fires has condemned him to hell. He is not able to repress wrath, but only to separate it:

... Satan not having the Science of Wrath, but only of Pity:
Rent them asunder, and wrath was left to wrath, & pity to pity.
(M 9:46–47, E 103)

The result for him is “dreadful Death,” since it is implied that either of these emotions, undiluted by the other, is too much to bear. Satan’s difficulty with pity, and his creation of a moralistic religion, both are reminiscent of Urizen’s difficulties in The Book of Urizen. It is little wonder that, after seeing Satan’s failure to manage Rintrah’s rage, “Los and Enitharmon knew that Satan is Urizen” (M 10:1, E 103), and that Satan is the God of this world (M 11:10–14, E 104). Satan’s torment is depicted in a full-page illumination which shows him writhing in flames while Rintrah and Palamabron look on. I suggest that it is Rintrah who is communicating the energy of his fury into Satan, by touching Satan’s right foot with his own left foot. Rintrah enters into Satan through the foot, as Milton later enters into Blake through the foot.12

The initial decision to blame Rintrah made a kind of rational sense—which may be part of what so enraged Blake/Los. It is not difficult to imagine Blake bottling up mixed feelings, while agreeing with Hayley that he should not have lost his temper. However, Blake seems to have persuaded himself that it also made a kind of imaginative sense. Hayley could not openly be condemned because he would not admit that he was angry. Napoleon could not be condemned without betraying many of Blake’s past loyalties. Blake’s own selfhood could not be condemned until Blake was ready to give up all his ambitions for commercial success. And, on the archetypal level, Satan should not be condemned—as Blake discovered from the “Great Assembly” within himself—because “If the Guilty should be condem’d, he must be an Eternal Death” (M 11:17, E 104). The Elect (including Hayley, Napoleon, and Blake’s own ego) could only continue by being “new Created continually moment by moment,” since their status depended upon their own self-esteem and the cooperative ego-support provided by the belief of the Redeemed: that is, upon what might be described in negative analysis as little more than a massive confidence trick.

All this, however, was not enough to save Satan from guilt by association. For, as we have seen, Blake/Palamabron was unwilling even to call a “Great Assembly” until after “Satan had assum’d Rintrah’s wrath in the day of mourning.” However, as soon as Satan is threatened with con-

demnation, Leutha appears before the “Great Solemn Assembly” in order to offer “herself a ransom for Satan, taking on her, his Sin.” Leutha is the archetype of the attractive principle in female sexuality. She is described as “glowing with varying colours immortal, heart-piercing / And lovely,” and as having “moth-like elegance” (M 11:29–30, 32–33; E 104). Her introduction into the story represents, among other things, another attempt by Blake to understand Hayley’s motivations, and perhaps to forgive him.

Leutha tells the “Great Assembly” that she loved Palamabron, but could not approach him because of the jealousy of Palamabron’s emanation, Elynittria. In order to get her way, she plays the part of Sin in a variation on Milton’s allegory of Satan, Sin, and Death. Leutha’s character as an archetypal motivating force becomes explicit when she tells how she entered

... the doors of Satans brain night after night
Like sweet perfumes I stupified the masculine perceptions
And kept only the feminine awake. hence rose his soft
Delusory love to Palamabron: admiration join’d with envy
Cupidity unconquerable! (M 12:4–8, E 104–105)

That Satan’s love is sexual in origin is made clear by identifying Leutha as the arousing agent. However, Hayley/Satan apparently expressed this love only in statements which Blake believed stemmed from artistic jealousy, and by attempting to drive Blake/Palamabron’s harrow “in Pitys paths”—where, of course, the gnomes revolted, and Satan failed dismally.

After Leutha’s failure to control “the flaming steeds” of Palamabron, and after Satan’s failure to repress the flames of the harrow, then (as we have seen) both Satan and Leutha are plunged into “A Hell of [their] own making.” While in this hell, Leutha “form’d the Serpent / Of precious stones and gold turned poisons...” (M 12:29–30, E 105). This bit of allegory is explained immediately:

To do unkind things in kindness! with power armd, to say
The most irritating things in the midst of tears and love
These are the stings of the Serpent! (M 12:32–34; E 105)

It is not difficult to imagine Hayley, in conscious innocence, acting the part of this serpent.

The rest of the allegory is acted out in a manner far different from that of Paradise Lost (or of James, I, 15). Leutha springs from the head of Satan “with Blandishments” after the gnomes (Hayley/Satan’s repressed energies) “refus’d to labour more.” These energies (although probably not Hayley, himself, consciously) recognize the source of his motivation, and

13. Blake may have suspected that Hayley was bisexual. See n. 8, above. Also, cf. the following epigram from his notebook: “Of His birth this was the happy lot / His Mother on his Father him begot” (E 497).
name her “Sin” (M 12:37–39, E 105). Sexual desire, of course, is no substitute for a sense of aesthetic proportion. Thus love is blamed for the disaster, as wrath and pity were before.

Leutha’s true nature is still ambiguous. She is “a Daughter of Beulah” (M 11:28; E 104) who is sincerely repentant after the event, even though Satan is not repentant:

O Divine Vision who didst create the Female: to repose
The Sleepers of Beulah: pity the repentant Leutha.
My Sick Couch bears the dark shades of Eternal Death infolding
The Spectre of Satan: he furious refuses to repose in sleep.
I humbly bow in all my Sin before the Throne Divine.
Not so the Sick-one; Alas what shall be done him to restore?

Nonetheless, as soon as Leutha saw that Enitharmon, in pity, “had / Created a New Space to protect Satan from punishment; / She fled to Enitharmon’s Tent & hid herself” (M 13:12–14, E 106). Thus she chose limitation, and life in Generation. Afterwards, Elynittria “met Leutha in the place where she was hidden.” Elynittria is nice to her, and brings her without jealousy “to Palamabron’s bed,” where the allegory of Satan, Sin, and Death is completed:

In moments new created for delusion, interwoven round about
In dreams she bore the shadowy Spectre of Sleep, & named him Death.
In dreams she bore Rahab the mother of Tirzah & her sisters
In Lambeths vales; in Cambridge & in Oxford, places of Thought
Intricate labyrinths of Times and Spaces unknown, that Leutha lived
In Palamabrons Tent, and Oothoon was her charming guard.
(M 13:39–44, E 106)

It is noteworthy here that Palamabron, rather than Satan, seems to be the father of Death. Yet Death in one sense is “Eternal Death”—the natural cycle of birth and death—and perhaps the vital flux of this cycle seemed to Blake to need a more vigorous male parent than the essentially sterile Satan/Urizen. It is also significant that all this happens in a world of “delusion” and “dreams”—which most probably is Beulah. What is being said in part is that the vegetative cycle of life and death owes its origin and continuation to the repeated conjunctions of female sexual allure and human emotion. This presents an interesting parallel to the banishment of Luvah and Vala to “the place of seed” in The Four Zoas (126:6–8, E 380). (Palamabron is the son of Los most directly influenced by the archetype of the emotions—Luvah. Leutha is the mother of Rahab, who is “Vala drawn down into a Vegetated body” [FZ 105:13, E 364].) However, Palamabron and Leutha are not exact equivalents of Luvah and Vala, thus another nuance of meaning is implied. The spirit of Palamabron might well inspire an imaginative theologian, and Leutha might well represent his idea of female sexuality. Thus the pair make particularly appropriate parents to Death and his troublemaking sisters.
when these offspring are viewed as distorted archetypes, conceived by theologians in such places as the bishop’s palace at Lambeth, and in the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge. 

That Oothoon should be Leutha’s “charming guard” during the time “Leutha lived / In Palamabrons Tent” is noteworthy. This conjunction of sexual appetite and allure, represented by Leutha, and the idealistic spirit of free love, represented by Oothoon, does not happen often in Blake. Oothoon is more characteristically represented by her role in Visions of the Daughters of Albion, where she seems to represent the inevitable frustration of idealistic freedom in a world in which most people are crippled by inhibition and jealousy. The time in Palamabron’s tent does not have happy results, since Leutha’s offspring represent forces which lead mankind further into delusion and despair. Nonetheless, as we have noted, the affair seems to take place in Beulah, and Oothoon is said to be “charming.” 

Perhaps the relationship between Oothoon and Leutha is suggested most clearly in a passage following shortly after the Bard’s song, where the two emanations, as components of the “Shadowy Female,” hover over Orc:

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{So spoke Orc when Oothoon & Leutha hoverd over his Couch} \\
&\text{Of fire in interchange of Beauty & Perfection in the darkness} \\
&\text{Opening interiorly into Jerusalem & Babylon shining glorious} \\
&\text{In the Shadowy Females bosom} \\
\end{align*}
\]

Here both Oothoon and Leutha enjoy “Beauty & Perfection,” since they “interchange” these qualities. However, I suggest that parallel word order is important in the listing of Jerusalem and Babylon. Leutha’s beauty, taken alone, can connect her only with the glories of Babylon, where the power and wealth of empire exploit female beauty. On the other hand, the true freedom of Oothoon, “the soft soul of America” (VDA 1:3, E 44), is always in rebellion against empire. She may be raped and then frustrated (as in Visions of the Daughters of Albion), or she may be forced by human jealousy to find her freedom only in secret (as in Milton and Jerusalem). However, she stands for the proposition that freedom can lead to the final integration represented by Jerusalem. For, as we learn from Jerusalem, 26, “JERUSALEM IS NAMED LIBERTY AMONG THE SONS OF ALBION.”

It is interesting that Elynittria cooperates with Leutha. Shortly before, Los had reproved her for her jealousy:

\[
\begin{align*}
&Elynitttrial whence is this Jealousy running along the mountains \\
&British Women were not Jealous when Greek & Roman were Jealous \\
&Every thing in Eternity shines by its own Internal light: but thou \\
&Darkest every Internal light with the arrows of thy quiver \\
&Bound up on the horns of Jealousy to a deadly fading Moon \\
\end{align*}
\]

Yet obviously she conquers her jealousy, since she brings Leutha to Palamabron’s bed.
JOHN H. SUTHERLAND

Ocalythron is the emanation of Rintrah. She is often coupled with Elynittia, just as Rintrah and Palamabron are often mentioned together. Like Elynittia, she is jealous, but unlike Elynittia, there is no evidence that she ever conquers her jealousy. When Los reproves Elynittia for her jealousy, he goes on to complain that

\[ \ldots \text{Ocalythron binds the Sun into a Jealous Globe} \]
\[ \text{That every thing is fixed Opaque without Internal light.} \]

(M 10:19-20, E 103)

Elynittia and Ocalythron may represent two aspects of Catherine Blake/Enitharmon’s psyche. When they are jealous, they can cut off both sun and moon—essential sources of “Internal Light” by which the dark stirrings of Blake/Los’s imagination may be perceived and brought to expression in art or action.14

The extent to which all this is either a political allegory, or an allegory of events in Blake’s life, is debatable. Elynittia may represent the spirit of Marie Antoinette, as Erdman suggests, but his argument does not seem to me to be convincingly corroborated by textual evidence. It seems to me likely, at least, that she represents one aspect of the character of Catherine Blake, just as Palamabron represents one aspect of William’s character. Yet both William and Catherine are more complete when they comprehend all the basic sons and daughters of Los, and thus may be seen, themselves, as Los and Enitharmon. The whole episode may refer to Catherine’s theoretical acceptance of Blake’s ideas concerning sexual freedom. The unexpected cooperation of Elynittia with Leutha may even have been suggested by Catherine’s acceptance of some of the attributes of Leutha within herself. In any event, Elynittia’s cooperation with Leutha is appropriate for an emanation who represents “living proportion,” and thus should have exceptional resistance to Urizenic “mathematical proportion,” prescriptive morality, and jealousy.

The Bard’s song ends with the episode of Elynittia, Leutha, Oothoon, and Palamabron. The reaction in Eternity is mixed:

\[ \ldots \text{many condemn’d the high tone’d Song} \]
\[ \text{Saying Pity and Love are too venerable for the imputation} \]
\[ \text{Of Guilt. Others said. If it is true! if the acts have been perform’d} \]
\[ \text{Let the Bard himself witness.} \ldots \] (M 13:47–50, E 107)

After this, as we have seen, the Bard claims that he must be right because he is inspired by “the Poetic Genius.” However, his unsubstantiated assertion does not convince all those in “the Heavens of Albion” where

\[ \ldots \text{there was great murmuring} \ldots \]
\[ \text{Concerning Generation & the Vegetative power & concerning} \]
\[ \text{The Lamb the Saviour.} \ldots \] (M 14:8–9, E 107)

It is in response to his sudden accession of the spirit of the Bard that Milton rises and announces his decision to return to incarnation in this

world of "Eternal Death." Apparently the Bard’s song has reminded him, first of all, that

    . . . the Nations still
    Follow after the detestable Gods of Priam; in pomp
    Of warlike selfhood, contradicting and blaspheming.
    (M 14:14–16, E 107)

However, the song also suggests that the Resurrection may be coming, and that it is high time that he come to terms with his own emanation:

What do I here before the Judgment? without my Emanation?
With the daughters of memory, & not with the daughters of inspiration[?]
I in my Selhood am that Satan: I am that Evil One!
He is my Spectre! in my obedience to loose him from my Hells
To claim the Hells, my Furnaces, I go to Eternal Death. (M 14:28–32, E 107)

Milton, first of all, has recognized in the Satan of the Bard’s song the same rational spirit which he deified in Paradise Lost. He also recognizes in the “Hell” of creative energy which torments Satan, the “Furnaces” within which he created his own best work. He sees in the various shifts adopted by “the Redeem’d” Blake/Palamabron, in his efforts to love and forgive “the Elect” Satan, some of the principles which he must adopt in order to come to terms with his own Spectre. Moreover, he may see in the self-sacrificing conquest of jealousy exhibited by Elynittria, a model of the kind of behavior which will be required of Ololon, if he and his emanation are ever to be reconciled. For all these reasons, and because aspects of Blake’s own spirit are represented by both Palamabron and the Bard, Blake’s body is a natural target for Milton’s spirit.

Milton’s finding in the Bard’s song evidence of contemporary wars is a reminder of the probable importance of political allegory in the song. Erdman comments that “Milton with surprising ease, considering the failure of modern readers to find political meaning here, understands him [the Bard] to have said that the persistence of corruption and war in the world of the nineteenth century is an indictment of the revolution for which Milton bears bardic responsibility.” 15 Blake artfully obscured the political implications of his work. We may be sure that political allegory is present; unfortunately, we have not yet identified enough positive references to be as sure of meaning on this level, as we are of meaning on the level of biographical allegory.

There is much more in the first fourteen plates of Milton than I have managed to comment on, even in passing. However, I hope I have demonstrated a little of how the figures in the poem reach in all directions: how they may represent real persons in history and in Blake’s own life, and simultaneously how they represent the psychological forces which animated those persons, and which Blake knew intimately and wrestled with, because they were component parts of his own psyche.

15. Prophet Against Empire, p. 426.
All the implications of the event which Blake allegorized by saying that Milton entered into his foot must have been extremely traumatic for Blake. The kind of psychological crisis he underwent is conveyed to us by parallel full page pictures: one labelled “William” showing a falling star approaching a man’s left foot, and another, much darker, labelled “Robert,” showing a falling star approaching a man’s right foot. The pictures are very nearly mirror images of each other, and both men are collapsing backward as if struck dead. Since we know Robert did die, the pictures seem to imply that the inward events symbolized by the descent of Milton struck William Blake with a critical intensity like that of death.

However, death is necessary to rebirth. After this experience Blake could begin again. He could condemn, and yet forgive, men whom he had once revered—such as Hayley and Napoleon. Without abandoning his earlier libertarian ideals, he could abandon hope for their achievement through violence. And he could develop his growing conviction that only through combining artistic vision with the continuous mutual forgiveness of sins could salvation be found.

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16. Plates 32 and 37, Blake Trust facsimile; also see *The Illuminated Blake*, pp. 248, 253.