

**John Milton, William Blake and the History of Individualism**

Claire Mary Colebrook

Doctor of Philosophy

University of Edinburgh

1992



Abstract of Thesis:  
John Milton, William Blake and the  
History of Individualism

The justification of "the ways of God to man" in *Paradise Lost* draws upon a history of classical and Christian theories of justice. According to these theories, justice is a *virtue* and has less to do with positive law than it does with individual wisdom. These theories of justice as a virtue are conceptually dependent upon the doctrine of the Platonic/Christian soul and a certain form of pre-modern individualism. In response to the emergent modern individualism of his day Milton asserted a neo-Platonic conception of truth and order. According to this metaphysical theory, the individual, because he or she is endowed with a soul, can attain knowledge of a transcendent and eternal realm of truth through private contemplation.

Although Romanticism has been seen by some critics, such as Harold Bloom, to promulgate a modern form of individualism, this thesis will argue that William Blake's poetry challenges both Milton's traditional doctrine of the individual soul with its personal relationship to God and the modern concept of subjectivity.

Historians of ideas are united in locating the emergence of modern individualism in the seventeenth century with modern individualism being a hallmark of capitalist and increasingly secular societies. This modern form of individualism is rejected by both Blake and Milton, but whereas Milton challenges modern individualism by reasserting an earlier hierarchical individualism, Blake sees individualism itself as the unifying characteristic of a great spiritual and cultural decline.

## Table of Contents

	page
List of Abbreviations	1
Preface	2
Chapter One: Individualism, the Soul and Reason	8
Chapter Two: <i>Comus, Samson Agonistes, Paradise Lost and Paradise Regain'd</i>	70
Chapter Three: Milton on Gender	122
Chapter Four: Milton, Blake and the Theory of Contraries	150
Chapter Five: From <i>The Marriage of Heaven and Hell</i> to <i>The Four Zoas</i>	170
Chapter Six: <i>The Four Zoas, Milton and Jerusalem</i>	199
Conclusion	258
Works Cited	264

**List of Abbreviations:**

CPW            John Milton. *Complete Prose Works of John Milton*. Ed. Don M. Wolfe et al. 8 vols. New Haven: Yale University Press. 1953-82.

John Milton. *The Poetical Works of John Milton*. Ed. Helen Darbishire. London: Oxford University Press, 1958.

PL                *Paradise Lost*

PR                *Paradise Regain'd*

SA                *Samson Agonistes*

COM              *A Maske presented at Ludlow Castle, 1634.*

William Blake. *The Complete Poetry and Prose*. Rev. ed. Ed. David Erdman. New York: Anchor, 1988.

NNR              *There is No Natural Religion*

ARO              *All Religions are One*

Thel              *The Book of Thel*

FR                *The French Revolution*

MHH              *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*

VDA              *Visions of the Daughters of Albion*

America          *America a Prophecy*

Urizen            *The [First] Book of Urizen*

Europe           *Europe a Prophecy*

SL                *The Song of Los*

Ahania           *The Book of Ahania*

BL                *The Book of Los*

FZ                *The Four Zoas*

M                 *Milton a Poem in 2 Books*

VLJ              *A Vision of the Last Judgment*

J                 *Jerusalem: The Emanation of the Giant Albion*

## Preface

The subject of this thesis is the historical relationship between two poets - John Milton and William Blake - and is less a study of influence than an exercise in the history of ideas. Indeed, this thesis will challenge the standard picture of poetic influence which has operated in discussions of Blake's relationship to Milton. The most influential Blake/Milton criticism to date (the work of Joseph Wittreich) has set itself the task of defining a "line of vision" which supposedly connects the two poets across history and diverges from its course only to impose the occasional correction to a unified vision.

This emphasis on continuity and shared vision began in 1935 when the relationship between Blake and Milton received full-length treatment in Saurat's *Blake and Milton*. Saurat begins his study from biographical similarities and bases his work around one particular similarity between the two poets - their dualism, a feature which Saurat had identified as central to Milton's work in his study *Milton: Man and Thinker*. Relying heavily upon perceived similarities between Blake and Milton he identifies a "powerful egotism" that both writers were seen to possess.<sup>1</sup> Saurat then undertakes an examination of the life circumstances of both poets and shows the ways in which biographical similarities produced poetry of the same tone. For example, he sees all the beliefs and efforts of the two poets as "owing to pride"<sup>2</sup> and then argues that this produces a certain type of poetry in which "Milton is . . . the veritable hero of *Paradise Lost*" and "Blake is the hero of his Prophetic Books."<sup>3</sup> Any differences between the two poets are explained, also biographically, as due to "a lack of self-control" on the part of Blake. There is no distinction in kind between the two poets, so that the "different circumstances modif[y] the garb rather than the essentials."<sup>4</sup> Neither historical circumstances nor particular differences of belief are considered as meaningful in dealing with the relationship between Blake and Milton. If Milton's texts appear to privilege reason more than those of Blake, Saurat attributes this to the greater ability of the earlier poet to control his passions: "Milton's high idea of himself led

him to keep a firm control over his nature." In assuming that the two poets write from the same basic impulse Saurat is the first in a long line of critics who will read Blake as a modified repetition of the earlier poet "with only differences of degree."<sup>5</sup> S. Foster Damon's work on Blake, and more particularly his brief article on Blake and Milton, also adopts Saurat's dichotomised view of the two poets, claiming that differences between them are due to a greater emphasis on passion rather than reason in the later poet.<sup>6</sup>

The major contemporary Blake/Milton critic, Joseph Wittreich, explicitly articulates his critical approach within theories of prophecy and eschatology. According to Wittreich, the true prophet is impersonal, other-worldly and a participant in the transcendent Word rather than its creator:

Isolated from the visionary line, the prophet is speechless; touching it he becomes articulate, even to the point of engaging (as Milton does with Spenser, and Blake with Milton) in corrective criticism. This corrective function is validated by the fact that, while prophets communicate with one another, they all derive their vision from Christ; they are all ministers of the Word.<sup>7</sup>

This concept of "corrective" criticism is then used by Wittreich and other commentators to discuss Blake's illustrations of Milton. Pamela Dunbar, for example, argues that "instead of making any radical statements of his texts he [Blake] confined himself to releasing the insights which he considered to be hidden beneath them."<sup>8</sup> Bette Charlene Werner sees Blake's illustrations as a "rethinking of Milton's themes, in which the insights that he sees as true are isolated, while the ideas he regards as confinements or distortions are rejected."<sup>9</sup> She thereby characterises the later poet's strategy as a process of sifting through visionary and non-visionary elements of the earlier poet: "In illustrating Milton's works, Blake can be seen then to first remove the veiling errors and then to affirm the essential verities that he finds."<sup>10</sup> Such an argument presupposes that Milton's works contained a latent truth or "essential verities" which became distorted in their literary manifestation. Such distortions supposedly stemmed from this

essential truth being brought within a personal, contingent or historical articulation. Blake then supposedly "frees" the vision from its temporal vagaries in order to bring Milton's vision into line with its actual intention. If Blake is seen to offer any counter argument, this is not interpreted as a difference as such, but rather as a making manifest of what Milton articulated unwittingly, unconsciously or only partially. According to Stephen Behrendt:

Hence Blake wishes to liberate Milton's vision, not by changing it radically, but by expressing it in its original, unfettered state, free of its encumbrances, revealing it in its original glory.<sup>11</sup>

According to Stephen Behrendt, Blake's illustrations release the eternal meaning in texts which have fallen into temporality. For Behrendt "corrective criticism" is a process whereby "illustrations concentrate upon the enduring vision implicit in Milton's poetry regardless of - and sometimes in Blake's case in spite of - the time and place in which that poetry was being read and discussed."<sup>12</sup> Wittreich, eventually, sees Blake's work, not even as correction but rather as an expansion of Milton's project: "*Jerusalem* is not a correction of Milton's vision but an extension and amplification of it, an envisioning of the universal redemption that *Paradise Regained* and *Milton* presage."<sup>13</sup> It cannot be denied that the idea of prophecy and the tradition of apocalypse were important to both Blake and Milton. However, there is a difference between identifying a theory of meaning as a subject in a series of works and employing that theory to read those works.

An alternative to Wittreich's notion of the "line of vision" is provided by Harold Bloom's concept of the struggle involved in dealing with precursor poets. Bloom's theory of poetic influence depends largely upon a certain reading of Milton's Satan, a figure he sees as the "archetype of the modern poet at his strongest."<sup>14</sup> The presuppositions of Bloom's theory of influence are in fact founded upon the values the figure of Satan embodies. Bloom describes the Satanic anxiety as the inability to deal with the fallen condition of poetry - that the poet will never be absolutely autonomous: "For the poet is condemned to learn his profoundest yearnings through an awareness of *other selves*."<sup>15</sup>

In contrast to these views of literary influence, this thesis will examine what I see as the fundamentally *opposed* philosophical presuppositions of Milton and Blake. In so doing, one of the implicit challenges will be to question Harold Bloom's theory of influence in which poets, particularly Romantic poets, play out an oedipus complex against their father poet (usually Milton). Like the theorists of a "line of vision" Bloom discounts the historical context of particular poets and then imposes a twentieth century Freudian conception of self upon the Romantics. According to Bloom, Romantic self-consciousness is epitomised by Milton's Satan; the Romantic poets themselves are analogous to the rebelling Satan. In contrast I will argue that such a definition actually applies least of all to Blake, who challenges the conception of selfhood in both its traditional and modern forms, as well as the philosophical presuppositions which ground those forms of individualism.

This study will therefore draw upon several major works in the history of ideas which examine the emergence of the concept of subjectivity from the older forms of Christian individualism. In order to discern the general transition from Milton's seventeenth century to Blake's modern world, important differences between various historians of ideas will unavoidably be missed. However, as my main area of focus will be Milton's and Blake's response to the ideas of their time, a general picture of this history of ideas will show how Milton and Blake considered their world without unduly emphasising the debates over the actual character of that world.

The main conceptual opposition which this thesis explores is the grounding dichotomy of Platonic philosophy: the distinction between this world of matter and the other world of transcendent forms. This opposition is at the basis of the difference between pre-modern transcendent definitions of the self and modern concepts of the worldly subject. It is also the opposition which grounds a history of debate over the relationship between the transcendent affairs of the church and its relation to the temporal state - or between divine law and positive law.



Furthermore, this opposition has been inextricably intertwined with the definition of gender in Western philosophy; the bodily or feminine is associated with material mundanity while masculinity is aligned with rationality and transcendence. Blake's most famous statements about Milton, in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, occur in a context in which it is declared that without contraries there is no progression. The history of certain conceptual dichotomies, their hierarchical ordering, and the concomitant definitions of the self will therefore be the context against which Blake's response to Milton is set.

- 1 Denis Saurat, *Blake and Milton*, (London: Stanley Nott, 1935) 12.
- 2 Saurat 18.
- 3 Saurat 17.
- 4 Saurat 9.
- 5 Saurat 20.
- 6 S. Foster Damon, "Blake and Milton," *The Divine Vision: Studies in the Poetry and Art of William Blake* ed. Vivian de Sola Pinto (London: Gollancz, 1957) 91-96.
- 7 J.A. Wittreich, introduction, *Milton and the Line of Vision*, ed. J.A. Wittreich (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1975) xv-xvi.
- 8 Pamela Dunbar, *William Blake's Illustrations to the Poetry of Milton*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980) 5.
- 9 Bette Charlene Werner, *Blake's Vision of the Poetry of Milton: Illustrations to Six Poems* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1986) 17.
- 10 Werner 19.
- 11 Stephen C. Behrendt, *The Moment of Explosion: Blake and the Illustration of Milton* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983) 8.
- 12 Behrendt 5.
- 13 Wittreich, *Line of Vision* 259.
- 14 Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973) 19.
- 15 Bloom, *Anxiety* 26.

**Chapter One:**  
**Individualism, the Soul and Reason.**

The seventeenth century is considered one of the most important periods for the history of ideas. While the decline of feudalism, scholasticism and religion was already well under way by the Renaissance, it is in seventeenth-century writers such as Hobbes, Descartes and Locke that the flourishing of capitalism, bourgeois humanism, economic thought, science and modern philosophy truly attain their expression. According to various historians of ideas, the shift from feudalism to capitalism entails a new way of seeing; relations between persons which were initially political become economic. That is, from *polis* - being an expression of the self in a social context - we shift to system or mechanism - which is a collection of selves. There is a move from unity to plurality, from a closed interacting organism to an open mechanism, from a theistically centred theory of knowledge to an evidential epistemology, from a system of innate value to exchange value and from a world of various determinate essences to a world of uniform matter. In examining this movement in the history of thought I will refer primarily to Martin Heidegger and Louis Dumont although other writers - such as Alexandre Koyre, Karl Popper, A.O. Lovejoy, Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer and more recently, Hans Blumenberg - have also stressed the importance of the seventeenth century as the period in which modern ways of seeing are established.<sup>1</sup> By examining Milton, and later Blake, within the context of modern thought it will become evident that both poets react against the movement towards modern "open" societies (although in different ways). Milton reinforces and rejuvenates the pre-modern world-view while Blake sees both the modern and pre-modern ways of seeing as symptomatic of the same loss of vision.

Martin Heidegger's distinction between the modern "mathematical" conception of being and the ancient and scholastic world-view depends upon a certain reading of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and Descartes's *Meditations*.<sup>2</sup> What follows is a summary of Heidegger's conclusions and the significance of

Heidegger's thought for the conclusions of other historians of ideas. Heidegger's reading is important for our study insofar as Descartes's work is seen by Heidegger as providing both the foundation of modern metaphysics as well as the definitive conception of subjectivity - a concept which has been important for studies of Romanticism and the Romantic poet's relation to Milton.<sup>3</sup> Heidegger's analysis of the emergence of the concept of the "subject" is situated within, and seen as dependent upon, the Cartesian conception of the world. In order to clarify the meaning of the Cartesian project Heidegger first delineates the ancient conception of the world against which Descartes, Galileo and Newton react. Although Heidegger cites Aristotle as exemplary of this pre-modern conception, I will be situating Milton within a Platonic metaphysic; the point to be drawn, nevertheless, is the same. Heidegger's reading of Aristotle sets out to demonstrate a particular world-view which is pre-modern in general and this is my purpose in reading Plato. The differences, then, between Plato and Aristotle (and they are by no means insignificant) are secondary in this case to what the two have in common.<sup>4</sup> In fact, it is the general background and shared metaphysic, despite the differences, which are important. In reading Milton with this background in mind I hope to demonstrate, not that Milton is Platonic nor that he is Aristotelian, but rather that he is, by and large, pre-modern and that those aspects of his thought which at first seem particularly modern - his individualism - are actually argued from the point of view of a pre-modern logic.<sup>5</sup>

Aristotle's discussion of nature in the *Metaphysics* delineates various categories of being. Being is by no means uniform. Each entity has its own character and its own way of movement. Heavenly bodies, for example, possess spherical movement in accord with their nature. The entity's movement and way of being is defined immanently, in accord with its nature. Hence, we cannot use the word "being" univocally. (When this idea was taken up by the Scholastics it was claimed that there was only one being that truly is, that needs no other being in order to be - God - and that all other being exists analogously.) What is important here is the belief that each entity has its own immanent particularity and quality. When

we look at Descartes's ontology this picture will shift dramatically, but for the moment it will be useful to see how Aristotle's idea of nature (which became the foundation of mediaeval ideas of the great chain of being) can be related in its logic to the Platonic conception of the soul, the forms and virtue.

According to the *Phaedo* the soul's relation to truth can only be distorted by the body; the soul's true way of being is fulfilled only when it acts independently from the body in a state of total autonomy:

And thought is best when the mind is gathered into herself and none of these things trouble her - neither sounds nor sights nor pains nor any pleasure, - when she takes leave of the body, and has as little to do with it, when she has no bodily sense or desire, but is aspiring after true being.<sup>6</sup>

The soul, therefore, has a certain character and pre-determined way of being which ought not depend on any other being. Knowledge is essentially attained through contemplation which, though private, yields access to a universal realm of truth. Activity in the world is primarily social and political (the virtuous citizen of the republic is other-directed) but the aim and foundation of action is the transcendent realm of truth which can only be contaminated if confused with the shadows of this world. The soul is therefore radically individual in its other-worldly directedness while dictating a distinctly social, collectivist conception of selfhood in the world. The connection between the two realms (the other-worldly and this world) is virtue - which can only be known in private contemplation but which forms the foundation of political, moral and social being.<sup>7</sup> The soul in this world must be purified from the body and this can be achieved through contemplation. The soul may ascend towards transcendence or become embodied if captured by the desires of the world.<sup>8</sup>

When Socrates discusses virtue in the *Phaedo* he insists that virtue cannot be defined in relation to anything else. Like the soul, which has its own essence distinguishing it from all other beings, virtue has its own mode of being. Virtue is not only immanently good with its own particular value; it is also outside or prior to any conception of economy, as it is that for which nothing else can be

exchanged. (This rejection of economy in the discussion of virtue will become important when we discuss Louis Dumont's theory of pre-modern human being as *Homo hierarchicus* as opposed to modern *Homo oeconomicus*.) Socrates is at pains to point out that virtue must not be valued for any other end, that unless it is sought for its own sake it is not truly virtue; its being is incompatible with its existence within any system of exchange. Virtue cannot be defined within a *quantitative* conception of value; it has a *quality* which hierarchises all other beings. It is not a value amongst others but rather the foundation of value itself. In his discussion of the contemplation which leads to the knowledge of virtue Socrates emphasises the importance of moral knowledge; for the wisdom of virtue transcends any economy of value:

Yet the exchange of one fear or pleasure or pain for another fear or pleasure or pain, and of the greater for the less, as if they were coins, is not the true exchange of virtue . . . is there not one true currency for which all things ought to be exchanged - and that is wisdom? And only in wisdom's company do courage, temperance, justice - in a word, true virtue - really exist; nor does it make any difference whether fears or pleasures or other similar goods or evils are present or not. The virtue which is severed from wisdom and depends on these exchanges, is a painted show of virtue only, nor is there any freedom or health or truth in her; but the reality consists in a purification from all these things, and in temperance, and justice, and courage; and wisdom herself is a sort of purification.<sup>9</sup>

Because virtue is the characteristic activity of the soul, Socrates emphasises the importance of moral knowledge, for moral knowledge enables the soul to act in accord with its disposition to virtue. Furthermore, if the soul is inclined towards virtue and virtue is the basis of all value, then true moral value is internal to the self and located in the predisposition of the soul. Similarly, Aristotle's conception of *eudaimonia* in his *Ethics* is defined as "an activity of the soul in accordance with virtue" (1098a-270).<sup>10</sup>

Despite the fact that Aristotle rejects the Platonic doctrine of forms he still retains the conception of each entity having its own specific mode of being. However, for Aristotle transcendence (the good to which we are directed) is social

(in the form of the *polis*) rather than metaphysical (the realm of the forms). Nevertheless, both the Aristotelian teleological conception of being and the Platonic doctrine of forms and essences have this in common: the behaviour and true activity of a being (be it the human soul, a natural being or a celestial body) is intrinsic to its ontological mode. It is neither arbitrary nor extrinsic. The soul has a characteristic activity and that activity is virtue. Virtue cannot be sought for any other end; for it is the natural end which the soul seeks.

When Platonism entered Christianity with Augustine it was primarily the doctrine of the soul which was imported.<sup>11</sup> One characteristic of the soul (which Augustine derives from Plotinus and which was held by all the pagan Platonists) is that the soul is in its essential nature divine, albeit in a subordinate degree. The soul itself is neither fallen nor corrupted<sup>12</sup> and the character of the life of the soul in the world determines whether the soul will turn downwards towards the corporeal or become divine via the philosophic life of contemplation. Augustine gives an account of the journey of the soul; its destination is determined by its divine character, while the necessity of its journeying stems from Augustine's insistence that the soul is a creature and not a part of God.<sup>13</sup> Divinity is, therefore, both the soul's true essence, but also something *other*. The soul refers outside itself (to God) to become what it truly is: "For God wisheth to make thee a God; not by nature as He is son is Whom He hath begotten; but by His Gift and Adoption" (*Sermon* 166.4).<sup>14</sup> It is Satan's untimely anticipation of his divinity in *Paradise Lost*, the forgetting of this difference between divinity by nature and divinity by adoption which constitutes his fall (as well as the later fall of Eve). What characterises Augustine specifically on this matter in the history of Christian thought is his unambiguous emphasis upon the cause of sin arising from the will, rather than the body:

For the body's decay, which weighs down the soul, is not the cause of the first sin but the punishment for it, nor is it the flesh, which is subject to decay, that makes the soul sinful; it is the sinful soul that makes the flesh subject to decay.<sup>15</sup>

It is not by having flesh, which the devil does not have, but by living according to his own self, that is according to man, that man has become like the devil. For the devil too chose to live according to his own self when he did not adhere to the truth, and thus the falsehood that he told had its source not in God but in himself.<sup>16</sup>

When we examine Milton's conception of the soul we can see that he too divides the inner self into two realms and that the worldly element of the self is not merely the body but that willful aspect of the individual enslaved to the body. Satan's reiteration of the power of will in *Paradise Lost* is also illuminated by this distinction between will and reason; for the will enacts the merely bodily desires and passions if not regulated by reason. Nevertheless, despite the will's tendency to tie reason to the body, Augustine enables a departure from the Pauline doctrine that the flesh itself is an impediment to the activity of the soul. Only when the will has enslaved reason to the body is the body a threat to virtue; as long as the will acts rationally the body has a rightful place in human being. Augustine's re-evaluation enables the possibility of the hierarchisation of the tripartite soul rather than the radical dualism of the early scriptures.<sup>17</sup> In *Christian Doctrine* Milton envisages the redemption of the entire aspect of human existence so that even the body will be brought to the condition of the soul; for body and soul are not two different substances: "the whole man is soul, and the soul the man" (CPW.6.318).

By acknowledging the importance of a subordination of the body to reason the Milton of *Comus* demands, not a denial of the body, but the need for its integration with spirit. The dualist of the masque is Comus who has separated the desires of the body from the desires of the spirit and hence advocates unbridled corporeal hedonism. For Comus, the only alternative to corporeal excess is total asceticism. The Lady, on the other hand, overcomes the opposition between excess and abstinence with the doctrine of temperance which, as Arthur Barker notes, opposes the "ideal integration of nature and spirit to the perverse segregation of them in favour of corrupted nature which Comus would effect."<sup>18</sup>



At this point it is necessary to remark that integration and subordination - a constant theme in Milton's unremitting dualism - still maintained the inferiority of the body, despite the worth granted to the body through the Augustinian attribution of sin to the will. As we learn from *Christian Doctrine*, this is because Milton took the idea of humanity as being made in God's image to mean that the human form itself was in some sense divine. Nevertheless, any value attributed to the body still took into account the divine/human dichotomy and only attributed worth to those corporeal aspects which displayed divine resemblance. Milton's qualified acceptance of nature and the body rested upon the belief that these forms retained vestiges of divinity in the evidence of their creation.

The Augustinian derivation of sin from the will begins to place a spiritual/temporal dualism within the immanence of the self. The will is the aspect of the inner self enslaved to the body while the inwardness of reason is directed towards spiritual aims. A consequence of this theory of the inwardly divided self is that certain forms of inner reflection have a truly ethical and Christian value - divine contemplation, a directedness towards the soul and the activity of virtue - whilst other forms are a positive disruption of the harmony of the tripartite soul and represent the beginning of embodiment. Satan's excessive self-regard is focussed on the will and autonomy; it is a self-directed rather than other-directed form of reflection, concerned with power rather than justice, the desires of the will rather than those of the soul.

We can see that the character of Augustine's individualism has this much in common with Platonism: the soul has a *character* which determines its proper attitude to the world. Knowledge is partly, but not totally, receptivity. What is given to the mind can only become knowledge when brought into line with the soul's inner light. As Etienne Gilson notes, for both Plato and Augustine "the manner in which the mind arrives at truth does not allow us to assume that the mind is the author of truth."<sup>19</sup> In Augustine the light of truth is at first inner and individual; the Word illuminates the mind which then becomes the source of

agreement between minds.<sup>20</sup> Insofar as Augustine can be seen to exemplify Christian Platonism we can say that, like Plato, the soul is both central (as our point of reference for attaining truth and the moral life) and transcendent (as being in the world but having its nature elsewhere). Where Augustine's Christianity emphasises individualism is in the personalising of the inner light; transcendent value is now no longer derived from the soul as such but from the soul's relation to God.

After Augustine an increasingly greater dichotomy between the spiritual and temporal spheres opens in Christian thought. The world is in no sense divine and even less so the stage upon which divinity can be attained. The possibility of access to transcendence is located in the individual (rather than an individual as an active member of the *polis* as in the Ancients). In Augustine the true direction for this individual light is away from the world and up to God. When attention to the world is increased in Thomistic philosophy and justified as a step on the way towards divine contemplation, the legacy of Augustine's turn from Platonism remains - the world is never essentially representative of other-worldly values, only a means to attain that end as the soul is directed away from the world. When Aquinas appropriated Aristotle it was the picture of nature - the hierarchy of being - which he incorporated. For Aquinas the chain of being led to preparation for the state of grace. The institution of the Church was of central importance to the Thomistic hierarchy. The worldly hierarchy of divine orders and its institution of sacraments was justified by the fallen nature of the world and the necessity of ascent by degrees. The Church and its role in temporal affairs was justified by the necessity to bridge the gap between different orders of being. For Milton, however, the inner light and not the institution of the Church, forms the basis for all knowledge, activity and thought. The soul can and should have a valid role in worldly life provided its other-worldly nature is never lost from view.

While rejecting the necessity for the hierarchical orders of the Church, Milton retains the concept of *ontological* hierarchy and all the theoretical

framework this brings in train. There is a constant stress in Milton upon the importance of subordinating human to divine being and within human being subordinating the body to the soul. This hierarchy is justified because it is dictated by Scripture and the power of reason. On the other hand, the intra-worldly hierarchies characteristic of feudal government and the mediaeval Church have no basis in reason and are arbitrarily instituted by human law for the purposes of temporal gain. Indeed, the fact that material rather than spiritual ends are served by these laws testifies to their invalidity. As C.S. Lewis notes, the "idea, therefore, that there is any logical inconsistency, or even any emotional disharmony, in asserting the monarchy of God and rejecting the monarchy of Charles II is a confusion."<sup>21</sup>

Thomistic thought justified an element of mundane law within Church government because it stressed a gradual hierarchy; the Church could be seen to govern an order of temporal decrees building up to ecclesiastical government. The Miltonic conception, however, precludes any such compromise with a less than divine law. Because divinity is within the soul and needs no other mediation than the gift of grace the compromise with fallen law is unjustifiable; all law should serve the purposes of the attainment of freedom of spirit. Aquinas could justify positive human law because the world could have its own ends. Milton sees the world as directly answerable to spiritual goals and hence all worldly means should be deployed to that end. Here we can see that the Platonic character of Milton's thought provides an answer to Roman Catholic/Scholastic Aristotelianism. Milton retains the founding idea of Aristotelian/Thomistic ontology - that each being has its own essence. However, Milton rejects the notion of hierarchy in Aquinas to the extent that he no longer accepts the *political* conclusions which that concept served to justify. He limits the idea of hierarchy to apply not to relations within the world (as it had for Aquinas) but only to relations between the different degrees of being Milton acknowledges - God, the soul, the will and the corporeal. Milton makes a similar move in his reading of Augustine. For example, he rejects the concept of sacral kingship of *The City of God* and for the

most part the idea of relative Natural Law whilst drawing heavily on that part of Augustine which did not essentially concern the structure of the institution of the Church - the concept of the soul as the inner light of reason. In addition, the metaphysical presuppositions of the ancients are retained by Milton. When Milton argues for the radical individualism which acknowledges no other source of truth than Scripture and the inner light, he employs concepts of eternal truth, the transcendence of the soul and a strict hierarchy of value which subordinates worldly being to the divine. For Milton there is still an eternal, centred and single conception of truth. Furthermore, the concept of the individual employed by Milton is that of the Platonic soul defined in Christian thought by Augustine. If we want to examine Milton's place in Church history we would have to situate him within the modern Protestant impulse of the seventeenth century; his conclusions are those of his contemporaries although his means for arguing towards those conclusions are distinctly pre-modern. When we come to read Milton's poetry it will be seen that the definition of justice in *Paradise Lost* and the concept of virtue in *Comus* depend upon this pre-modern metaphysic.

By situating Milton within a neo-Platonic tradition my concern is not so much with particular issues or textual allusions. What I will be examining, rather, is a type of world-view which historians of ideas have characterised in a number of ways. It is the logic and character of this *Weltanschauung* which I wish to examine insofar as Plato can be seen as both an exemplar and founder of a certain way of defining being and value. Louis Dumont has defined the pre-modern world-view as "hierarchical" and refers to "*Homo hierarchicus*" as opposed to "*Homo oeconomicus*" or "*Homo aequalitas*."<sup>22</sup> Ferdinand Toennies refers to *Gesellschaft* as opposed to *Gemeinschaft*;<sup>23</sup> Karl Popper and Alexandre Koyre have called the world-view "closed" as opposed to "open." These conclusions can be related to the way Heidegger defines modern "mathematical" thinking in opposition to earlier scholastic thought. In all these historians, with the possible exception of Popper,<sup>24</sup> there is a unity of argument. Heidegger's thought deals with metaphysics, Koyre's with cosmology, Popper's with politics and

ethics and Toennies's with sociology. Within these areas the logic is interrelated and structurally homologous. All theorists argue for the occurrence of a shift from a world seen as an ordered and meaningful whole, to a world reckoned to be no greater than the sum of its parts. Dumont's analysis of modern "economic" ideology works on both a literal and figurative level. Alongside the foundation of the discipline of economics there occurs a new way of seeing in which the world is conceived "economically." All these theorists are united in seeing the shift away from the traditional "way of seeing" as occurring in the seventeenth century.

According to the French anthropologist, Louis Dumont, the structure of modern ideology can be defined as founded upon two interrelated concepts - the concept of individualism and the concept of economy. Although Dumont has noted the existence of what he refers to as "other-worldly individualism" in the beginnings of Christian thought and in the Hindu caste system, he sees "intra-worldly individualism" as characteristic of modern, equalitarian,<sup>25</sup> economic societies. Pre-modern or traditional societies, on the other hand, are typified by "holism."<sup>26</sup> Dumont defines the individual of modern societies as an "independent, autonomous, and thus (essentially) non-social moral being."<sup>27</sup> The independence of the individual in modern societies is intra-worldly. There is, therefore, a loss of transcendence which completely isolates the individual who now shares no common arena of other-worldly value and whose being is now defined in a totally mundane sense. With the loss of hierarchy or holism (where the system of worldly organisation is given meaning by some transcendent source) the meaning of each entity is defined through intra-systemic relations:

The moment hierarchy is eliminated, subordination has to be explained as the mechanical result of interaction between individuals and authority degrades itself into power.<sup>28</sup>

This shift from authority to power is a result of the loss of transcendence. Ontological difference had previously been derived from a natural hierarchy which was organised by a higher presence. Now, difference results from the inter-relation of individual entities. There is no natural authority and so order

must be generated through power. Social order, therefore, becomes extrinsic because the elements within society have no immanent meaning, nor is there an innate structure to the totality; structure must be imposed. Society and law are no longer the expression of persons but an imposed construct. In his discussion of Hobbes Dumont sees the loss of hierarchy as concomitant with the lack of transcendent ends:

. . . the hierarchical ordering of the social body is absent because the State is not oriented towards any end which would transcend it, but is subject only to itself.<sup>29</sup>

Persons are, therefore, not essentially social but rather pre-social units with no law-determining essence. Dumont sees the beginning of modern individualism as the culmination of the progressive mundanisation of the Christian soul: "individualism was characteristic of Christian thought from the start; the evolution was from other-worldly individualism to more and more this-worldly individualism."<sup>30</sup> I want to challenge Dumont's concept of "evolution" and show how the Christian soul did not so much *evolve* into the modern this-worldly individual of bourgeois economics; rather, the Christian soul in its constantly shifting definitions, always retained some level of transcendence but encountered, in the seventeenth century, the individual of liberal theory and became contaminated and confused with its mundanity. What is noted by Dumont is the importance of the English Revolution in the development of this new form of individualism:

The equalitarian claim was extended from the religious to the political sphere in the course of the English Revolution (1640-60), especially by the Levellers. Although they were swiftly defeated, the Levellers had had time to draw the full political consequences of the idea of the equality of Christians. The Revolution itself affords one more example of the movement by which supernatural truth comes to be applied to earthly institutions.<sup>31</sup>

Despite the "swift defeat" of the Levellers, they were a remarkably influential movement and their conception of the individual owes as much to a general movement of secularisation as it does to the tradition of the Christian

individual. When we come to examine the Levellers in relation to the theory of what C.B. MacPherson refers to as "possessive individualism" we will see that both politically and metaphysically the Levellers were not just developing the Christian soul but also bringing in a new ontology within which to consider persons. Their idea of equality was *not* in fact reducible to its Christian counterpart; what separated the Levellers from the early Christians was the theory of property and labour upon which the Leveller demands were based. And it is in this respect that their thought differs most significantly from that of Milton, who never adopted those foundational concepts of Lilburne's which are constitutive of modern liberal individualism. Still, even disregarding this challenge to Dumont's claim regarding the origins of the modern individual, his analysis is helpful as it sets out to examine the conceptual preconditions for the emergence of individualism in the ascendance of the notion of "economy." These preconditions will be seen to be analogous to those Heidegger identifies in Cartesian and Newtonian modern science. Both Dumont's idea of the individual and Heidegger's account of the Cartesian subject rest upon the theory that the world is conceived quantitatively in the modern era; that being loses its inner quality and becomes pre-determined by an external, humanly constructed discipline - in Heidegger's account modern science, in Dumont's, modern economics.

According to Dumont, the idea of economics rests upon the "recognition of some raw material, and a specific way of looking at it."<sup>32</sup> This idea of "raw material" is part of a general "equalising" of the world where nature becomes a single "matter" devoid of particularising essences<sup>33</sup> and where meaning and identity are imposed from without. Modern ontology disavows any discernible essential and immanent difference between beings. The departure from the hierarchical order of different beings and essences gives way to the importance of property and ownership and the concomitant notion of equality. This transition occurs because the world is no longer a sphere of distinguished spaces and beings with their own movement and position. Now social structure is imposed by labour and the character of human being is defined in accord with its possibility for

appropriation of raw material. Whereas previously the theory of relative Natural Law could be seen to dictate a pre-given system of ownership and hierarchy, the removal of this vestige of divine law from the world necessitates that social structure be derived from human effort. Therefore, the being of an entity is now defined by its relation to its owner; it becomes capital. This will also have effects on the definition of the owner and we will examine this further when we discuss the theory of "possessive individualism" in Locke. Dumont, summarising Locke's second treatise, refers to the shift in the conception of the world from a hierarchy to a realm of potential capital:

Between men and beasts it is a matter of property or ownership: God has given the earth to the human species for appropriation - and homologously, man is, in the Second Treatise, God's work and property. As for men, there is among them no inherent difference.<sup>34</sup>

Locke's rejection of innate ideas (an idea Blake explicitly challenges) and his metaphor of "tabula rasa" are the psychological counterparts of this political theory. Equality is no longer based on the sanctity of the soul but on the emptying out of individual essence, the depersonalising of the relation with God and the reduction of all relations (between God and persons, between persons and persons) to the relation between owner and property. As Dumont states, Locke denied subordination on the ontological level and reintroduced it on the empirical.<sup>35</sup> In Lockean society social relations have no reason other than themselves, no transcendent justification. The social order does not exist to express justice. The practice of justice (now law) maintains the social system.

Justice is, therefore, also defined in relation to property and the individual, rather than from the view of the social whole. Rights are now determined quantitatively. The individual as a self-contained, pre-social entity receives capital according to the amount of expended labour. A previous system of social and distributive justice attributed rights according to need and the position within the social whole. Dumont concludes that modern juridical relations occur between men and things, "not from the necessities of the social order, but from an intrinsic



property of man as an individual."<sup>36</sup> (And this individualism is the only "intrinsic" property; "man" has no essential being other than his difference from all other individuals.) Property is defined in terms of the individual, as the product of one's labour. Labour is also conceived as alienable property; one is a self insofar as one has this property of labour with which to market. Social being is then derived from this economic fact. Justice is the protection of property, a guarantee against invasion of property by others. It is this analysis which enables Dumont to conclude that "economics as a philosophical category represents the acme of individualism."<sup>37</sup>

Of course, Dumont refers to economics in the sense of a particular discipline but both Cartesianism and aspects of seventeenth-century Protestant individualism are based upon an "economic" ontology in the broader sense. As an ontology, the concept of "economy" provides a metaphor for the process of meaning and beings as such. All being is differentiated with quantitative concepts; the world is a sphere of "raw material;" relations between things are mechanistic and the social order shifts from being an organism to a mechanism. Interestingly enough, we can see this shift in the opening of Hobbes's *Leviathan* where the body politic is described. The concept of mechanism is introduced as a metaphor for the human body itself and so the traditional conception of the social hierarchy as a living organism of interdependent parts subtly shifts to a mechanism of self-contained units:

For what is the *Heart*, but a *Spring*, and the *Nerves*, but so many *Strings*; and the *Joynts*, but so many *Wheeles*, giving motion to the whole Body, such as was intended by the Artificer?<sup>38</sup>

Whereas Platonic ethics rejects any concept of economy, modern ethics sees good as quantifiable (hence the development of utilitarianism). Virtue is now capable of existing within a system of exchange: hence there is a need to ground or justify ethics in relation to other ends<sup>39</sup> (in Hobbes and Locke this is, characteristically, the defense of property). We will now turn to Heidegger's

analysis of the Cartesian conception of the world and see how this relates to Dumont's theory of modern ideology as economic and equalitarian.

### Heidegger's Reading of Descartes:

Heidegger summarises the standard picture of Descartes:

The story of Descartes, who came and doubted and so became a subjectivist, thus grounding epistemology, does give the usual picture; but it is at best only a bad novel, and anything but a story in which the movement of being becomes visible.<sup>40</sup>

Heidegger criticises the standard definition of Descartes as a sceptic. Descartes's project of doubt was not based on *epistemological* scepticism but on a prior ontological demand. This ontological demand stemmed from a "mathematical" conception of being. The "cogito" answers (and is defined by) the logical requirements of this conception of being.

In *Being and Time* Heidegger undertakes a study of the Cartesian conception of "world" and its definition as *res extensa*.<sup>41</sup> Descartes identifies two types of worldly substance. In addition to *res extensa* there is *res cogitans*. (As Husserl said of this Cartesian move, the cogito became a "tag end of the world" because Descartes never *radically* doubted the world; he always assumed that *res cogitans* was a part of the world, a substance.<sup>42</sup>) In admitting these two types of substance Descartes claims that we cannot experience substantiality directly (because it does not affect us); we can only experience substance in its attributes and the primary attribute (upon which all other attributes depend) is extension. It is *this* claim which characterises the Cartesian world and which represents the explication of modern science in its "mathematical" sense. By isolating extension as the primary attribute to which all other "qualities" can be referred, Descartes overturns the Aristotelian conception of different modes of being with different values in favour of a univocal conception of substance.

In order to explain the quality of hardness, for example, Descartes defines this quality as the extent to which an object would move given a certain force. Rather than the quality being seen to inhere in the object, the attribute is defined via the position of the object in space. Even the temporal phenomena of the object's movement is reduced to a spatial explanation as a shift in position. Both temporality and quality are defined in terms of a uniform space. A "soft" object does not change position at the application of a certain force; a "hard" object resists force and hence is moved. A quality of the object is thus referred to the relative space which is the ground of all attributes. Motion (which for Aristotle typified the being of entities - heavenly bodies move spherically for example) is redefined as change of place.

Heidegger sees the Newtonian *lex inertia* (where a body left to itself would continue in a straight line) as the efflorescence of this mathematical conception of being. Entities are determined beforehand to be uniform (so that one can refer generally to "a body left to itself") while motion, which for Descartes was relative, is referred to a general system of points in an absolute space. Absolute space differs from the older conception of closed hierarchy in that points in absolute space are not *places* where an entity *should* be; such points have no character other than their quantitative difference from any other point. Descartes represents the emergence of this uniform principle in the characterisation of the world as *res extensa*. All those other aspects of experience - colour, movement, value and so on - are not seen as different qualities of being. Rather, there is an ideal space containing equal substances to which all these phenomenal attributes are secondary.

It is this uniform character of being which is the condition for the foundation of the cogito. The definition of worldly being as *res extensa* elevates extension as the primary attribute insofar as extension is that in the entity which will remain the same. Shape or colour can change without altering substantiality, the essential attribute of which is extension. The ontological ideal of regarding

that which is constant as the reality of the entity is as old as Platonic metaphysics but the elevation of extension (rather than essence) is modern and mathematical and relies upon attending to a system of measurement rather than the inner being of the entity. By "mathematical" Heidegger refers to a broader ideal of which "mathematics" (in the numerical sense) is but a privileged example. According to Heidegger, "mathematical" for the Greeks meant that which could be known and determined beforehand. The reduction of the world to extension enables the world to be interpreted as a collection of entities which can be determined as substances subject to exact calculation. Subsequently, the ideal of modern metaphysics is the achievement of an axiomatic way of dealing with the world. That is, rather than reference to a source of truth elsewhere, the world must yield its own axiom. But if knowledge is to become axiomatic and certain, it needs a foundation which would be *self-grounding*. According to Heidegger, it is the complete transparence or total self-presence of the cogito which fulfils this demand. There is no otherness in the cogito; it has no divine qualities; there are no innate characteristics inscribed upon it; its *only quality* is its guaranteed presence to all thought. Heidegger isolates the shift in the meaning of the Latin "subjectum" as evidence for this requirement for a first principle which would be self-evident:

One must therefore find such a principle of all positing, i.e., a proposition in which that about which it says something, the *subjectum* (upokeimenon) is not just taken from somewhere else. That underlying subject must as such first emerge for itself in this original proposition and be established.<sup>43</sup>

The Latin "subjectum" originally referred to that which was posited. In the search for a self-grounding axiom on which to base all knowledge, that which is posited must be the same as that which posits. By the "I" taking itself as its "subjectum" all doubt is removed and certainty is attained. That which alone is certain is the Cartesian "subjectum," the modern subject, the self-present "I." The Cartesian subject is therefore the consequence of a certain ontology. Once all matter is reduced to a uniformity capable of being studied "mathematically," the need emerges for a self-grounding axiom upon which to base this mathematics.

This axiom can only be fulfilled by the "I" for the "I" is the only "subjectum" which cannot be doubted; it is the "subjectum" *par excellence*, the subject. This subject is not *human* in its essence but mathematical:

This 'I' which has been raised to be the special *subjectum* on the basis of the mathematical, is, in its sense, nothing 'subjective' at all, in the sense of an incidental quality of just this particular human being. This 'subject' designated is the 'I think'.<sup>44</sup>

The universality of Cartesian subjectivity is therefore set over against the *particularity* of specifically embodied human beings. As an axiom which is self-evident and self-grounding the Cartesian "I" is transparent, uniform, the epistemological condition for a certain conception of being. Insofar as extension needs no other attribute in order to be, it characterises substance. But the study of extension demands the mathematical axiom of the subject. All quality is defined as measurable in terms of a spatial *a priori* which is present to the "I":

Nature is now the realm of the uniform space-time context of motion, which is outlined in the axiomatic project and in which alone bodies can be bodies as a part of it and anchored in it.<sup>45</sup>

While Heidegger situates his reading of Descartes within a broader critique of being as presence, the implications for the general shift between a modern and pre-modern world-view are also significant. The reference of attributes to space conceived not as a system of places but as a system of equal points reduces quality to a quantitative and measurable phenomenon. The world has no significant limit or principle of order because nothing is posited as transcendent to it. The equalising of the world which was the precondition for the economic idea of "raw material" and the individual as potential labourer also grounds the idea of the subject as the recipient of matter. The epistemological definition of subjectivity characterises consciousness as self-presence and transparency: there is no character of subjectivity prior to the subject's self-constitution. Descartes does admit God into his philosophical system in order to bridge the gap between *res extensa* and *res cogitans*. However, God is brought in as a "solution" to a primarily materialistic problem - of how thought can act upon matter. There is

no sense in which the character of *res cogitans* is derived from a conception or definition of God. Cartesianism is a metaphysical explication of an ontology which has as its cultural precondition the broader shift from hierarchic to economic conceptions of being.

Insofar as I am attempting to delineate the conceptions of the self that were current in seventeenth-century thought, it can be seen that Cartesian "subjectivity" differs from the "individual" which is defined in a concrete social human sense. Descartes's "cogito" grounds an ontological project while the "individual" is the consequence of political theory. However, as a means of grounding *res extensa* the primary relation of the cogito is to substance and not to other cogitos. It can consequently be likened to the Lockean individual's definition in relation to property. The seventeenth-century self no longer referred to God or the social whole but to *res extensa* or property. Whereas the Lockean individual, the individual of liberal theory, is world-dependent; the Cartesian subject has at its basis a far greater autonomy. Self-reflection is definitive of subjectivity. The subject becomes a "subject" only insofar as it posits itself. The subject is the paradigm of independent substance and this is revealed in a positing which need not refer in order to be certain. It is because of a complete coincidence of subject ("I") and subject (what is posited) that reflection has value. The distinction between this epistemological reflection and the Platonic/Socratic/Christian ideal of self-reflection should be clear. The earlier form of self-reflection directed itself towards a given transcendence; Cartesian self-reflection constitutes itself as subject. Insofar as Cartesianism is a dualism, it is intra-worldly with *res extensa* and *res cogitans* both being grounded in a conception of substance.

The "economic" character of seventeenth-century individualism and ontology is nowhere better expressed than in Hobbes's conception of the self. For Hobbes the value of a person is not an inherently ethical or theological consideration but is determined by the "price" of the individual's power. Hobbes's

method of defining the social self is, like Locke's, dependent upon the primary value of property and the individual's capacity to appropriate capital:

The Value, or WORTH of a man, is as of all other things, his Price; that is to say, so much as would be given for the use of his Power: and therefore is not absolute; but a thing dependent on the need and judgement of another. . . . And as in other things, so in men, not the seller but the buyer determines the Price. For let a man (as most men do) rate themselves at the highest Value they can; yet their true Value is no more than it is esteemed by others.<sup>46</sup>

The following section is heavily indebted to C.B. MacPherson's book, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism*.<sup>47</sup> In summarising MacPherson's conclusions I will attend mainly to his reading of Locke and the Levellers although MacPherson also considers Hobbes as one of the central theorists of "possessive individualism." The importance of MacPherson's study for our purposes is twofold. One of the most significant claims of MacPherson's book regards the Levellers; far from being the radicals they have traditionally been conceived to be, they actually provide the foundations for liberal economic conceptions of the individual. This will help us to delineate the differences between their political project and that of Milton, whose conclusions may have been similar but whose presuppositions were quite different. Secondly, MacPherson's theory of possessive individualism, in addition to Dumont's work, demonstrates the primacy of the economic category in the seventeenth century and a discarding of the traditional concepts of society. Dumont's theory of *Homo oeconomicus* also relies upon Hobbes and Locke. Hobbes is usually regarded as the founder of liberal political theory insofar as he derives rights and obligations, not from transcendent value but from dissociated individuals. The importance of an historical assessment of Hobbes and Locke and their relation to the more directly influential thought of the Levellers lies in the primacy of the notion of property in their thought.

One of the central differences between the Hobbesian individual and the Christian soul lies in Hobbes's conception of reason. Whereas Augustine had insisted on the unfallen nature of the inner light, Hobbes insists that rationality is

given to human beings in a sullied form. Reason is contaminated with animality; the bodily aspect of human existence cannot be subordinated by reason alone, for reason itself is implicated in corporeal brutishness. Hobbes still retains a dualism between reason and carnality. However, he ceases to believe that the individual can deal with this dualism rationally. Reason itself cannot overcome the recalcitrance of the body. Hence Hobbes's theory necessitates the construction of an imposed society. What characterises human being is not a soul, grace or a privileged place in the great chain of being. Humanity is distinguished from animal nature only by the capacity of speech. Truth and falsehood are not determined by transcendent value. Truth is a property of statements (and their relation to the world). The Aristotelian belief in the naturally social condition of human beings must be done away with, for what is natural is brutish and only by acting in opposition to nature can pure reason be achieved. Social order must now be an imposed limit and run counter to the natural condition of human desires. The modern idea of freedom as an assertion of right against the State follows from this sociology, whereas freedom for the Ancients (and also for Milton) had entailed following a law recognised as a social good.

In discussing the individualism of the seventeenth century in general, MacPherson points to the common emphasis upon possession of property. He argues that it is this factor which marks Hobbes and Locke as modern and constitutes their main legacy to political thought today. The historical significance of MacPherson's claim will become more important when we come to consider Blake, as it is this problem initiated by seventeenth-century bourgeois liberalism which Blake's particular humanism sets out to overcome. It is the stress on possession as the foundation of rights that forms the unifying strand in modern political theory; this emphasis is concomitant with a departure from traditional holism:

. . . the difficulties of modern liberal-democratic theory lie deeper than [has] been thought, . . . the original seventeenth-century individualism contained the central difficulty, which lay in its possessive quality. Its possessive quality is found in its conception of the individual as essentially



the proprietor of his own person or capacities, owing nothing to society for them. The individual was seen neither as a moral whole, nor as part of a larger social whole, but as an owner of himself. . . . Political society becomes a calculated device for the protection of this property and for the maintenance of an orderly relation of exchange.<sup>48</sup>

Hobbes's premise that human beings are self-moving and self-directed mechanisms does away with the possibility of anything like a soul which could be the foundation of virtue. Similarly, a social structure which is a site for edification and the practice of virtue also has no place in Hobbes's theory. Consequently, the distinction upon which Socratic ethics is based - the difference between true virtue (with its internal benefits) and the mere appearance of virtue (and its contingent rewards) - is rejected. Political theory is now directed solely towards the achievement of external benefits. Virtue is now no longer an essential good intrinsic to the soul but is defined relatively. Consequently, even the practice of virtue is viewed competitively by Hobbes:

Vertue generally, in all sorts of subjects, is somewhat that is valued for eminence; and consisteth in comparison. For if all things were equally in all men, nothing would be prized.<sup>49</sup>

MacPherson's critique of possessive individualism is based upon his explanation of a hidden assumption in modern theory which allows thinkers such as Hobbes to derive a theory of a universal struggle for power from the concept of man as a mechanical system. MacPherson argues "that certain social assumptions have to be made in order to establish that all men in society seek ever more power over others."<sup>50</sup> That is, MacPherson questions the characteristically modern assumptions that individuals can have no stable place in a social order, that society is necessarily inimical to the first order desires of human beings and that persons will always desire *more* property. Macpherson claims that modern thinkers have assumed that society is a container for naturally antagonistic individuals and that "the capacity of every man to get what he wants is opposed by the capacity of every other man."<sup>51</sup> That is, other persons are no longer a part of that greater order which is also the truer expression of human being; the idea of a mutually

beneficial social totality gives way to a collection of individuals constrained from encroachment upon each other by positive law. This modern State is conceived as "natural" insofar as it is necessary. The "power of men associated to transform nature is rejected."<sup>52</sup> When modern theorists have examined humanity in the state of nature, MacPherson claims, they have merely subtracted law from "possessive market society." There is an assumed social arrangement concealed in the Hobbesian state of nature. MacPherson defines this hidden social arrangement as "the pre-eminence of market relations and the treatment of labour as an alienable possession."<sup>53</sup>

As we have seen in our discussion of Dumont, the concept of possession expresses itself in Locke's political theory in his *Two Treatises* where his definition of the individual is based upon property.<sup>54</sup> MacPherson confines himself to examining the social theory of Locke but in addition, Locke's metaphysics also relies upon a materialist individualism. Like Descartes, Locke reduces the individual to substance and sees human being as entirely worldly. His concept of the *tabula rasa* establishes an affective metaphor for selfhood. That is, there is no character to human being other than its receptivity. Furthermore, the idea of experience as an *impression* of ideas upon the mind also defines human experience mechanistically. The self in Locke's metaphysics is merely the self-knowledge of ideas caused by external objects:

When we see hear, smell, taste, feel, meditate, or will anything, we know that we do so. Thus it is always as to our present sensations and perceptions; and by this everyone is to himself that which he calls *self* . . . For since consciousness always accompanies thinking, and it is that that makes everyone to be what he calls self, and thereby distinguishes himself from all other thinking things, in this alone consists personal identity.<sup>55</sup>

For Locke there is nothing like a human soul which would personalise individuals in a transcendent sense. This modern philosophical tradition carries over into the actual political platform of the Levellers.

In the Putney debates over the issue of franchise the Levellers claimed to be demanding a manhood franchise. In addition to this, however, they also clearly excluded servants and alms-takers. In his analysis of the history of the debates MacPherson notes that the Levellers saw no inconsistency between these two claims. The apparent contradiction is resolved if we examine the Levellers' definition of human freedom - freedom for the Levellers being the condition for the right to vote. As in Locke, economic independence provided the criteria for deciding this political right. The Levellers' belief in the natural right to property - that God had not distributed wealth in some worldly hierarchy but that the earth was the common property of all men equally - was associated with their belief in the natural freedom of the individual. Because each person had an equal right to life and the continuance of life entailed property, each individual had a right to property. Government was therefore an establishment to enable the preservation of property. Where the Levellers differed from the army leaders was in the extension given to the concept of property. Like Locke (and here is their characteristically bourgeois strain) the Levellers regarded the alienable labour of one's own person as natural property. This alienable labour is the essence of human selfhood. It can be bought and exchanged but not justifiably taken without economic exchange. Richard Overton opened his pamphlet, *An Arrow Against All Tyrants* (1646) with this argument:

To every Individuall in nature is given an individuall property by nature, not to be invaded or usurped by any: for every one as he is himselfe, so he hath a selfe propriety, else could he not be himselfe, and on this no second may presume to deprive any of, without manifest violation and affront to the very principles of nature, and of the Rules of equity and justice between man and man; mine and thine cannot be, except this be: No man hath power over my rights and liberties, and I over no man's; I may be but an Individuall, enjoy my selfe and my selfe propriety, and may write my selfe no more than my selfe, or presume any further; if I doe, I am an encroacher and an invader upon an other man's Right, to which I have no *Right*.<sup>56</sup>

Contrasted with the ancient concept of freedom as willing obedience to the law, freedom here is expressed as freedom from other persons. Freedom is, more specifically, the proprietorship of one's own labour. Hence the Levellers did have a property qualification of sorts built into their demand for manhood suffrage. This property qualification was enabled by their definition of labour as personal property. The franchise could be granted to those above the level of dependence only and hence excluded servants and alms-takers (and without question women). The Levellers acknowledged that these groups that did not possess the "property" of labour could have all other civil, religious and economic rights. But they were not freely able to sell their labour and were therefore not "free" and so could not vote. Labour was for the Levellers both a human attribute and a commodity. Cromwell and Ireton, on the other hand, conceived freehold land of chartered trading rights as the only valid conditions for human freedom. Both parties placed a property qualification on the right to vote; the Levellers merely demanded only the property of labour.

Milton, like the Levellers, acknowledges the importance of freedom in its socio-political sense. However, for Milton, prior to political or economic freedom there needed to be established a relation of liberty between the individual and the law. Milton's "liberty" differed from the freedom of the Levellers in two respects. Milton's liberty was not based on property or labour but on the ability to exercise one's reason. Secondly, liberty for Milton, like the ancients, was willing obedience to a law recognised as rational. Consequently, Milton's demands for liberty appear to accord with those of the Levellers but in Milton's discussion of the foundation of Government the more traditional conception of freedom emerges. In the following section Milton's dependence on a pre-modern metaphysic will be examined along with the particular conception of justice and freedom which this metaphysic yields.

### Milton on Inner Experience: *Reason of Church Government*

With the development of individualism from Plato to Augustine, a certain attitude to the world and a specific type of dualism follows. The progressive institutionalisation of the Christian Church saw the spiritual/temporal dualism of ethics transposed into a theory of Church and State. In the Gospels, Christianity directs itself almost exclusively to other-worldly redemption. In the later Christian Church there emerges a need to consider the role of the State. As the institutionalisation of Christianity increases, so does its tolerance towards involvement in temporal affairs. The Church, therefore, comes to demand that the affairs of the temporal institution - the State - be subordinated to the interests of the ecclesiastical institution - the Church. However, with this gain in the Church's power comes the ingredient for its eventual demise. Once the Church has allowed itself to become involved in affairs of State, it becomes subject to the ever increasing encroachment of temporal demands. The Christianity of the Gospels deemed this world irrelevant to spiritual issues. Divine Law was located in an other-worldly sphere; justice could not be expected on this earth. There is a radical difference between spiritual and political realms: "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36). While obedience to worldly authority is encouraged - "Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities" (Rom. 13: 1-7); "Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake" (1 Pet. 2: 13-15) - such obedience should cease if a conflict between worldly and spiritual demands arises: "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). With the adoption of Christianity by the Roman Empire, there emerges a need for a greater tolerance towards the State. Tertullian (150-220) in his *Apology* emphasises the subordination of the temporal powers to God but in doing so he also subtly prefigures the theory of sacral kingship. The king may be God's *servant* but he is nevertheless *God's* servant:

For we, on behalf of the safety of the Emperors, invoke the eternal God, the true God, the living God, whom the Emperors themselves prefer to have propitious to them beyond all other gods. They know who has given them the empire; they know, as men, who has given them life; they feel

that He is God alone, in whose power they are, second to whom they stand, after whom they come first, before all gods and above all gods. Why not? seeing that they are above all men, and men at any rate live and so are better than dead things. They reflect how far the strength of their empire avails, and thus they understand God; against him they cannot avail, so they know it is through Him that they do avail.<sup>57</sup>

For Eusebius of Caesarea (260-337) the emperor himself is not divine but one whom God "receives:" "Thus outfitted in the likeness of the kingdom of heaven, he pilots affairs below with an upward gaze, to steer by the archetypal form."<sup>58</sup>

This theoretical shift, which allows the consideration of temporal power, inaugurates a history of Church/State theory which attempts to reconcile the radical spirit of the Gospels with the practices of worldly politics. The appropriation of Plato by Augustine unites the ancient theory of the State and its basis in reason with the Christian soul and its spiritual demands. The worldly involvement of the Church is allowed for in Augustine but such accommodation is achieved only by stressing that the temporal affairs of the Church should be subordinated to its ultimately divine function. In the *City of God*, written after the fall of Rome, Augustine turns away from the demands of the Empire and attends to the "heavenly city." It is the obligation of all Christians to bring the earthly city into as much conformity to the heavenly city as possible. However, Augustine exempted the State from the radical demands of the Gospels; the kingdom of God was not expected to begin in history. Nevertheless, Augustine's Platonism meant that the soul was an aspect of God's light in human being and so there was still an aspect of transcendent value in the world. It no longer manifested itself in the practice of virtue in the city-state but in the activities of a separate institution - the Church - whose direction was other-worldly:

. . . the earthly city, that lives not by faith, seeks an earthly peace, and its end in aiming at agreement concerning command and obedience on the part of the citizens is limited to a sort of merging of human wills in regard to the things that are useful for this mortal life. Whereas the heavenly city, or rather the part of it that goes its pilgrim way in this mortal life and lives by faith, needs must make use of this peace too, though only until this mortal lot which has need of it shall pass away.<sup>59</sup>

The Church should exist for the process of the edification of the inner light. The world itself, because fallen, is opposed to divine law; hence the fallen, secondary or relative law of the State is subordinated to the ecclesiastical demands of the Church. Milton accepts Augustine's Christianisation of the Platonic soul but rejects Augustine's emphasis on the world's fallenness. In response to Augustine, Milton retrieves the Platonic idea of the world as an arena for the enactment of the virtues of the soul. For Augustine, the Church need not aim to enact a kingdom of equal souls for there is a discontinuity between the prelapsarian state of nature and the postlapsarian fall into hierarchy. Milton will not allow this discontinuity. For Milton, reason dictates that worldly government be just, despite the fallenness of the will. The justice Milton demands is the justice of the ancients: a self-sufficient and internally coherent virtue.

Milton therefore carries Augustine's concept of the soul further into the world. The soul's radical other-worldliness is retained insofar as its values and aims are transcendent but the soul now dictates the foundation of political being. Milton restores the possibility of just government which had been lost in the shift from the Ancient concept of justice to the mediaeval conception of relative natural law. Government, ecclesiastical or temporal, need no longer be set over against human will if will is subordinated to reason or the soul. Self-government is the precondition for social and institutional government. Worldly social being, which is anything but individualistic, depends upon a spiritual individualism. For Milton, the grace of God has willed that some vestiges of divinity should remain in the world. God's will acts in the cause of good in the temporal sphere; neither the State nor the human will is entirely fallen. Because the residue of divine goodness is located in individual souls, worldly justice can only be attained by freely reasoning individuals.

The Early Christian Church had allowed the temporal world to exist unaffected alongside the recognition of a higher spiritual realm. For Augustine, on the other hand, the world, due to its fallenness, must begin to conform to

spiritual demands and the Church must therefore play a part in the world. The structure of this subordination is at the heart of the established Christian Church's theory of Church and State; it is encapsulated in the late fifth century in the letter of Pope Gelasius I to the Emperor which states the relation of power between the State Church and royal authority. A.J. Carlyle paraphrases Gelasius's letter:

The true and perfect king and priest was Christ Himself, and in that sense in which His people are partakers of His nature they may be said to be a royal and priestly race. But Christ, knowing the weakness of human nature, and careful for the welfare of his people separated the two offices, giving to each its peculiar function and duties. Thus the Christian emperor needs the ecclesiastic for the attainment of eternal life, and the ecclesiastic depends upon the government of the emperor in temporal things. There are, then, two authorities by which chiefly the world is ruled, the sacred authority of the prelates and the royal power; but the burden laid upon the priests is heavier, for they will have to give account in the divine judgment, even for the kings of men; thus it is that the emperor looks to them for the means of his salvation, and submits to them and their judgment in sacred matters. The authority of the emperor is derived from the divine order, and the rulers of religion obey his laws: he should therefore the more zealously obey them.<sup>60</sup>

As Dumont notes, the reference to salvation reveals the supreme level of consideration which hierarchises the priest's *auctoritas* over the king's *potestas*: Here, the world begins to lose its own immanent reason of Government as the function of the Church is to provide "sacred authority." Milton's contemporary opponents reiterated this concept of the interrelated spheres of ecclesiastical and temporal power. Bacon's approval of the inter-relation of Church and State claimed that "religion hath parts which pertain to eternity, and parts which pertain to time."<sup>61</sup> Milton, rejecting this traditional Church/State relationship marked the reign of Constantine as the commencement of the decline of Church government precisely because at that point the Church became concerned with temporal affairs. Milton, addressing the bishops in *Of Reformation*, saw Constantine as a figure who epitomised tyranny and poor Church government:

Stay but a little, magnanimous Bishops, suppress your aspiring thoughts, for there is nothing wanting but *Constantine* to reign, and then Tyranny her selfe shall give up all her cittadels into your hands, and count ye thence



forward her trustiest agents. Such were these that must be call'd the ancientest and most virgin times between *Christ* and *Constantine*. (CPW.1.551) <sup>62</sup>

Milton's opponents, on the other hand, applauded the political imperialisation of the Church:

The Christian Church and temporall State were then divided; and the first was persecuted by the second, till glorious *Constantine* obtained the Imperiall diadem, upon the yeere 316. Afterwards by favour of the Emperour, and other Princes, civill dignity, and temporall power were annexed to Episcopall places, the Church and State being now united together.<sup>63</sup>

When Milton eventually demands a complete separation of Church and State in *Of Civil Power*, it is not only for the purposes of returning to the radical spirit of Early Christianity in demanding a Church free from temporal aims. Milton's prose career begins by demanding a purification of the Church from the corrupt and temporal influences of political government. His vision of Church government based on reason, the soul and its relation to transcendence eventually provides a model for the State. In *A Defence of the People of England* Milton argues that the freedom enabled by the atonement is political as well as spiritual:

I do not speak of inward freedom only and omit political freedom. The prophecy of [Christ's] advent foretold by Mary his mother, 'He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts; he hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree,' must indeed be but idle talk if his advent is instead to strengthen tyrants on their thrones and subject all Christians to savage power. (CPW.4.374)

In *Reason of Church Government* Milton allows the practice of jurisdiction (which rules by outward force) to continue in the political sphere. The moral sphere of religion, on the other hand should be governed inwardly. To gain ascent to doctrine through outward force is to mistake the essentially inward character of Christian doctrine. Hence in *Reason of Church Government* Milton argues that the spiritual affairs of the Church should not be impeded by the bodily, temporal or material affairs of the State. The latter should be subordinated to the former. But later, in *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, Milton brings this argument regarding the internalisation of law into the political sphere so that the temporal

State, too, will benefit from its freedom from institutionalised and external law. The commonwealth will be a function of the free and independent exercise of reason without the impediment of arbitrary laws. Because religion is rightly a matter of the inner soul, external institutions such as a State Church can only impede the soul's inwardness. But, again, the premises Milton uses to argue for the independence of religion later come to apply to the ideal commonwealth.

At the basis of Milton's theory of the Church and State is the Platonic rejection of externally imposed laws and the embrace of internally coherent and immanently valid laws of reason. Freedom, reason and spiritual autonomy can be defined immanently in the temporal sphere and this because we are innately divine and capable of a "paradise within" (which would still, nevertheless, always be subordinated to and directed towards that transcendent paradise of the kingdom of heaven). Milton's return to a Church/State division is therefore not quite a return to the parallelism of the Gospels which had in no way brought its religious concerns to issues of this world. Affairs of State, insofar as they are directed by reason and *always* have freedom of conscience as their aim, are still subordinated to the spirit which in the final instance is divine and transcendent. But the subservience to reason, to the inner light residing in all souls, need not be doubled by the subordination of legal practices to an institutionalised religion. If the spirit is allowed to work freely the true practice of justice will emerge without the government of prelates entering the picture. Milton's belief in the singularity, plainness and attainability of truth and truth's transcendence from all worldly difference is at the basis of this thought. Truth is attainable by each spirit; the State, therefore, does not need the "spiritual authority" of the Church. Truth is clear and attainable. Hence, in *Of Reformation* Milton remarks:

The very essence of Truth is plainnesse, and brightnes; the darknes and crookednesse is our own. The *Wisdome* of *God* created *understanding*, fit and proportionable to Truth and the object, and end of it, as the eye the thing visible. If our own *understanding* have a film of *ignorance* over it, or be blear with gazing on other false glisterings, what is that to Truth? (CPW.I.566)

The radical distinction which could be drawn between Milton's contemporaries' desire for democracy and Milton's apparently similar desire for liberty can be accounted for by his belief in the power of reason. What Milton desired was a form of government which enabled freedom of thought and the development of rational capacities, so that whatever political structure was achieved it would be based on the inner power of reason. Here is a further link with Plato's politics.<sup>64</sup> If Milton's demands yielded democratic practice this was contingent; what was essential was the centrality of reason and the belief that justice would necessarily follow. If profoundly non-democratic means needed to be employed to achieve an ultimate freedom of the spirit then Milton would advocate them.

In examining Milton's debt to Plato I will be examining a certain type of pre-modern individualism, its relation to a cosmology and metaphysics and its means of defining value in relation to a transcendent realm of being. What concerns me, therefore, is not so much Milton's reading of Plato, nor how consciously early seventeenth-century thought was neo-Platonic (although the Cambridge Platonists did continue the efflorescence of Plato that had begun in the Renaissance Florentine School). Rather, within a history of differences, from classical and scholastic through to seventeenth-century thought, there are a certain set of shared metaphysical assumptions which are rejected in the modern era and it is this which I wish to examine. Consequently, in discussing Milton's emphasis on, and valorisation of, inner experience I prefer to see this as not only connected with Puritanism but also as the culmination of a history of thought about the Christian soul. The difference between the Puritan emphasis on individual experience of the Word and the pre-modern ethic lies in the relation of transcendence to the immanence of inner experience. Milton's argument relies heavily upon classical conceptions of the soul while his emphasis upon justice, hierarchy and value situates his argument within the pre-modern neo-Platonic tradition; Milton's concepts of inner experience cannot be exhaustively explained by reference to the Puritan ethic alone.

What follows is an examination of Milton's reform tracts of the early 1640s. While Milton is here arguing for a Presbyterian form of State Church he will eventually reject this possibility and demand the disestablishment of any State Church whatsoever. Of the two hottest politico-religious issues of Milton's day - disestablishment and toleration - Milton argued more fervently for the former, whereas the Levellers placed their stress on the demand for tolerance. Milton's emphasis on disestablishment can be explained with reference to the metaphysic which is already expressed in the Presbyterian tracts of the 40s - the logical conclusion of which is Milton's eventual position on complete State/Church independence. The issue of disestablishment was of primary importance for Milton because he believed that a deinstitutionalisation of the Christian spirit would yield a flourishing of individual virtue. If attention was directed inwards truth would follow and all those values which were eternally and essentially true - justice, toleration and worldly liberty - would ensue. The Levellers, on the other hand, had a sense of the law which was far more positive. The importance of institutions for the protection of freedom was therefore important; their belief in the primacy of property entailed a desire for its protection. Furthermore, for the Levellers toleration would be an issue even in an ideal world. For Milton all free spirits could be expected, of their own accord, to alight upon the truth in their own hearts; no such confidence could be held by the Levellers. There would always be a plurality of beliefs - hence toleration was part of that demand for freedom which precluded the encroachment of any other upon one's individual person.

Milton begins his *Reason of Church Government* by referring to Plato and the importance of persuasion in the education of government:

In the publishing of humane laws, which for the most part aime not beyond the good of civill society, to set them barely forth to the people without reason or preface, like a physicall prescript, or only with threatenings, as it were a lordly command, in the judgement of *Plato* was thought to be done neither generously or wisely. His advice was, seeing that persuasion certainly is more winning, and more manlike to keepe men in obedience then feare, that to such lawes as were of principall moment, there should

be us'd as an induction, some well temper'd discourse, shewing how good, how gainfull, how happy it must needs be to live according to honesty and justice, which being utter'd with those native colours and graces of speech, as true eloquence the daughter of vertue can best bestow upon her mothers praises, would so incite, and in a manner, charme the multitude into the love of that which is really good as to embrace it ever after, not of custome and awe, which most men do, but of choice and purpose, with true and constant delight. (CPW.1.746)

Laws should not be imposed; they should be seen to be good and adopted for their own sake. *Reason of Church Government's* emphasis upon reason (and its manifestation in the immediacy of the Gospel rather than textual tradition) relies upon the Platonic belief that laws should be valued in and for themselves and should be internally valid and not arbitrarily prescribed. This argument is reiterated in *Of Reformation* when Milton states that "Custome without Truth is but agednesse of Error" (CPW.1.561). Milton's reference to Plato displays a difference in emphasis between his particular conception of reason and the general Puritan belief in inner experience. The stress on the value of reason and the importance of sound civil practice for the edification of individuals (that is, the importance of the law as a recognised and reasoned social practice) derives from the classical tradition of defining individuals as essentially political animals and this by virtue of the fact that they are endowed with souls. Social structure is therefore founded upon and directed towards the interests of inner experience. What unites all sections of *Reason of Church Government* (including the autobiographical "digression") is an argument about the relations between the inward and outward spheres of human being. The inward spirit is identified with reason, the eternal, the divine and the essential, while outward corporeality is aligned with the contingent and the temporal. In his thinking through of this metaphysic Milton reinforces his Protestant doctrine with the logic of Plato's argument concerning the soul. Furthermore, whereas radical Protestant thought more often than not rejected Church government of any form as essentially a contamination of the pure individualism of the inner light, Milton at this point still conceives the worldly practice of Christianity as appropriately embodied in a trans-individual structure such as the Church. When Milton eventually demands

Church/State separation he is still not opposed to institutions *per se*, for the practice of civil law and magistrates is valued. But the condition for their valid existence is the attainment of the knowledge of virtue which can only be achieved by the individual examining scripture and their own heart.

Milton's reference to Plato is significant precisely because Platonic thought and the Christian tradition of neo-Platonism are based upon a valorisation of inner experience (which is at the same time a relativising of the world). This tradition, accordingly, defines values "intrinsically." What is important about Book One of the *Republic*, for example, is not its definition of justice or any particular value but the articulation of a certain method of defining virtues. Thrasymachus, Socrates's main opponent, believes that justice is the advantage of the powerful. This is a non-universal, contingent and relative conception of justice. For Thrasymachus, justice has no internal character but is defined by those in power in order to maintain their position of power. Socrates, on the other hand, argues that justice, as a virtue, has its own value and character; a virtue has its own reason and is desired for its own sake. The foundation of the recognition of the internal value of justice lies in the role of reason. As Kimon Lycos's reading of Plato notes, the pre-Socratic conception of justice as a cosmic force is re-situated in the *Republic* so that Plato's "solution . . . consists in 'internalising' this supra-personal dimension of justice, in identifying it with the power obtained when intellect and reason rule over appetite and passion in the minds of individuals."<sup>65</sup> This tradition of the ethics of "internalising" value is continued and Christianised in Augustine's conception of the soul where reflection on the inner light leads to the recognition of divinity. It is a move away from the bodily and the temporal towards transcendent truth and grace.

The Platonic and neo-Platonic soul/body ethic is articulated within a metaphysic of the worldly and the other-worldly. Whereas modern philosophy sees the Cartesian dualism between mind and body as a division *within* the world which causes epistemological problems, the Platonic division enables an ethics

which informs the world with transcendent value. This difference between Platonic and Cartesian dualism becomes important for a consideration of the differences between Christian and modern individualism. Within the Platonic tradition the truly valuable is that which is other-worldly. Transcendence may play a role in worldly life, may be discovered through worldly practice and may bestow a value upon the world. Nevertheless, its origin and essence is eternal and other-worldly and herein lies its validity. When Milton considers the role of the State in individual flourishing, it is essential for him that laws be framed in accord with truth and reason which is God's will; this is achieved through self-reflection so that law "if it be at all the worke of man, it must be of such a one as is a true knower of himselfe" (CPW.1.753). Self-knowledge, therefore, is at the heart of sound government.<sup>66</sup>

By beginning *Reason of Church Government* with a reference to persuasion, therefore, Milton invokes the Platonic tradition of demanding an understanding and embracing of law in addition to obedience. Milton claims that when the "multitude" embrace justice and honesty through "custome and awe" they cannot truly be happy. It is when a "love of that which is really good" leads to a "choice and purpose" that justice is appropriately conceived (CPW.1.746). Milton's discussion of "justice" itself is significant insofar as the concept of justice provided the central point of meditation for classical ethics. Justice was a social virtue whereas modern theory is concerned with more individualistic concepts such as "rights." Modern "contract theories" of government presuppose the existence of individuals who *then* decide on a mutually beneficial law. Milton, on the other hand, recalls the example of Old Testament law which, though external, is not human but divine in origin and can therefore be understood rationally. Even Old Testament law recognised the need for rational government. Now that the atonement has installed an inner light in the human soul the necessity for internalised law should be imperative:

If then in the administration of civill justice, and under the obscurity of Ceremoniall rites, such care was had by the wisest of the heathen, and by *Moses* among the Jewes, to instruct them at least in a generall reason of

that government to which their subjection was requir'd, how much more ought the members of the Church under the Gospell seeke to informe their understanding in the reason of that government which the Church claimes to have over them: especialy for that the Church hath in her immediate cure those inner parts and affections of mind where the seat of reason is; having power to examine our spirituall knowledge, and to demand from us in Gods behalfe a service intirely reasonable. (CPW.1.747-48)

Milton's rejection of "contracts and mutual rights of man" in favour of an internalised law which was derived from thoughts of God and true human nature, can be seen in contradistinction to the social contract theory of law which was articulated in the seventeenth century by Hobbes. In modern contract theory laws were *imposed* upon limitless desires; for the ancients laws derived from, and fulfilled, higher order desires. The idea of "contracts and mutual rights of man" (where contracts defend property and rights exclude encroachment upon others) sees law as negative. Contract theory sees pre-social individuals entering into society in order to achieve rights; such rights guard against exploitation by others. Ethical theories based on justice, on the other hand, rely upon a desire inherent in human souls to achieve their true nature as *politikon zoon* - that is, as essentially and already social beings. Milton's conception of law was eudaimonistic; law was a means to an end as well as an end in itself. Although Milton uses a form of contract theory to explain the origin of kingship in *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* Milton's conception of a contract only explained the conditional handing over of power to a king in order to safeguard the interests of reason. Unlike Hobbes, Milton did not see reason as fallen and therefore did not see kingship as an unconditional handing over of rights. Prior to the handing over of power to a sovereign a commonly agreed social arrangement is constructed; the social whole, therefore, precedes and governs kingship:

... they agreed by common league to bind each other from mutual injury, and joyntly to defend themselves against any that gave disturbance or opposition to such agreement. Hence came Citties, Townes and Common-wealths. And because no faithe in all was found sufficiently binding, they saw it needfull to ordaine som authoritie, that might restrain by force and punishment what was violated against peace and common right. This autoritie and power of self-defence and preservation being



originally and naturally in every one of them, and unitedly in them all, for ease, for order, and least each man should be his own partial Judge, they communicated and deriv'd either to one, whom for the eminence of his wisdom and integritie they chose above the rest, or to more then one whom they thought of equal deserving: the first was call'd a King; the other Magistrates. Not to be their Lords and Maisters . . . but to be their Deputies and Commisioners, to execute, by vertue of thir intrusted power, that justice which else every man by the bond of nature and of Cov'nant must have executed for himself, and for one another. (CPW.3.199)

Milton insists that law is not a result of fallenness and thus disagrees with the history of relative natural law which explained away worldly inequality and the difference between individual good and legal right as due to our postlapsarian condition. Law only appears alien to desire when its origin in human reason and the natural superiority of reason have been forgotten. Milton is therefore advocating neither unquestioning obedience to authority nor a radical and unlimited freedom. True freedom entails recognising the value of law in willing and reasoned obedience, so that as created beings God's law is our own good. Law, order and limit are intrinsic to human being as such and not merely in its postlapsarian state:

And certainly discipline is not only the removall of disorder, but if any visible shape can be given to divine things, the very visible shape and image of vertue, whereby she is not only seene in the regular gestures and motions of her heavenly paces as she walkes, but also makes the harmony of her voice audible to mortall cares. (CPW.1.751-52)

The soul has a determined and structured character which accords with law and virtue; it is in recognising and achieving this essential being that freedom is attained. Were human nature to be purely open, undefined and characterless law would have no essential basis and would be alien rather than essential. For Milton, goodness itself is limited, defined and marked out while discipline plays a role even in paradise as *Reason of Church Government* goes on to argue:

The state also of the blessed in Paradise, though never so perfect, is not therefore left without discipline, whose golden survaying reed marks out and measures every quarter and circuit of new Jerusalem. (CPW.1.752)

There is, therefore, a law which is divine and eternal, which is not a restriction to the flourishing of the soul. In fact, divine law is the condition for the soul's fulfilment. In his reform tracts of the early 1640s Milton uses the distinction between divine and human law to argue for a certain type of Church government grounded on inner experience. *Of Prelatical Episcopacy* opens with the question whether episcopacy "is either of Divine constitution, or of humane" (CPW.1.624). This distinction between human and divine value aligns Milton with a pre-modern method of conceiving value where value is derived from a transcendent and supra-human source. Furthermore, this distinction underlies and enables the further distinctions which are articulated in Milton's prose tracts: between outward and inward human experience, between State law and Church government, between magistrates and ministers, between the temporal and the eternal, between jurisdiction and censure, between the texts of the Fathers and Holy Scripture and between sophistry and true reason. Ultimately, the foundational value and that which decides and determines all other values is that of reason; and reason is embodied in scripture and the inner light. Milton's conception of the true nature of the Church follows from this.

Ernst Troeltsch's examination of the history of Christian thought has identified a tension between two conceptions of the nature of the Church.<sup>67</sup> The Church can be conceived in a worldly sense as an institution for the enactment of holy sacraments and as an enabling governing body which would rule by the will of God and derive its power over individuals from natural law. This universal institution is the arbiter of truth and in order to effect the sacrament of grace embraces secular institutions to achieve its ends. On the other hand, the Church can be seen less as a worldly institution than as a collection of believers and a representation of the body of Christ, as a symbol of mediation between God and world - as a supra-individual projection of the inner spirit which each believer possesses. Here, the practical behaviour of its individual members rather than the distribution of sacraments is what constitutes the institution as holy. Troeltsch sees this as the difference between Church and sects.<sup>68</sup> This distinction - between

the Church as worldly institution and the Church as a symbol of the spirit - is not expressed explicitly by Milton but his idea of reform relies upon the latter conception of the Church. Whereas Troeltsch sees the conception of the sects as precluding anything like Church government,<sup>69</sup> Milton maintains the sect idea of fellowship while still arguing for Church government. He therefore overcomes the opposition between institution and individual participation which Troeltsch sees as the primary contradiction of Christian thought. He does this by making that institution, rather like the ancient *polis*, an essential expression of individual being rather than an imposed externality. Milton, accordingly, imagines the Christian commonwealth as a projection of individual being:

. . . a Commonwealth ought to be but as one huge Christian personage, one mighty growth, and stature of an honest man, as big and compact in vertue as in body; for looke what the grounds and causes are of single happiness to one man, the same yee shall find them to a whole state, as *Aristotle* both in his ethicks, and politicks, from the principles of reason layes down. (CPW.1.572)

Milton's emphasis upon the historical importance of Constantine in *Of Reformation* reveals his recognition that it is after the State is Christianised that the Church loses its inward character and becomes worldly and outward-directed.<sup>70</sup> The adoption of the Church by the State is conceived as a loss of original purity and a move towards the body - from inherent value to the *appearance* of value. Furthermore (and this idea will become particularly important with Blake) the forgetting of the spiritual and inner origin of Christianity is linked to a seizing of political power:

But when through *Constantine's* lavish superstition they forsook their *first love*, and set themselves up two Gods instead, *Mammon* and their Belly, then taking advantage of the spiritual power which they had on men's consciences, they began to cast a longing eye to get their body also and bodily things into their command, upon which their carnal desires, the Spirit dayly quenching and dying in them, they knew no way to keep themselves from falling to nothing, but by bolstering and supporting their inward rottenes by a carnal and outward strength. (CPW.1.576-77)

The idea of a "lavish Superstition" which enslaves the spirit continues Milton's earlier condemnation of Constantine's fixing of fasts and feasts (CPW.1.556).

Outward display and theatricality emerge when inner spirit weakens and atrophies. Attention to the body is both symptomatic of, and causally related to, a loss and forgetting of "inward Sanctity" (CPW.1.556). It is important to realise that this is not a total denegation of the body but is part of a tradition of insisting upon an ethical hierarchisation of the soul and body.

In the *Phaedo* Socrates insists that the practice of philosophic contemplation in this world can raise the soul to its non-corporeal status; on the other hand allowing the body to dictate value will embody the soul. In Augustine the soul can look down towards the body or up towards God. This is not so much a denial or radical dualism of the body so much as it is a subordination. In keeping with this, Milton acknowledges the importance of bodily action when it accords with spirit. In Book Three of *Paradise Regain'd* once Satan is "confuted and convinced / Of his weak arguing" he is compelled to admit the integrity of Christ's character. Christ's virtue entails the realisation of inner good with outer action, the manifestation of spirit in words and deeds:

Thy actions to thy words accord, thy words  
To thy large heart give utterance due, thy heart  
Conteins of good, wise, just, the perfet shape. (PR.3.9-11)<sup>71</sup>

That is, the "shape" of goodness lies in the heart. The origin of outer value is inward in character. In Book Four, when Satan tempts Christ with worldly power, claiming that it is a condition for the emancipation of the people, Christ claims that power may be a necessary but is certainly not a sufficient condition for freedom. Just as *Of Reformation* states that spiritual enslavement is the first and most important loss of freedom, Christ stresses that the "degenerat" are "by themselves enslav'd" and asks rhetorically who "could of inward slaves make outward free?" (PR.4.144-5). Once again, this is not a denial of the significance of bodily enslavement; rather, it is a statement that imprisonment of the body presupposes a loss of spiritual autonomy, that the condition for political tyranny is an abnegation of inner strength. And it is in this sense that Christ claims that the people are "Deservedly made vassal" (PR.4.133) because frugality and

temperance have given way to "lust and rapine" (PR.4.137). Bodily excess, individual desire and denial of limits leads to corporealisation of the spirit. Such hedonistic individualism results in a loss of spiritual autonomy which is the precursor to corporeal enslavement. Excessive self-regard within the world leads to a failure to see the truly other-worldly dimension of the self. The Church since Constantine, according to Milton, has exploited this process of embodying the spirit as a means for enslaving its members.

Milton, therefore, saw reflection upon Church government by individuals as a moral duty, for only an institution grounded upon individual reason could be valid: "how much more ought the members of the Church under the Gospell seeke to informe their understanding in the reason of that government which the Church claimes to have over them" (CPW.1.747). It is with the development of theocracy after Constantine that value is derived from a mediate body - the emperor - and the individualism of early Christianity gives way to a subordination to divine right. In the opening of *Of Reformation* Milton compares the history of the Church and Christian doctrine with the body of the resurrected Christ:

. . . after the story of our Saviour *Christ*, suffering to the lowest bent of weaknesse, in the *Flesh*, and presently triumphing to the highest pitch of *glory*, in the *Spirit*, which drew his body also, till we in both be united to him in Revelation of his Kingdome: I do not knowe of any thing more worthy to take up the whole passion of pittie, on the one side, and joy on the other: then to consider first, the foule and sudden corruption, and then after many a tedious age, the long deferr'd, but much more wonderfull and happy reformation of the *Church* in these latter dayes. (CPW.1.519)

When Milton likens the Church to a body of Christ he de-institutionalises and re-individualises the Church. This sentiment is heightened in *Reason of Church Government* with the depiction of the reformed Church as analogous to the resurrected Christ. It is through examination of the soul that we shall "accomplish the immortall stature of Christ's body which is his Church in all her glorious lineaments and proportions" (CPW.1.757). The idea of the Church as Christ's body will become particularly important for Blake who extends the concept of Christ's body to include not only the Church but all believers and their

imaginations. The Church, as an image of Christ's body, should be an externalisation of the divine spirit which resides in the soul. In this sense, Milton's Christianity can be regarded as humanist insofar as it places the human capacity for divinity before the institutionalisation of divinity.

The Socratic insistence upon the universal value of justice as a virtue depended upon internalising the definition of virtues in reason. Despite Milton's agreement with the tradition of demanding that virtue be internally coherent, he also emphasises the transcendent origin of ethics so that reason, for Milton, is conceived in the Augustinian sense of God's light installed in human being. Both Plato and Milton insist that justice should direct power and not be defined by power - that justice is a value independent of the State and that values are known via contemplation of the soul which is universal, essential and rational. True values are still "internal" for Milton insofar as their basis is the inner sanctity of the soul but they are transcendent precisely because the soul is divine in nature. *Reason of Church Government* therefore argues that Church discipline is "beyond the faculty of man to frame" and should not be "left to man's invention" (CPW.1.756). Nevertheless, though transcendent, the rules for Church government should not be seen as alien. The foundation of law which is the will of God still reveals itself in the human soul:

the soule of man . . . is his rationally temple and by the divine square and compasse thereof [it can] forme and regenerate in us the lovely shapes of vertues and graces. (CPW.1.757-58)

The Church in its true foundations is grounded upon the act of inward reflection, is centred upon the soul and in itself is a projection of the "greater man" whose soul and virtue is a model for individual existence. The Church, ideally, is not a disciplining force but an exemplar of that internalised discipline which is the individual's true nature.

If Law is "political," according to Milton in *Reason of Church Government*, "than no Christian is oblig'd in Conscience" (CPW.1.764). That is, if the origins



of a law are worldly no citizen can be inwardly impelled. Reasons for obedience could only reside in expediency and prudence; law would therefore be non-universal and contingent. However, Milton identifies another possibility whereby law would be "morall." In this sense the law would be "substantially and perpetually true and good" (CPW.1.764). There are two means of attaining "morall" law. The first is by "what we fetch from those unwritten lawes and Ideas which nature hath ingraven in us" and the second is through Gospel law (CPW.1.764). Milton thereby identifies *innate* human law, the law "ingraven in us" with Divine (or Gospel) law and sets this law over and against a tradition which "copies out" from "borrow'd manuscript" (CPW.1.764). What is "ingraven" within human hearts has the same status as the moral law of the Gospels, as that which is divinely ordained. The aspect of human nature which is eternally and substantially true is divinity, the divine law harboured within. The soul is other-worldly and therefore provides "morall" law. Human law, which is "politicall," relies upon constructed hierarchies within the world and not the natural law of the soul's subordination to God. "Politicall law" therefore is not only lacking in the validity of "morall law" but contradicts the doctrine of Christian individualism. Political law comes into conflict with individual moral law because it is *corporeal*. Its justification relies on outward force rather than inward assent, on arbitrary worldly hierarchies of power: "For the ministration of the law consisting of carnall things, drew to it such a ministry as consisted of carnall respects, dignity, precedence, and the like" (CPW.1.766).

A worldly hierarchy of power based on "dignity and precedence" leads, according to Milton, to a "pomp and glory of the flesh" (CPW.1.766). Milton acknowledges and approves of only one hierarchy - the subordination of the worldly to the inner sanctity of the soul and the soul's natural subordination to its Creator. Milton does employ the scholastic notion of hierarchy in *Paradise Lost* and his insistence upon the subordination of the human to the divine depends heavily upon a notion of hierarchy in cosmology. However, unlike the scholastics, Milton believes that any hierarchy *within* the world relies upon a merely human,

contingent and unjustifiable construction of value (because ungrounded in reason or Gospel law). Here Milton brings the universality of the soul into accord with the practice of Church government. Whereas the mediaeval Church had justified worldly inequality as a consequence of the fall, Milton's insistence upon the divine nature of the soul, and the possibility of obtaining truth and right from the soul, demands that true law be in accord with individual moral good. Milton's concept of inner freedom and equality is not a compensation for worldly hierarchy and inequality. Rather, individual freedom *dictates* the reclaiming of law by individual reason and attacks the institutional Church's concept of divine will which dictates the good rather than acting according to the reason of good. Hierarchy in the world is a condition for the loss of spiritual autonomy and depends upon the forgetting of the true hierarchy which would subordinate human to divine value. Whereas the early Church allowed radical spiritual individualism and equality to exist alongside worldly hierarchy, Milton demands that worldly practice be governed by the doctrines of the soul and this because inward freedom is threatened by an attention to mundane honour. For Milton, the parallelism of early Christianity is inadequate precisely because of his Platonic insistence upon the internalisation of the validation of the law:

. . . if the forme of the Ministry be grounded in the worldly degrees of authority, honour, temporall jurisdiction, we see it with our eyes it will turne the inward power and purity of the Gospel into the outward carnality of the law; evaporating and exhaling the internall worship into empty conformities and gay shewes. (CPW.1.766)

Milton's critique of the effect of worldly power on inner experience underlies his distinction between jurisdiction and ministry. Jurisdiction deals with *imposition* and with the negative aspect of law in the form of restraint and punishment. (This is the role of magistrates.) Ministry, on the other hand, deals with "censure," the promulgation of virtues for their own sake and the constitution of the good in individual discipline. Ministry entails sustaining "the person of Christ" (CPW.1.767) in the role of preaching. Prelacy, on the other hand, introduces the worldly "political" role of jurisdiction into Church government (with



ecclesiastical courts, for example). Episcopacy's appropriation of juridical practices represents a contamination of the spiritual sphere with external constraint. The prelate who governs but does not preach, has put the temporal before the spiritual:

. . . why should the performance of ordination which is a lower office exalt a Prelat, and not the seldome discharge of a higher and more noble office which is preaching & administring much rather depress him? (CPW.1.767)

Milton accepts the role of jurisdiction in the political sphere but wishes to subordinate outward law to spiritual truth. Original teachings of the Gospels claimed an equality of souls before God. Such equality for Milton also applies to the temporal sphere. Prelacy, on the other hand, not only imposes jurisdiction and inequality on individual souls, it does this for temporal gain. Consequently, an equality and involvement of all believers must be preceded by the destruction of the prelatical hierarchy:

So that Prelaty if she will seek to close up divisions in the Church, must be forc't to dissolve, and unmake her own pyramidal figure, which she affirms to be of such uniting power, when as indeed it is the most dividing, and schismaticall forme that Geometricians know of, and must be faine to inglobe, or incube her selfe among Presbyters. (CPW.1.790)

Just as government must be subordinated to spiritual ends so Milton hierarchises knowledge. The "contemplation of naturall causes and dimensions" is a lower wisdom compared to the knowledge of God. Christian discipline is grounded in the higher aim. Milton refers to "the only high and valuable wisdom" as knowledge of God which entails "the improvement of these his entrusted gifts" which are "summes of knowledge and illumination" (CPW.1.801). Consequently, self-reflection and cultivation of inner experience are precursors to the knowledge of God. Milton unites his discussion of Christian wisdom with the issue of prelacy by claiming that the worldly power of the prelates has been achieved by directing attention away from inner truth through the allure of "the fals glitter of deceitfull wares." Milton therefore sees a political motivation behind the corruption of knowledge and the dehumanising of the Church's members:

Therefore by gratifying the corrupt desires of men in fleshly doctrines, they stirre them up to persecute with hatred and contempt all those that seek to bear themselves uprightly in this their spiritual factory. (CPW.1.802)

Milton then follows this observation with his autobiographical "digression" - the motivation of which has been implicitly justified by the preceding book which elevates inner truth above external law, which values self-contemplation over self-regard. John S. Diekhoff claims that the autobiographical sections of Milton's prose function as a reassurance to the reader of the writer's fitness to discuss doctrine: "these 'digressions' of autobiography, self-congratulation, and self-praise are parts of the ethical proof."<sup>72</sup> In addition, however, the act of autobiographical reflection *itself* can be seen to have its own value given the argument of the pamphlet. Milton not only defends the motivation for his arguments and argues that he is not self-interested, he also demonstrates that his arguments are sound because they are the product of self-reflection. Milton insists that his impulses are not personal but are inward in a deeper and higher sense. The fact that he is directed by conscience testifies to his denial of personal interest: "neither envy nor gall hath entered me upon this controversy, but the enforcement of conscience only" (CPW.1.806). Milton argues that his inspiration stems from an "inward prompting" (CPW.1.810); this insistence on the inward origins of the pamphlet sets out to universalise rather than personalise the impulse of his writings. The autobiographical digression forms part of the argument which urges that to "look upon Truth herself" (CPW.1.818) necessitates looking inward. This inward direction is anything but individualism in its bodily, empirical or possessive sense; what is sought in the inward gaze is transcendent. Just as Milton rejects giving any precedence to the tradition of Christian exegesis rather than Scripture itself, so, in writing he turns away from "Dame Memory and her Siren daughters" towards the "eternall Spirit who can enrich with all utterance and knowledge" (CPW.1.820). Milton rejects tradition or memory in favour of original scripture and inspiration, for only the latter is truth itself. The former may still be of value but only within the context of a vigilant attention to original and pure thought - the thought which would yield an inspired poetics, a disciplined life and

a religion which is "pure, spirituall and lowly, as the Gospel most truly is" (CPW.1.766).

After Milton's autobiographical digression he returns to a critique of the prelates' attention to worldly value. Milton's self-reflection rejected the primacy of personal desires in favour of a higher truth. The prelates' ecclesiastical mismanagement, on the other hand, has as its basis a forgetting of the divine origin of value: "it consists in a bold presumption of ordering the worship and service of God after man's own will in tradition and ceremonies" (CPW.1.826). The "traditions and ceremonies" which have obscured the primordial truth are merely human; the "pure simplicity of saving truth" is lost due to a lack of immediacy. Truth is now mediated by the worldly institution of the Church and its tradition:

. . . mistrusting to find the authority of their order in the immediat institution of Christ, or his Apostles by the cleer evidence of Scripture, they fly to the carnal supportment of tradition. (CPW.1.827)

Milton associates tradition with corporeality because both are set over against the pure spirit of original and immediate truth. Similarly, "the pervers iniquity of sixteen hundred yeers" (that is, human history) must be epistemologically subordinated to "him that is eternal" (CPW.1.827). There is a confusion in Church government between true and false hierarchies - a confusion between the ontological hierarchy of the spiritual and temporal with the political hierarchy of episcopacy. This confusion stems from a failure to acknowledge the finite nature of human experience in its relation to the divine: "instead of shewing the reason of their lowly condition from divine example and command, they seek to prove their high pre-eminence from humane consent and authority" (CPW.1.827).

Milton does not wish to devalue the divine potential of human being. It is, rather, a sense of *worldly* individualist autonomy which he sees as the cause of

error. It is essential that the possibility for the attainment of truth be awakened within each individual. However, the self-reflection which leads to truth should reveal the dependence and finitude of the individual alongside the self's divinity.

The knowledge of that which is most divine in human being relies upon not mistaking that which is merely mundane and secondary - the body, positive law, sophistry and temporality - for what is divine:

. . . ye think ye by these gaudy glisterings to strive up the devotion of the rude multitude; ye think so, because ye forsake the heavenly teaching of *S. Paul* for the hellish Sophistry of Papism. (CPW.1.828)

Milton's denegation of the "hellish Sophistry" which appeals to the "rude multitude" reinforces his extra-mundane individualism. When the self is part of a worldly multitude it is led into error; truth is achieved when the self turns away from the world to its personal relationship with God.

Just as individuals are led astray by falling into corporeality, so it is when the Church as

a decay'd nature seeks to the outward fomentations and chafings of worldly help, and external flourishes, to fetch, if it be possible, some motion on her extream parts, or to hatch a counterfeit life with the crafty and artificial heat of jurisdiction. (CPW.1.833)

Milton's rejection of jurisdiction as an ecclesiastical function places worldly discipline in the realm of the State with the Church enforcing only "the mighty operation of the spirit." Milton stresses the independence of the Church, for worldly activity of the nature of the State can only act as a contamination to the ideals of the Gospels. But, concomitant with this, the State as it stands at the moment must not bring inward experience into its service: "the Magistrat hath only to deal with the outward part, I mean not only the body alone, but of the mind in all her outward acts" (CPW.1.835). However, Milton later, in *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, argues that the inward demand for justice which rightly grounds Church government should also apply to the temporal sphere for "Justice is the onely true sovran and supreme Majesty upon earth" (CPW.3.237). In *Reason of Church Government* Milton goes on to stress the importance of civil

peace and sound government as "undoubtedly the first means to a natural man" who might then "open his eyes to a higher consideration" (CPW.1.836). Justice in this world creates an environment conducive to "higher considerations." Milton's rejection of any interplay between Church and State practices, in *Reason of Church Government*, is a result of his vision of the political sphere as based on temporal, external and contingent values. But even temporal government must be such that it allows the free working of the spirit in the Church. The Church does not embrace secular institutions for its purposes; it merely requests that these relative institutions do not interfere with its progress and do not provide conditions which preclude its development.

Milton discusses the nature of God and how this again must be seen within the distinction between the inner light which is reason and the values which found the mundane order of government. Whereas jurisdiction (as opposed to the moral censure of the Church) acts outwardly and by force and judgment, Milton stresses that God is "now no more a judge after the sentence of the Law, nor as it were a schoolmaister of perishable rites" (CPW.1.837). Milton's rejection of an external and punishing figure of God depends, once again, on the radical individualism of the Christian soul. God is not an external disciplining force set over and against human beings precisely because inner being is in accord with divine will. Milton then derives the nature of true Church government from God's benign paternalism and the inner light: "in the sweetest and mildest manner of paternal discipline he hath committed this other office of preserving in healthful constitution the inner man, which may be term'd the spirit of the soul to his spiritual deputy the minister of each Congregation" (CPW.1.837).

Milton goes on to state that jurisdiction in general would be supererogatory if humans bore an "inward reverence for their own persons." Such "inward reverence" would not be an attention to personal selfhood but would lead away from self-interest to love of God - precisely because of the divine nature of the soul: "And if the love of God as a fire sent from Heaven to be ever kept alive

upon the altar of our hearts, be the first principle of all godly and vertuous actions in men, this pious and just honouring of our selves is the second" (CPW.1.841). But in order to attain this inward reverence the individual must play a role in Church government; only this will bestow the dignity which will edify the soul to the point of attaining "the true likenesse and visage of what she is indeed" (CPW.1.844).

The self, therefore, achieves its essence by rejecting tradition, external government, corporeal desires and positive law. It attains its likeness by an active participation in the activity of reason through taking part in a Church founded on spirit. This is why, according to *Reason of Church Government*, "the functions of the Church government ought to be free and open to any Christian man" (CPW.1.844). Intervention and participation in Church government is not so much a duty as a necessary condition for spiritual edification and this because the Church should be composed of individuals and not be an institution for the distribution of sacraments. Only by being a participating individual can the soul be related to the Church in an authentic manner.

From this we can see that in the seventeenth century there were two radically distinct forms of individualism: the traditional Christian, other-worldly individualism embraced by Milton and the modern, secular, mundane individualism of modern philosophy. These two forms of individualism are central to two opposed ideologies. The older theological ideology is hierarchical, static and holistic. The individual gains access to eternal truth by contemplation of the divinity within or by consulting scripture. The modern ideology is open, equalitarian and relational; value is defined contingently and the individual competes with other individuals for what is valuable. Milton deals with the emergence of this non-hierarchical concept of value through a dramatic dialogue with his characters Comus and Satan. The arguments adopted to refute these characters express the same confidence as the prose tracts of the 1640s regarding the plainness of truth and the universality of reason. The premises which ground

Milton's epics are fundamentally those first expressed in *Reason of Church Government*: the soul is the seat of right reason; reason can discern what is eternally and universally true, and good and reason are God's divine light in human being.

- 1 See Alexandre Koyre, *From the Closed World to the Infinite Universe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1957); K.R. Popper, *The Open Society and its Enemies*, 5th ed. (London: Routledge, 1991); Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea*, (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1936) and Hans Blumenberg, *The Genesis of the Copernican World* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1987).
- 2 Like Heidegger, Adorno and Horkheimer also employ the concept of a "mathematicisation" of being. In *Dialectic of Enlightenment* the progress of reason through history is linked to a process of domination and loss of meaning where the "multiplicity of forms is reduced to position and arrangement, history to fact, things to matter." This process of enlightenment which has its origins in Platonic thought but becomes modern with Bacon's "scientific attitude" is mathematical in character: "The same equations dominate bourgeois justice and commodity exchange. [Adorno and Horkheimer then quote from Bacon's Advancement of Learning:] "Is not the rule, '*Si inaequalibus aequalia addas, omnia erunt inaequalia,*' an axiom of justice as well as of mathematics? And is there not a true coincidence between commutative and distributive justice, and arithmetical and geometrical proportion? Bourgeois society is ruled by equivalence. It makes the dissimilar comparable by reducing it to abstract quantities." Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. John Cumming (London: Verso, 1979) 7.
- 3 See, for example, Anthony Easthope, *Poetry as Discourse* (London: Methuen, 1983) 122-25; Geoffrey H. Hartman, "Nature and the Humanisation of the Self in Wordsworth," *English Romantic Poets*, ed. M.H. Abrams, 2nd ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1975) 123-132; Catherine Belsey, "The Romantic Construction of the Unconscious," *Literature, Politics and Theory*, ed. Francis Barker, Peter Hulme, Margaret Iversen and Diana Loxley (London: Methuen, 1986) 57-76; and Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973).



- 4 Nevertheless, certain distinctions between Platonic and Aristotelian thought will be of relevance in relation to Milton. The poet's satire and criticism of Aristotle's "misreading" of Plato's doctrine of forms (in *De Idea Platonica* and "Vacation Exercise"), for example, indicate that Milton inclined towards the "other-worldly" aspect of Plato's doctrines rather than Aristotelian naturalism. In her study of the relationship between Milton and Plato, Irene Samuel notes that where he could Milton would adopt both the arguments of Aristotle and Plato. Samuel also demonstrates Milton's awareness that Aristotle was Plato's pupil and that their shared ground was more significant than their differences: "Insofar as Aristotle refined the concepts of form and essence without refuting Plato's view, Milton tries to keep his use of the terms consistent with both Plato and Aristotle." Irene Samuel, *Plato and Milton* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1947) 134.
- 5 Thus Kevin Sharpe and Steven Zwicker argue that Milton is closer to Jonson than he is to Dryden by virtue of the fact that for Milton "the ethical and political spheres were conceived as inseparable" and that the idea of "Reason of state, the language of Machiavellian politics, aroused only fear and incomprehension in the citizens of a Christian commonwealth." introduction, *Politics of Discourse: The Literature and History of Seventeenth Century England*, ed. Kevin Sharpe and Steven Zwicker (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987) 8-9. C.S. Lewis also noted that one could observe in Milton "side by side with his rebelliousness, his individualism, and his love of liberty, his equal love of discipline, of hierarchy, of what Shakespeare calls 'degree'." C.S. Lewis, *A Preface to Paradise Lost* (London: Oxford University Press, 1942) 7.
- 6 Plato, *Portrait of Socrates: Being the Apology, Crito, and Phaedo of Plato in an English Translation with Introductions and Notes*, trans. R.W. Livingstone, (1938; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966) 100.
- 7 The idea of virtue being known through contemplation is specifically Platonic. Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics* stressed that virtue was an

acquired social practice. Milton's belief in the primordially of inner knowledge is therefore Platonic rather than Aristotelian.

8 Milton also subordinates the body to the soul and warns that the soul may become embodied if this hierarchy is not maintained. In *Of Reformation* he warns that "the Soule by this means of over-bodying her selfe, given up to fleshly delights, bated her wing apace downward" (CPW.1.522). Irene Samuel claims that Milton rejects the Platonic dichotomy between soul and body in his later works such as *De Doctrina* where "the whole man is soul, and the soul man" (Samuel 157). However, this belief in the "non-compound" nature of human being does not represent an over-turning of the dualism of *Comus* but rather a Christian belief in the eventual and appropriate development of human life towards its true and proper character, the soul. Attention to the body, on the other hand, would produce a greater degree of corporeality; the self can therefore overcome the soul/body dichotomy through ethical practice. Dualism within human being is a symptom of fallenness and corruption. Milton's increased Arminianism in his later years yielded a greater faith in the power of the body's progression towards the soul and less emphasis on the power of the body to 'imbrute' the soul.

9 Plato, *Phaedo* 106-07.

10 Aristotle, *The Ethics of Aristotle: The Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. J.A.K. Thomson (1953; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976) 77.

11 C.S. Lewis demonstrated the importance of Augustine for a reading of *Paradise Lost*, particularly with regard to Milton's account of the Fall and Augustine's idea that pride is a perversion of virtuous self-consciousness so that a "perversion arises when a conscious creature becomes more interested in itself than in God" (Lewis 66). Irene Samuel has also noted the importance of Augustine for Milton's relationship to Plato. Not only does Augustine represent the substantial transportation of Platonism into Christianity (following Clement and Origen) he is also "doubtless the chief link between Milton and other Platonists of the time, especially the group

at Cambridge." (Samuel, 38). In relation to the Cambridge Platonists, it is interesting to note that Henry More was one of the contributors to *Justa Edouardo King naufrago, ab Amicis moerentibus, amoris . . .* (1638) in which Milton's "Lycidas" was first published.

- 12 Milton retains this belief in the unfallen nature of reason and it forms the basis for one of his central differences from Calvinism. While Calvin extended and emphasised the fallenness of Augustine's "will," Milton stressed the unfallen reason. For Calvin, "when Adam stepped into sin, this image and likeness of God was cancelled and effaced, that is, he lost all the benefits of divine grace, by which he could have been led back into the way of life. Moreover, he was far removed from God and became a complete stranger. From this it follows that man was stripped and deprived of all wisdom, righteousness, power, life, which - as has already been said - could be held only in God." John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, Rev. ed. (London: Collins, 1986) 15-16.
- 13 This gives Augustine's thought its distinctly Christian character, for the separation in Plato and Plotinus between the divine and the emanations of the divine, in the form of souls, is not structurally significant for their thought.
- 14 Saint Augustine, *Sermons on Selected Lessons of the New Testament*, vol.2 (Oxford, 1845) 845.
- 15 Saint Augustine, *The City of God Against the Pagans*, Loeb Classical Library, vol. 4: Books 12-15, trans. Philip Levine (London: Heinemann; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1966) 271.
- 16 Augustine, *City of God*, Book 14, 273.
- 17 See A.H. Armstrong "Augustine and Christian Platonism," *Augustine: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. R.A. Marcus (New York: Doubleday, 1972) 10.
- 18 Arthur Barker, *Milton and the Puritan Dilemma: 1641-1660* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1942), 10.

- 19 Etienne Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of Saint Augustine*, trans. L.E.M. Lynch (London: Victor Gollancz, 1961) 72.
- 20 Gilson 74.
- 21 Lewis 76.
- 22 Louis Dumont, *From Mandeville to Marx: The Genesis and Triumph of Economic Ideology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977).
- 23 "The relationship itself, and also the resulting association is conceived of either as real and organic life - this is the essential characteristic of the *Gemeinschaft* (community), - or as imaginary and mechanical structure - this is the concept of *Gesellschaft* (society)." Ferdinand Toennies, *Fundamental Concepts of Sociology: (Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft)*, trans. Charles P. Loomis (New York: American Book Company, 1940) 37.
- 24 K.R. Popper, *The Open Society and its Enemies*. Popper sees Plato's metaphysics as the grounding theory of "closed" societies. However, according to Popper, this "closed" metaphysic is not left behind with the advent of modern society but continues in the works of such thinkers as Hegel and Marx. Similarly, the theory of the "open" society is already presented as a challenge in Plato's time. Popper sees both world views as possibilities recurring throughout the history of philosophy.
- 25 Dumont refers to modern society as "equalitarian" insofar as it seeks to maintain the ontological sameness of its members; the term "egalitarian" is traditionally associated with equal rights and benefits.
- 26 Louis Dumont, *Essays on Individualism: Modern Ideology in Anthropological Perspective* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988) 3.
- 27 Dumont, *Essays* 8.
- 28 Dumont, *Essays* 10.
- 29 Dumont, *Essays* 84.
- 30 Dumont, *Essays* 15.
- 31 Dumont, *Essays* 79.
- 32 Dumont, *Essays* 33.

- 33 See A.N. Whitehead's account in *Science and the Modern World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932).
- 34 Dumont, *Essays* 49.
- 35 Dumont, *Essays* 208.
- 36 Dumont, *Essays* 52.
- 37 Dumont, *Essays* 54.
- 38 Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Richard Tuck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) 9.
- 39 Alastair MacIntyre as a neo-Aristotelian offers a powerful critique of this misunderstanding at the heart of modern moral philosophy - that by attempting to ground ethics in something other than itself one misses the very nature of moral experience. See *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 2nd ed. (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984).
- 40 Martin Heidegger, *What is a Thing*, trans. W.B. Barton and Vera Deutsch (1967; Lanham: University Press of America, 1985) 98.
- 41 Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (1962; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985) 122-134.
- 42 Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, trans. Dorion Cairns (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1960) 24.
- 43 Heidegger, *What is A Thing* 103.
- 44 Heidegger, *What is a Thing* 105.
- 45 Heidegger, *What is a Thing* 92.
- 46 Hobbes, *Leviathan* 63.
- 47 C. B. MacPherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962).
- 48 MacPherson 3.
- 49 Hobbes, *Leviathan* 50.
- 50 MacPherson 19.
- 51 MacPherson 35.
- 52 MacPherson 37.
- 53 MacPherson 48-9.

- 54 John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, ed. Peter Laslett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).
- 55 John Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Peter H. Nidditch (1975; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979) 211-212.
- 56 Richard Overton, *An Arrow Against all Tyrants* (1646; Exeter: The Rota, 1976) 3.
- 57 Tertullian, *Apology*, Loeb Classical Library, trans. T.R. Glover (London: Heinemann; New York: G.P. Putnam, 1931) 151.
- 58 Eusebius, *In Praise of Constantine: A Historical Study and New Translation of Eusebius' Triennial Orations*, trans. and ed. H.A Drake (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976) 87.
- 59 Augustine, *The City of God*, trans. William Chase Green, vol. 6: Books 18.36 -20, Loeb Classical Library (London: Heinemann; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960) 195.
- 60 R.W and A.J. Carlyle, *A History of Mediaeval Political Theory in the West*, vol. 1 (London and Edinburgh, 1903) 190-91.
- 61 Francis Bacon, "An Advertisement Touching the Controversies of the Church of England," *The Letters and the Life of Francis Bacon; Including All his Occasional Works*, ed. James Spedding, vol.1 (London: Longman, 1861) 75.
- 62 John Milton. *Complete Prose Works of John Milton*, ed. Don M. Wolfe et al. 8 vols. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953-82), vol. 1, 551; all further references will be abbreviated as CPW and incorporated into the text.
- 63 Pelsoni Almoni, *A Compendious Discourse, Proving Episcopacy To Be of Apostolicall, and Consequently of Divine Institution* (1641) qtd. in Don Wolfe, introduction, CPW.1.122.
- 64 Kymon Lycos's reading of the *Republic* makes a point that could equally be applied to Milton: "The issue then was not whether a type of political organisation was the most equitable or efficient, in distributing social benefits to the citizens. Rather, it was whether the political arrangement

- could lay claim to being the one most appropriate to preserve the citizens' sense of identity with their polis." Kymon Lycos, *Plato on Justice and Power: Reading Book I of Plato's Republic* (London: Macmillan, 1987) 11.
- 65 Lycos 13.
- 66 Throughout Milton's reform tracts the value of self-reflection plays a constant and foundational role. It is important to note here that self-reflection in this (Platonic) sense begins by looking inward but seeks to attain a truth which is trans-individual, divine and other-worldly. It must be distinguished from Cartesian self-reflection which is epistemologically oriented and which seeks self-reference and self-grounding rather than the otherness of God.
- 67 Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, trans. Olive Wyon, vol. 1 (London: Allen and Unwin; New York: Macmillan, 1931).
- 68 Troeltsch concludes the first volume of his history of Christian teaching which traces doctrine up to the Reformation with the identification of this contrast: "The Church is the principle of universalism and of Christian civilization, of intellectual freedom, of mobility and power of adaptation, but she binds herself to incarnate her Divine content in Dogma and in the Priesthood, limits her relative process to an exclusive degree, and claims external and exclusive dominion over the State and over Society, in order to ensure sufficient room for its inward effects of grace" (Troeltsch 380). On the other hand "The sect is the more mobile and subjective, the truer and more inward principle, because it us at the same time more exclusive and more powerful, and it is firmly based upon the literal interpretation of the Gospel" (Troeltsch 381).
- 69 Troeltsch 461.
- 70 As Arthur Barker notes, Milton's attitude to Constantine demonstrates his difference from the Smectymnuans insofar as they referred to the "admired Constantine, that great promoter and patron of the Christian Church" who demonstrated "the gracious disposition of princes towards Christian

- religion." (*An Answer to . . . An Humble Remonstrance*, March, 1641, 28, 45, 74) qtd. in Barker 33.
- 71 John Milton, *The Poetical Works of John Milton*, ed. Helen Darbishire (London: Oxford University Press, 1958). All quotations from Milton's poetry are taken from this edition; all further references will be abbreviated and incorporated into the text. The initials of the title of the work will be followed by book and line numbers successively.
- 72 John S. Diekhoff, "The Function of the Prologues in Paradise Lost," *PMLA* 57 (1942): 698.



## Chapter Two:

### *Comus, Samson Agonistes, Paradise Lost and Paradise Regain'd*

The tradition of classical ethics and metaphysics which Milton affirms in order to refute Satan has its beginning in the Platonic conception of virtue. Plato's dramatisation of Socrates's refutation of the Sophists is at the heart of the transcendent definitions of value which ground the Western philosophical tradition of ethics prior to the seventeenth century. In Plato's *Republic* Thrasymachus defines justice as "what is in the interest of the stronger party:"<sup>1</sup>

Each ruling class makes laws in its own interest, a democracy democratic laws, a tyranny tyrannical ones and so on; and in making these laws they define as 'right' for their subjects what is in the interests of themselves, the rulers, and if anyone breaks their laws he is punished as a 'wrongdoer'.<sup>2</sup>

Thrasymachus therefore claims that the structure of the state and its laws rest upon power, that laws serve the maintenance of the state for the advantage of the state and that justice has no inherent quality but is a concept used to dominate the less powerful. He argues that in some ways the current perception of justice, ethics and value is a form of deception, that what is commonly accepted as justice is not justice at all but power appearing as justice. Socrates's refutation of Thrasymachus consists in demonstrating that whatever justice is, it cannot be defined in this contingent way. Justice is not a concept to be used for political ends but is a virtue and therefore has its own validity. According to Socrates, a practice or *techne* does not look to its own interests but to the interests of its subject: "Medicine therefore looks to the interest not of medicine but of the body."<sup>3</sup> Similarly, justice seeks not to maintain its own practice but to act for the good of its object: "no ruler of any kind qua ruler, exercises his authority, whatever its sphere, with his own interest in view, but that of the subject of his skill."<sup>4</sup>

Thrasymachus, however, restates his position in response to Socrates by claiming that the political power of rulers is directed towards economic gain: "the rulers of states, if they are truly such, feel towards their subjects as one might

towards sheep, and think about nothing all the time but how they can make a profit out of them."<sup>5</sup> In describing the exploitation enabled by the spurious justice of the state Thrasymachus demonstrates that the practice of justice only brings benefits to rulers: "but you ought to consider how the just man always comes off worse than the unjust."<sup>6</sup> Thrasymachus's conclusion formulates a relativist ethics based on self-interest and power: "injustice, given scope, has greater strength and freedom and power than justice; which proves what I started by saying, that justice is the interest of the stronger party, injustice the interest of oneself."<sup>7</sup> Socrates argues that the competitive quality of injustice makes it an incoherent practice: "And so with any two individuals. Injustice will make them hate each other, and they will be at enmity with themselves and with just men as well."<sup>8</sup> Socrates then goes on to argue the similar effects of injustice on the state:

Injustice, then, seems to have the following results, whether it occurs in a state or family or army or anything else: it renders it incapable of any common action because of factions and quarrels, and sets it at variance with itself and with its opponents and with all just men.<sup>9</sup>

Injustice also has a comparable effect on the individual: "It renders him incapable of action because of internal conflicts and division of purpose."<sup>10</sup> The weight of Socrates's refutation rests upon the claim that a virtue, such as justice, is not reducible to the external benefits which may attach to it. Justice, as a practice, has its own function or good and that good is integral to human happiness.

Socrates refutes Thrasymachus's sophistry through the practice of reason. Reason reveals the true nature of a virtue, its essential rather than its contingent goods. Thrasymachus can be refuted because his sophistry still pretends to right reason. The exploitation which Thrasymachus claims is at the heart of the concept of justice can be refuted by examining the intrinsic character of the practice of justice. Sophistry, therefore, differs from modern moral relativism, which not only denies the intrinsic character of virtue, as Thrasymachus attempts to do, but also denies the validity of right reason. Plato's sophists employ the use of what only appear to be reasonable arguments to argue to certain ends. The sophist can therefore be refuted by reason, for the whole concept of sophistry rests upon the

possibility of right reason. In its modern form relativism claims that concepts such as reason, justice and right are only ever contingently defined to serve those in power, that their actual ends are extrinsic to their *de facto* definition. The modern relativist is therefore less easy to refute; the relativist rejects the distinction between false and right reason. For the moral relativist *all* reason is sophistry. Despite the distinction between relativism and sophistry the two positions have much in common. The connection can be seen in Milton's Satan and Comus, who put forward both relativist and sophistical arguments.

What characterises pre-modern examinations of sophistry is that non-universal definitions of value are refuted by a demonstration that concepts such as reason, justice and virtue are intrinsically valid and that any accusation of their contingency is parasitic and self-refuting. Consequently, there is a recurrent insistence by Milton on the untenability of the sophist's position. The truth of moral value inevitably manifests itself; relativism is self-refuting: "evil on it self shall back recoil . . . Self-fed, and self-consum'd" (COM. 593-97). Virtue is the foundation of the world's being and is therefore anathema to the "eternal restless change" of evil. Consequently, speaking of the purity of goodness the elder brother in *Comus* asserts: "if this fail, / The pillar'd firmament is rott'nness, / And earths base built on stubble" (COM.597-99). Hence, the practice of virtue is foundational to the being of the world and not an arbitrary practice with external ends. As Milton states in *Eikonoclastes* practice of the virtues is integral, not contingent, to the well being of a state and its individuals:

The happiness of a Nation consists in true Religion, Piety, Justice, Prudence, Temperence, Fortitude, and the contempt of Avarice and Ambition. They in whomsoever these vertues dwell eminently, need not Kings to make them happy, but are the architects of their own happiness; and whether to themselves or others are not less then Kings. (CPW.3.542)

In *Paradise Regain'd*, which, as Northrop Frye has noted, resembles a Platonic dialogue,<sup>11</sup> Satan is eventually "confuted and convinc't / Of his weak arguing, and fallacious drift" (PR.3.3-4). His unsound reasoning is eventually

defeated. Similarly, Comus's sophistry is overcome by the lady's virtue - a victory that is anticipated by the Elder brother's invocation of Minerva's chastity "that dash't brute violence / With sudden adoration, and blank aw" (COM.451-52). Comus is compelled to recognise the validity of the lady's utterances: "She fables not, I feel that I do fear / Her words set off by som superior power" (COM.800-01). Nevertheless, Comus continues to employ a rhetoric of moral relativism for the purpose of persuasion. He claims that the lady's ethics are "moral babble" and yet he can only challenge her virtue by invoking "canon laws":

. . . I must dissemble,  
And try her yet more strongly. Com, no more,  
This is meer moral babble, and direct  
Against the canon laws of our foundation;  
(COM. 805-08)

The arbitrariness of moral discourse which Satan and Comus assert in order to achieve their own ends is inevitably overcome by true reason. According to the Miltonic view relativist claims can only ever be sophistical; they must be the product of unsound reason. However, some notion of essential truth will always be hidden in the arguments of the sophist. The distinction between truth and feigned reason can be clearly made because there is a universal arbiter of value. For Milton, like Plato, access to this transcendent source of value lies in the soul and reason. The purpose for our discussion of this distinction between sophistry and right reason lies in the assessment of the character of Satan. Satan, in many ways, represents the Thrasymachan attitude toward justice. Like Thrasymachus his arguments are self-refuting and dependent upon the very concepts he sets out to invalidate. In addition, Satan's sense of self is modern insofar as he manifests all those hallmarks we have identified in the emergent possessive individualism of the seventeenth century. Satan's emphasis upon the power of the "unconquerable Will" (PL.1.106) renounces the Platonic subservience of the will to reason and resembles a more Hobbesian stress on self-assertion. Satan's claim that freedom depends upon absolute self-determination, self-grounding and self-origination

presents all other individuals as threats to the self; this is also a characteristic of Hobbesian individualism. Finally, the structure of Satan (and Comus's) thought is economic or equalitarian rather than hierarchical. Satan states that "Orders and Degrees / Jarr not with liberty, but well consist;" (PL.5.792-3) but this acknowledgement is actually used to *refute* hierarchical ordering, for Satan takes the presence of liberty in all degrees as entailing a society of equals:

. . . and if not equal all, yet free,  
Equally free; for Orders and Degrees  
Jarr not with liberty, but well consist.  
Who can in reason then or right assume  
Monarchie over such as live by right  
His equals, if in power and splendor less,  
In freedom equal? . . . (PL.5.791-97)

Satan's initial statement that hierarchy and liberty are not mutually exclusive is contradicted by his faulty conclusion that there is an equality of liberty which invalidates any assumption of right or authority. His conditional premise ("if not equal all") which admits hierarchy is refuted by the later assumption that equality of liberty precludes hierarchy ("Who can in reason then or right assume"). Nevertheless, his final return to "power and splendor · less" demonstrates that he cannot discharge the first premise, that there is an ontological hierarchy. It should be noted here that Satan uses notions of reason and right despite the fact that his leap from "free" to "equally free" to "equals" is a faulty syllogism.

Satan's sense of value arises not from a sense of order and due subordination but from power and domination so that quantitative issues such as force, rather than qualitative issues such as right and merit, determine law and justice. It has been claimed that many of Satan's arguments resemble radical Protestant beliefs and that Milton was therefore implicitly sympathetic to the character of Satan.<sup>12</sup> In the reading of *Paradise Lost* which follows it will be argued that it is precisely the radical modern type of individualism which Milton rejects. Satan's arguments are consistently represented as flawed and the basis for Milton's refutation is his assertion of those universal conceptions of truth and justice which featured in his earlier writings such as *Reason of Church Government*.

The whole issue of the distinction between spurious moral rhetoric and moral truth stems from Milton's belief in the essential, eternal and rational character of truth. In fact, there is a contradiction at the heart of Milton's sophists which is an outgrowth of Milton's presentation of sophistry as logically self-refutable. Comus and Satan at once use the appearance of reasoned arguments in order to compel certain ends *and* deny any essential or universal definitions of truth or reason. We will consider these two aspects in turn beginning with the semblance or claim to reason.

Milton's Satan, like Comus of the Masque, is a sophist. Both Satan and Comus claim at some times to be *using the appearance of reason* while at other times they make actual claims to rationality. Comus himself claims to have "power to cheat the eye with blear illusion, / And give it false presentments" (COM.155-56). He also admits that he works "under fair pretence of friendly ends, / And well plac't words of glozing courtesie / Baited with reasons not unplausible" (COM.160-62). Reason, therefore, is for Comus a means to be used and not an end or virtue. In *Paradise Regain'd* Satan admits to using "well-coucht fraud, well woven snares" (PR.1.97). But he also constructs arguments which appear to be compelling syllogisms. When Satan tempts Eve in paradise it is with "Reason, to her seeming" (PL.9.738). Satan's arguments directed to Christ in *Paradise Regain'd* and against God in *Paradise Lost* employ the use of concepts such as reason, right and justice. Satan employs these concepts of reason while he also acknowledges that he works by irrational means or "well woven snares." Throughout *Paradise Lost*, there is insistent mention of the spurious character of Satan's reason: "By som false guile . . . glozing lyes" (PL.3.92-93), "So spake the false dissembler" (PL.3.681), "Which marrd his borrowd visage, and betraid / Him counterfet" (PL.4.116-17), "and with calumnious Art / Of counterfeted truth thus held their ears" (PL.5.770-71).

Milton not only accuses both Satan and Comus of sophistry; he also demonstrates the way in which their arguments are parasitic upon true and

authentic moral discourse. The refutation of Satan and Comus by their opponents lies in the identification of the distinction between the appearance and reality of reason. The Lady in *Comus* sees Comus's arguments as "false rules pranckt in reasons garb" (COM.758). Her refutation then extends into an observation regarding the sophist - that it is an inner lack of worth and an inability to receive reason which makes rational argument seem for him "moral babble" (COM.806): "Thou hast not Eare, nor Soul to apprehend / The sublime notion" and "Thou art not fit to hear thyself convinc't" (COM.784-92). Similarly, Christ's reply to Satan states that he is "compos'd from lyes / From the beginning, and in lies wilt end" (PR.1.407-08). In addition, Christ identifies the hallmark of sophistry - its dependence upon the appearance of truth: "that hath been thy craft, / By mixing somewhat true to vent more lyes" (PR.1.432-3). Christ's observation reinforces the essential nature of true reason and the parasitic nature of sophistry. However much Satan and Comus may insist upon the arbitrariness of truth, their sophistry must appeal to those concepts of truth they rhetorically deny. Throughout *Paradise Lost* Satan presents several arguments to justify his rebellion; these arguments produce notions of right, justice and equality. When addressing the fallen angels he uses the concept of justice to express a notion of sacral kingship, the type of kingship he has (unjustly) attributed to God:

Mee though just right, and the fixt Laws of Heav'n  
 Did first create your Leader, next, free choice,  
 With what besides, in Counsel or in Fight,  
 Hath been achievd of merit . . . (PL.2.18-21)

By referring to the fixed laws of heaven in order to legitimate his rule Satan invokes a concept of the divine right of kings which, given his rebellion, would actually conflict with his own notion of "just right." Satan claims for himself what can only be attributed to God. He cannot lead by "just right" for there is no hierarchical distinction which would raise him above his fellow angels. He next refers to free choice, despite the fact that his previously invoked idea of "fixed laws" would seem to contradict any form of democracy. He then concludes with the idea that merit has achieved free choice thus commencing the fallacy he repeats throughout the epic: that the angels revolted in the name of freedom, that

their free choice has been achieved by a form of merit and not that it has been bestowed by God.

Both Satan and Comus claim that moral concepts have no intrinsic meaning but are defined contingently. This produces an ethics of prudence rather than an ethics of virtue. That is, while virtues are ends in themselves, characters like Comus and Satan see moral behaviour and moral discourse as useful means to some external end. Hence Comus states that the distinction between good and evil rests upon discovery: "Tis only day-light that makes Sin" (COM.126). Similarly, Satan refers to God as "Our great Forbidder, safe with all his Spies / About him" (PL.9.815-16). In keeping with this external conception of moral discourse Satan continually expresses a rule-based morality. He refers to God as "Heav'ns high Arbitrator" (PL.2.359). Milton, on the other hand, sees Chaos (where "Chance governs all") as the "high Arbiter" who rules "by decision" rather than order or justice (PL.2.907-10). Satan's view of God as tyrannical is based upon a reduction of the universe to a Chaotic realm where the only laws are instituted "by decision." For the fallen angels the only possible basis for God's supremacy is "strength, or Chance, or Fate" (PL.1.133). Similarly, Sin sees the universe ruled by God's "wrauth, which he calls Justice" (PL.2.733).

Milton's fallen characters, therefore, live in a rule-based and externally ordered universe. Milton, on the other hand, depicts God as freely giving the world a natural law which God (because he involves no contradiction) cannot subvert at will. Hence God states that Adam must be expelled from paradise because "The Law I gave to Nature him forbids" (PL.11.49). God does not decide what is right; Christ, in answering God says that He "judgest onely right" (PL.3.155). What is right is logically antecedent to God's judgement. Accordingly, for Milton, justice is a concept not decided by God but fulfilled by God because he is just. Just as Adam must be expelled from paradise to accord with the natural law which God has freely ordained, so Adam must fall in accord with justice: "Die hee or Justice must" (PL.3.210). The concept of justice is prior to



God's will. Like Thrasymachus in the *Republic* Satan attempts to ground his definition of justice in power. For Satan, God's being is not co-incident with right; rather it is God's position of power which enables Him to decide what justice or right is:

. . . hee  
 Who now is Sovran can dispose and bid  
 What shall be right: fardest from him is best  
 Whom reason hath equald, force hath made supream  
 Above his equals . . . (PL.1.245-49)

The concept of right, for Satan, is not based upon reason but upon divine fiat. Satan sees reason neither as an endowment from God, nor as an inner faculty leading to the spiritual edification of human being. Satan here is at once a modern rationalist<sup>13</sup> (claiming that reason equalises, that all beings possess reason to the same degree, and that reason is the highest mode of being and hence unsurpassed by God to whom it is equal) and a voluntarist (reason does not generate a universal concept of good; only force decides what shall be right). Here, reason is set against the structure of law rather than law being seen as the outgrowth of reason. Hence, for Satan, laws of obedience must be set against knowledge; according to Satan reason would reveal that all moral concepts are merely the advantage of the powerful. However, in Book Six of *Paradise Lost* God declares that it is only when reason (which would reveal that Christ rules by merit) has failed that laws must be imposed by force:

. . . and to subdue  
 By force, who reason for thir Law refuse,  
 Right reason for thir Law, and for thir King  
 Messiah, who by right of merit Reigns. (PL.6.40-43)

Reason for Satan is an equalitarian faculty rather than the foundational principle of hierarchy. Satan refers to God's commands to Adam and Eve as "Envious commands, invented with designe / To keep them low whom Knowledge might exalt / Equal with Gods" (PL.4.524-26). Satan assumes that the hierarchy in heaven is a continual reassertion of God's power and therefore sees no reason

why he should "bow and sue for grace . . . and deifie his power" (PL.1.111-12). He sees God's reign as tyrannical because, for Satan, there is no order other than force which "now triumphs" and "holds the Tyranny" (PL.1.123-24). God is sovereign, not because of any ontological hierarchy, but because he is "Whom Thunder hath made greater" (PL.1.258). However, Satan also possesses a peculiarly modern psychologistic sense of will which he sets against physical power. Hence he claims that "who overcomes / By force, hath overcome but half his foe" (PL.1.648-49). This struggle between an inner spirit and outward force is a modern Hobbesian analysis of the individual's relationship to law and will be considered at greater length in the following section on Satan's individualism.

The justification of God's ways to man in *Paradise Lost* rests upon the assertion of a hierarchical conception of value, a universal definition of justice (with the addition of the Christian concept of grace), a refutation of the logical possibility of relativism, a rejection of Satanic individualism and an insistence upon the ability of reason in the human soul to alight upon truth. Christopher Hill claims that Milton felt a need to justify God because of the failure of the revolution and that *Paradise Lost* represents a departure from Milton's earlier faith in the possibility of justice.<sup>14</sup> In contradistinction to Hill, however, I would argue that *Paradise Lost* still retains faith in the power of reason. Milton still considers this aspect of human being capable of attaining the light of truth. Nevertheless, there is a greater emphasis in *Paradise Lost* upon the corruption of the will and self-enslavement as a result of the postlapsarian disturbance of the correct hierarchy of the tripartite soul. The survey of history by Michael in Books Eleven and Twelve, for example, demonstrates the progressive degeneration of Church government as spiritual values are increasingly contaminated by and subordinated to carnal desires.

The presence of the concept of hierarchy in *Paradise Lost* has been commented upon by a number of critics. C.S. Lewis draws attention to the distinction between the ontological hierarchy which Milton asserts between men

and God and the political hierarchy he rejects which would subordinate some men to others. In his book, *The Great Chain of Being*, A.O. Lovejoy also frequently quotes Milton in relation to the concept of hierarchy. The purpose of the discussion which follows will be to demonstrate the ways in which the concept of hierarchy is inextricably intertwined with the Miltonic conceptions of value and the soul and the incompatibility of the Satanic world-view with Milton's commitment to hierarchy.<sup>15</sup>

The passage which most clearly demonstrates the "great chain of being" in *Paradise Lost* is the speech of Raphael (here significantly called "the winged hierarch") to Adam:

O Adam, one Almighty is, from whom  
 All things proceed, and up to him return,  
 If not depriv'd from good, created all  
 Such to perfection, one first matter all,  
 Indu'd with various forms, various degrees  
 Of substance, and in things that live, of life;  
 But more refin'd, more spiritous and pure,  
 As neerer to him plac't or neerer tending  
 Each in thir several active Sphears assignd,  
 Till body up to spirit work, in bounds  
 Proportiond to each kind. So from the root  
 Springs lighter the green stalk, from thence the leaves  
 More aerie, last the bright consummat floure  
 Spirits odorous breathes: flours and thir fruit  
 Mans nourishment, by gradual scale sublim'd  
 To vital spirits aspire, to animal,  
 To intellectual, give both life and sense,  
 Fancie and understanding, whence the Soule  
 Reason receives and reason is her being,  
 Discursive or Intuitive; discourse  
 Is ofttest yours, the latter most is ours,  
 Differing but in degree, of kind the same. (PL.5.469-90)

Milton adopts the Augustinian conception that evil arises not from the corruption of natural being but in the ability of free human wills to aspire upwards towards God, becoming more spiritual, or downwards towards the less rational positions in the ontological hierarchy. Milton therefore places the origin of evil not in matter as such ("one first matter all") but in the possibility, stemming from free

will, that human beings can either aspire to their appropriate character or refuse God's grace and remain bound to the fallen disruption of the hierarchy of reason, will and passions. The assertion that all things proceed from and return to God (an idea of Plato's *Timaeus* which influenced Plotinus and Christian neo-Platonism) enforces the idea of a totality in which all being is subsumed beneath its transcendent source. The expression of hierarchy in this tradition sees the upward progression as a process of spiritualisation (as does Socrates in the *Phaedo*). Hence entities are "by gradual scale sublim'd." The traditional concept of the chain of being also sees the character of each member of the hierarchy assigned to a particular sphere of activity: "Each in thir several active Sphears assignd" and "in bounds / Proportiond to each kind." The presence of reason in the soul is a function of the position of human being in the hierarchy and it is the possession of reason which characterises the appropriate mode of being for human life: "whence the Soul / Reason receives, and reason is her being." The idea of the proper station of being is repeated throughout *Paradise Lost* both for angels ("Each had his place appointed, each his course" PL.3.720) and for human beings. Raphael warns Adam against both aspiring beyond his being's capability for knowledge and against "attributing overmuch to things / Less excellent" (PL.8.565-66). The appropriate kind of knowledge is knowledge of one's own proper mode of being: "but to know / That which before us lies in daily life, / Is the prime Wisdom" (PL.8.192-94). Consequently, not only does Raphael assert the existence of the chain of being; he also prompts the suggestion by Adam that an awareness and contemplation of this hierarchy is the appropriate and edifying object of human knowledge:

. . . and the scale of Nature set  
 From center to circumference, whereon  
 In contemplation of created things  
 By steps we may ascend to God . . . (PL.5.509-12)

The acknowledgement of hierarchy and degree is here connected with moral knowledge in two respects. First, as we have just seen, knowledge of the "scale of Nature" provides the contemplative wisdom which yields a moral life capable of spiritualising human being. This idea is reiterated in Book Seven where the

ascension towards God is qualitative and by steps: "till by degrees of merit rais'd" (PL.7.157). Secondly, like Plato and Augustine, Milton asserts a hierarchy within the individual in accord with the doctrine of the tripartite soul.<sup>16</sup> We have seen that in *Reason of Church Government* Milton's insistence upon the distinction between bodily and spiritual values stressed a subordination rather than a mortification of the body. The idea that the mind itself had both spiritual and temporal aspects is evidenced in the distinction between reason and the will. In *Paradise Regain'd* the hierarchy within the mind is seen as both prior to and more important than worldly hierarchy. Christ's refusal of the wealth offered by Satan is based on the impossibility of salvation for the inwardly enslaved. The necessary efficacious power for just government therefore, results not from worldly power but from inner hierarchy: "Yet he who reigns within himself, and rules / Passions, Desires, and Fears, is more a King" (PR.2.466-67). In *Paradise Lost* this notion of inner hierarchy is more specifically expressed in terms of the Platonic conception of the tripartite soul. The unfallen Adam insists upon the distinction between certain aspects of inner experience which are duly subordinated to reason: "in the Soule / Are many lesser Faculties that serve / Reason as chief" (PL.5.100-2). Even in Eden, Adam is warned by Raphael to maintain the subordination of will and the passions to reason: "take heed lest Passion sway / Thy Judgement to do aught, which else free Will / Would not admit" (PL.8.635-37). Rather than be transported by the "outside" of Eve's appearance which would lead to "subjection" as opposed to "honour" (PL.8.568-70) Raphael states that the appropriate love:

. . . refines  
 The thoughts, and heart enlarges, hath his seat  
 In Reason, and is judicious, is the scale  
 By which to heav'nly Love thou maist ascend,  
 Not sunk in carnal pleasure . . . (PL.8.589-93)

After the fall the subordination of the lesser faculties to reason which had produced the prelapsarian inner harmony gives way to a disruption of hierarchy. Adam and Eve, like the fallen Satan, now have minds which are divided. As J.B

Broadbent has noted the characters of *Paradise Lost* do not soliloquise until they have fallen.<sup>17</sup> What was once a "calme Region" for Adam and Eve is now an inner hell; this disturbance of inner harmony is a consequence of the usurpation of reason by the appetite which sways the free will to its demands:

. . . nor only Teares  
 Raind at thir Eyes, but high Winds worse within  
 Began to rise, high Passions, Anger, Hate,  
 Mistrust, Suspicion, Discord, and shook sore  
 Thir inward State of Mind, calme Region once  
 And full of Peace, now tost and turbulent:  
 For Understanding rul'd not, and the Will  
 Heard not her lore, both in subjection now  
 To sensual Appetite, who from beneath  
 Usurping over sovran reason claimd  
 Superior sway . . . (PL.9.1121-31)

Despite Satan's continual insistence upon a form of mind/body split ("the mind is its own place"), his mental life is depicted by Milton and admitted by Satan to be a "Hell within him" (PL.4.20). While "Vaunting aloud," he is "rackt with deep despaire" (PL.1.126). Satan sees an illegitimate hierarchy as the condition for God's tyranny but his despair is in actual fact a product of the disruption of his own inner hierarchy which would rightly recognise the supremacy of God. For when reason is dominant, laws, virtues and obedience do not appear forced but are conducive to the well being of rational creatures. Reason is not set over and against the passions for the practice of the virtues yields "a wel-govern'd and wise appetite" which recognises that "that which is not good, is not delicious" (COM.704-05). For Milton, the concept of reason is inextricably intertwined with a directedness towards God, virtue, goodness and the appropriate mode of being of the soul. In *Paradise Regain'd* Christ answers Satan by expounding this relationship:

And reason; since his Word all things produc'd,  
 Though chiefly not for glory as prime end,  
 But to shew forth his goodness, and impart  
 His good communicable to every soul . . .  
 (PR.3.122-25)

The faculty of reason, therefore, has a *telos* which entails both a directedness towards God and an issuing of divine goodness to each individual soul. The

hierarchy which subordinates human to divine being is validated by the very essence of human reason and also defines and generates universal good. The character of the soul therefore participates in the definition of goodness.

In *Samson Agonistes* the chorus asserts that "Just are the ways of God, / And justifiable to Men" (SA.293-94). The concept of justice is reiterated throughout *Samson Agonistes*, *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regain'd*.<sup>18</sup> Milton's entire concept of free will and his rejection of Calvinistic predestination is a consequence of his determination that God is just. If God were to have decreed absolutely that Adam were to fall, then he could not justly condemn him for an action over which he had no control. Furthermore, if God were then to bestow grace upon some and not upon others, this would also contradict justice. It would condemn some for refusing a grace that they were never offered. Justice would not be universal and compelling but a function of arbitrary choice. In *Christian Doctrine* Milton reiterates that the use of the word "elect" in scripture is to refer to those who *choose* to believe (CPW.6.180). God's salvation and grace towards believers is just because he has left each rational being with a free will. Consequently, the purpose of God's description of human free will is that it "clears his own Justice" (PL.3.Argument).<sup>19</sup>

The significance of Milton's allegiance to the integrity of the concept of justice in the face of the Protestant emphasis on God's will, underlines the poet's traditional conception of the virtues. Milton's refusal to divorce the concept of justice from the being of God stems from his classical identification of reason with virtue and other-worldly directedness. A virtue must be seen as having an inherent value and desired for its own end. If God's decrees were seen to be arbitrary and at odds with the inner coherence of classical conceptions of ethics, then moral behaviour in this world would lose its intrinsic worth and become a means to an end (salvation and the manifestation of election) rather than an end in itself. The Calvinistic conception of election has frequently been seen to support a modern ethic because it reduces emphasis on other-worldly

contemplation and inherently moral action. The most famous statements of this idea are Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* and R.H. Tawney's *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*.<sup>20</sup> Milton's belief in the essential nature of truth, justice, reason and virtue simply cannot allow such an arbitrary God. The good, for Milton, can be proved to have an almost logical necessity insofar as the very being and character of the world arises from a good and rational God. The addition of the Christian concept of grace does not weaken the integrity of the virtue of justice. Grace is necessary in Milton's Christian conception, not because justice is at odds with the world nor because justice is not desirable in itself, but rather because human fallenness requires the light of God in order to attain justice.<sup>21</sup>

Despite Satan's attempts to invert ethics, his "evil be thou my good" embodies as much contradiction as Thrasymachus's argument that justice is the advantage of the powerful. Just as Thrasymachus's argument in the *Republic* never steps into full-blown relativism, so Milton demonstrates that Satan never can renounce the true concept of good. In *Paradise Regain'd* Satan states:

. . . I have not lost  
To love, at least contemplat and admire  
What I see excellent in good, or fair,  
Or vertuous, I should so have lost all sense  
(PR.1.379-82)

In order to demonstrate that this is not just further sophistry on Satan's part Milton later writes that Satan is "strook / With guilt of his own sin" (PR.3.146-47). In *Paradise Lost* Satan repeatedly attempts to shift his centre of value from good to evil. At first Satan is complicit with Chaos who claims that his behaviour will be based on gain rather than good: "Havock and spoil and ruin are my gain" (PL.2.1009). Satan then attempts a complete reversal of ethical terms: "Evil be thou my Good" (PL.4.110). But all this effort to invert the dichotomy of good and evil fails primarily because the dichotomy is not symmetrical. Neither term can simply be chosen arbitrarily at will; for reason, being, order and the universe are in accord with good while evil is a parasitic negation of that good.<sup>22</sup> Hence the



centrality of goodness always forces Satan in the end to recognise the character of virtue. After announcing that evil will be his good Satan encounters the unfallen angels, Zephon and Ithuriel:

. . . abasht the Devil stood,  
And felt how awful goodness is, and saw  
Vertue in her shape how lovly, saw, and pin'd  
His loss; but chiefly to find here observd  
His lustre visibly impar'd; yet seemd  
Undaunted . . . (PL.4.846-51)

The rebuke of Ithuriel and Zephon causes Satan to realise that he simply cannot adopt evil as a good and that virtue has an inherent value that cannot be exchanged. More importantly, Satan is aware that the fall has had a deleterious effect on his own being ("His lustre visibly impar'd"); the loss of virtue is at odds with the total well-being of the body. This contradicts Satan's dualist valorisation of the "unconquerable Will" and reinforces the Platonic idea that virtue contributes towards outward appearance insofar as it maintains the stable hierarchy between reason and the passions. Satan's fallenness is manifested by the fact that he is "chiefly" disturbed by the loss of outward lustre at the same time that he laments the loss of virtue which is the prime cause for the impairment.

The necessity of the acknowledgement of virtue and the universal beauty of the good, in no way contradicts free will. Simply because virtue prompts admiration this does not entail that virtue will be followed. In fact, Satan himself states that "most men admire / Vertue, who follow not her lore" (PR.1.482-83). Furthermore when Satan encounters Eve's "Heav'nly forme / Angelic" and his malice is "overawd" (reinforcing the sense of "awful goodness"), he is "Stupidly good" (PL.9.457-61). While being struck by the impressive value of virtue he is in no way determined by it; the recognition does not yield virtuous action or knowledge. Milton enforces the sense of the necessity and inevitability of goodness and thus does away with any form of relativism or voluntarism while at the same time reinforcing the importance of moral knowledge. Virtue has an efficacy and value which cannot logically be denied ("Evil be thou my good"

paradoxically presents "good" as valuable at the same time that it attempts to deny "good"); but virtue must also be embraced by reason and faith if it is to be virtue and this is what Satan fails to do. Freedom is inextricably intertwined with virtue despite the fact that virtue is a compelling and essential feature of God's created world:

Love vertue, she alone is free,  
 She can teach ye how to clime  
 Higher than the Spheary chime;  
 Or if Vertue feeble were,  
 Heav'n it self would stoop to her. (COM.1019-23)

In *Paradise Regain'd* Christ rejects Satan's claim that he has aided God by forming part of the divine plan of redemption; Satan's testing of Job, though producing virtue, is not a virtuous act because it is caused by fear and a desire for pleasure: "Wilt thou impute to obedience what thy fear / Extorts, or pleasure to do ill excites?" (PR.1.422-23). Christ also rejects the peripatetics who as "teachers best / Of moral prudence" argue for virtue for reasons of extrinsic gain (PR.4.263-64). Virtue is incompatible with compulsion because it is intertwined with reason and "Reason is also choice" (PL.3.108). After being overawed by Eve Satan commences a characteristic soliloquy in which we realise just how assiduously he has to endeavour to deny the "compulsion" of goodness:

Thoughts, whither have ye led me, with what sweet  
 Compulsion thus transported to forget  
 What hither brought us, hate, not love, nor hope  
 Of Paradise for Hell, hope here to taste  
 Of pleasure, but all pleasure to destroy,  
 Save what is in destroying . . . (PL.9.473-78)

Harold Bloom claims that prior to Satan's speech on Mount Niphates the Satanist critics (such as Empson, Blake and Shelley) are right and that the rest of *Paradise Lost* confirms the arguments of the anti-Satanists (critics such as C.S. Lewis).<sup>23</sup> Bloom's interpretation is based upon Satan's shift in attitude at this point in the epic. With his remark, "how I hate thy beams / That bring to my

remembrance from what state / I fell," (PL.4.37-39) Satan becomes the envious, bitter and hubristic monster the anti-Satanists claim he is throughout. At this point, according to Bloom, Satan's admission of God's "surpassing glory" vitiates his prior glorious rebellion against tyranny. From here on, for Bloom, Satan's values are the same as those of God; he acknowledges God's goodness but merely rebels because he can now no longer be part of that goodness: "Be then his Love accurst, since love or hate, / To mee alike, it deals eternal woe" (PL.4.69-70). However, Bloom's argument that Satan's rhetoric is coherent prior to Book Four cannot be sustained. We have already seen how Satan at once employs arguments about "justice" and "right" (PL.2.18) while at the same time denying the validity of such principles insofar as the rebellion itself is based upon the rejection of just right to rule. In addition, the futility and self-contradiction of Satan's position is made clear prior to Book Four. Satan announces that, "To do aught good never will be our task" and goes on to say that his aim is "out of good still to find means of evil" (PL.1.159-65). Milton makes it clear at this point that these aims are not only impossible (all Satan's evil will "heap on himself damnation"); they are also based on the incorrect belief that Satan is an absolutely self-determining being. God decides to unchain the rebel angels from the burning lake and it is clear that this is because Satanic evil is a self-destructive mission:

. . . the will  
 And high permission of all-ruling Heaven  
 Left him at large to his own designs,  
 That with reiterated crimes he might  
 Heap on himself damnation, while he sought  
 Evil to others, and enrag'd might see  
 How all his malice serv'd but to bring forth  
 Infinite goodness, grace and mercy . . .  
 (PL.1.211-18)

The rebel angels, on the other hand, attribute their freedom to their own power, ironically revealing their ignorant self-directedness:

. . . glorying to have scap't the *Stygian* flood  
 As Gods, and by thir own recoverd strength,  
 Not by the sufferance of supernal power.  
 (PL.1.239-41)

Satan's position is therefore both logically inconsistent and based on error. The undeniable presence of truth and the compelling nature of virtue forms part of Milton's justification of the ways of God. If right is what God decides, then the fall which is based on the concept of transgression of right, becomes an arbitrary and, by implication, malicious act of divine will. If on the other hand justice has its own character which God (because he is divine) fulfils, then the expulsion of Adam from paradise, becomes part of a logical process of justice. God cannot simply will away the transgression of justice. Milton states in the argument to Book Three: "grace cannot be extended toward man without the satisfaction of justice." Grace is a necessary (but not sufficient) condition for the salvation of human life. If only justice were to be fulfilled the fall would have been the end of the story, for the disobedience in Eden is justly answered by the expulsion from paradise. The Christian concept of grace is therefore an essential aspect of redemption. Despite this fact Milton's continual additions of the concept of grace to the concept of justice do not affect the value or character of the concept of justice which is insistently recalled throughout *Paradise Lost*. As the argument states, justice must be fulfilled prior to grace, for without the virtue of justice human life cannot be good. Obedience to God is therefore not a matter of force or prudence but a question of the natural tendency of human being given its finite nature. Referring to the creation of man God says, "I made him just and right" (PL.3.98). The existence of hell is also a function of justice: "Such place Eternal Justice had prepar'd" (PL.1.70). The hierarchy which places God above finite created rational creatures is just; for contemplation directed towards God produces the wisdom, order and grace conducive to human flourishing. The endowment of grace is therefore intertwined with the enactment of justice. Although mercy is the first and last principle of redemption it must be coupled with justice, for justice is part of the order of the created world: "Man therefore shall find Grace, / . . . in Mercy and Justice both, / Through Heav'n and Earth" (PL.3.131-33). If God were not justly to decree against insubordination then he could be seen to countenance the inner torment of the disrupted fallen soul.

*Paradise Lost* therefore continually stresses the justice of God's will which is in accord with human flourishing.

God's speech on free will and reason reiterates the adequate creation of human being as directed towards right: "They therefore as to right belongd , / So were created, nor can justly accuse / Thir maker" (PL.3.111-13). The process of salvation shall be instituted through the virtue of justice. Fallen man is disobedient and hence unjust. Christ's sacrifice will be a substitution of justice for injustice; his purpose is to "redeem / Mans mortal crime, and just th' unjust to save" (PL.3.214-15). This redemption will be an act of "charity" and so Milton again adds a Christian virtue to the classical concept of justice in order to reinforce the dependence upon God for the renewal of justice after the fall. The atonement needs charity as its impetus but its logic accords with justice: "So Man, as is most just, / Shall satisfie for Man" (PL.3.294); "So onely can high Justice rest appaid" (PL.12.400). The salvation shall then be followed by a world of justice; it will be a "New Heav'n and Earth wherein the just shall dwell" (PL.3.335).

### **Natural Law and the Human Soul**

The compelling character of the concept of justice is bound up with the mode of being appropriate to the human soul and the natural law inscribed therein. Insofar as the idea of the Christian soul enabled a theory of universal truth and its accessibility, claims regarding the specific and eternal nature of virtues could be made. The concept of natural law can be interpreted in a number of conflicting ways. In Milton's time, the argument of natural law justified both disagreements with positive law in the name of a higher justice and the transgression of justice by temporal powers in the name of relative (or fallen) natural law. For this reason, the concept of natural law was one of the most important points of interpretation in the debates surrounding Church government and was employed in varying forms by Independents, Presbyterians and Royalists. Milton's concept of the virtues which stressed the inherent worth of concepts such

as justice precluded any argument of sacral kingship or relative natural law which permitted injustice to be the way of the world. If reason is akin to virtue, and reason (unlike the will) is unfallen, then with the help of grace natural law will accord with positive law and justice. If however, the faculty of reason is not sovereign, then the ensuing enslavement following from the loss of virtue will yield a tyranny in the world which will be a fulfilment, rather than a denial, of justice:

. . . Therefore since hee permits  
 Within himself unworthie Powers to reign  
 Over free Reason, God in Judgement just  
 Subjects him from without to violent Lords;  
 . . . somtimes Nations will decline so low  
 From Vertue, which is Reason, that no wrong,  
 But Justice and some fatal curse annex  
 Deprives them of thir outward Libertie,  
 Thir inward lost: . . . (PL.12.90-101)

The argument of fallen natural law - that positive law need not accord with justice because man is fallen - is here rejected. Worldly injustice is a consequence neither of divine wrath nor of the contamination of the capability of justice; it is, rather, the just consequence of the refusal of the faculty of reason. The identification of virtue with free reason and its connection with divine justice is in accord with the Socratic emphasis that virtues are only virtues if they are adopted freely and for the right reasons. Tyranny and the loss of outward freedom is a consequence of the disruption of inner hierarchy. Milton's concept of "Rational Libertie" (PL.12.82) contradicts the modern and Satanic concept of freedom which marks all alterity, limits and constraints as obstacles to liberty. The hierarchical ordering of the soul is part of the character of unfallen humanity. The subordination of the passions and the presence of law is not a lamentable feature of a once primitive or natural man (Rousseau/Hobbes) but the only situation in which true liberty inheres:

Since thy original lapse, true Libertie  
 Is lost, which alwayes with right Reason dwells  
 Twinnd and from her hath no dividual being:  
 Reason in man obscur'd, or not obeyd,  
 Immediatly inordinate desires  
 And upstart Passions catch the Government  
 From Reason, and to servitude reduce

Man till then free. . . . (PL.12.83-90)

The radical distinction of the primitive Christian Church between this world and God's kingdom is replaced by Milton with an application of divine law to this world. The established Church's tradition of relative natural law which had justified the involvement of the Church with temporal issues is also rejected with Milton's insistence that this world and human being is imbued with God's being - both "endu'd / With Sanctitie of Reason" (PL.7.507-08) and implanted with grace (PL.11.23). The transcendence-in-immanence of the human soul should not therefore accommodate itself to mundanity; rather, the temporal sphere - the world of government, religion, marriage and literature - should aspire to the spiritual. Although Milton's doctrine of accommodation in *Christian Doctrine* insists that we distinguish between the literal and figural, the issue of an anthropomorphic presentation of God is solved by his insistence that a "human" God would be no less divine:

. . . if God attributes to himself again and again a human shape and form, why should we be afraid of assigning to him something he assigns to himself. (CPW.6.135-36)

The similar suggestion in *Paradise Lost* that the "Earth / Be but the shadow of Heav'n" (PL.5.574-5) does not contradict Milton's valorisation of spiritual over temporal being; it posits the possibility that the earth may be a realm of divine rather than merely mundane value so that the prelapsarian earth which "Seemd like to Heav'n, a seat where Gods might dwell" (PL.7.329) may be regained when "God shall be All in All" (PL.3.340). Milton's Christian humanism is connected with this belief in the achievable divinity of the world. Just as the fall is a consequence of forsaking their "Makers Image" (PL.11.515) so redemption lies in an adherence to the "Divine similitude" (PL.11.512) which is retained after the fall. Like Blake, Milton insists on the divinity of human being. In a phrase which is to become important for Blake, Milton refers to the "human face divine" (PL.3.44). Adam and Eve are "Godlike erect" with "looks Divine" and a bearing

in which the "image of thir glorious Maker shon" (PL.4.289-92). Significantly, this image expresses "Truth" and "wisdom."

In Eden there is a harmony between the body and the soul such that the physical appearance of Adam expresses a natural hierarchy which places rational human being above nature: "His fair large Front and Eye sublime declar'd / Absolute rule" (PL.4.300-01). The consequence of the fall is a disturbance of this lordly rule of nature as the body becomes a vehicle of enslavement. The body is no longer an expression of reason but the site of passions which sway the body. The embodied self becomes an imprisoned self after the fall. Hence Samson in a soliloquy says to himself, "Thou art become (O worst imprisonment!) The Dungeon of thyself" (SA.155). This concept of self-imprisonment if the clear light of the soul falls into corporeality is expressed as early as *Comus*:

He that has light within his own cleer brest  
 May sit i' th center, and enjoy bright day,  
 But he that hides a dark soul, and foul thoughts  
 Benighted walks under the mid-day Sun;  
 Himself is his own dungeon . . . (COM.381-85)

When Satan comes to lament his rebellion it is after a realisation that his spirit is becoming progressively corporeal; he expresses his fallenness as a process of embodiment:

. . . I who erst contended  
 With Gods to sit the highest, am now constrained  
 Into a Beast, and mixt with bestial slime,  
 This essence to incarnate and imbrute,  
 (PL.9.163-166)

Satan is presented as a self-divided being; not only is he continually engaged in soliloquy and reversal, all his actions and aims work against himself. Following on from the passage just quoted we learn that "Revenge, at first though sweet, / Bitter ere long <sup>back</sup> on it self recoiles (PL.9.171-72). This reinforces the sense of the futility of evil but also manifests the divided character of the Satanic self. Satan's continual expressions of mind/body split will be examined in the following section. However, it is worth noting at this stage that as the first fallen being in *Paradise Lost*, Satan is the exemplar of fallen dualism. His incessant and regressive



narcissism is an aspect both of his failure to be other-directed and his enthrallment within his own body. The radical divide between spirit and body which is to become the lynch-pin of Cartesian philosophy is seen by Milton as a consequence of the fall. Platonism valorises the spirit and subordinates the corporeal but always holds as a possibility the harmonious government of the passions by reason. The naked majesty of Adam and Eve which expresses lordly rule in Eden is replaced by a controlling and usurping body. Hence the discourse of postlapsarian sex is permeated with compulsion: "in Lust they burne," "contagious Fire," "Her hand he seis'd," "sleep / Oppressd them" (PL.9.1015-1045). This sense of compulsion is coupled with the contamination of the faculty of reason and the presence of error: "that fallacious Fruit, . . . / About thir spirits had plaid, and inmost powers / Made erre" (PL.9.1046-49). Significantly, this corruption of reason is concomitant with the loss of virtue; Adam and Eve are "destitute and bare / Of all their vertue" (PL.9.1056). The fall from "native Righteousness" is a loss of both rational and ethical capacities. The interdependence of virtue and reason throughout this section expresses Milton's profound debt to the Socratic tradition of ethics as moral knowledge. The significance of this interdependence lies in the challenge it presents to any claims which would base questions of justice upon power, prudence or property. Because reason and virtue are inextricably intertwined and because reason is the apportioned end of human life then the ethical and contemplative life is intrinsically justifiable. The foundation upon which this verification is based, therefore, is the human soul - the "living Oracle" which dwells in "pious Hearts" providing "all truth requisite for men to know" (PR.1.460).

Milton's concept of the soul as a "living oracle" is an aspect of his Protestantism insofar as the emphasis upon spirit directs attention away from sacraments, tradition and the established Church and focuses upon individual belief. However, the confident belief that contemplation by individual souls will yield universal truth, justice, reason and light is traditional and Platonic in character. The more individualistic strains of the radical Protestant sects went so

far as to identify God with individual spirit - a feature and tendency of seventeenth-century Protestantism which contradicts entirely the otherworldly directedness of Milton's soul. Milton insists that the "paradise within" has its source and being in a transcendent source. This is revealed both in Milton's invocations where the classical concept of the muse is Christianised to become the influx of divine light and in the narrative of the epic itself where Adam and Eve are *granted* "implanted grace" and "umpire conscience."

In the invocation to Book One Milton expresses both the nobility and the dependence of the human spirit; the "upright heart and pure" is set before all "temples" at the same time that the spirit is invoked for assistance: "What in mee is dark / Illumin, what is low raise and support" (PL.1.22-23). In the second invocation at the commencement of Book Three, the spirit appealed to is ascribed certain qualities: light, eternity, purity ("essence increate") and ontological priority ("Before the Sun, / Before the Heav'ns thou wert"). These attributes are set against the poet's corporeal limits: "these eyes, that rowle in vain / To find thy piercing ray, and find no dawn" (PL.3.23-4). The overcoming of bodily finitude is achieved through the influx of spirit towards the poet's soul thereby achieving immortal vision:

So much rather thou Celestial Light  
Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers  
Irradiate, there plant eyes, all mist from thence  
Purge and disperse, that I may see and tell  
Of things invisible to mortal sight . . .  
(PL.3.51-55)

A similar transition is made at a broader level in *Samson Agonistes* where Samson's initial conflation of physical and spiritual blindness is overcome by a realisation of the distinction between corporeal and divine vision. At first Samson expresses a total exclusion from the realm of divine light: "Light the prime work of God to mee is extinct, / And all her various objects of delight / Annulld" (SA.70-72). As the tragedy progresses Samson discerns the transcendence of inner vision. The chorus reminds Samson that directedness towards God and not "objects of delight" is the condition for retrieving vision: redemption cannot be

gained "Unless he feel within / Some source of consolation from above" (SA.663-64). Finally, the distinction between physical light and the inward illumination of the visionary brings about Samson's triumph as he becomes "With inward eyes illuminated / His fierie vertue rouz'd" (SA.1689-90). This distinction between the inward vision "from above" and the physical vision of the world becomes the condition for the possibility of redemptive action. The identification of the poet with the prophet rests upon the common influence of holy light. The function of poet and prophet alike is to shift attention from the literal act of seeing to the vatic state of vision.

One of the necessary conditions for acquirement of vision is the recognition of the dependence of the soul upon extra-mundane light as its source of truth. Thus in each invocation Milton expresses the impotence of individual genius without divine aid: "my prompted Song else mute" (PR.1.12). As we will see in the following section on Satan, the fallacy of total self-origination precludes all possibility of right reason. Satan is led astray by those aspects of truth in his discourse which he fails to see as stemming from God. Hence Christ answers his sophistry: "Such are from God inspir'd, not such from thee" (PR.4.350).

The Christian concept of grace also reinforces the frailty and finitude of fallen human being. The internal coherence of the virtues is not sufficient to produce moral behaviour given the fall of reason from its position of supremacy and so grace is added to the classical conception of the virtues. The self-contained individual is not an adequate agent for redemption; there must be an aspect of other-directedness. So God insists that salvation is the consequence of universal grace restoring the proper hierarchy of the soul:

Yet not of will in him, but Grace in mee  
 Freely vouchsaf't; once more will I renew  
 His lapsed powers, though forfeit and enthralld  
 By sin to foul exorbitant desires;  
 Upheld by mee, yet once more he shall stand . . .  
 By mee upheld, that he may know how frail  
 His fall'n condition is . . . (PL.3.174-81)

The acknowledgement of human frailty intersects with an emphasis upon hierarchy and proper ontological ordering. The direction of attention away from the corporeal towards the source of all being, the acceptance of finitude and the limits of worldly being eventually enables a transcendence of those limits. Through the act of "contemplation . . . we may ascend to God" (PL.5.511) because consciousness of the soul yields knowledge of those transcendent qualities which worldly self-regard denies. Self-knowledge therefore converges with devotion insofar as reason produces awareness of God's transcendence:

. . . endu'd  
 With Sanctitie of Reason, might erect  
 His Stature and upright with Front serene  
 Govern the rest, self-knowing, and from thence  
 Magnanimous to correspond with Heav'n,  
 But grateful to acknowledge whence his good  
 Descends . . . (PL.7.507-13)

This is neither Cartesian nor Satanic self-reflection; its aim is neither certain knowledge of this world nor an absolute sense of self-origination. The fall stems from a failure of self-knowledge. Adam and Eve defile their own likeness by failing to sufficiently know the divinity imparted to the human soul: "Therefore so abject is thir punishment, / Disfiguring not Gods likeness, but thir own, / . . . since they / Gods Image did not reverence in themselves" (PL.11.520-28). Similarly, the demise of Samson is brought about by a neglect of due self-reverence: "She sought to make me Traitor to my self" (SA.401). Consequently self-betrayal, like the self-enslavement which precedes tyranny, is prior to actual betrayal: "I to myself was false ere thou to me" (SA.824).

Prior to the fall Adam and Eve had been sufficiently endowed with reason and virtue to resist temptation; they were created "Perfet within, no outward aid require" (PL.8.642). This adequacy of the unfallen soul vindicates God's justice. The ability of the soul to act virtuously without the intervention of grace prior to the fall is bound up with the structure of the virtue of justice. We have noted that *Paradise Lost* insists upon the presence of justice in God's works and in the process of salvation. We have also seen that despite the just character of the

human soul, tyranny falls on nations who are self-enslaved. This justifies the presence of evil in the world with the doctrine of free will. Because human beings have been created capable of virtue it is perfectly just that they should suffer if they fail to practice virtue. The possibility for overcoming worldly injustice lies in the power of God's implanted conscience to retrieve self-government. As Christ replies to Satan in *Paradise Regain'd*: "Let his tormentor Conscience find him out / . . . That people victor once, now vile and base, / Deservedly made vassal" (PR.4.130-33). The tradition of relative natural law which had accounted for worldly injustice by positing a less just world as a consequence of the fall allows for the presence of tyranny regardless of the character of the persons tyrannised. Milton's explanation of evil in the world sees tyranny as a consequence of present human self-enslavement: "For God hath justly giv'n the Nations up / To thy Delusions; justly, since they fell / Idolatrous" (PR.1.442-4). It follows, therefore, that if through the power of reason the disparity between positive law and natural law is perceived there can be a just rebellion against tyranny in the name of universal justice. This is the argument of Milton's *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* which is also found in *Samson Agonistes*.

The interpretation of *Samson Agonistes* in this respect is of significant importance in considering Blake's response to Milton. Critics such as Stephen Behrendt and Joseph Wittreich have seen *Samson Agonistes* and *Paradise Regain'd* as companion works with the latter operating as a type of critique of the former.<sup>24</sup> According to this view, the distinction operating between *Samson Agonistes* and *Paradise Regain'd* is that of true and false prophecy with the violent apocalyptic tone of *Samson Agonistes* being sublated by the humanist doctrine of redemption of *Paradise Regain'd*. It is then argued by Behrendt and Wittreich that Blake's illustrations and poetry extend the realisation (supposedly made by Milton) that the prophet figures of *Samson Agonistes* and *Paradise Lost*, are in some ways false prophets. One of the problems with this argument is evidenced by Blake's own poetry. The earlier figure of Orc (as opposed to the later imaginative and reconstructive Los) manifests all those characteristics of violence,

apocalyptic negation and iconoclastic destruction which Blake (according to Behrendt and Wittreich) rejects in the Milton of *Samson Agonistes*. A problem also arises when the text of *Samson Agonistes* itself is examined in conjunction with Milton's other statements regarding regicide and rebellion. An additional problem connected with the coherence of Milton's statements on regicide, is the problem of dating the composition of *Samson Agonistes*. In order to deny validity to the arguments for violent rebellion in *Samson Agonistes* the work must be subordinated to *Paradise Regain'd*. Maintaining the traditional later dating of *Samson Agonistes* (1666-70) is necessary in order to interpret the work as a companion piece to *Paradise Regain'd*. This traditional dating has been convincingly challenged<sup>25</sup> and the new earlier dating (1647-53) places the work closer to the composition of *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* and the first and second defences of the execution of Charles.

The traditional later dating has recently been re-asserted by Frank Kermode and Christopher Hill.<sup>26</sup> The reasons given by both writers are based on the tragic tone of the work and its concern with the seemingly inexplicable character of divine justice. As we have just seen, however, *Paradise Lost* locates worldly injustice where the hierarchy within the soul is already corrupted; in this sense it does explain the failure of the revolution but the structure of this argument is also compatible with a positive pre-revolutionary position. If tyranny is attributed, not to divine wrath, but to the failure of reason then a seizure of power may be validated upon the basis of the retrieval of the light of God. As Milton states in *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*:

If men within themselves would be govern'd by reason, and not generally give up their understanding to a double tyrannie, of Custom from without, and blind affections within, they would discern, what it is to favour and uphold the Tyrant of a Nation. (CPW.3.190)

This argument - that a loss of reason precedes tyranny - is indeed the position of *Samson Agonistes* but it is also the logical conclusion of Michael's survey of history in *Paradise Lost*. The argument, therefore, that the two works must be written during the same post-Restoration period is not compelling insofar as the argument

for the justification of God's ways is compatible with a pre-revolutionary and post-revolutionary position depending upon the inflection given to the argument. Indeed, as we shall see, the expression of the concept of justice in *Samson Agonistes* does have a pre-revolutionary character. I would therefore disagree with the distinction Wittreich makes between the worldly apocalypse of Samson and the divine apocalypse of Christ and the radical disjunction he sees between type and truth.<sup>27</sup> Mundane and divine action are not incompatible but hierarchical, for Milton sees the virtue which orders worldly justice as one of the conditions for other-worldly salvation.

The justification for overriding positive law in *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* (1649) rests upon the existence of a natural law which is prior to the state. For Milton this natural law is not the law of democracy but the law of "Justice, which is the Sword of God, superior to all mortal things" (CPW.3.193). In order to challenge the authority of a temporal power there must be some ground for right other than the tradition of law or the will of the people. In the *Tenure* and the pamphlets by other writers involved with the debate it was argued, from Scripture, that action could be taken against a temporal power in the name of the people even without their consent. This appeal to natural law was neither the divine right of *lex rex* (the natural law of the royalists) nor the democratic *salus populi suprema lex* (the natural law of the Presbyterians); it was God's law of right which transcended human will and temporal powers and revealed itself to the souls of the enlightened: "For if all human power to execute, not accidentally but intendedly, the wrath of God upon evil doers without exception be of God; then that power, whether ordinary, or if that faile, extraordinary so executing that intent of God, is lawfull, and not to be resisted" (CPW.3.197-98). What was at issue was whether or not the rebelling agent claiming revelation was acting as a private person or for the sake of divine justice. The *Representation* presented by ministers expelled after Pride's Purge stressed the primacy of democracy and denied the validity of any individual's action against such government because the state transcended the collection of "Private Persons."

For the Lawes of God, Nature, and Nations, together with Dictates of Reason, and the common consent of all casuists allow that to those which are intrusted with managing the Supream Authoritie of a State or Kingdom, which they do not allow to a multitude of Private Persons.<sup>28</sup>

Milton agrees that an individual has no right to act against the government insofar as he acts as a private person. In the *Tenure* Milton asserts that David did not slay Saul, not because the providence of God had intervened to prevent the destruction of a ruler as the Royalists claimed, but because David was acting as a "privat person" and would have "bin his own revenger, not so much the peoples" (CPW.3.216). But Milton also insists (and this is implied in his discussion of David and Saul), against the *Representation* and the Royalists, that an individual can act rebelliously if not acting as a private person. In *Samson Agonistes* this is precisely the position Samson places himself in: "I was no privat but a person rais'd / With strength sufficient and command from Heav'n" (SA.1211-12). The radical individualism of *Samson Agonistes* which reiterates the concepts of inner light, election, and self-redemption ("Making them each his own Deliverer" [SA.1289]) is in no way incompatible with the doctrine that rebellion is only legitimate if carried out for universal rather than personal ends. Samson is "perswaded inwardly that this was from God" (SA.argument); his action is guided by an individual and privileged access to truth. At the same time the truth he acts upon is for the public good and is part of the universal justice informing the world despite the lack of public support prior to his act. The violence of *Samson Agonistes* is therefore not an act of a personal will but a justifiable part of God's revelation. To claim, as Wittreich and Behrendt do, that there is an implicit rejection of the violent action of Samson in *Samson Agonistes* is to ignore both its possible earlier dating and Milton's clear defences of non-democratic rebellion. As Christopher Hill maintains, we may not approve such violence but disapproval cannot justify a denial that Milton did see violence as a valid means for dealing with tyranny and infidels:

There is no evidence that Milton ever abandoned his belief that it was a religious duty to fight against God's enemies, to slay them when this seemed to serve God's cause. The High Court of Justice which



condemned Charles I, Milton thought, was a representation of the great day, when the saints shall judge all worldly powers.<sup>29</sup>

### The Character of Satan

John Carey has recently argued that it is impossible to claim that Satan is either right or wrong in *Paradise Lost*;<sup>30</sup> the history of disagreements between critics as to the value of Satan as a character or moral being testifies to a fundamental ambiguity at the heart of the representation of the rebel angel which no reading could conclusively or justifiably disprove. However, following on from the previous discussions of the sophisticated character of Satan's rhetoric it may be argued that the indeterminacy which has characterised discussions of Satan is due to an historical confusion regarding the nature of individualism. From our discussions of Milton's work so far it is evident that the poet endorses an intensely other-worldly individualism. This individualism is to be distinguished from its modern form precisely insofar as it directs itself towards a transcendent realm of value at the same time as it sees itself as essentially partaking in that realm. Modern individualism is both non-hierarchical and totally self-grounding. The less traditional strains of radical protestant individualism tend to embody this more modern form of self-directedness.<sup>31</sup> In fact, the protestant sects of the seventeenth century can be seen to occupy a liminal position between the traditional theological individualism of holistic societies and the equalitarian individualism of modernity. While Milton clearly endorses the former, Satan's individualism is of the latter variety. The confusion as to where the sympathy of the poet lies arises from the similarity of the two positions - both Satan and Milton are individualists. This confusion is evidenced by arguments, such as those of Fredric Jameson, in which it is claimed that Satan represents an older order of feudalism: Satan is not a modern revolutionary but a "great feudal baron" whose rebellion is "a reminiscence of the distant feudal past."<sup>32</sup> On the other hand, Hugh M. Richmond has argued that "Milton's organicism of the soul" supported "a possessive

individualist poetic."<sup>33</sup> The purpose of this section will be to identify the distinction between Satanic and Miltonic individualism and the implicit rejection of the former as an ethical possibility.

Satan's belief that God is a tyrant who reigns by power rather than right has already been identified as a function of the fallen angels' failure to understand the hierarchical arrangement of divine government. In contradistinction to Milton's statement that reason, freedom and virtuous action are intertwined, Satan defines freedom as a total absence of alterity. He therefore identifies any limits to the self as the expedient commands of an envious God. His outlook is open, equalitarian and "economic." As Louis Dumont has demonstrated in his essay on Hitler's Germany, this type of world-view is the condition for totalitarianism; for if any order or limit to one's being is regarded as anathema to the natural desires of the self then any laws or social structure will have to be imposed on unwilling subjects.<sup>34</sup> According to Dumont totalitarianism "results from *the attempt in a society where individualism is deeply rooted and predominant, to subordinate it to the primacy of the society as a whole.* It combines, *unknowingly*, conflicting values."<sup>35</sup> It is the nature of laws themselves to be tyrannical; the will of the people simply cannot enter the picture. Satan's belief in the "unconquerable Will" and his refusal to allow any limit to his own freedom therefore precludes him from being anything other than a tyrant himself. If he denies God's right to rule and then claims such a right for himself his position is either contradictory (as when he does acknowledge God's right) or totalitarian (as when he places himself above the rebel angels).

Satan's refusal to acknowledge any limits to his own being is revealed in several aspects. First, his definition of freedom as an absolute rejection of alterity produces the belief that all authority is a denial of the governed self's worth. Consequently, the rebel angels "while they feel / Vigour Divine within them, can allow / Omnipotence to none" (PL.6.157-59). The distinction between liberty and licence which Milton insists upon is lost to Satan. Satan believes that his first

impression that "Libertie and Heav'n / To heav'nly Soules had bin all one" (PL.6.164-5) is contradicted by the elevation of Christ. He feels his freedom impaired by the existence of a duty to serve and therefore attributes obedience to a lack of power and will.

The fallen angels are characteristically self-directed. In Book Two they sing of "Thir own Heroic deeds" (PL.2.549). This ironically parallels the heavenly choir's praise of God. Like Hobbesian individuals they aim to see all value as emanating from themselves. Mammon's advice is to "seek / Our own good from our selves, and from our own / Live to our selves" (PL.2.252-54). Satan's sin of pride, both in *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regain'd*, involves a type of self-consciousness which produces self-deception regarding Satan's origins. In *Paradise Regain'd* Satan upbraids Belial for being so self-obsessed as to see all others as like himself: "*Belial*, in much uneven scale thou weigh'st / All others by thyself" (PR.2.173-74). Despite this criticism Satan is no better; if Belial has assumed Christ will be tempted by women and pleasures of the flesh, Satan commits a similar error by assuming that Christ will be tempted with worldly glory. Milton describes Satan as he "who self-deceiv'd / . . . had no better weigh'd / The strength he was to cope with, or his own" (PR.4.7-9). Satan is at once self-directed and lacking in self-knowledge. The idea that Satan adopts a stance of self-deception as a consequence of his excessive pride is extended in *Paradise Lost*. Despite Satan's subsequent claims that it is God's priority which causes his subjection, ("The Gods are first, and that advantage use / On our belief," [PL.9.718]) prior to the war in heaven he alleges total self-creation:

. . . who saw  
 When this creation was? rememberst thou  
 Thy making, while the Maker gave thee being?  
 We know no time when we were not as now;  
 Know none before us, self-begot, self-rais'd  
 By our own quick'ning power, . . .  
 Our puissance is our own, our own right hand  
 Shall teach us higher deeds, by proof to try  
 Who is our equal: . . . (PL.5.856-866)

Satan's discourse here exploits the epistemology of a modern rationalist. If something is not known its existence is open to doubt. Adam in Eden receives revealed knowledge and accepts Raphael's word because of the limits of his knowledge: "for who himself beginning knew?" (PL.8.251). Satan, on the other hand, transposes his epistemological finitude into his ontology. If his creation by God cannot be known, seen or remembered (because it is transcendent to experience) Satan, who cannot acknowledge transcendence, rejects God's creation. He therefore demands *proof* of God's power and denies any hierarchy.

After the war in heaven, once Satan has had to acknowledge God's priority, he attempts to confound ontological with temporal priority. God may be first temporally but Satan adopts a concept of progressive improvement. On hearing of the creation of earth he asks: "For what God after better worse would build?" (PL.9.102). To acknowledge that God's creations are good is one thing - to argue that Eden must be greater than heaven because it is God's second creation is to deny the perfection of God; it is to imply that God may get better at creation with practice. It is certainly a non-hierarchical way of thinking; it relies on accumulative value rather than ontological ordering. Satan's transition from a rejection of God's priority to the implication that priority is equivalent to inferiority is an indication of his self-deception. What is at issue for Satan is not truth but the argument which will serve his pride.

Milton reinforces the sense of Satan's self-directedness through a juxtaposition with the other-directedness of the unfallen angels, Christ and Adam and Eve in Eden. The unfallen angels sing not of their own deeds or desires but of God's glory. Raphael's excursion to Eden with his discourse upon God's creation evidences the angel's knowledge of the divine hierarchy and his willing obedience. Abdiel's reply to Satan conflates the law of servitude to God with natural law because of God's excellence and explains that such obedience is just and commensurable with freedom:

Unjustly thou deprav'st it with the name  
 Of *Servitude* to serve whom God ordains,  
 Or Nature; God and Nature bid the same,  
 When he who rules is worthiest, and excels  
 Them whom he governs. This is servitude,  
 To serve th'unwise, or him who hath rebelld  
 Against his worthier, as thine now serve thee,  
 Thy self not free, but to thy self enthralld;  
 (PL.6.174-181)

Satan's self-enthralment is contrasted in several episodes with the Son of God. Christ's offering of himself for the atonement through charity is contrasted with Satan's volunteering of himself to enter Eden for reasons of glory. The holy Trinity and Christ's position as the substantial expression of God's goodness is contrasted with the birth of Sin and Death. Whereas the relationship between God and Son is one of expression and action the relationship between Satan, Sin and Death is of narcissistic and incestuous self-directedness. The birth of Sin from Satan's head amplifies the sense in which Satan's fall is due to his "own suggestion" and that he was "Self-tempted, self deprav'd" (PL.3.130). Not only does it strengthen the argument that evil arises from Satan's will rather than God's creation, it also reveals Satan's self-directedness. While the angels in heaven recoil from Sin, Satan becomes familiar with, and then captivated by, this image of himself:

. . . but familiar grown,  
 I pleas'd, and with attractive graces won  
 The most averse, thee chiefly, who full oft  
 Thy self in me thy perfect image viewing  
 Becam'st enamour'd . . . (PL.2.761-65)

Satan's attraction to Sin is a portent of the narcissism which inspires Satan to deny the role of God as creator. Eve, on the other hand, while initially mesmerised by her own image, is called away by the voice of God towards Adam. Significantly Satan later appeals to her self-love in order to tempt her to eat the forbidden fruit. The significance of this incident is that Milton sees certain types of self-consciousness as unethical and self-deceptive. The allegory of Sin and Death reveals how self-directedness becomes self-destruction. Sin's "odious offspring", Death, turns upon his mother and becomes her "inbred enemy" and rapes her to

produce monsters for his own devouring. The relationship between Sin and Death then becomes a circle of violence, incest and consumption with the destruction of Sin by Death prevented only by Death's desire for further prey. Not only does this episode reveal the products of Satan's imagination to be hideous and destructive; the image of continual and circular violence connects with the insistence throughout *Paradise Lost* that evil redounds upon itself.

Milton's individualism does depend upon some distinction between mind and body and as early as *Comus* the possibility is expressed of inward freedom in the face of corporeal enslavement: "Thou canst not touch the freedom of my minde / With all thy charms, although this corporal rinde / Thou hast immanacl'd, while Heav'n sees good" (COM.663-65). The fact that this freedom is dependent on the presence of heaven is significant. The mind is indomitable while "heaven sees good" - hence the mind in this instance is not an isolated entity but gains autonomy from the body by virtue of divine influence. *Comus* is clearly more adamant with regard to the distinction between mind and body than Milton's later works. In *Paradise Lost* the unfallen body is an expression of the divine image while in *Christian Doctrine* the entire salvation of human being involves the body. Nevertheless, there is still a sense in *Comus* of a subordination of the body rather than its rejection. A lack of virtue "Lets in defilement to the inward parts, / The soul grows clotted by contagion, / Imbodies, and imbrutes, till she quite loose / The divine property of her first being" (COM.466-68). While virtue is the soul's being it also, although directed towards the non-corporeal, has its effect on the body:

Till oft convers with heav'nly habitants  
Begin to cast a beam on th'outward shape,  
The unpolluted temple of the mind,  
And turns it by degrees to the souls essence,  
Till all be made immortal . . . (COM.459-63)

Redemption of the body is conditional upon communion with transcendence and does not depend upon a dualism which isolates the mind from either the body or

alterity in general. The transition must also be by degrees and moral action and cannot occur through an act of will.

In *Paradise Lost* Satan's emphasis upon the will refuses to acknowledge the influence or transcendence of God. Satan asserts that he possesses a "mind not to be chang'd by Place or Time" (PL.1.253). Beelzebub maintains that "the mind and spirit remains / Invincible" (PL.1.139-40) and that God's "force" is a physical power only which will have no effect upon inner being. He also puts forward the idea that God "Have left us this our spirit and strength intire" (PL.1.146) in order to increase their suffering. Satan leaps upon this idea and urges retaliation on the basis that "to be weak is miserable" (PL.1.157). Satan's acceptance of the invincibility of the mind and spirit produces a dualism in which "the mind is its own place." Both Milton and Satan believe that hell can be a state of mind. Satan at first claims that an act of will can produce heaven or hell: "The mind is its own place, and in itself / Can make a Heav'n of Hell, a Hell of Heav'n" (PL.1.254-55) Milton, on the other hand, sees the inward character of hell or heaven as due not to an act of will but to the position of the soul in its relation to God. Because Satan has turned away from God and towards himself, his mind is an arena of turmoil. Hell is pictured as self-enthrallment and as the logical outcome of the sort of claims which reduce heaven or hell to willed psychological states of an autonomous mind:

And like a devilish Engin back recoiles  
 Upon himself; horror and doubt distract  
 His troubl'd thoughts, and from the bottom stirr  
 The Hell within him, for within him Hell/*He brings, and round about him, nor from Hell*  
 One step no more than from himself can fly  
 By change of place: Now conscience wakes despair  
 That slumberd, wakes the bitter memorie  
 Of what he was, what is and what must be  
 Worse; of worse deeds worse sufferings must ensue.  
 (PL.4.17-26)

Satan's obsessive self-directedness has paradoxically led to his self-enslavement. He has lost control of his thoughts (which are distracted by doubt - a malaise from which Blake's characters also frequently suffer). He is not so much a spirit as a

mechanism marked with compulsion. Despite his earlier protestations that his mind could decide its own being he is here plagued by the memory of his original and proper station to which he cannot at will return. Furthermore, Satan's attempts to deny the force of ethics and virtue are here negated by the return of conscience. It is after the return of conscience that Satan acknowledges that he has misconstrued the nature of God's power. He then concedes that his mind is not an inward heaven amidst the physical hell but a greater and "lower deep":

Which way I flie is Hell; my self am Hell;  
 And in the lowest deep a lower deep  
 Still threatning to devour me op'ns wide,  
 To which the Hell I suffer seems a Heav'n.  
 (PL.4.75-78)

It is significant that at this point Satan's economic or quantitative conception of God's power is problematised. Although he still uses an economic metaphor, Satan sees that his error lay in interpreting obedience to God in terms of quantitative difference - thinking that,

. . . one step higher  
 Would set me highest, and in a moment quit  
 The debt immense of endless gratitude,  
 So burdensom still paying, still to ow;  
 Forgetful what from him I still receivd,  
 And understood not that a grateful mind  
 By owing owes not, but still pays, at once  
 Indebted and discharg'd; what burden then?  
 (PL.4.50-7)

Satan, at this moment of reawakened conscience, acknowledges that God's position as creator places him qualitatively higher and that His continual sovereignty is due to the fact that creatures owe their existence to their maker. However, Satan's irreparably fallen character induces him to see this as a "burden" and "debt immense" although he goes on to assert that it is *not* a burden and that such owing "owes not." Satan's discourse is here straining at its limits. Unlike Abdiel who has a coherent conception of justice and obedience, Satan is still using quantitative metaphors to express essentially qualitative distinctions. His rebellion was prompted by an economic conception of value - by seeing the presence of the



Son as doubling the honour he would have to pay to God: "Knee-tribute yet unpaid, prostration vile, / Too much to one, but double how endur'd" (PL.5.782-83). Consequently, when Satan considers repentance he knows he would be unable to sustain reconciliation. He calculates such a return to obedience as of little worth, again in economic metaphors: "so should I purchase deare / Short intermission bought with double smart" (PL.4.101-02). Satan then announces that evil will be his good; he somehow wishes to absent himself from the infinite debt to God. His inversion of good and evil implies that the terms have an exchange value and that his reign in hell will be equivalent to God's reign in heaven. So, when Satan returns to hell after tempting Adam and Eve he proclaims that the rebellion has in the end proved a worthwhile bargain: "A World who would not purchase with a bruise" (PL.10.500). The logic of the narrative of *Paradise Lost* proves Satan wrong, however; goodness and God's kingdom ultimately overcome the force of hell and Satan's claims to value are "counterfet" (PL.4.117). Raphael warns against such a concept of exchange value. Adam should not see Eve's "shows" as exchangeable with "realities" (PL.8.575); there should be a hierarchical relationship recognising difference where value and profit are based on just and right and not on free exchange:

. . . weigh with her thy self;  
 Then value: Oft times nothing profits more  
 Then self-esteem, grounded on just and right  
 Well manag'd; . . . (PL.8.570-73)

Raphael here endorses a conception of value in which each being can be weighed and its value decided. An economic conception accounts for value quantitatively and homogenously. All entities are exchangeable and hence no one being (virtue or good) has any *a priori* merit over any other. Satan can thereby justify his "purchase" of the world with evil.

The doctrine of economy rejects the limits and inherent qualities of particular beings; it is therefore linked to doctrines of excess. Comus's art of persuasion also employs an economic conception of value. His endorsement of a doctrine of excess rejects the insistence upon human finitude and limit which is

a feature of Raphael's speech to Adam and Eve. If nature is defined as property for human utility then a doctrine of temperance would leave aspects of nature purposeless: "Th'all-giver would be unthank't, would be unprais'd, / Not half his riches known, and yet despis'd, / And we should serve him as a grudging master, / As a penurious niggard of his wealth" (COM.723-26). For Comus there is a natural law of property (and significantly he includes the Lady's self in this property) which lends nature to all and demands free distribution. So, replying to the Lady he responds: "But you invert the cov'nants of her trust, / And harshly deal like an ill borrower" (COM.682-83). Immediately prior to embarking upon an extended metaphor which uses currency as a vehicle for nature, Comus rejects the Lady's doctrine of chastity with a reply that reduces the virtue to its rhetorical use: "be not cosen'd / With that same vaunted name Virginitiy" (COM.737-38). He then follows with a trope of free economy:

Beauty is natures coyn, must not be hoarded,  
 But must be currant, and the good thereof  
 Consists in mutual and partak'n bliss, (COM.739-41)

The lady repudiates this doctrine of excess and the metaphor of open economy with a distribution based upon limit and proportion: "Natures full blessings would be well dispenc't / In unsuperfluous eeven proportion" (COM.772-73). Although Satan does not use the metaphor of currency his arguments to Eve are of a similar structure. In Eve's dream Satan describes the good not in the terms of discipline, temperance and limit but in distribution, increase and excess: "And why not Gods of Men, since good, the more / Communicated, more abundant grows, / The Author not impaired, but honourd more?" (PL.5.71-73). Raphael, on the other hand, in describing heaven claims that "full measure onely bounds / Excess" (PL.5.639-40). For Raphael, the presence of plenty does not demand consumption but rather allows the free and self-disciplined imposition of limits, whereas scarcity might produce a desire for more.

The arguments of the chain of being, the emphasis upon the endowed character of the soul, the qualitative conception of value based on just and right

and the stress on limit rather than excess are all concomitant with a pre-modern ontology which sees value as based on the inherent character of a being. Such a concept of value has an ethical meaning insofar as all arguments regarding justice, right and government are referred to a transcendent concept of good which informs and orders all entities. Satan's equalitarian, economic and eventually excessive conception of value derives the concept of good either from its use in a discourse of power or from a qualitative notion of gain. In the final books of *Paradise Lost* Michael presents a vision of history in which the former hierarchical conception of value falls under the influence of power and gain.

### Church Government and Hierarchy

Milton makes it clear in *Reason of Church Government* that the distinction between spiritual and temporal values has been continually effaced in the progression from primitive Christianity to the established Church. In *Paradise Lost* Michael's vision of the fallen world therefore includes an observation of the increasing worldliness of religious institutions. Michael's vision is anticipated by Milton's description of the fallen angels (who will become pagan deities) in Book One:

By falsities and lyes the greatest part  
Of Mankind they corrupted to forsake  
God thir Creator, and th' invisible  
Glory of him that made them, to transform  
Oft to the Image of a Brute, adorned  
With gay Religions full of Pomp and Gold,  
And Devils to adore for Deities: (PL.1.367-73)

The heathen religions of the fallen angels are based upon "lies" and "falsities." This connection between unreason and pagan religion reinforces Milton's conception of the rationality of Christianity. This passage also reiterates the idea of the fallen angels as Sophists and links their deception to a process of corruption where the invisibility of God is transformed into images. Although Milton is here describing pre-Christian forms of worship Michael's description of the Church after the apostles in Book Twelve is similar:

Wolves shall succeed for teachers, grievous Wolves,  
 Who all the sacred mysteries of Heav'n  
 To thir own vile advantages shall turne  
 Of lucre and ambition, and the truth  
 With superstitions and traditions taint,  
 Left onely in those writt'n Records pure,  
 Though not but by the Spirit understood.  
 Then shall they seek to avail themselves of names,  
 Places and titles, and with these to joine  
 Secular power, though feigning still to act  
 By spiritual, to themselves appropriating  
 The Spirit of God, promis'd alike and giv'n  
 To all Beleevers; and from that pretense,  
 Spiritual Lawes by carnal power shall force  
 On every conscience; Laws which none shall finde  
 Left them inrould, or what the Spirit within  
 Shall on the heart engrave. What will they then  
 But force the Spirit of Grace it self, and binde  
 His consort Libertie; what, but unbuild  
 His living Temples, . . . (PL.12.508-527)

Michael has previously explained to Adam that the "various laws" given to humanity are "to evince / Thir natural pravitie" (PL.12.287). Such laws are imperfect until the covenant of the atonement where law will not be imposed but ingraven on hearts. Only the spirit can discern this inward law. The appropriation of discipline by secular and institutional authorities is therefore a corruption and denial of God's grace. Furthermore, the *use* of such external laws for the advantage of the powerful causes an atrophy of the individual spirit which should rightfully be deciding on law; it "unbuilds" the inner temples. When Milton argues decisively for the disestablishment of the church in his sonnet "On the *New* Forcers of Conscience under the Long Parliament" he specifically refers to *forcers* of conscience. The presbyters have attributed to themselves the law which is actually discernible in the spirits of all individual believers; the ministers of the established church introduce "Civill Sword" into the realm of grace and conscience. Not only is there a contamination of the spirit with secular power, the secular authority claims to be acting through spiritual jurisdiction: "feigning still to act / By spiritual." Like all laws which are *used* by the powerful, the control of church law by state power can only be a semblance of what it claims to be. By failing to

subordinate worldly power to spiritual value the individual conscience of believers and the true character of the law will be violated. Milton equates liberty not with the rejection of law but with the internalisation of law. The rejection of "outward rites and specious forms" in favour of the spirit of God "promised alike and given / To all believers" reiterates the concept of the universal attainability of truth and law in *Reason of Church Government*. If, as Christopher Hill has maintained, Milton eventually lost faith in the ability of human reason to achieve justice and that *Paradise Lost* expresses that disillusionment, then that inability was attributed by Milton not to the character of the human soul but to the corrupting nature of Church government. While Milton always maintained that self-enslavement preceded institutional tyranny, he also saw the character of the established Church as conducive to the loss of reason rather than edification. His pronouncements on the essential character of the human soul and its capacity to grasp truth, however, reveal the hope that worldly hierarchies would ideally be overcome by the internalisation of law and the predominance of spirit in all persons.

In *Of Reformation* Milton had argued for a system of Presbyterianism; in doing so he had challenged the "No Bishop, No King" argument. Presbyterianism, he claimed, supported rather than threatened the continuation of kingship. At that stage of his career Milton was only transposing the idea of a kingdom of equals into the ecclesiastical sphere and had yet to make any political demands. By the time Milton comes to write *Paradise Lost* he has already refuted the validity of political as well as ecclesiastical hierarchies. Not only does *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* argue against any form of natural lordship, the divorce tracts also demand the freedom to divorce by denying the magistrates right to govern in the domestic sphere. The rejection of worldly hierarchy is therefore transposed, from the ecclesiastical realm, into political and domestic life. At the basis of all Milton's arguments for the rejection of *worldly* hierarchy is his assertion of spiritual hierarchy. Because of the divine transcendence and natural superiority of reason, there is no justification for the subordination of individuals to external or "corporeal" institutions. *Paradise Lost*, therefore, is a text both of

subordination and liberation. The criticisms of Satan's rebellious desire to govern tyrannically are laid alongside the call for a governing and upright reason. In his divorce tracts Milton also articulates a hierarchy of both subordination and elevation; in this case his subject, however, is not Satan but women.

- 1 Plato, *The Republic*, trans. H.D.P. Lee (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1955) 65.
- 2 Plato, *Republic* 66.
- 3 Plato, *Republic* 70.
- 4 Plato, *Republic* 71.
- 5 Plato, *Republic* 72.
- 6 Plato, *Republic* 72.
- 7 Plato, *Republic* 73.
- 8 Plato, *Republic* 83.
- 9 Plato, *Republic* 83.
- 10 Plato, *Republic* 83.
- 11 Northrop Frye, "The Typology of Paradise Regained," *Modern Philology* 53 (1956): 235.
- 12 Jackie DiSalvo claims that Satan's arguments resemble those of both the radical protestants and the Levellers. She then concludes that Satan's arguments subvert the manifest intention of Milton's text and represent the poet's latent radicalism: "Within his text, however, Milton also presents a satanic polemic against these allegations in which the real cause of the Fall is God's illegitimate assertion of authority." Jackie DiSalvo, *War of the Titans: Blake's Critique of Milton and the Politics of Religion* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1983) 101.
- 13 In a study explicitly set against Christopher Hill's depiction of Milton as a revolutionary figure in the English civil war Andrew Milner claims that Milton is a "rationalist" and that revolutionary Protestantism in general, along with philosophers such as Locke, were part of a "rationalist" movement. Milner offers an accurate definition of rationalism: "For the rationalist the central datum is the discrete individual, and it is he, and he alone, who decides what is true and what is untrue." [Andrew Milner, *John Milton and the English Revolution: A Study in the Sociology of Literature* (London: Macmillan, 1981), 52.] I hope that it will be apparent from the

discussion of Milton's other-worldly individualism which follows that I do not agree with Milner's categorisation of Milton as a rationalist.

- 14 Christopher Hill explains that the failure of the revolution necessitated a justification of the fallenness of this world: "The Fall is therefore the only way in which we can explain evil in the world; human sinfulness is the only way to explain (among other things) the failure of the English Revolution." Hill then goes on to claim that the acknowledgement of the sinfulness of human beings precluded Milton from adopting the more democratic positions of the Ranters or Diggers: "he was not prepared to trust the spirit in all men. . . . Milton believed in God because he believed in inequality, in social hierarchy, in heaven as on earth." [Christopher Hill, *Milton and the English Revolution* (London: Faber and Faber, 1977) 244.] Despite Hill's argument, Milton's commitment to hierarchy and inequality is not absolute insofar as he attributes fallenness to the will. There is a possibility that the unjust hierarchy human beings have brought upon themselves will be overcome through right reason but until this is the case social inequality is justifiable.
- 15 A.O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being* 164-65.
- 16 Milton's adherence to the doctrine of the tripartite soul has been noted in Herbert Agar's *Milton and Plato*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1928).
- 17 J.B. Broadbent, *Some Graver Subject: An Essay on Paradise Lost* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1960) 80.
- 18 The concept of virtue, rather than justice, is central to *Comus*. Although this can be accounted for in several ways it is significant that *Comus* as a much earlier work is less concerned with the social concept of justice and concentrates on personal virtue. Whichever date we accept for *Samson Agonistes*, even the earliest date places it closer to Milton's prose pamphlets concerning Church government, his *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* (1649) and *Defensio pro populo Anglicano* (1651). We can therefore discern a transition from the personal virtue of *Comus* and its



emphasis on self-ordering to a more political outlook in the pamphlets and later epics. This broadening of vision towards the political and social does not change the character of Milton's thought however. The later emphasis upon justice, just as much as *Comus's* stress upon virtue, structures value around the soul and its other-worldly nature.

- 19 The connection between the justification of God and Milton's doctrine of free will has been comprehensively documented by Dennis Danielson. Dennis Richard Danielson, *Milton's Good God: A Study in Literary Theodicy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).
- 20 Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons (1930; London: Allen & Unwin, 1976); R.H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism: A Historical Study* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1938).
- 21 C. A. Patrides has noted the theological tradition, particularly strong in the Middle Ages, of a perceived conflict between justice and mercy. According to Patrides this "severe contention" is manifested in the discussions between the Father and Son in Book Three of *Paradise Lost*. [C.A. Patrides, *Milton and the Christian Tradition*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966) 131]. Timothy O'Keefe, however, argues that *Paradise Lost* overcomes this conflict by demonstrating that "justice is fulfilled by love." Timothy J. O'Keefe, *Milton and the Pauline Tradition: A Study of Theme and Symbolism* (Washington: University Press of America, 1982) 4.
- 22 Although Milton, like Augustine, rejects the belief that evil is privation due to a being's lower position in the hierarchy (which was the belief of Plotinus and the pagan neo-Platonists) he also clearly refuses the concrete existence of evil as part of matter itself (Manicheanism). Rejecting the orthodox doctrine of creation *ex nihilo* Milton asserts that matter comes from God [CPW.6.307]. The good is the object of reason and reason is the soul's appropriate being. Because freedom is bound up with the capacity of reason, the possibility of evil also occurs. Despite this possibility for evil, the natural propensity for the universe is to produce goodness, because it

is God's creation. Only by perverting the natural end of reason does evil come about but because that evil is unnatural and irrational the value of the good will continue to carry force.

- 23 Harold Bloom, introduction, *John Milton's Paradise Lost*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House, 1987).
- 24 Behrendt and Wittreich both reject the violent apocalyptic tone of *Samson Agonistes* in favour of the supposedly more inward humanism of *Paradise Regain'd*. It is also argued by these critics that the "psychological" epic of *Paradise Regain'd* critically undermines, not only *Samson Agonistes* but also *Paradise Lost*. According to Wittreich, *Paradise Regain'd* "retracted the terrifying theology of *Paradise Lost*, revealing Milton to be a broader and wiser man than was usually acknowledged, a more humane and moral man than ordinarily thought. In this poem, John Milton is shown falling from grace into humanity." Joseph Anthony Wittreich Jr., *Angel of Apocalypse: Blake's Idea of Milton* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1975) 144. See also Stephen C. Behrendt, *The Moment of Explosion: Blake and the Illustration of Milton* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983) 28.
- 25 William R. Parker, "The Date of *Samson Agonistes*," *Philological Quarterly* 27 (1949): 145-66 and William R. Parker, "The Date of *Samson Agonistes*: A Postscript," *Notes and Queries* 5 (1958): 201-2. In his edition of Milton's poetry John Carey endorses the earlier composition date and convincingly rejects both E. Sirluck's ["Some Recent Suggested Changes in the Chronology of Milton's Poems," *Journal of English and German Philology* 60 (1961): 749-85.] and A.S.P. Woodhouse's ["*Samson Agonistes* and Milton's Experience," *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada* 43 (1949): 157-75.] attempts to counter Parker's theory. John Carey ed. *Complete Shorter Poems by John Milton* (1971; Harlow: Longman, 1987)330.
- 26 Christopher Hill "Samson Agonistes Again," *Literature and History* 1 (1990): 24; Frank Kermode, *An Appetite for Poetry: Essays in Literary Interpretation* (London: Collins, 1989) 66.

- 27 Wittreich, *Angel of Apocalypse* 162. Christopher Hill also rejects Wittreich's reading of Samson as a false prophet on the basis of seventeenth-century attitudes to the figure of Samson. According to seventeenth-century critics Samson was either a representation of fallen man or a saint whose fall was only temporary. According to Hill the division between these two types of Samson was political and the radicals (including Milton) adhered to the latter concept thus endorsing Samson's violent destruction of his enemies [Hill, "Samson Agonistes Again" 26].
- 28 *A Serious and Faithfull Representation of the Judgements of Ministers of the Gospel within the Province of London* (1649); qtd. in introduction, CPW.3.53.
- 29 Hill, "Samson Agonistes Again" 29.
- 30 Carey sees the character of Satan as inherently ambiguous and supports this claim with the assertion that Satan has rarely been regarded as a depiction of true evil and has frequently been seen by "some of the most distinguished" readers as "superior in character to Milton's God." Carey argues that the pro-Satan movement begins with Dryden and hence denies that the interpretation of Satan as a laudable figure is Romantic: "It is sometimes supposed that critical support for Satan began with the Romantics, but this is not so.... the notion of Satan as the true hero of Milton's epic goes back to Dryden and was a commonplace of eighteenth century literary opinion both in France and England." The issue of whether the identification of Satan as the hero amounted to critical (or moral support) will be considered later where Carey's claim that "Blake ... championed Satan" will be challenged. John Carey, "Milton's Satan," *The Cambridge Companion to Milton*, ed. Dennis Danielson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) 132.
- 31 Gerrard Winstanley's attitude to the external existence of God is a case in point: "Whether there were such outward things or no, it matters not much." qtd. in Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas During the English Revolution* (1972; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982) 144.

- 32 Fredric Jameson, "Religion and Ideology: a Political Reading of *Paradise Lost*," *Literature, Politics and Theory*, Barker, Hulme, Iversen and Loxley ed. 49.
- 33 Hugh M. Richmond, *The Christian Revolutionary: John Milton*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974) 13-14.
- 34 Dumont, *Essays* 149-79.
- 35 Dumont, *Mandeville to Marx* 12.

### Chapter Three: Milton on Gender

Milton's refutation of Satanic individualism clearly advocates a pre-modern orientation towards virtue and transcendence. The open, competitive and autonomous selfhood of Satan is defeated by the doctrine of the rational, subordinated and hierarchised Christian soul. But not only does Milton's rational theology promulgate a certain form of individualism, it also entails a hierarchical theory of gender. While Milton defends the rationality of all individuals (including women), he also acknowledges the capacity for other aspects of the self - the body, the will and the passions - to impede the soul's rational activity. In the case of Satan, as we have seen, reason is adversely affected by the will. In the case of women Milton articulates an anxiety regarding their attachment to the visual, bodily and specular aspects of being. In *Reason of Church Government* Milton had made the historical association between corporeality, specularity and Constantine's corruption of the Church through the State. In the divorce tracts and *Paradise Lost* Milton associates these fallen aspects of being with femininity.

Like the debate on Milton's "Satanism," the readings of Milton's attitude towards women appear to be divided between two critical camps. Critics who defend Milton's discussions of women and femininity operate from a basis of context and intent. So, their argument runs, while Milton's texts may have been written and interpreted within a patriarchal context which devalues women, the broader aim of Milton's corpus is the extension of Christian liberty to all persons. On the other side of the critical debate are the critics who attack Milton's position on women, finding themselves unable to subordinate the "sexist" utterances in Milton's poetry to the fallenness of Milton's characters. These critics refer Milton's texts, not to the broader context of Milton's intentions, but to the responses they have experienced as critics and readers of Milton. In these cases

the patriarchal readings and uses of Milton's texts are seen as inextricably intertwined with the text itself.

Both Diane McColley and Barbara Lewalski have attempted to excuse Milton's sexism on the basis of historical difference claiming that it is unreasonable to expect a seventeenth-century individual to totally transcend contemporary attitudes.<sup>1</sup> Such a defence is no doubt reasonable but there are defenders of Milton's portrayal of women, such as Joseph Wittreich and Jackie DiSalvo who want to go further and claim that the effect of Milton's texts is to actually *challenge* patriarchy.<sup>2</sup> So the debate is not merely between critics who want to attack and critics who want to excuse Milton's "sexism." What is at issue is the ideological function of Milton's work and whether it enforces or challenges patriarchal ways of seeing. Laudatory readings such as Wittreich's, which see Milton as overcoming the sexism of his time open the field for responses made by critics such as Christine Froula and Sandra Gilbert who argue that by refusing to acknowledge the poet's misogyny the patriarchal canonisation of Milton's texts continues a gender bias which cannot be localised in the past but continues with every act of reading.

Critics such as Sandra Gilbert and Christine Froula argue their interpretation from a position of response. Both these critics begin their assessment of Milton with reference to Virginia Woolf's characterisation of Milton as the crippling patriarchal "bogey" of the literary canon.<sup>3</sup> Gilbert's argument is based upon the response of nineteenth-century women writers to the presence of Milton while Froula reiterates the supposedly undeniable validity of her own response in reply to challenges of her reading.<sup>4</sup> Critics such as Diane McColley and Barbara Lewalski argue from a more intentionalist basis - claiming that Milton's further discussions of marriage in his divorce tracts and the tenor of *Paradise Lost* as a whole should be taken into consideration and that claims that Milton is sexist cannot be substantiated in the broader context of Milton's argument for Christian liberty. Joseph Wittreich employs both response and

intentionalist methods, arguing that Milton's admiring early female readership *and* his revolutionary position in the tradition of visionary poetry yield a "feminist Milton."<sup>5</sup> The intentionalist critics not only *implicitly* answer the response-oriented critics; the recent history of feminist criticism has yielded a pattern whereby an article claiming Milton's misogyny is followed by a corrective "answer" which situates the misogynist utterances within a broader context.<sup>6</sup>

Now, even if we accept the claim made by Wittreich and DiSalvo that Milton challenges misogyny, the discourse that Milton uses to undertake this putative challenge - the discourse of reason, justice and theology - despite its pretensions to be gender neutral is, I will argue, embedded in a history of sexist bias. This chapter will deal with Milton's argument for Christian liberty in his divorce tracts (the passages most often cited to defend Milton's attitude towards women) and certain passages in *Paradise Lost* in order to challenge Wittreich's position that Milton's texts are liberating for feminists. While agreeing with those critics who claim that there is an implicit rejection of misogynist utterances in the poetry it does not follow that because Milton is opposed to a certain form of misogyny that he is necessarily "feminist" or that there is no gender bias in his thought. The fact that certain readers such as Virginia Woolf have found Milton's texts alienating despite attempts by other critics to "frame" misogynist statements should lead to a questioning of the possibility of distancing the "brutal and dictatorial"<sup>7</sup> misogyny of the fallen Adam from authorial intent.

If feminist criticism is to decide simply whether a text is "sexist" or not then the debate will only continue with two sides arguing from incommensurable premises - between critics of response and critics of intent. If, however, response can alert us to problems with the representation of intent then the radical divide between advocates of a "feminist Milton" and Milton as patriarchal "bogey" can lead us to question why, if Milton did intend a liberating and humanist justice for all God's creatures, his intention in some cases (that of women) seems to go awry. The answer to this question, I believe, lies in Milton's use of the concept of reason

and the concomitant hierarchical relationship between the soul and the body. If men have traditionally been considered essentially more rational and women essentially more directed towards the body, then any adoption of reason as the *telos* of human being, unless it undertakes a radical redefinition of gender, will be prejudiced against women.<sup>8</sup>

Northrop Frye has noted the analogous relationship between the hierarchy of the soul and the hierarchy of gender:

There is a rough but useful correspondence between the hierarchy of reason, will and appetite in the individual and the social hierarchy of men, women and children that would have developed in Eden if Adam had not fallen.<sup>9</sup>

This observation can be confirmed by Milton's expression of hierarchical natural law in *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*:

The *good man* or *master of the familie* is a person, in whome resteth the private and proper government of the whole houshold, and he comes not into it by election, as it falleth out in other states, but by the ordinance of God, settled even in the order of nature. The husband indeed naturally beares rule over the wife; parents over their children, masters over their servants: but that person who by the providence of God, hath the place of a husband, a father, a master in his house, the same also by the light of nature, hath the principalitie and soveraignitie therein and he is *Paterfamilias*, the father and chiefe head of the familie: to him therefore the true right and power over all matters domesticall, of right appertaineth. (CPW.2.353)

The hierarchical natural order expressed here is remarkably feudal. The idea that someone (either husband or master) "naturally beares rule" would seem to be at odds with Milton's previous anti-hierarchical arguments against episcopacy and his later anti-hierarchical arguments against the divine right of kings. There are two explanations for this contradiction. The first is that Milton, like later liberal thinkers, refuses to transpose the tenets of individualism into the sphere of marriage so that while he rejects natural hierarchy in other spheres he maintains a hierarchy of gender.<sup>10</sup> However, here, and later in *Tetrachordon* Milton invokes natural political and social hierarchies in addition to the familial hierarchy. It is possible to explain this by seeing Milton's expression of hierarchy in the divorce



pamphlets as a transitional point in the development of his thought. Until the divorce pamphlets Milton's prose had dealt with Church government and the unjustified worldly hierarchy of the prelates in the ecclesiastical sphere. In the divorce pamphlets Milton begins to transpose the qualities of original and unfallen existence into the temporal sphere with his demand that marriage be a spiritual union as it was in Eden. By the time Milton writes his "political" pamphlets hierarchy will be seen as invalid in the temporal sphere as a whole because Milton will demand those original conditions of justice and liberty for the worldly domain of the present.

In *Tetrachordon* Milton invokes the idea of a secondary natural law of nature and nations to explain the presence of injustice in the world. This is to bring his reading of the New Testament in accord with the Mosaic sanction of Divorce. The Old Testament allowed divorce because of the world's fallenness but the new Testament emphasises that such practices were not necessary in Eden: "in the beginning it was not so." The "beginning" according to Milton is the unfallen condition of Eden where woman was a spiritual helpmeet. The secondary law of nature is used to explain worldly conditions in contradistinction to the original state of nature. If Milton were to follow the secondary law argument accordingly he would argue for allowing the presence of unfit marriages on the basis of human fallenness. But Milton, of course, argues precisely the opposite and here, as in his reform tracts, he believes in the duty to restore as far as is possible the condition of Eden on earth. Therefore Milton argues for divorce in order to do away with marriages which do not meet the spiritual condition of the original marriage between Adam and Eve. In order to do this the faculty of reason must judge, against magistrates, what is its own good.

Reason and liberty:

shall restore the much wrong'd and over sorrow'd state of matrimony, not onely to those mercifull and life-giving remedies of *Moses*, but as much as may be, to that serene and blissful condition it was in at the beginning; (CPW.2.240)

In *Tetrachordon* Milton adopts the theory of secondary natural law - a theory characteristically used to account for the presence of worldly injustice. But Milton uses the theory of secondary natural law only as a means of arguing towards the possibility of attaining the conditions of original nature; secondary natural law is neither an essential aspect of his thought nor is it an idea to which he logically and consistently adheres.

Ernest Sirluck claims that the distinction between primary and secondary natural law is introduced in *Tetrachordon* and overcomes a problem encountered in *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* (the relation between Mosaic and New Testament law):

. . . where had Milton learnt to improve his argument by distinguishing, not between Pharisees and other men, but between the primary and secondary laws of nature? He had not known how to use this distinction for his purposes early in 1644.<sup>11</sup>

Like Sirluck, Arthur Barker claims that Milton introduced a new concept - an accommodation of worldly experience - in his divorce tracts which contradicted the tone of his earlier work:

. . . compared with his reasoning on the church, Milton's divorce argument thus involves a remarkable shift in the centre of his thinking. The basic principle of divine prescription is replaced by the basic principle of human good, temporal as well as spiritual.<sup>12</sup>

The problem with Barker's argument that secondary natural law evidences a greater direction towards human good, however, is that the structure of the secondary natural law argument actually serves to explain and justify the presence of unjust hierarchies which contradict the primitive Christian ideal of a kingdom of equals. We can see this from Milton's own definition of the doctrine:

. . . partly for this hardnesse of heart, the imperfection and decay of man from original righteousnesse, it was that God suffer'd not divorce onely, but all that which by Civilians is term'd the *secondary law of nature and nations*. He suffers his owne people to wast and spoyle and slay by warre, to lead captives, to be som maisters, som servants, som to be princes, others to be subjects, hee suffer'd propriety to divide all things by severall possession, trade and commerce, not without usury; in his common wealth some to be undeservedly rich, others to be undeservedly poore. All which till hardnesse of heart came in, was most unjust; whenas prime Nature made

us all equall, made us equal coheirs by common right and dominion over all creatures. (CPW.2.661)

What Milton, in fact, argues for in his divorce pamphlets is the use of worldly law to return to the original state of nature (where law would not have been necessary) and not the continuation of fallen practices. Sirluck and Barker are correct in noting that Milton introduces the idea of secondary natural law for pragmatic purposes of argument and that it is contrary to Milton's previous statements on law. But even in the divorce pamphlets Milton never fully adopts or follows through the consequences of secondary natural law theory. Milton's definition of secondary natural law is in accord with the standard seventeenth-century definitions; secondary natural law justifies the presence of unjust hierarchies in the fallen world. Despite this definition Milton's arguments for divorce are based on the premise that it is both desirable and possible to restore the Edenic condition of marriage on earth. What we see here in the divorce pamphlets is not the introduction of a new concept of human morality. In his Reform tracts Milton demanded a primitive unity and purity for the Church. The chronological development we witness in *Tetrachordon* is not a radical change of policy but an extension of the demand for original conditions - which Milton had previously demanded for the ecclesiastical sphere - into the domestic realm. The essence of Milton's use of secondary natural law is not that it "prevent[s] Christians from being held to a higher moral duty than that imposed by natural law."<sup>13</sup> It is not a compromise measure. Rather, Milton's justification of his proposed divorce laws is the possibility of attaining the original conditions of marriage of the "lost Paradise" (CPW.2.316) where divorce laws were not necessary. In his reform tracts Milton rejects Hooker's idea that Church government be suited to the conditions of the temporal state; Milton demands an original condition of purity for the Church independent of the fallen state. In *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* Milton begins to transpose the elimination of worldly hierarchy into the temporal sphere by demanding a Christian liberty not governed by magistrates for domestic life. By the time of the *Tenure* and *Eikonoclastes* Milton has also rejected the natural rule of kings by transposing

Christian rationalism into the political sphere. Although Milton eventually rejects natural hierarchy in unjust practices of State he will always retain a gender hierarchy, as we see in *Paradise Lost*. This is because the hierarchy of gender, unlike political and ecclesiastical hierarchy, is not due to any secondary condition of fallenness but is part of the harmonious subordination to natural order in Eden.

The hierarchical relationship between Adam and Eve is not incidental to *Paradise Lost*; it plays an important part in the logic of the narrative. As Diane McColley and Stevie Davies note, Milton's depiction of married life in Eden does much towards overcoming the merely domestic role of women. Eve is shown as inventive and rationally independent. However, Eve must also be subordinate. It is when she oversteps the mark between rational independence and a self-directed desire for autonomy and superiority that she succumbs to Satan's temptation. The hierarchical relation between Adam and Eve is first noticed by Satan who sees in this situation the possibility for successful temptation. It is from Satan's point of view that the famous "Hee for God only, shee for God in him" is delivered. This remark echoes *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*: "Who can be ignorant that woman was created for man, and not man for woman" (CPW.2.344).

Milton's hierarchical and yet ennobling depiction of Eve can be illuminated with reference to his doctrine of the body. The hierarchical relationship between reason and the body does not seek to pervert or deny the body but to bring it closer to the character of reason. As early as *A Mask presented at Ludlow-Castle* Milton introduces the idea of a "wise appetite" and in *Christian Doctrine* Milton claims that the process of resurrection is the attainment of the condition of the soul for all aspects of human being including the body. Just as this doctrine in many ways revalues the body and overcomes dualism so Milton's attitude toward women and their ontological inferiority is at first glance ennobling. The government of reason is not repressive but enables a stable and free body and

will. In Milton's picture of marriage the wife's due reverence of her husband will mean she is more than a corporeal chattel; she will become a rational and spiritual partner and this will in turn dignify the sexual aspect of marriage. One central argument of Milton's divorce pamphlets is that a law which permits divorce only for adultery or absence of sexual consummation characterises marriage as a contract between bodies. Milton does not simply want to add the issue of spiritual compatibility; in fact he sees the issue of intellectual companionship as being more important due to the very character of gender relations. Just as Milton sees the practice of justice as being the end of the State and therefore argues against the state becoming a law unto itself, so spiritual compatibility is the virtue towards which marriage is directed. Milton here, as elsewhere, refuses to place the institution before the ethical reason for its existence. Marriage is correctly a spiritual bond and not a civil contract; its end is the edification of human being. Therefore, while being bound by an institutional and scriptural tradition of the inferiority of women, Milton sees this inferiority as placing women not in an entirely other category of being altogether<sup>14</sup> but as differing in degree (like Adam from the angels). In fact the relationship between woman and man is structurally analogous to that between man and Christ.<sup>15</sup> It is for this reason that woman should not be servile but edified by her relation to a similar yet superior version of herself: "man is not to hold her as a servant, but receives her into a part of that empire which god proclaims him to, though not equally, yet largely as his own image and glory" (CPW.2.589). Just as God must create human beings free so that they can be obedient in a worthy manner, women must be rational and noble inferiors in order to be a glory of man's image: "for it is no small glory to him, that a creature so like him, should be made subject to him" (CPW.2.589). Just as the human soul carries the image of a higher transcendence, so the woman if correctly directed towards her proper mode of being sees her image in man: "the woman is not primarily and immediately the image of God, but in reference to the man" (CPW.2.589). In *Paradise Lost* Adam refers to Eve as "Best Image of my self and dearer half" (PL.5.95). Accordingly, the appropriate direction of attention for women is to the

image of God in their husband. This is the aspect of Milton's thought which critics like McColley and Lewalski feel gives more to women than it takes.<sup>16</sup> True, Milton reinforces inferiority, the argument runs, but that is a function of his historical tradition. What is more important is that he sees women as ideally rational, capable of education, responsible and primarily souls rather than bodies.

According to Northrop Frye, Milton's rejection of the idea that women are the bearers of sin and should be subservient because of their collusion with and responsibility for the fall therefore condemns the blaming sentiments expressed by the fallen Adam in Book Ten of *Paradise Lost*:

Out of my sight, thou Serpent, that name best  
 Befits thee with him leagu'd, thy self as false  
 And hateful; nothing wants, but that thy shape,  
 Like his, and colour Serpentine may shew  
 Thy inward fraud, to warn all Creatures from thee  
 Henceforth; lest that too heavenly form, pretended  
 To hellish falsehood, snare them. But for thee  
 I had persisted happie, . . . (PL.10.867-74)

Despite Frye's claim, Milton does characterise women as the bearers of sin in *Tetrachordon* (although Frye is correct in noting that Milton does not see them as essentially and universally in this way): "from her the first sin proceeded, which keeps her justly in the same proportion still beneath. She is not to gain by being first in the transgression, that man should funder loose to her, because already he hath lost by her means" (CPW.2.590). Frye's later argument - that the logic of *Paradise Lost* implies that Adam would have done well to divorce Eve and thus place divine before human loyalty - suggests that man could have been without sin had he divorced the fallen woman.<sup>17</sup> Sin, according to this picture, should be recognised and cast out, and in the divorce pamphlets sin more often than not comes in the form of a woman. One of Milton's arguments in *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* takes as its supposedly undeniable premise the correctness of "divorcing an Idolatresse, which was, lest she should alienate his heart from the

true worship of God" (CPW.2.260). From this premise Milton extends the reasons for divorce to include unsociability of the wife: "what difference is there whether she pervert him to superstition by her enticing sorcery, or disenable him in the whole service of her unhelpful and unfit society, and so drive him at last through murmuring and despair to thoughts of Atheism" (CPW.2.260). This right to divorce a threat to one's faith could logically apply to the divorce of husbands by faithful wives. However, Milton's rhetoric of idolatry and bewitchment associates the heretic partner with the corporeal and the *attractive* - qualities specifically associated with the feminine in Milton's poetry. In the broader context of *Paradise Lost* Adam is wrong to attribute his fall to Eve's "too heavenly form," for he did choose his fate. Nevertheless, it is significant that although he has no right to see Eve as the cause for his fall, the suggestion she provides is associated with "shew / Rather than solid vertu" (PL.10.884). Eve is seen as deficient in inner experience; her "hellish falsehood" is achieved by "inward fraud" - by not having the gifts of virtue to match her outward appearance. Adam warns other creatures of the danger of feminine wiles, of the "innumerable / Disturbances on Earth through Femal snares" (PL.10.896-97). According to Milton's philosophy Adam is wrong to demand that God should have populated the universe with masculine spirits (PL.10.893) for free will should be able to experience and resist temptation. But Eve is a temptation and even if we see the limits of Adam's speech that fact remains. The devil tempts through sophistry but Eve, Adam claims, appeals not through reason but by "Femal charm."

Milton sees the female usurpation of the role of master in a marriage as justifiable if it stems from an (exceptional) superiority of reason. More often than not, though, such challenges to power are a result of female pride. It is common that the man may be "contended with in point of house-rule who shall be the head, not for any parity of wisdom, for that were something reasonable, but out of female pride" (CPW.2.324). It is therefore "likely that God in his Law had more pitty towards man thus wedlockt, then towards the woman that was created for another" (CPW.2.325). Milton's individualism reinforces the right of divorce

for husbands afflicted with heathen wives; in this way Milton ties in the concept of the internalisation of law with the right of men to dispose of wives who do not fulfil the conditions of "helpmeet:" "For ev'n the freedom and eminence of man's creation gives him to be a law in this matter to himself, being the head of the other sex which was made for him" (CPW.2.347). Milton's position in *Tetrachordon* repeats the warning against the power of women - against being fondly overcome with female charm. A man cannot be truly said to love a woman who poses a threat to his faith: "For either the hatred of her religion, & her hatred to our religion will work powerfully against the love of her society, or the love of that will by degrees flatter out all our zealous hatred and forsaking and soone ensnare us to unchristianly compliances" (CPW.2.682). It is possible to argue, therefore, that Milton is against a form of misogyny which would reduce women to embodied and irrational beings. Women can and should aspire to be rational. In fact, the entire logic of the divorce pamphlets devolves upon the original state of marriage where hierarchical differences - between the soul and the body and male and female - were properly ordered: "marriage is a human society, and that all human society must proceed from the mind rather than the body, els it would be by a kind of animal or brutish meeting" (CPW.2.275). If the exercise of reason is to be the foundation of marital law and the edification of the soul is the end of marriage then women as well as men are spiritually ennobled in the Miltonic schema. From this we can see that overtly misogynist remarks which would reduce women to entirely irrational and corporeal beings would both sully the relation of marriage and defile the male partner. The feminine must be like enough to the masculine to reflect his rationality and only inferior in the sense of providing subordinated but not valueless virtues of attractiveness and charming diversion: "wherin the enlarg'd soul may leave off a while her severe schooling; . . . which as she cannot well doe without company so well as where the different sexe in most resembling unikenes, and most unlike resemblance cannot but please best" (CPW.2.597). Milton sees marriage as governed by the same laws of hierarchy which operate in the universe as a whole. If a man has married an idolatresse or a woman whose society is such as to bring him into despair and



hence atheism he should divorce her for the sake of a higher divine good: "for there is a certain scale of duties, there is a certain hierarchy of upper and lower commands, which for want of studying in right order, all the world is in confusion" (CPW.2.264).

Not only does Milton invoke a natural hierarchy to govern marital law, he also argues for a transcendental concept of "divorce" in which the creation of the world is seen to begin with an originary act of division of like from unlike: "[By God's] divorcing command the world first rose out of Chaos, nor can be renew'd again out of confusion but by the separating of unmeet sorts" (CPW.2.273). This argument for divine divorce is extended into a concept of the natural propensity of the universe to produce meetings of similar kinds: "God's doing is ever to bring the due likenesses and harmonies of his workers together." Unfit marriages are therefore "against the fundamental law book of nature" and it is the function of divorce laws to restore that state of nature where like resides with like. Milton also uses the doctrine of similarity to reject the argument that the Mosaic law sanctioning divorce accommodated a sinful people. For Milton, sin and law are contraries and such contraries can have no truck with each other: "sin can have no tenure by law at all, but is rather an external outlaw, and in hostility with law past all atonement: both *diagonall* contraries, as much allowing one another, as day and night together in one hemisphere" (CPW.2.288). The significance of this doctrine of contraries for gender relations should be clear.<sup>18</sup> The feminine when "other" to the masculine creates a cosmic disorder which it is the function of reason, in the form of the divorce laws, to expunge. The feminine, then, though possessing an inclination for difference must see its image in the masculine at the same time as it subordinates itself to that image.

It is difficult to minimise the significance of Milton's hierarchical distinction between men and women, for the hierarchical conception impedes the possibility of female rationality at the same time that it asserts that women should aspire to the condition of reason away from embodiment. For Milton, the inferiority of

women is not due to any imperfection of their creation: "God . . . hath done his part" (PL.9.375). Women's inferiority lies in the greater propensity for female will to be directed towards the body and for the female body to direct other wills toward sin. But as long as responsibility lies in free human will God cannot justly be accused of disadvantaging female being. By adopting a hierarchical arrangement rather than an ontological dualism Milton can assert both that women are ideally rational *and* that they are attracted towards the body to a greater extent. To establish reason as the end and mode of human being cannot be a gender-neutral argument when reason is articulated within a hierarchical discourse of related, subordinated and valorised terms and when one gender is seen to have a greater directedness towards the subordinate term in the dichotomy.

Just as Milton's arguments on Church government claim that institutions should be based on the validity of inner experience and reason, so his divorce tracts claim that marriage is properly a private and spiritual contract. Excessive attention to the bodily or external aspects of such institutions leads to idolatry, for Milton claims that the divorce laws against which he is arguing make an Idol of marriage: "to injoyne the indissoluble keeping of a mariage found unfit against the good of man both soul and body . . . is to make an Idol of mariage, to advance it above the worship of God and the good of man" (CPW.2.276). What is at issue for Milton in his pamphlets is the possible spiritual corruption of the soul that becomes chained to the institution. Although Milton argues that both men and women can divorce a heathen or incompatible partner as a threat to the spiritual solace of the faithful partner, Milton's poetry as well as the examples offered in his prose tend to depict the contamination of partner spirits as a process of "unmanning" or "effeminising." Thus the divorce laws Milton advocates assert the right of a man to be released from an Idolatresse: "This law therefore justly and piously provides against such an unmanly task of bondage as this" (CPW.2.626). In *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* Milton claims that being forced to remain in a marriage with a woman who is no meet help threatens both

the husband's soul and his manhood: "to constrain him further were to unchristian him, to unman him" (CPW.2.353). The effects of women upon men could also extend into the political sphere. In his *History of Britain* Milton denies that women can play any role in the framing of law, (CPW.5.32, 74 & 79-80) despite the fact that his reform tracts demanded that all Christian citizens had a duty to oversee right government. In *Eikonoclastes* Milton comments on Charles' letters: "to sumn up all, they shewed him govern'd by a woman" (CPW.3.538). Again in *Eikonoclastes*, Milton attributed the declension of sound government in his day to a process of effeminisation: "Examples are not far to seek, how great mischeif and dishonour hath befall'n to Nations under the Government of effeminate and Uxorious Magistrates" (CPW.3.421).

Such rhetoric inveighing against the effects of effeminacy was not Milton's alone. Shakespeare had seen the power of feminine beauty to be possibly unmanning. In *Romeo and Juliet* Romeo exclaims, "O sweet Juliet / Thy beauty hath made me effeminate." One aspect of Puritan thought concerned an anxiety that male spectators of the theatre as well as the boys playing women would be effeminated by female dress. Such a fear was stated in John Rainolds's *Th' Overthrow of Stage Plays* (1599). Stephen Gosson in *The School of Abuse* (1579) claimed that theatre had the power to "effeminate the minde."<sup>19</sup> In his anti-theatrical tract *Histrion-mastix* William Prynne warned against the effeminising effect of the stage because empty outward spectacle directed attention away from the soul.<sup>20</sup> The significance of this traditional association between femininity, theatricality and degeneration of the soul is twofold. Milton associates the attrition of the soul with a process of effeminisation. He also associates women with spectacle and outward attraction. In the vision of history in Book Eleven of *Paradise Lost* Adam sees a "fair femal Troop" whose singing and dancing cause the "sober Race of Men" to "yeild up all thir vertue" (PL.11.614-25). Adam concludes from this that women are the originary corruption of male virtue and attributes evil and fallenness to the feminine. Michael corrects Adam by pointing out that women are not the bearers of evil: "From Mans effeminat slackness it

begins" (PL.11.634). What is to be feared, therefore, is not so much the evil female but the feminine evil in men which follows upon the spectacle of female beauty or "Goddesses" (PL.11.615). In *Paradise Regain'd*, when Christ answers Satan's offer of power to free the enslaved nations, he replies that such people are "Deservedly made vassal" and that such self-inflicted slavery is a consequence of "effeminacy" and materialism: "Luxurious by thir wealth, and greedier still, / And from the daily Scene effeminate" (PR.4.141-42). In *Samson Agonistes* Samson claims that all his fortitude and temperance had been in vain due to his eventual collapse. Not only does Samson fall through temptation by a woman, he sees his being as contaminated by femininity: "I yeilded, and unlockd her all my heart, / Who with a grain of manhood well resolv'd / Might easily have shook off all her snares: . But foul effeminacy had me yoked" (SA.407-10). Later, reinforcing the idea that his downfall is due to his own effeminacy, he says, "What boots it at one gate to make defence, / And at another to let in the foe / Effeminatly vanquisht?" (SA.560-62).

In *Paradise Lost* Adam relates to Raphael the attraction he felt for Eve after their "wedding":

Nor vehement desire, these delicacies  
 I mean of Taste, Sight, Smell, Herbs, Fruits, and Flours,  
 Walks, and the melodie of Birds; but here  
 Farr otherwise, transported I behold,  
 Transported touch; here passion first I felt,  
 Commotion strange, in all enjoyments else  
 Superiour and unmov'd, here onely weake  
 Against the charm of Beauties powerful glance.  
 Or Nature faild in mee, and left some part  
 Not proof anough some Object to sustain,  
 Or from my side subducting, took perhaps  
 More than anough; at least on her bestowd  
 Too much of Ornament, in outward shew  
 Elaborate, of inward less exact.  
 For well I understand in the prime end  
 Of Nature her th' inferiour, in the mind  
 And inward Faculties, which most excell  
 In outward also her resembling less  
 His Image who made both, and less expressing

The character of that Dominion giv'n  
Ore other Creatures . . . (PL.8.526-46)

Milton gives Adam the free will to resist such "commotion" but maintains the ideological association between women and the power to make men "vehement" or irrational. Raphael warns Adam against Eve with the rebuke, "what transports thee so; / An outside?" (PL.8.567-68). When Adam relates his dream of Eve's creation he says it is her "looks" which "infus'd Sweetness" into his heart (PL.8.474). Part of Milton's assertion of Adam's capacity to have withstood the fall lies in situating Adam's failure, not in his reason, but in his attraction to Eve: "Against his better knowledge, not deceav'd / But fondly overcome with Femal charm" (PL.9.998-99). Eve's bodily appearance causes a suspension of reason in Adam; her "*Heav'nly* forme" - the aspect which is not so much feminine as divine stuns Satan and overawes his malice (PL.9.460-1). Hence, when Eve's beauty can be referred to a non-feminine and transcendent other it has the power to elicit virtue. However, when it is seen as self-sufficiently perfect - when Adam sees the world "in her summd up, in her containd" - her beauty causes distraction (PL.8.473). The feminine, for Milton, is therefore capable of reason but has a greater degree of embodiment. Eve prefers Adam to relate Raphael's warning because he will "intermix / Grateful digressions, and solve high dispute / With conjugal Caresses, from his Lip / Not words alone pleas'd her" (PL.8.54-57). Consequently, the feminine is not simply devalued by Milton. Like the body it is a valuable aspect of experience if subordinated to masculine reason. If due hierarchy is maintained the feminine can be rational; if this hierarchy is disrupted the feminine can contaminate and ensnare reason. Christ tells Adam that his failure to acknowledge this natural law of gender is the cause of his fall and that Eve's visual adornment should not have been allowed to affect the "real dignity" of male reason. Adam's failure is a failure of self-knowledge and a fall to the outwardness of "attraction:"

Wherein God set thee above her made of thee,  
And for thee, whose perfection farr excelld  
Hers in all real dignitie: Adorn'd  
She was indeed, and lovely to attract  
Thy Love not thy Subjection, and her Gifts

Were such as under Government well seemd,  
 Unseemly to bear rule, which was thy part  
 And person, hadst thou known thyself aright.  
 (PL.10.150-56)

In *Samson Agonistes* Dalila is associated with outward display and a dangerous captivating power. Samson laments of Dalila that "She sought to make me Traitor to my self . . . / With blandisht parlies, feminine assaults, / Tongue-batteries" (SA.402-4). The figure of Samson's blindness, on the other hand, is employed by Milton to express an entirely inward vision and non-specular comportment. Consequently, critics who attempt to locate the misogyny of *Samson Agonistes* in Samson's fallen utterances alone have to overlook the general description of Dalila which, when considered within the schema of values the tragedy implies, represents her as an example of bodily-directed womanhood. The character of Dalila is fallen in a way that Satan is not. Dalila possesses a dangerously captivating quality which resides in her bodily charm.

Diane McColley answers criticisms that Milton's women are narcissistic and self-directed by seeing the "Narcissus" episode of Eve's self-captivation in *Paradise Lost* as an ethical trial which Eve significantly overcomes. It is telling, however, that Milton chooses such a trial for Eve and not Adam.<sup>21</sup> Milton is not arguing that women are embodied; on the contrary, he sees their *telos* as the image of male reason. But there are qualities which are traditionally associated with women: attractiveness, sensuality and vanity.<sup>22</sup> Milton does nothing to destroy such associations and his ontology rigorously testifies to the threat such qualities pose to the soul.

French feminists such as Helene Cixous have argued that the dichotomies which ground the discourse of reason have always worked against women.<sup>23</sup> Luce Irigaray also argues that a certain term in the dichotomy is seen as originary, rational and foundational while the other term is seen as parasitic, disruptive and secondary.<sup>24</sup> According to both Cixous and Irigaray women have always been

associated with the latter term of the dichotomy. For both writers any arguments of "equality" will continue to devalue feminine "difference" simply because arguments for equality still see the "male" characteristics as desirable. The association of women with the irrational, darkness, the body and the sensible should lead us to revalue these terms and not merely claim that women should (or could) aspire to the rational, light, the soul and the intelligible. For Irigaray the character of the concept of reason - its emphasis on non-contradiction, presence, unity, visibility and deduction - links it essentially to the Western metaphors of male sexuality. According to the Australian feminist philosopher Genevieve Lloyd, the discourse of reason is historically defined within a dichotomous rhetoric which devalues those qualities most commonly associated with women. For Lloyd, philosophers can be guilty of gender bias even if they do not specifically mention the inferiority of women simply by reinforcing the oppositions which have been used to devalue femininity. Consequently it is an act of philosophical self-deception to assume that by allowing women the possibility of rationality one has done away with sexism; for concepts such as reason cannot be removed from their semantic history. Genevieve Lloyd's claim that reason is not a gender-neutral term is based upon an argument which places systems of ethics, ontology and epistemology within a social and conceptual context. According to Lloyd, while certain philosophers may have made no explicit statements excluding women from the realm of reason, the notions they do employ, such as transcendence, self-assertion, development and universalisability, are linked to a whole system of oppositions which excludes the feminine. Within each philosophical discourse the positive terms have tended to be linked with what is traditionally associated with masculinity. Theoretically, a woman may be capable of rational activity, but this would depend upon her movement towards male ideals, whereas men would simply have to develop what were presumably their already innate and dominant traits. For Lloyd and Irigaray ideals of reason have helped constitute sexual difference; the notion that "Reason knows no sex" is a form of philosophical bad faith.<sup>25</sup> In overcoming prejudice it is not sufficient to acknowledge that different cultures, genders or classes are "the same;" one needs

to be aware that identity or equivalence should not be the condition for rights and respect.

Milton does away with the medieval virgin Mary cult and the ideal of woman as "other" and institutes a more modern form of gender bias.<sup>26</sup> Woman is not the idolised "other" but the inferior "same." By transposing the masculine ideal of reason as a possibility for women and inscribing a hierarchical relationship between women and men which is analogous to that between men and souls, Milton associates women with a more embodied level of the hierarchy and thereby subordinates the qualities he still traditionally associates with women.

Milton's theory of gender, therefore, reinforces the hierarchical ordering of entities in the great chain of being. His argument for divorce also appeals to an original condition of natural law which remains eternally valid. While granting women the free will to ascend the scale of being, there is still a static hierarchical ordering where women are subordinated to men, as they were in the natural and harmonious hierarchy of Eden. With the emergent modern world-view of the seventeenth century, against which Milton was reacting, women are subordinated not on ontological or theological grounds - equalitarianism has superseded hierarchy - but on the basis of property. Women are the corporeal chattels Milton explicitly declares they should not be. When Blake examines the role of women in society he therefore challenges *both* the Miltonic idea that woman is ideally a reflection of the rational male *and* the modern notion that woman is an item of property. Both these tropes - of reflection and ownership - are subverted in *Visions of the Daughters of Albion*. (Oothoon is both a slave and the reflection of masculinity.) Blake's main challenge to both Milton and modern theories of gender is enabled by his theory of contraries. For Blake, law and value do not precede and govern the meeting of opposites; what is valuable is generated by contraries. Unlike Milton, who sees opposites as hierarchically ordered within a static chain of being, Blake views contraries as dynamic and mutually productive of each other. Blake's response to Milton's theory of contraries and the law



Milton sees as antecedent to and governing those contraries will be the subject of the next chapter.

- 1 According to Lewalski great art transcends "those lesser categories of human experience" such as race, class and gender. Consequently, we cannot condemn Milton's "glorious and supremely right" vision of the human condition on the basis that the categories it employs are outmoded. Barbara Lewalski, "Milton on Women - Yet Once More," *Milton Studies* 6 (1974): 4-5. From a Marxist perspective which condemns Milton's individualism David Aers and Bob Hodge come to a similar conclusion regarding Milton's historical position and his "inevitable complicity with orthodox sexist ideology": "His thought includes an immense, yet insecure advance over the course of his life, but there are limits to how far even a heroic individual can transcend his background and education, in thought and practice." David Aers and Bob Hodge, "Rational Burning: Milton on Sex and Marriage", *Milton Studies* 13 (1979): 29.
- 2 Wittreich argues that Milton's works are actually "feminist": "Milton was not just an ally of feminists but their early sponsor" and "Milton's epic prophecy is in part a woman's text - indeed, a lost feminist text." [Joseph Wittreich, *Feminist Milton* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987) ix-x.] DiSalvo argues that despite the poet's manifest intention the materials he adopts actually challenge his ostensible patriarchal views. This dual perspective hinges upon the character of Satan: "At the heart of Milton's epic lies a contradiction aesthetically reflected in the magnetism of his Satan and the repulsiveness of his God." *Paradise Lost* yields a criticism of its own dogma because "the democratic, anti-patriarchal, and irreligious views which [Milton] assigned to the enemies of God ... eventually touch a responsive chord in readers approaching the poem from a new social and ideological perspective." [Jackie DiSalvo, *War of the Titans* 9 & 12.] Stevie Davies also argues that the breadth of Milton's vision actually presented a challenge to his ostensible misogyny. Because of Milton's indebtedness to the hermetic tradition, the female principle is seen as essential to the poet's own creative being as well as to the fecundity of the universe. According to Davies this "heresy" is "flamboyantly at odds with

- Milton's professed aim to justify the patriarchal God whose theology is laid out in Book III of *Paradise Lost*, with its respect for contract law and the hierarchy of obedience. It contradicts Milton's own best and frequently expressed anti-female principles." [Stevie Davies, *The Idea of Woman in Renaissance Literature: The Feminine Reclaimed*, (Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1986) 231.]
- 3 Gilbert quotes from Woolf's diary in order to argue that Milton excludes the "feminine" aspects of experience: "[Milton] deals in horror and immensity and squalor and sublimity but never in the passions of the human heart." Virginia Woolf, *A Writer's Diary* (New York: Harcourt, 1954) 5; qtd. in Sandra Gilbert, "Patriarchal Poetry and Women Readers: Reflection's on Milton's Bogey," *PMLA* 93 (1978): 369. Both Sandra Gilbert and Christine Froula characterise Milton as a poet who dramatises abstract and masculine concepts over passion and women's experience.
  - 4 See Christine Froula, "Pechter's Spectre: Milton's Bogey Writ Small: or, Why Is He Afraid of Virginia Woolf?," *Critical Inquiry* 11 (1984-5): 171-78.
  - 5 Joseph Wittreich, *Feminist Milton*. There are several problems with both sides of Wittreich's approach. To argue that Milton's early approving female readership proves that Milton is not a sexist writer is a form of essentialism. It denies that oppression can be internalised and that repressive ideologies are also adopted by the oppressed. Because these readers are "female" it does not follow that they are "feminist." The problem with Wittreich's intentionalist claims about Milton's status as a revolutionary poet stem from Wittreich's conflation of political with sexual revolution as well as the claim (challenged in this section) that Milton's poetry problematises traditional conceptions of patriarchy. Wittreich's argument here, as in *Angel of Apocalypse*, depends upon the notion of vision and prophecy to argue that Milton somehow transcended his personal and historical limits to see beyond patriarchal prejudice. Such a notion not only tends to be ahistorical, it also valorises those very concepts many feminists have sought to challenge. For concepts of eschatology,

apocalypse and prophecy grant individual canonised male poets an unassailable transcendent vision which anticipates and already answers all other arguments. Because Milton is seen as a liberating poet his "vision" supposedly accounts for all forms of liberty - sexual and political as well as Christian. Edward Pechter's answer to Christine Froula also assumes that because Milton was "dedicated to the eradication of formal institutional authority in favour of freedom of conscience" his attitude towards women was also liberating. Edward Pechter, "When Pechter reads Froula pretending She's Eve Reading Milton; or, New Feminist Is But Old Priest Writ Large," *Critical Inquiry* 11 (1984-5): 163.

- 6 Thus Marcia Landy's article "Kinship and the Role of Women in *Paradise Lost*" [*Milton Studies* 4 (1972): 3-18] is answered by Barbara K. Lewalski's "Milton on Women - Yet Once More". [*Milton Studies* 6 (1974): 3-20] Sandra Gilbert's article, "Patriarchal Poetry and Women Readers: Reflection's on Milton's Bogey," [*PMLA* 93 (1978): 368-382] is promptly answered by Philip Gallagher's "Milton's Bogey" [*PMLA* 94 (1979): 319-21]. Finally, Christine Froula's "When Eve Reads Milton: Undoing the Canonical Economy" [*Critical Inquiry* 10 (1983-4): 321-47] is answered by Edward Pechter's "When Pechter Reads Froula Pretending She's Eve Reading Milton; or, New Feminist Is But Old Priest Writ Large", [*Critical Inquiry* 11 (1984-5): 163-170.] which is answered by Froula asserting the validity of her response and the "cultural power of Milton's patriarchal text in our own day." ["Pechter's Spectre: Milton's Bogey Writ Small: or, Why Is He Afraid of Virginia Woolf?", *Critical Inquiry* 11 (1984-5): 171-78.]
- 7 The phrase is Northrop Frye's from *Five Essays on Milton's Epics* (1965; London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966).
- 8 Sandra Gilbert also notes the use of reason in Milton and sees this as part of Blake's feminist criticism of the earlier poet: "And that the Right Reason of *Paradise Lost* did have such [misogynist] implications was powerfully understood by William Blake, whose fallen Urizenic Milton

- must reunite with his female emanation in order to cast off his fetters and achieve imaginative wholeness." Gilbert, "Patriarchal Poetry," 374.
- 9 Northrop Frye, *Five Essays on Milton's Epics*, 65.
- 10 Commenting upon the theories of marriage and the family in Rousseau, Locke and Hobbes Sara Ann Ketchum notes: "While classical liberal theory attacked the assumption that the natural authority of lords over serfs and of kings over subjects should be respected because it was natural and not to be interfered with, they left the ideology of marriage more or less intact in that respect." "Liberalism and Marriage Law," *Feminism and Philosophy*, ed. Mary Wetterling-Braggin, Frederick A. Elliston and Jane English (1977; Totowa: Rowmans and Allenheld, 1985) 265.
- 11 Ernest Sirluck, introduction, CPW.2.157
- 12 Arthur Barker, *Milton and the Puritan Dilemma: 1641-1660* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1942) 111.
- 13 Ernest Sirluck, introduction, CPW.2.157
- 14 Here I would disagree with Sandra Gilbert who claims that Milton continues the representation of women as "other:" "The story that Milton, "the first of the masculinists," most notably tells is of course of women's secondness, her otherness, and how that otherness leads inexorably to her demonic anger, her sin, her fall, and her exclusion from that garden of the gods which is also, for her, the garden of poetry." ["Patriarchal Poetry," 370.] In fact, I would argue that the problem with Milton's texts for a feminist reading lies in the fact that he sees women not so much as "other" and excluded but as the same in kind while failing in degree.
- 15 According to Christine Froula such hierarchical relations reinforce a process of authority which robs self-evidence of its validity and confers truth upon only transcendent sources: "Eve's relation to Adam as mirror and shadow is the paradigmatic relation which canonical authority institutes between itself and its believers in converting them from the authority of their own experience to a 'higher' authority." Froula, "When Eve Reads Milton," 328-9. On this point see also Kathleen M. Swaim, "Hee for God

- Only, Shee for God in Him': Structural Parallelism in *Paradise Lost*," *Milton Studies* 9 (1976): 121-50.
- 16 For McColley the significance of Milton's achievement lies in his ability to depict a prelapsarian marriage in contradistinction to the tradition of Renaissance iconography which had no conception of unfallen woman. In fact, Milton seeks to overcome the gender dualism by seeing neither term in the dichotomy as antithetical: "The idea of Eve that Milton's age inherited resulted from a dualistic habit of mind that he strove in all his works to reform: the supposition that nature and spirit, body and soul, passion and reason, and art and truth are inherently antithetical and that woman, the primordial temptress, represents the dark and dangerous (or rebellious and thrilling) side of each antithesis." Diane Kelsey McColley, *Milton's Eve* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983) 3. Lewalski also argues that despite Eve's inferiority she was "sufficient to have stood" and that the image of eye in Paradise Lost liberates women from a purely domestic role and sees them as responsible, educated and rational. Lewalski, "Milton on Women," 3.
- 17 "The man has the right to divorce his wife (or the wife the husband) if she is a threat to his spiritual integrity, and she cannot be that without representing something of what idolatry means to Milton." Frye, *Five Essays*, 69.
- 18 I would therefore disagree with Joseph Wittreich's claim that Blake's doctrine of contraries accords with that of Milton. Wittreich cites *Reason of Church Government* as well as *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* as Blake's source. Both these pamphlets (like *Areopagitica*) invoke the idea of contraries in order to demonstrate a natural and logical progression of the correct and superior term over its subordinate. Truth in its unity will always emerge from a pair of contraries. Blake's doctrine may be inspired by Milton's, but Milton's contraries are closer to what Blake calls "negations." In fact, Milton advocates anything but a marriage of heaven and hell. As the current divorce laws stood for Milton "one moment after

- those mighty syllables pronounc't which take upon them to joyn heaven and hell unpardnably till death pardon" all the promised blessings of marriage vanish. (CPW.2.600). Joseph Wittreich, "Blake's Philosophy of Contraries: A New Source," *English Language Notes*, 4 (1966): 105-10.
- 19 Stephen Gosson, *The School of Abuse: Contayning a pleasant invective against Poets, Pipers, Players, Jesters and such like Caterpillars of a Commonwealth*, (London, 1579) sig. B7.
- 20 William Prynne, *Histrio-mastix: The Players Scourge, or, Actors Tragedie* (London, 1633). According to Prynne "effeminacy is both an odious and a condemning sinne" (Prynne 206) while it was characteristic for the theatre to present "dishonest, effeminate, womanish gestures"(Prynne 188). Stephen Orgel has studied this fear of effeminisation in "Nobody's Perfect: or Why Did the Renaissance Stage Take Boys For Women," *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 88 (1989): 7-29. According to Orgel "the deepest fear in anti-theatrical tracts, far deeper than that fear that women will become whores, is the fear of universal effeminization." Orgel 7.
- 21 McColley, *Milton's Eve* 75. Maureen Quilligan notes that Adam awakes to look first at the sky while Eve sees a reflected sky and herself. Maureen Quilligan, *Milton's Spenser: The Politics of Reading* (Ithaca, New York: 1983) 227-8.
- 22 Christine Froula also notes the ways in which *Paradise Lost* associates Eve with visibility and Adam with invisibility in connection with a general patriarchal strategy of promoting the invisible lineage of the father over visible maternal production. This also connects with the privileging of abstract over sensual thought. For Froula the matriarchal origins of myth are repressed in *Paradise Lost* so that the text harbours the "shadow of the repressed mother." "When Eve Reads Milton" 330-4.
- 23 "And we perceive that the 'victory' always amounts to the same thing: it is hierarchized. The hierarchisation subjects the entire conceptual organization to man. A male privilege, which can be seen in the opposition by which it sustains itself, between activity and passivity."

Helene Cixous, "Sorties," *New French Feminisms*, ed. Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron (1980; Sussex: Harvester, 1985) 91.

24 "The same remarking itself - more or less - would thus produce the other, whose function in the differentiation would be neglected, forgotten." Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, trans. Gillian C. Gill (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1985) 21.

25 Genevieve Lloyd, *Man of Reason: "Male" and "Female" in Western Philosophy* (London: Methuen, 1984).

26 Frye comments on Milton's rejection of this tradition: "It is understandable ... that Milton should see in the cult of courtly love, of *Frauendienst* or worship of women in the literary conventions of his time, one of the most direct and eloquent symbolic results of the fall of man. For this reason, Milton places the supremacy of Eve over Adam at the central point of the fall itself." Frye, *Five Essays* 66-7. According to Stevie Davies, there is still an aspect of idealisation of the feminine in Milton's earlier works such as *Arcades* and *Comus*. Stevie Davies, *The Idea of Woman* 178.



**Chapter Four:**  
**Milton, Blake and the Theory of Contraries.**

In *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* Milton argues that incompatible partners in marriage should not be forced to remain together. To support this argument he invokes a notion of cosmological harmony defined through the concept of contraries:

. . . there is indeed a twofold Seminary or stock in Nature, from whence are deriv'd the issues of love and hatred distinctly flowing through the whole masse of created things, and . . . Gods doing is ever to bring the due likenesses and harmonies of his works together, except when out of the two contraries met to their own destruction, he moulds a third existence, and that . . . is error, or some evil Angel. (CPW.2.272)

Milton goes on to state that a refusal to act in accordance with either the natural attraction for like to meet with like or the repulsion of contraries is "against the fundamental law book of nature" (CPW.2.272). God wills harmony and the meeting of contraries, not themselves evil, can only produce error. By associating the natural repulsion of contraries with natural law Milton harnesses a theory of physical opposition to an ethical theory. The exploitation of this association is also adopted in Milton's earlier work. His first use of the doctrine of contraries encompasses both a belief in the eternal character of virtue and the natural necessity of contraries. In *Reason of Church Government* Milton adopts the concept of contraries as part of an argument for the toleration of sects:

For if there were no opposition where were the triall of an unfained goodnesse and magnanimity? Vertue that wavers is not vertue, but vice revolted from itselfe, and after a while returning. The actions of just and pious men do not darken in their middle course; but *Solomon* tels us they are as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfet day. . . . the way of the wicked is as darknesse, they stumble at they know not what. . . . For if we look but on the nature of elementall and mixt things, we know they cannot suffer any change of one kind, or quality into another without the struggle of contrarieties. (CPW.1.795)

While Milton's concept of virtue is Socratic - true virtue cannot waver or even be relative to vice - "opposition" is essential to reveal and test the truly pious

and just. Milton does not argue that vice is necessary for virtue to exist, although the presence of vice strengthens and highlights, rather than threatens and sullies, the truly virtuous soul. In the context of *Reason of Church Government* the argument for opposition yields a justification for the existence of sects so that in the realm of plural beliefs the power of truth will eventually, and of its own accord, bear rule. But truth does not need error in order to be. While Milton also here argues that contraries are essential for change, the interaction of such *ethical* contraries should only yield this change: the error of vice should pale before the truth of virtue. Milton, in fact, makes very little of the meeting of virtue and vice in terms of any subsequent effect in terms of qualitative change; the opposition is not one of interaction but of effacement. Error should not be suppressed; its natural encounter with opposition will bring about the ascendancy of truth. Truth, goodness and virtue are thus self-sufficient terms. Epistemologically, where such ethical opposites are concerned, contraries may be necessary but ontologically and ideally there is no need for "contrarietie." Consequently, when Milton does refer to the notion of contraries it is always to illustrate a logical point with a material argument as the vehicle: in the case of *Reason of Church Government* "the nature of elementall and mixt things." It is important to make this distinction, for while Milton acknowledges natural contraries which produce qualitative change, he elsewhere argues that matter, being God's creation, must be essentially good.<sup>1</sup> The contraries of a *natural* opposition cannot be good and evil in themselves; evil can only be produced from the forced meeting of unlike qualities - a disruption of natural harmony. So the existence of *natural* opposites which are necessary is not strictly analogous to *ideal* oppositions such as virtue and vice where the former term is self-sufficient. Natural opposition can form part of God's creative whole because qualities such as light and dark can exist in a world without evil. But vice and virtue are not created as part of the natural process of the world. In *Areopagitica* Milton claims that it is the *knowledge* of good *in this world* which depends upon evil. It is for this epistemological

reason that ethical contraries such as vice and virtue should be allowed to exist and not because of the character of goodness:

Good and evill we know in the field of this World grow up together almost inseparably; and the knowledge of good is so involv'd and interwoven with the knowledge of evill, and in so many cunning resemblances hardly to be discern'd, that those confused seeds which were imposed on *Psyche* as an incessant labour to cull out, and sort asunder, were not more intermixt. It was from out the rinde of one apple tasted, that the knowledge of good and evill as two twins cleaving together leapt forth into the World. And perhaps this is that doom that Adam fell into of knowing good and evill, that is to say of knowing good by evill. As therefore the state of man now is; what wisdome can there be to choose, what continence to forbear without the knowledge of evill? (CPW.2.514)

The natural and necessary existence of physical contraries differs significantly from ideal ethical opposites such as good and evil; material contraries are defined relative to each other, need each other in order to exist and produce temporal development of the physical world. Good, on the other hand, did exist without evil, and although in the fallen world good is known through evil, it is logically and ideally possible that good should be freely chosen without the occurrence of evil. Milton's coupling of the argument of natural attraction and repulsion with the existence of vice and virtue has an explicative value only. Just as there is a natural harmony of the physical universe which requires contraries for change, so there is a natural harmony of the ideal realm which allows contraries for human freedom. But the natural law of eternal justice is not reducible to the natural law of the material world insofar as empirical contraries are symmetrical and ethically neutral (producing evil only when forcibly coupled) while ethical opposites contain one primordial and one derivative term. Contraries are necessary for change but the purpose of change for Milton, at least in the ethical sphere, is the emergence of truth and virtue - essentially uncontaminated entities.

The ascendance of natural philosophy in the eighteenth century witnessed an entirely different emphasis on explanations of conflicting

elements. The uniformity of matter replaced the hierarchy of essences. Oppositions, therefore, were two aspects of the same underlying matter with no intrinsic mode of behaviour or value; their identity was defined relationally. A theory of natural law following upon this conception of the universe would be concerned with a mechanistic and empirical interaction of elements. The natural law of Hobbes, based on the principle of self-maintenance, is such a mechanistic natural law. What is good or just is not dictated by an anterior natural law which is God's command. Rather, concepts such as justice follow from the interaction of elements in a system (or persons in society) in order to achieve the continuation of each element. In Hobbes's examination of society, the totality must be divided into its minimal units and then reconstructed upon the principle of those units.

Despite the general shift in ideas towards empiricism the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries were not unanimous in the manner of reducing the interplay of elements to a uniform field of force. Emmanuel Swedenborg's philosophy occupies a curious space between earlier theological explanations of the universe and the emerging preoccupations of natural science. Although Swedenborg reacted against the Cartesian philosophical revolution in asserting the value of the classics he was also originally a scientist who published studies in chemistry and geometry. His philosophical works were coloured with his original scientific training and in his major work published in 1772, *Principia Rerum Naturalium, or New Attempts toward the Philosophical Explanation of the Elementary World*, he produces "A Philosophical Argument concerning the First Simple" arguing for an original natural and material point from which the world originated. His "explanations" of the world are also highly mechanistic. But Swedenborg's mechanism is "animated," shaped and dominated by a supernatural power. Swedenborg's world-soul is not material although its dynamic qualities lend it the character of a material force. Not only Swedenborg's scientific works but also his later philosophical and prophetic writings are imbued with a sense of original matter

endowed with anima. Swedenborg sees the world of particulars determined by a governing form: "So heaven is a unity resulting from various parts in the most perfect of all forms".<sup>2</sup>

Swedenborg is at once reacting against natural science's reduction of the entire world to a uniform matter devoid of spirit while at the same time seeing the world in the modern terms of particulars endowed with systemic coherence. What distinguishes Swedenborg from thinkers like Newton and Descartes is the highly theological cast of his theory of dynamic particulars. Heaven is a collection of particulars but "God is order."<sup>3</sup> Although God, for Swedenborg, is not a purely material principle, he is neither ineffable nor invisible. In fact the Divine is a human form: "heaven in its whole complex resembles one man."<sup>4</sup> For Swedenborg it is absurd to think of God in any way other than as a "human shape:"<sup>5</sup>

Those in heaven were amazed that men believe themselves intelligent, who, in thinking of God, think of something invisible, that is, incomprehensible under any form, and that they call those who think differently, unintelligent and simple, when yet the reverse is the case.<sup>6</sup>

More significantly, Swedenborg also transports into his theological works a theory of the attraction of like to like. In explaining the ordering system of angels in heaven he writes that "Likeness causes them to be together" and goes on to expand this into a general claim:

Like are drawn spontaneously as it were to like, for with their like they are as if with their own and at home, but with others they are as if with strangers and abroad.<sup>7</sup>

Like Milton and the writers of the Christian tradition, Swedenborg identifies the animating principle with the spiritual being of God. Because of his emphasis upon spirit, Swedenborg's theory of attraction can be extended to include a visionary element which was no doubt important for Blake. As long as one is drawn to the material world one likens to matter; in order to see angels one must become spirit:

Like sees like from being alike. Besides, as everyone knows, the bodily organ of sight which is the eye is so gross as to be unable even to see, except through magnifying glasses, the smaller things of nature; still less then can it see the things that are above the sphere of nature as are all things in the spiritual world. But these things may be seen by a man when he is withdrawn from the sight of the body and the sight of his spirit is opened.<sup>8</sup>

Swedenborg couples his theory of attraction and the vision of like by like with a theory of repulsion:

For this reason, he who has no idea of heaven, that is, no idea of the Divine from Whom heaven exists, cannot be raised to the first threshold of heaven. As soon as he comes to it, a resistance and strong repulsion is perceived.<sup>9</sup>

The theory of repulsion, in addition to the clear distinction Swedenborg wishes to maintain between corporeality and spirituality, the inward and exterior realms of experience and heaven and hell, indicates an essential dichotomy between two orders of being. For example, certain animals on the earth correspond to "evil affections" while others to "good affections".<sup>10</sup> While Swedenborg sees all things issuing from the first principle, he defines nature as a meaningless exterior to spirit:

Angels are amazed when they hear that there are men who attribute all things to nature and nothing to the Divine, and who also believe that one's body, into which so many wonders of heaven are gathered, is a product of nature. Still more are they amazed that the rational part of man is believed to be from nature, when, if men but raise their minds a little, they can see that such things are from the Divine and not from nature, and that nature has been created simply for clothing the spiritual and for presenting it in a corresponding form in the ultimate of order.<sup>11</sup>

In fact, Swedenborg, seeks to see the world as entirely natural and heaven as purely spiritual: "for the things in heaven are spiritual and those in the world natural".<sup>12</sup> This widening of the dichotomy between spirit and world in addition to the theory of repulsion of natural from heavenly being produces, not the possibility of interaction between contraries, but, like Milton, an ideal of the "natural" process of purification of principles:

As all things that are in accordance with Divine order correspond to heaven, so all things contrary to Divine order correspond to hell. The

things that correspond to heaven have relation to good and truth. Those things that correspond to hell have relation to evil and falsity.<sup>13</sup>

Blake's doctrine of contraries in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* is a consequence of a critique of both Swedenborg and Milton's conception of contraries. While Milton acknowledges the necessity for natural opposites in the physical world, his ethical theory is based upon absolute ideas of justice, good and virtue which are defined through reference to a transcendent ideal of divinely ordained natural law. In his characterisation of Satan in *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regain'd* Milton clearly establishes the parasitic nature of error and vice and the central and self-sufficient character of virtue. Swedenborg's emphasis upon the human form of divine being and the spiritual origin of the universe take steps towards overcoming certain aspects of classical dualism. However, his marked distinction between heaven and hell, good and evil and their corresponding beings in the natural world as well as his impoverished conception of the physical body become the target of Blake's rethinking of the operation of physical contraries and their relation to ethics. In *Milton* Blake laments the Swedenborgian orthodoxy which employed the concepts of heaven and hell to divide human existence between "transgressors" and "warriors" and explicitly connects this division to Platonic ethics:

O Swedenborg! strongest of men, the Samson shorn by the Churches!  
 Shewing the Transgressors in Hell, the proud Warriors in Heaven:  
 Heaven as a Punisher & Hell as One under Punishment:  
 With Laws from Plato & his Greeks to renew the Trojan Gods,  
 In Albion; & to deny the value of the Saviours blood.  
 (M, 22: 50-54, E:117-18; K:506)<sup>14</sup>

Just prior to this comment on Swedenborg, Blake broadens his critique of the accusatory power of dualist thinking by identifying a religion of "deceit" and "new Jealousy" which he attributes to Milton's vestigial orthodoxy: "Milton's religion is the cause" (M, 22 [24]: 40, E:117; K:506). The "deceit" and "jealousy" of this religion recalls its divisive and double nature. Blake also

invokes the enlightenment reaction to such dualist orthodoxy and sees it, too, as bound up with a spirit of punishment:

Seeing the Churches at their Period in terror & despair:  
 Rahab created Voltaire; Tirzah created Rousseau;  
 Asserting the Self-righteousness against the Universal Saviour,  
 Mocking the Confessors & Martyrs, claiming Self-righteousness;  
 With cruel Virtue: making War upon the Lambs Redeemed;  
 To perpetuate War & Glory.  
 (M, 22 [24], 40-45, E:117; K:506)

Swedenborg, Milton and the Natural Religion of the enlightenment are united by the "cruel Virtue" which sets up a transcendent ideal from which to punish and divide any opposing human existence. Blake's repeated emphasis on "self-righteousness" is highly significant given the crucial role of "selfhood" in the classical doctrine of virtue. While Platonic and Miltonic ethics grounded the concept of goodness in self-contemplation and the development of inward virtue which directed itself towards transcendence, enlightenment ethics stressed the ability of independent reason to arrive at its own ethical truths. In either case the concept of the individual self is central. For Blake, such individualist ethics only lead to self-righteousness and it is the power of self-righteousness which denies the "value of the Saviours blood" (forgiveness of others) and enables the division of existence into heaven and hell - the punishing spirit of Swedenborg's contraries.

In his early work Blake lays a great deal of emphasis on the interaction of contraries, seeing them as "necessary to Human existence" (MHH, 3, E:34, K:149). Whereas Milton insists upon the self-sufficiency of goodness and invokes physical contraries only at the level of illustrative example, Blake rejects the concept of an ideal and transcendent goodness. Blake's concept of opposition owes its materialism to the alchemical tradition of Paracelsus and Boehme which emphasises the physical qualities of attraction and repulsion. For Milton, physical contraries are ethically neutral and symmetrical while ethical contraries contain one primary and one derivative term. Blake on the other hand sees ideal oppositions such as "Love and Hate" as analogous to



"Attraction and Repulsion" and sees the attribution of ethical oppositions to these contraries as a legacy of religion:

Without Contraries is no progression. Attraction and Repulsion,  
Reason and Energy, Love and Hate, are necessary to Human existence.

From these contraries spring what the religious call Good & Evil.  
Good is the passive that obeys Reason[.] Evil is the active springing  
from Energy.

Good is heaven. Evil is hell.

(MHH, 3: E:34; K:149)

In *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* Blake conducts an ethical inversion similar to that of Satan's "Evil be thou my good" in *Paradise Lost*. By claiming that "Good is the passive that obeys Reason" Blake ironically devalues the angelic realm of heaven in favour of the energetic and interactive evil of hell. Whereas Satan's inversion of good and evil is incoherent in *Paradise Lost* because Milton has established a concept of transcendent and self-sufficient goodness, Blake undertakes a more successful inversion precisely because he rejects the metaphysical underpinning of Miltonic ethics. This is achieved through an historical examination of the origin of virtue. Energy is seen as the primary and rightly governing life force which concepts of goodness and virtue have had to usurp *because such concepts are weaker*: "Those who restrain desire, do so because theirs is weak enough to be restrained; and the restrainer or reason usurps its place & governs the unwilling" (MHH, 5, E:34; K:149). But while Blake sees energy as primordial and goodness or reason as secondary, he still sees reason as essential to the continuation of the energy and therefore differs from Milton who saw his primary term as entirely self-sufficient. Blake does not harbour Milton's distinction between ideal and physical contraries; he sees the being of the world in its entirety (both materially and ideally) as an opposition of forces:

Thus one portion of being, is the Prolific. the other, the  
Devouring: to the devourer it seems as if the producer was in his chains,  
but it is not so, he only takes portions of existence and fancies that the  
whole.

But the Prolific would cease to be Prolific unless the Devourer as  
a sea recieved the excess of his delights.

(MHH, 16: E:40; K:155)

Blake's work prior to the prophetic books therefore stresses the physical interaction of contraries. Because of Blake's view of the history of ethical and religious thought (where reason has enslaved its greater and threatening opposite, energy) his early works witness the overthrow of Reason (Urizen) by the energetic Orc. Blake's theory of contraries at this stage, though materialist, does not attribute symmetry to oppositions; reason or passivity has had to develop a history of its primacy in order to enslave its greater opponent. Blake's programme is therefore corrective; energy must be given some dominating power to overcome the long period of reason's reign. Consequently, Blake stresses that reason must remain as the bound or circumference of energy at the same time that he attacks reason's value and doctrines. In theory Blake is only criticising the monopoly reason has attempted to maintain over existence and not the faculty of reason *per se*. However, it often appears that Blake lays more emphasis on the destruction of reason's supremacy than the productive interaction of reason and energy which would supposedly follow. At this stage Blake is arguing for a reassessment of the imbalance between reason or goodness and energy or evil and assuming that the worldly paradise will necessarily ensue from a greater release of energy.

In the prophetic books, written after most Romantic writers became disillusioned with the one release of energy they did witness (in the form of the French Revolution), Blake departs from his physicalist and quantitative theory of contraries. The liberation of energy needed some *form* other than its interaction with its contrary. Blake's earlier *negative* definition of both good and evil as necessary opposites defined dynamically on the model of attraction and repulsion is thoroughly reformulated. Blake had already personified the forces of reason and energy in the characters of Urizen and Orc. But his introduction of the eternal man, or Albion, as a background against which to enact the drama between these warring forces gives each quality its rightful *place* in a thoroughly humanised topography. Milton had placed God and the

eternal form of goodness as a transcendent point of reference for his contraries. Now, Blake introduces an order and due harmony of contraries which is neither the physical interaction of his earlier work nor the Miltonic transcendent subordination of worldly evil to eternal good. Each quality, in Blake's new schema, has its rightful place and function in the human form. Contraries now are neither physical nor metaphysical but *human*. In "Night the Ninth" of *The Four Zoas* the "regenerate" Albion accords each faculty of human existence its particular role and warns against the elevation of any particular function into a transcendent form:

Luvah & Vala henceforth you are Servants obey & live  
 You shall forget your former state return O Love in peace  
 Into your place the place of seed not in the brain or heart  
 If Gods combine against Man Setting their Dominion above  
 The Human Form Divine.  
 (FZ.9. p. 126: 6-10, E:395; K:366)

The "Gods" Albion refers to are created when one of the states of the human soul (for example, reason or "Urizen") is projected onto an external deity; consequently Albion here warns against the future elevation of any one state. But instead of warring contraries Albion envisages harmonious interaction within the human form:

In Enmity & war first weakend then in stern repentence  
 They must renew their brightness & their disorganizd functions  
 Again reorganize till they resume the image of the human  
 Cooperating in the bliss of Man obeying his Will  
 Servants to the infinite & Eternal of the Human form  
 (FZ.9 p. 126: 13-17, E:395; K:366)

In addition to rethinking the structure of contraries, Blake adds the opposition of male and female to his work and grants it primary importance. In fact, it is Blake's introduction of the issue of gender into his theory of oppositions which if it does not enable, at least coincides with, the humanisation of his doctrine of contraries.

We have already seen that in Milton's work there is an implicit distinction between ideal and physical contraries. Such ideal contraries ground

a series of hierarchically ordered oppositions. Such oppositions - between reason and the body, male and female, church and state, ecclesiastical and temporal spheres - exist neither by mutual definition and interaction (as in the case of physical contraries) nor by the self-sufficiency of a primary term and its parasitic derivation (as in the ideal case). In Milton's hierarchical oppositions the first term (reason, church, male, ecclesiastical) does not generate or necessarily imply the second term; the second term has its own nature, character and virtue. Nevertheless the second term, while different, should be subordinate and directed to the values of the first term. Blake, on the other hand, not only directly attacks the *subordination* of these oppositions - in the case of reason and the body for example; he also repeatedly asserts the spurious character of the distinction operating in the opposition. Not only is it the case that "Man has no Body distinct from his Soul" (MHH, pl.4, E:34; K:149), but the transcendence of the eternal ecclesiastical sphere is also repudiated: "What is Above is Within, for every-thing in Eternity is translucent" (J, 71: 6, E:225; K:709).

Blake clearly rejects the Miltonic conception of gender whereby the feminine is the same as the masculine in kind and differs only in degree. The centrality which Blake grants the concept of sexual difference is evidenced in the culmination of *Jerusalem* where the union between the male (Albion) and his female emanation (Jerusalem) is the condition for the possibility of regaining human paradise. However, there is a double movement in Blake where sexual difference is both a symbol and symptom of alienation as well as the means for redemption. Throughout his prophetic books Blake sees the division between male and female as a consequence of the fall from eternal unity. In the opening of the first book of *Milton* Los attempts to give Urizen definite form. As Urizen takes on a biological and limited body Los becomes enslaved to the finitude of his creation: "Terrified Los stood in the Abyss & his immortal limbs / Grew deadly pale; he became what he beheld" (M, 3: 28-9, E:97; K:483). As Los moves toward this fallen form sexual difference occurs:

"he wept over it, he cherish'd it / In deadly sickening pain: till separated into a Female pale" (M, 3: 32-3, E:97; K:483). After the emanation of the female form there emerges "a Male Form howling in Jealousy" (M, 3: 36, E:97; K:483). The "Jealousy" of this male form is important for the subtlety of Blake's argument. When sexual difference is constituted through opposition or conflict it is symptomatic of the general fall into disunity. Blake's alien female emanations - Vala, Rahab and Tirzah - are external and threateningly independent to their male counterparts.

However, it by no means follows that Blake supports the idea of a primordial and eternal androgyny to which human existence should return. Albion's emanation, Jerusalem, is a more benign female form because, though different, she complements, fulfils and recognises male selfhood while chastening the masculine will to autonomy and "self-righteousness." The total denial of sexual difference can be as pernicious as the other extreme: the elevation of gender distinctions into two totally independent and warring opposites. In the prophetic books all qualities have their place in the eternal "man" including masculinity and femininity. In this respect Blake's Albion is "man" in the generic sense insofar as he represents humanity; but Blake exploits the fact that he is specifically "man" insofar as he needs to reinclude his female emanation. Humanity has been "man" because it has rejected its integrated and original femininity (Jerusalem) and externalised and elevated an independent and dominating female form (Vala). In *The Book of Urizen* Blake anticipates the emergence of the female form in *Milton*:

9. All Eternity shudderd at sight  
Of the first female now separate  
Pale as a cloud of snow  
Waving before the face of Los

10. Wonder, awe, fear, astonishment,  
Petrify the eternal myriads;  
At the first female form now separate

They call'd her Pity, and fled

(U, 18-19: 9-15 & 1, E:78; K:231)

The female form here embodies pity - a quality which Blake saw as valuable in its place but also as a threatening element of the patronising and domineering spirit of Christian charity.<sup>15</sup> Significantly, this female form elicits wonder and becomes capable of the idolisation we see later in Vala. Blake appears to still retain some of the spirit in which Milton warned of the seductive power of Eve's beauty. Los attempts to embrace the female but she controls and dominates him through denial:

But Los saw the Female & pitied  
 He embrac'd her, she wept, she refus'd  
 In perverse and cruel delight  
 She fled from his arms, yet he followd  
 (U, 19: 10-13, E:79; K:231)

However, Blake's female figures are not threatening because of their bodily charm but because of the general human process of externalising and idolising what should really be seen as inward and human. Significantly, Blake is also critical of the Miltonic idea of woman as man's own image; such an idea is anathema to a poet who consistently criticises the selfish and paralysing character of self-reflection. When woman serves merely as an external reflection of male selfhood, solipsism as well as alienation occurs. Los does not see an other self in a relationship of mutual recognition but his own divided likeness:

Eternity shudder'd when they saw,  
 Man begetting his likeness,  
 On his own divided image.  
 (U, 19: 14-16, E:79; K:232)

In *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* Blake had already pointed out the hypocrisy of this doctrine of the woman being a reflection of masculine glory. After Oothoon has been raped by Bromion she internalises his punishing doctrine and becomes self-condemnatory as she sees herself as an inadequate reflection of Theotormon:

I call with holy voice! kings of the sounding air,  
 Rend away this defiled bosom that I may reflect.  
 The image of Theotormon on my pure transparent breast.

The Eagles at her call descend & rend their bleeding prey;  
 Theotormon severely smiles. her soul reflects the smile;  
 (VDA, 2: 14-18, E:46; K:190)

But Oothoon does not remain reflectively subservient to Theotormon and eventually points out the contradiction of Theotormon's self-righteous accusations: "How can I be defild when I reflect thy image pure?" (VDA, 3: 16, E:47; K:191).

Clearly, as well as repudiating the idolised and externalised "feminine" Blake also rejects the conceptualisation of sexual difference along lines of similarity and "reflection." In fact the loss of the particularity of sexual difference is symptomatic and symbolic of a loss of identity in general. This is evidenced in Blake's use of the term "hermaphroditic" in a highly perjorative sense. In *Milton* Blake lists the cycle of churches and refers to them as "Giants mighty Hermaphroditic" (M, 37[41]: 37, E:138; K:528). As Blake continues the list and includes the central figures who have united religion with statehood he emphasises the loss of sexual difference:

. . . these are the Female-Males  
 A Male within a Female hid as in an Ark & Curtains,  
 Abraham, Moses, Solomon, Paul, Constantine, Charlemaine  
 Luther, these seven are the Male-Females, the Dragon Forms  
 Religion hid in War, a Dragon red & hidden Harlot  
 (M, 37[41]: 39-43, E:138; K:528)

In this passage Blake unites the confusion of two sets of contraries. The feminine form of Rahab is an adulterated "femininity;" it is the harlot of the state church - the principle of femininity used to further a life-denying doctrine of chastity and moral virtue. It is "male-female" because it is the feminine harnessed to masculine power. The state church is male-female because it exploits what Blake sees as the feminine arts of denial for the sake of a deferred good; it is a "harlot" because it acts by temptation and refusal. The Church claims spirituality and redemption but is actually a dominating and materialist power. The confusion of sexual difference, therefore, is at the heart of the fall of religion into statehood. The celebration of sexual difference

would threaten the control of the state-church morality over its subjects. Milton saw the division of Church and State to be a metaphysical issue of first importance to the individual because it involved the important distinction between this-worldly and other-worldly spheres of value. Blake, on the other hand, saw the Church as responsible for instituting the distinction between the temporal and spiritual spheres. Religion had devalued the delights of nature and the body in order to control them. It had taken the concept of femininity away from the realm of sexual enjoyment and converted the feminine into a "harlot" virgin cult. Then the Church itself had adopted this new male-female's enslaving arts.

There appears to be a contradiction between Blake's condemnation of the confusion of sexual difference in the "Female-Male" of state religion and his frequently expressed idea that gender differentiation occurs with the fall of the self into disunity. However, the idea of a "fall" into sexual difference refers, not to difference *per se*, but to the alienation of masculinity from femininity - in seeing the feminine as thoroughly external to universalised masculinity. So, in *Milton*, we are warned of the "female space" which would set itself outside experience and limit the capacities of perception.

The nature of a Female Space is this: it shrinks the Organs  
Of Life till they become Finite & Itself seems Infinite  
(M, 10[11]: 6-7, E:104; K:490)

Here Blake uses the word "female" adjectivally to describe what is external to experience. By recognising this we can see why Vala is united with the concept of nature. For Blake both nature and the feminine are valuable when seen as humanised and integrated with the imagination; but when either femininity or nature is elevated above human experience (as in either the "nature" of science or the femininity of virgin cults) they can limit and impoverish existence. Blake unites his theory of gender with his general ontological claim that what *appears* to condition and determine experience is merely experience alienated from itself. Thus Blake's character Vala unites both external nature and external femininity. In *Milton* Ololon calls the theorists of natural religion "feminine"



because their critique of religion has relied upon the annihilation of the particularity of existence; they have reduced the world to an alien, uniform substance by denying difference. They are therefore no better than the traditional Christians who have set up and worshipped an other-worldly and alienated God, for the enlightenment God is nature (the "Newtonian Phantasm"):

Are those who contemn Religion & seek to annihilate it  
 Become in their Femin[in]e portions the causes & promoters  
 Of these Religions, how is this thing? this Newtonian Phantasm  
 This Voltaire & Rousseau: this Hume & Gibbon & Bolingbroke  
 This Natural Religion! . . .  
 (M, 40[46]: 9-13, E:141; K:532)

For Blake sexual difference has a truly redemptive capacity. Because the history of Western thought has been a history of individualism Blake sees the extension of the individual to include alterity as the condition for the possibility of renewal. Because the primary mode of alterity for Blake is sexual alterity the union of masculine selfhood with its female emanation becomes the symbol for the regaining of human plenitude. Insofar as Blake uses the concept of the "feminine" as a metaphor for alienated otherness in general it is possible to understand all his supposedly "misogynist" statements as actually grounded in the historical observation that what we experience as the feminine is an alienated and perverted construction of patriarchal culture. The "cruel delight," "female will" and chastity have their origin in a system of the projection of certain qualities and doctrines onto the feminine. The retrieval of this alienated feminine being lies not in eradicating sexual difference but in transforming the opposition from one of mutual exclusion to mutual recognition. Consequently, Blake seeks both to maintain the particular integrity and value of the feminine and to unite both masculinity and femininity within the eternal human form. The importance of the recognition of others and otherness begins with the prophetic books. Before examining *The Four Zoas*, *Milton* and *Jerusalem* it is necessary to see how Blake arrives at the recognition of the need for the reinclusion of the feminine in the human form.

The following chapter will therefore deal with Blake's poetry up to the beginning of *The Four Zoas*.

- 1 Although Milton rejects the orthodox position of creation *ex nihilo*, the position he does adopt sees the first matter from which the world was created as deriving from God and therefore free from evil: "That matter should have always existed independently of God is inconceivable. In the first place, it is only a passive principle, dependent upon God and subservient to him; and, in the second place, there is no inherent force or efficacy in time or eternity, any more than there is in the concept of number. But if matter did not exist from eternity, it is not very easy to see where it originally came from. There remains only one solution, especially if we allow ourselves to be guided by scripture, namely, that all things came from God" (CPW.6.307). Milton thus firmly refuses the Manichean position, where matter is equated with evil, and allows the possibility of a concept of natural law based on a premise that the world is naturally good.
- 2 Emmanuel Swedenborg, *Heaven and Hell: From Things Heard and Seen*, trans. J.C. Ager, ed. Doris H. Harley (London: The Swedenborg Society, 1958) 26.
- 3 Swedenborg 27.
- 4 Swedenborg 33.
- 5 Swedenborg 38.
- 6 Swedenborg 39.
- 7 Swedenborg 21.
- 8 Swedenborg 35.
- 9 Swedenborg 38.
- 10 Swedenborg 53
- 11 Swedenborg 49.
- 12 Swedenborg 57.
- 13 Swedenborg 56.
- 14 William Blake, *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, ed. David V. Erdman, Rev. ed. (New York: Anchor-Doubleday, 1988);

*Blake: Complete Writings*, ed. Geoffrey Keynes, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957). All further references will be taken from the Erdman edition and will appear abbreviated in the text. The initial of the title will be followed by the plate, line and page numbers successively. Page numbers for the Keynes edition will follow, prefixed by "K."

- 15 See, for example, *Milton* where Los laments his act of pity which has redistributed the division of labour against the natural talents of Satan and Palamabron: "Mine is the fault! I should have remember'd that pity divides the soul / And man, unmans" (M, 8: 19-20, E:102; K:488). If pity is female, as is claimed in *The Book of Urizen*, then its "unmanning" quality in Milton recalls the fear of feminine unmanning that we have seen in Milton's divorce tracts and *Paradise Lost*. Blake differs from the traditional account of the feminine ability to "unman" masculinity in locating the effeminating power in sentiments - such as pity - and in the elevated and idolised female goddess rather than in the female body.

### Chapter Five:

#### From *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* to *The Four Zoas*

It is evident from Blake's response to Milton's concept of contraries that the main theoretical differences between the two poets stem from Blake's refusal to admit an ideal or transcendent mode of being into his ontology. Whereas Milton's contraries are governed, ideally, by some supra-mundane order, Blake's contraries are intra-worldly. While Milton argues for an eternal and static conception of value which could distinguish between and order contraries, Blake argues that concepts such as virtue and morality are an effect of contraries. However, in adopting this position towards Milton, Blake comes perilously close to the purely relational definition of value of modern ideology. Although Blake emphasises contraries and refuses to subsume the being of the world beneath one uniform law ("One Law for the Lion & Ox is Oppression") his oppositions are characterised by force (evil/energy) and its negation (reason/limit). Blake's desire to both "open" the finite cosmology of Milton's epics *and* overcome modern science's doubt and relativism is the motivating force behind his development towards the prophetic books. Blake's most fundamental pair of contraries is, in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, the opposition between reason and energy, with energy being Blake's primary value. By the time Blake writes his prophetic books his most important contraries are the masculine and feminine. This shift, from a materialist opposition, to an inter-human opposition is fundamental to Blake's critique of modern science and ideology as well as traditional concepts of selfhood. Blake's attack upon modern "subjectivity" is intertwined with his theory of contraries. In Blake's work prior to the prophetic books the reasoning self must be overcome by form-annihilating energy. Later, when the emphasis in Blake's theory of contraries shifts to gender, selfhood is overcome through the interaction of masculinity and femininity. Blake's central redemptive image of the retrieval of the female emanation is his answer to both Milton's other-worldly rational soul and the "subject" of modern science and Cartesian

epistemology.

A scientific revolution is inaugurated by Descartes's turn to the subject as the basis for both truth and method. Despite the fact that Descartes admitted God into his system, God for Descartes was a convenient afterthought, added to overcome the difficulties of his final position. As Peter Schouls has noted, Descartes inaugurates the enlightenment with his revolutionary conception of human being as the ground for truth:

At least in practice Descartes' revolution in the sciences was accompanied by a revolt against the traditional Christian view of the place of man. For Descartes, man has the first word and the last in the matter of determining what is and what is not to be accepted as truth.<sup>1</sup>

Concomitantly, there is a rejection of the traditional or hierarchical conceptions of value. Such a revolution instantiates what Dumont refers to as the modern ideology of *Homo oeconomicus* where system rather than the innate character of entities becomes the ground-rule for all disciplines. The relevance of such an historical shift for the work of William Blake obviously lies in the poet's rejection of given systems with his emphasis on minute particulars. But despite the fact that Blake frequently mentions two primary Cartesian terms - the vortex and the method of doubt - his named opponent is Newton. Unlike Descartes who wanted to place scientific system on a *rational* footing Newton's doctrine premised itself on the primacy of *experience*. Donald Ault suggests that although Blake was obviously aware of Cartesian philosophy he chose Newton to attack because Descartes was no longer a threat to imagination by Blake's time and had indeed been surpassed by Newton.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless both Descartes and Newton were united in their desire for systematic thinking and their attempt to unite the laws of celestial and terrestrial gravitation.

Newton's concept of absolute motion overturned the Aristotelian world-picture in which each entity had its own mode of movement and earthly and celestial bodies moved according to their particular mode of being. Descartes's rationalism had commenced the reduction of the world to homogeneous

extension; all knowledge was to be sought through the axiomatic rules of method applied to a world of uniform *res extensa*. The particular character of entities along with the concept of ontological hierarchy was replaced by the search for correct methodology. Newton, like Descartes, saw the need for systematic and uniform laws for the study of nature but gained those rules from an inductive empiricism rather than Cartesian rationalism. Newtonian science introduced the concept of absolute motion, along with absolute time and space. Absolute space was not the relative position between two things but a universal "container" in which things were positioned. If, for Aristotle, earthly things fell to earth because earth was their proper place of dwelling, for Newton the laws of gravity explained a uniform motion for all things in an arena of absolute space where all positions were equal. Similarly, absolute time was not the lived time of human experience nor the clock time to which human experience was ordered but a temporal version of Newton's spatial "container." In such a picture the distinction Milton makes between the time of angels, fallen human temporality and the atemporal realm of God's eternal creation has no place.<sup>3</sup> When Blake was writing, the Kantian "Copernican revolution" which identified time and space as transcendental and *a priori* conditions for experience had yet to make its mark in English thought. According to Kant, time and space ordered a reality which *in itself*, or noumenally, was neither temporal nor spatial: "Time is nothing but the form of inner sense, i.e. of the intuition of ourselves and our inner states."<sup>4</sup> The prevailing world view for Blake, however, pictured the individual as a thinking substance contained within an external spatial and temporal network. Blake's characters Los and Enitharmon, in charge of time and space respectively, become of central importance in Blake's prophetic books; their feuding and division are intertwined with the fall of Albion and their union is essential to redemption. Significantly Los, Blake's agent of temporality, is of primary importance. Although Kant identified both time and space as in some sense subjective, time was the internal and space the external condition of perception. Unlike Kant, Blake never postulated a noumenal world outside of the categories of human

perception. In response to the prevailing Newtonian view of time and space as containers it is not surprising, therefore, that we encounter Blake's recurring image of the sea of time and space which washes around the figure of fallen Albion. If, for Blake, time and space were external "containers" for worldly entities then they would be outside the inner life of the imagination and therefore alienated. The individualism which follows from the Newtonian conception of the universe is, as Blake saw, one in which the subject is limited to whatever aspects of the world can be disclosed to the senses. The traditional transcendence-in-immanence of the human soul which enabled the individual to contemplate and aspire to a higher mode of being is now removed and all knowledge of God is to be inferred from the order of nature.

The concept of individualism in general is usually associated with the modern world view - with Cartesian philosophy, the novel, liberal ethics and capitalist societies. In fact, when the ascending power of individualism became apparent in the eighteenth century it was met with a chorus of denunciation identifying it as a threat to traditional values.<sup>5</sup> Louis Dumont's study of individualism, however, differentiates a pre-modern individualism (in the form of *Homo hierarchicus*) from the modern ideology of equalitarian individualism (or *Homo oeconomicus*). This earlier form of individualism bears as its hallmark an orientation towards transcendence; the subject is individuated by its personal relationship to a non-worldly being. As we have seen, Milton's prose and poetry are informed by such a Christian individualism which is not only different from, but radically antithetical to, the modern individualism of Descartes and Locke. Like Milton, Blake also challenges the modern ideology of Locke, Newton and Bacon. By invoking Bacon and Newton Blake recalls the specifically scientific premises of modern ideology which Heidegger has identified as fundamental to modern subjectivism. However, unlike Milton, Blake's answer to this empirical individualism of the eighteenth century does not re-assert traditional Christian individualism. In fact, Blake examines both the traditional Christian and modern forms of individualism and formulates an



ontological position which at times appears to hover or vacillate between the two but which actually challenges the philosophical premises of the western tradition. Unlike the historians of ideas who mark a radical discontinuity between "closed" non-individualistic feudal societies and "open" individualistic capitalist societies, Blake locates both closure and the demonic "selfhood" in the worlds of "Bacon, Newton and Locke" as well as Milton.

Blake's critique of Platonic/Christian individualism occurs in *Milton*; it is at this point that Blake discovers the importance of a *form* of individualism while he rejects both the traditional and modern alternatives. Prior to writing *Milton*, Blake's approach to individualism is entirely critical and his attitude towards selfhood is purely negative, attacking both modern and Christian forms of individualism. However, in *Milton* Blake overcomes the dichotomy operating between in-worldly and other-worldly individualism with his concept of Imagination. While traditional individualism presupposes a distinction between the soul and body, modern individualism eradicates the transcendence of the soul to arrive at a purely mundane concept of selfhood. Blake's early work is characterised by a vigilant attack upon the notion of a transcendent soul distinct from the body as well as a rejection of the empiricist individual enclosed within sense perception. He therefore attacks both modern and Christian strands of individualism. Blake's eventual humanism, overcomes the Hobson's choice between the Christian self seen as other-worldly and the material in-worldly individual of modern ideology.

In *All Religions are One* Blake denies the subordination of the body as an inferior ontological substance and claims that the body is an extension of the imagination: "the body or outward form of Man is derived from the Poetic Genius" (ARO, E:1; K:98). In *There is No Natural Religion* the idea that the body limits human experience is also rejected by Blake's assertion that the empiricist's touchstone, experience, should not be defined as merely experience of the senses: "Mans perceptions are not bounded by the organs of perception"

(NNR [b], E:2; K:97). For Blake, any limiting of the possibilities of human knowledge leads to "Nobodaddy" figures of a mysterious, external and unknowable deity; for once the human self is seen as fallen, finite and natural, the transcendent and infinite aspects of experience need to be attributed to a non-human deity. Consequently, Blake not only rejects the classic Platonic argument that "Man has two real existing principles Viz: a Body & a Soul" (MHH, 4: E:34; K:149), he also denies the empiricist's reduction of human being to the natural body. Blake's arguments against selfhood are directed against both the pre-modern concept of a contemplative, individual and other-worldly soul and the Cartesian notion of the self as *res cogitans* or thinking substance, a self which is the remainder or "tag end" of the world after all the world is doubted.<sup>6</sup> Blake's arguments regarding selfhood are therefore intimately connected with his doctrine of contraries, his desire to overcome the traditional dichotomies upon which both Platonic and empiricist philosophies are based.

In *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, where the doctrine of contraries is first formulated, Blake, unlike Milton before him, sees contraries not merely as epistemologically essential for moral knowledge but as "necessary to Human existence" (MHH, 3: E:34; K:149). The contraries Blake lists - "Attraction and Repulsion, Reason and Energy, Love and Hate" - are both ideal and physical with both ideality and materiality being opposed in one pair: "Reason and Energy." The ethical opposition of good and evil then springs from these contraries. However, Blake himself does not attribute goodness or evil to either property; this is done by "the religious" who identify passivity with goodness. While *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* implies a valorisation of energy, activity and the "evil" term of the contrary, the role of reason as the circumference of energy as well as the devourer who preys on the prolific are acknowledged as necessary terms: "But the Prolific would cease to be Prolific unless the Devourer as a sea recieved the excess of his delights" (MHH, 16: E:40; K:155). The importance of the limiting or devouring part of the contrary

becomes more important in Blake's later work which tempers his earlier emphasis on "evil" qualities. Blake here rejects the Miltonic idea that contraries should be allowed to interact until the good term naturally triumphs over the evil. In fact the putative essential goodness or evil of the terms is attributed to an act of domination when reason usurped desire and called itself "good." This act of subordination Blake associates with "religion" which is an endeavour to reconcile contraries (MHH, 16: E:40; K:155). Whereas Milton sees evil as parasitic and goodness as self-sufficient, the "voice of the devil" claims that desire is the foundation upon which reason builds: "This is shewn in the Gospel, where [Christ] prays to the Father to send the comforter or Desire that Reason may have Ideas to build on" (MHH, 5: E:35; K:150).

In *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* "The Voice of the Devil" seems, in part at least, to articulate Blake's own opinions.<sup>7</sup> But if this is so, why has Blake attributed both this section and "The Proverbs of Hell" to a voice other than his own? In Blake's early work - from *An Island in the Moon* to *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* - his mode is satirical. As Northrop Frye points out, the original context of the earliest *Songs of Innocence* is *An Island in the Moon* and their satirical dimension should therefore not be forgotten.<sup>8</sup> What makes the *Songs* satirical is their use of voice. As Harold Bloom notes, these are songs *of*, not about, innocence and experience and the limits of both states of the human soul can only be identified by reading the poems with a certain attention to irony.<sup>9</sup> David Erdman has also drawn attention to the differing levels of irony at work in the *Songs*: "The problem of detecting the degrees of irony in the songs is related to the problem of detecting the degrees of lack of insight in the characters."<sup>10</sup> Innocence, like Beulah, is an enclosed, benign, child-like and naive, though beautiful, state of existence. The speaker of Innocence believes in a loving, fatherly God and a universe built on charity and pity: "but God ever nigh, / Appeard like his father in white" ("The Little Boy Found"); "He'd have God for his father & never want joy" ("The Chimney Sweeper"); "And round the tent of God like lambs we joy" ("The Little Black

Boy"); "Where Mercy, Love & Pity dwell, / There God is dwelling too" ("The Divine Image"). The speaker of Experience, on the other hand, is self-directed, imprisoned in his body, fearful and believes in a distant and mysterious God: "What immortal hand or eye, / Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?" ("The Tyger"); "Thou Mother of my Mortal part. / With cruelty didst mould my Heart" ("To Tirzah"); "God & his Priest & King / Who make up a heaven of our misery" ("The Chimney Sweeper"). Although Blake originally issued *Songs of Innocence* alone and only later incorporated *Songs of Experience*, the moral platitude which completes "Holy Thursday," ("Then cherish pity, lest you drive an angel from your door") indicates an irony which would already imply the more cynical state of experience. Alan Richardson has recently noted the presence of both innocence and experience in the *Songs of Innocence* and has linked this to Blake's subversion of the moral program of eighteenth-century children's verse as secularised catechism:

Blake's child-narrators speak in a double register, at once innocent and experienced, putting the subject positions of both child and adult into a dialogical relation that critically undermines the catechistic relation.<sup>11</sup>

The fact that Blake transferred some of the original *Songs of Innocence* to the *Songs of Experience* also indicates the mutual dependence and implication of the two states. While each state harbours a degree of truth the real insight of *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* is not expressed in the *persona* of any of the speakers but is implied in the very action of their juxtaposition. G.E. Bentley Jr. has argued that Blake's use of the definite article in his title - "Shewing the Two Contrary States of the Human Soul" - implies that there is no other state, such as organised innocence, being advocated but that human existence constantly moves back and forth between innocence and experience.<sup>12</sup> However, if the songs show the two contrary *states* of the human soul, we do not have to assume that Innocence and Experience exhaust the possibilities for human experience, particularly if we consider that Blake's position may be satirical, for there may be a possibility for human life beyond Innocence and Experience which is not a state.

Blake's notion of Imagination relies upon distinguishing between states and the individuals who occupy those states. Blake locates Imagination beyond states: "The Imagination is not a State: it is the Human Existence itself" (M, 32[35]: 33, E:132; K:522). While both *Milton* and *Jerusalem* clearly seek to represent and explore the imagination and the concept of self which is not a state, Blake's earlier work relies more on the satirical rejection of any state of selfhood than on the formulation of the imaginative self. Consequently, in the *Songs* we are presented with Innocence and Experience as states which are both incomplete, while in the *Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, the critical voice belongs to the devil who expresses the doctrine of "Energy" as opposed to Reason. Blake, in the *Songs*, relies on the reaction of contrary states while in *The Marriage* he is concerned with retrieving the contraries to conventional philosophical premises. The "Memorable Fancy" sections are similarly parodic with the character of Blake acting as the contrary to the angel. The emphasis is on reacting against rule-based authority: "no virtue can exist without breaking these ten commandments" (MHH, 21: E:43; K: 158) and on the value of a constantly changing opinion rather than a state of selfhood: "The man who never alters his opinion is like standing water, & breeds reptiles of the mind" (MHH, 20: E:42; K:156). The main value promulgated by *The Marriage* is the constant and irreconcilable interaction of contraries rather than a state which would reconcile or overcome opposition: "These two classes of men are always upon earth, & they should be enemies; whoever tries to reconcile them seeks to destroy existence" (MHH,16-17: E:40; K:155). In *The Marriage* the phrase, "For this history has been adopted by both parties" (MHH, 5: E:34; K:) refers to *Paradise Lost* where each party (the devil's "energy" or the Messiah's "reason") asserts that the other term is secondary or parasitic. Blake, on the other hand, suggests the inter-dependence of goodness and evil. The myths of an originary reason which is weakened by the fall into evil or the opposite account adopted by the contrary party of the devil are tales of power used to efface the necessary existence of *both* terms. The emphasis on contraries in the early work is continued in *Thel* and *Tiriel* where, once again, we are shown

the limits of Thel's state of Innocence and Tiriël's accusing and despairing Experience. Both Thel and Tiriël are trapped within their selves. The only "positive" statements in *Thel* refer to a doctrine of self-abnegation: "every thing that lives, / Lives not alone, nor for itself" (*Thel*, 3: 26-7, E:5; K:129). Blake's position defends the interaction of contraries so that neither the guarded, enclosed state of innocence nor the despairing, condemning state of experience exhaust the possibilities of human experience; but what existence lies beyond those states or what the result of the fruitful interaction of contraries would yield is not fully explored by Blake at this stage.

While Blake continues to assert the value of "mental" rather than "corporeal war" throughout his later work along with the resulting value of giving up selfhood, he also manages to retrieve a concept of humanism which is neither the fallen and limited self of Experience which derived from Bacon, Locke and Newton nor the Innocent self which abnegates its being and force before the presence of a transcendent God. Blake's doctrine of contraries at first provides a concept of human existence which is purely reactive. As a result, the self Blake advocates in the *Songs* is implied ironically rather than embodied in any particular persona, while the *Marriage* asserts the value of opposition. In *There is No Natural Religion* the poetic character is identified with the function of change and expansion rather than with the "form" which is to become so important in the prophetic books:

If it were not for the Poetic or Prophetic character. the Philosophic & Experimental would soon be at the ratio of all things & stand still, unable to do other than repeat the same dull round over again (NNR[b], E:3; K:97)

Furthermore, there is less emphasis upon eternity and divinity than in the later works and a greater insistence upon the immanence of God: "All deities reside in the human breast" (MHH, 11: E:38; K:153); "God only Acts & Is, in existing beings or Men" (MHH, 16, E:40; K:155). The vehement reaction against the traditional notion of the soul clearly rejects Milton's other-worldly individualism. In addition, Blake identifies God with an elevated, yet still

human, perception of the world: "He who sees the Infinite in all things sees God" (NNR[b], E:3; K:98).

Accordingly, Blake's use of the "voice of the devil" as the force of energy and reaction is not met again in his later prophecies. In fact, Satan becomes the "accuser" with his usurping and destructive character being treated critically. Prior to *Milton*, however, Blake's works tend to operate on an opposition between law-giving characters like Tiriel and Urizen and rebellious and destructive characters like Satan, Fuzon and Orc.

Blake's Tiriel and Urizen figures are characterizations of Milton's God with their emphasis on justice, retribution, transcendence, law and reason. They also, however, resemble the God of the modern world-view - God as divine watchmaker, artisan, first cause, an empty ontological presupposition. Blake's genius lies in seeing the continuity between the Miltonic and modern conceptions of God. What unites the two definitions of God is the ontological dualism which both Milton and the empiricists presuppose. For Milton the natural world is informed, sustained and given meaning by a transcendent God. Any value attributed to the natural world derives from its being a creation of God. Human being occupies a liminal position between natural and supernatural being with its *telos* being the redemption of what has been corrupted through the fall. The proper direction of the self is inward but towards transcendence. The God of the modern world on the other hand plays less of a role in constituting the meaning and the value of the universe. In fact, God's existence is proved from the being of the world. As Newton states in the "General Scholium" to the *Principia*: "This most beautiful system of the sun, planets, and comets could only proceed from the counsel and dominion of an intelligent and powerful Being."<sup>13</sup> In 1727 Thomson clearly saw that Newton "from Motion's simple laws, / Could trace the secret hand of Providence, / Wide-working from this universal frame."<sup>14</sup> God is a logical condition which can be inferred from the examination of nature. While Milton sees the soul as

transcendence-in-immanence and nature and human being as soulless if not directed to an other-worldly being, the deist allows the world and humanity to remain mundane. However, both Milton and the deist see human being as finite, limited and as part of the world. While Milton's ethic directs the self to an other-worldly God, the deist directs the self to the world. Both "parties" therefore produce a mysterious, alienated and dominating universe. Milton's exteriority is God; the deist's is nature.

Blake specifically identifies the traditional conception of God with a "closed" universe as opposed to a world which is a collection of particulars:

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 a tyrant crown'd.  
 (*Europe*, 10: 21-3, E:63; K:241)

This passage from *Europe* makes the connection between organised religion ("serpent temple"), the closure of the universe ("Shut up in finite revolutions"), human obedience to transcendence ("and man became an Angel") and the law-giving, kingly character of God ("a tyrant crowned"). When Blake's God-figures are rule-giving, punishing and enclosed in contemplation they are Miltonic; when they are seated in the void or chaos and threateningly absent they are modern. Thus Fuzon's description of Urizen concentrates less on his rule-bearing and ordering function than on emptiness and absence:

Shall we worship this Demon of smoke,  
 Said Fuzon, this abstract non-entity  
 This cloudy God seated on waters  
 Now seen, now obscur'd; King of sorrow?  
 (*Ahania*, 2: 10-13, E:84; K:249)

Fuzon still refers to Urizen as a king thereby recalling the pre-modern image of God as law-giver alongside the modern idea of an absent God who creates a self-ruling universe. In fact, Urizen frequently combines both sets of characteristics and Blake is able to intertwine modern and pre-modern concepts of deity precisely because he sees them united by one characteristic: exteriority. Although Milton had argued that obedience to God is not a



question of obeying rules but simply recognising the compelling character of God's goodness and acting according to the soul's innate capacity for divine harmony, Blake still characterises Milton's God as rule-bearing. For Blake, any criterion of goodness which excludes the *essential* human qualities of desire, energy and action - so-called "evils" - is still external. If "Good and Evil are Qualities in Every Man" and truth is entirely human - "There is not a Truth but it has also a Man" - then any ethics premised upon a transcendent notion of goodness which would purify and elevate human being is rule-giving whatever claims it cares to make for the logical necessity of its rules (VLJ, E:563; K:615). Milton was able to depict Satan's rebellion as ethically illogical precisely because he had premised his narrative upon a transcendent and irrefutable value. Satan himself repeated those premises in setting himself up as an alternative ruler in Pandemonium just as Blake's characters in *The Four Zoas* repeatedly claim victory and grant themselves the title of God. In this sense the Satan of *Paradise Lost* was of the Godly party without knowing it. Milton's premises were those of a "closed" ontological order in which the concept of good was hierarchically situated above all other values and could therefore not be challenged. While modern science supposedly "opened" the universe by examining particulars rather than transcendent forms and by imagining a God who did not ordain a specific form of government or grant a divine right of kings it still retained God as an airy absence. It still saw natural laws - now scientific rather than theological - as external and governing human behaviour. In fact the "opening" of the universe from circling heavens to a void or boundless chaos created a more alienating form of exteriority. The "Newtonian voids" are a product of the closure of the mind within absolute space and time. In *Milton* Blake describes the being of finite humanity as man within chaos:

There Chaos dwells & ancient Night & Og & Anak old:  
 For every human heart has gates of brass & bars of adamant,  
 Which few dare unbar because dread Og & Anak guard the gates  
 Terrific! and each mortal brain is walld and moated round  
 Within . . . (M, 20[22]: 33-37, E:114; K:502)

Blake then goes on to assert that such a chaotic view of the world is predicated upon an humanity too enclosed to see the form of the universe. The "open" universe only appears as "Newtonian Voids" to the natural man who is unable to discern the form of the stars:

For the Chaotic Voids outside of the Stars are measured by  
The Stars, which are the boundaries of Kingdoms, Provinces  
And Empires of Chaos invisible to the Vegetable Man  
(M, 37[41]: 47-9, E:138; K:528)

The doctrine of empiricism which confines human experience to sense perception is behind Blake's recurring motif of the limiting finitude of the natural man: "when the five senses whelm'd / In deluge o'er the earth-born man; then turn'd the fluxile eyes / Into two stationary orbs, concentrating all things. / . . . and petrify'd against the infinite" (*Europe*, 10: 10-15, E:63; K:241).

Blake's criticisms of both the Newtonian and Miltonic world-views are also formulated as attacks on the concept of law. For what unites classical and modern conceptions of God and nature is the search for a unifying, unchanging order beneath apparent change.<sup>15</sup> Orc's most significant action in *America* is to "stamp" Urizen's "stony law . . . to dust" (*America*, 8: 5, E:54; K:198) thus destroying the natural or divine "law" behind changing reality.

As we have seen, one of the most important distinctions for both ancient and Miltonic ethics was the distinction between acting virtuously for reasons of gain or prudence and acting virtuously in accord with the internal moral law. Blake asserts that such a distinction is spurious and, once again, the result of an historical act of domination by organised religion. For any moral law, even putative "eternal laws" are actually prudent positive laws claiming transcendent value:

And their children wept, & built  
Tombs in the desolate places,  
And form'd laws of prudence, and call'd them  
The eternal laws of God  
(*Urizen*, 28: 4-7, E:83; K:236)

Just as Blake in *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* concentrates on the way the word "harlot" is used by figures such as Bromion to enslave women, so here the word "eternal" is used to universalise particular acts of human law-making. In *Europe* Enitharmon deceitfully proclaims that "an Eternal life awaits . . . / In an allegorical abode where existence hath never come" (*Europe*, 5: 6-7, E:62; K:240). The concept of an eternal form of the good in Platonic philosophy is the archetype for all subsequent ethical theories which postulate a transcendent *telos* for all human action and a suspension of engagement in this world. Eternity is one of the persistent features of any characterisation of a transcendent source of value. Milton's faith in reason also called for the subordination of the will and passions to reason's internal and eternal laws. Blake significantly tempers the concept of eternity with involvement in temporality. Not only is Los, the eternal prophet, in charge of time, but one of the proverbs of hell asserts: "Eternity is in love with the productions of time" (MHH, 7: 10, E:36; K:151).

Blake's dual attack upon both Milton and Enlightenment world-views is carried out in *The Book of Urizen* where the continuity between pre-modern and modern thought is identified as the valorisation of selfhood. The values of Platonic thought - contemplation, attention to inward transcendence, the self-sufficiency of reason - are embodied in the figure of Urizen who is "Self-closed," "A self-contemplating shadow," and "consum'd / Inwards, into a deep world within" (*Urizen*, 3-4: E:70-72; K:222-224). *The Book of Urizen* is commonly identified as a parody of the Book of Genesis. Blake's emphasis upon self-enclosedness, contemplation and solitude also parodies the accretion of Platonic and neo-Platonic thought to the biblical account. Urizen's creation ends with nature "self balanc'd" and the final description of Urizen's world is as "the pendulous earth" (*Urizen*, 28: 21, E:83; K:237). Such diction recalls the Miltonic emphasis upon earth's balancing in *Paradise Lost*.<sup>16</sup> The Miltonic imagery of the self-balanced earth reinforced the sense of the world's internal order, its closure, its harmony and its spiritual centrality in the divine schema.

Blake, on the other hand, interprets the self-balanced earth negatively seeing the free-standing globe awash a sea of chaos: "And the salt ocean rolled englob'd" (*Urizen*, 28: 23, E:83; K: 237). To see the world as balanced is to see it *within* something else, something which is external to human experience. Thus the older Miltonic cosmology passes over easily into the empiricism which the *Book of Urizen* also describes. The net of religion eventually causes human life to be "bound down / To earth by their narrowing perceptions" (*Urizen*, 25: 46-7, E:83; K:236). While *Urizen* refers to the Old Testament God of self-contemplating creation as "That solitary one in Immensity" (*Urizen*, 3: 43, E:71; K:223) the consequences of empiricism are no less solipsistic:

For the ears of the inhabitants,  
 Were wither'd, & deafen'd, & cold  
 And their eyes could not discern,  
 Their brethren of other cities.  
 (*Urizen*, 28: 15-18, E:83; K:236)

*Urizen's* power, the first line of *The Book of Urizen* tells us, is "assum'd." Blake clearly identifies the myth of a self-enclosed, self-contemplating, solitary and external deity with the assumption of power, and concomitantly, the loss of agency of *Urizen's* subjects. Such a *Urizenic* world is clearly "closed" insofar as the tyrant-God's creative powers and laws are external to the pendulous globe. The modern aspect of the *Urizenic* world - its "voidness unfathomable" - may "open" the world cosmologically but it equally "closes" the embodied, empirical natural man within the sea of external time and space and its mathematical laws of weight and measure. Both conceptions of the universe are linked by Blake to an external "Nobodaddy" God figure.

In his later work Blake is able to depict a God "who is the intellectual fountain of Humanity" (J, 91: 10, E:251; K:738) and who is an embodiment of the human spirit of forgiveness. His work prior to *Milton* concentrates upon parodying traditional and enlightenment conceptions of God and freeing human experience from those conceptions. The character of Orc in Blake's

earlier works consequently has a negative function in destroying such God-like figures. As early as *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* Blake is working upon a doctrine of excess, wrath and the breaking of limits: "The tygers of wrath are wiser than the horses of instruction / . . . You never know what is enough unless you know what is more than enough" (MHH, 9: 44-6, E:37; K:152); "One thought. fills immensity" (MHH, 8: 36, E:36; K:151). In *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* Oothoon demands the joys of openness while rejecting the closure of her "infinite brain into a narrow circle" (VDA, 2: 32, E:47; K:191):

Infancy, fearless, lustful, happy! nestling for delight  
In laps of pleasure; Innocence! honest, open, seeking  
The vigorous joys of morning light; open to virgin bliss.  
(VDA, 6: 4-6, E:49; K:193)

Because Blake at this stage is more concerned with destroying the bounds to liberty, Oothoon's liberated state is not a feminine form of self but an overcoming of the male selfhood which brands women as harlots. As a result Oothoon's main concern is with producing a plurality of female objects of desire for Theotormon:

But silken nets and traps of adamant will Oothoon spread,  
And catch for thee girls of mild silver, or of furious gold;  
I'll lie beside thee on a bank & view their wanton play  
In lovely copulation bliss on bliss with Theotormon:  
(VDA, 7: 23-6, E:50; K:194-95)

Such is Blake's insistence on the necessity for breaking the rules of chastity and morality that the "Preludium" to *America* depicts the rape of the "shadowy daughter of Urthona." Prior to being raped the "shadowy" female lacks both voice and identity; when she is seized by Orc her resistance is objectified into her womb by the use of "It joy'd":

The hairy shoulders rend the links, free are the wrists of fire;  
Round the terrific loins he siez'd the panting struggling womb;  
It joy'd: she put aside her clouds & smiled her first-born smile;  
(*America*, 2: 2-4, E:52; K:196)

It is Blake's insistence on the value of excess and the destruction of bounds to the creative imagination which in his earlier works often implies a valorisation of violence. It is this aspect of Blake which influenced W.B. Yeats who used

the rape of Leda as a metaphor for creative visitation and D.H. Lawrence who depicted the rape of the slave-girl by the slave-boy as the opening of desire in his novella "The Man Who Died."

Continuing the imagery of liberating destruction in *America*, the plagues sent by Albion's angel to subdue America redound upon the aggressor:

The red fires rag'd! the plagues recoil'd! then roll'd they back with fury  
 On Albion's Angels; then the Pestilence began in streaks of red  
 Across the limbs of Albion's Guardian  
 (America, 14-15: 20 & 1-2, E:56; K:202)

The rest of *America* continues with the "fires of Orc" consuming the "law-built heaven" (*America*, 16: 19 & 21, E:58; K:203) so that the images which conclude, generate and sustain *America* are of destruction and reversal. Although in *The French Revolution* a distinction is made by Orleans between fires of growth and fires of consuming (FR, 10: 179, E:294; K:142), the forces of enlightenment summoned by Fayette still violently expel the religious:

Like a flame of fire he stood before dark ranks, and before expecting  
 captains  
 On pestilent vapours around him flow frequent spectres of religious men  
 weeping  
 In winds driven out of the abbeys, their naked souls shiver in keen open  
 air,  
 Driven out by the fiery cloud of Voltaire, and thund'rous rocks of  
 Rousseau  
 They dash like foam against the ridges of the army, uttering a faint  
 feeble cry.  
 (FR, 14: 273-77, E:298; K:146)

In *Europe* Blake begins to add the concept of form to the desire for the destruction of the bounds of energy. The figure of the "Shadowy female" appears at the beginning of *Europe*; she is the mother nature of modern science, shadowy because she is outside human imagination, unendowed with the identity of any particular entity, a formless realm of uniform matter. When she emerges from Orc's breast to address Orc's mother, Enitharmon, she demands that Orc's fires remain unbounded: "Stamp not with solid form this

vig'rous progeny of fires" (*Europe*, 2: 8, E:61; K:238). It is the stamping of form which enables the shadowy female's flames to leave her: "And thou dost stamp them with a signet, then they roam abroad" (*Europe*, 2: 10, E:61; K:238). Although the imagery of "stamping" with a signet recalls the *Visions of the Daughters of Albion's* trope of slavery and can hardly be considered positive for Blake he is here beginning to work towards a critique of the formlessness of the modern view of the natural world. Enitharmon's "stamping" here is an ambiguous liberation and alienation from nature. When the Shadowy female calls to Enitharmon - "And who shall bind the infinite with an eternal band? / To compass it with swaddling bands? and who shall cherish it / With milk and honey?" (*Europe*, 2: 13-15, E:61; K:239) - she anticipates Enitharmon's role from *The Four Zoas* onwards as a weaver of forms. For the imagery of binding and enclosing, which is later associated with the Daughters of Beulah, becomes important as a stage on the way to four-fold vision. Such a binding is necessary to overcome chaotic formlessness. In *Europe*, however, Blake is still anxious about the binding of Orc. Enitharmon's act of binding the fires of Orc is attributed to a female will of domination which interiorises the patriarchal attitude to female desire:

Now comes the night of Enitharmon's joy!  
 Who shall I call? Who shall I send?  
 That Woman, lovely Woman! may have dominion?  
 Arise O Rintrah thee I call! & Palamabron thee!  
 Go! tell the human race that Womans love is Sin!  
 That an Eternal life awaits the worms of sixty winters  
 In an allegorical abode wher existence hath never come:  
 Forbid all Joy, & from her childhood shall the little female  
 Spread nets in every secret path.  
 (*Europe*, 5: 1-9, E:62; K:240)

The "nets" the little female spreads in every path are a consequence of the binding of desire. The doctrine of chastity which Theotormon has used to enslave Oothoon is taken up and used by the female will to deny desire. By forbidding joy, Enitharmon claims power over her sons. The domination of the female will is predicated upon the proclamation that "Womans Love is Sin." Enitharmon's dream is the eighteen hundred years of human history preceding

Blake's birth. In this dream Orc is characteristically burning through oppressive Europe and destroying law: "The Guardian of the secret codes forsook his ancient mansion, / Driven out by the flames of Orc" (*Europe*, 12: 15-16, E:64; K:242). Enitharmon, on the other hand, is rejoicing at her success in having bound her children: "Enitharmon laugh'd in her sleep to see (O womans triumph) / Every house a den, every man bound" (*Europe*, 12: 25-6, E:64; K243). *Europe* reaches the approach of revolution when the sons depart from Enitharmon's binding influence and the gate of the East opens. The vision of Orc appears amidst imagery of fires, wrathful tigers and lions. Although Blake has introduced the idea of a binding and forming of the prolific fires the emphasis is still upon the removal of limits and the destruction of laws.

In *The Song of Los* the fallen world is depicted as enslaved to Urizen's laws - laws which Blake explicitly connects with Mosaic law ("Moses beheld upon Mount Sinai forms of dark delusion") and Platonism ("Palamabron gave an abstract Law: / To Pythagoras Socrates & Plato" SL, 3: 17-19, E:67; K:245-46). But Urizen's fallen world is also subject to the natural laws of physical contraries: "Lo these Human form'd spirits in smiling hipocrisy. War / Against one another; so let them War on; slaves to the eternal Elements" (SL, 3: 13-14, E:67; K245). Blake here connects the physical natural laws of the scientists with the Christian natural law as divine decree as well as the natural law of ancient metaphysics. The children of Los and Enitharmon are bound equally by law and nature. Blake characteristically intertwines his description of law with the empiricist doctrine of sense experience:

Thus the terrible race of Los & Enitharmon gave  
Laws & Religions to the sons of Har binding them more  
And more to Earth: closing and restraining:  
Till a Philosophy of Five Senses was complete  
Urizen wept & gave it into the hands of Newton & Locke  
(SL, 4: 13-17, E:68; K:246)

The laws of Urizen naturally lead to binding the sons more to earth; the modern concept of an external law-ruled nature is simply another version of the pre-modern notion of a law-giving Nobodaddy. Orc's role in *The Song of*



*Los* is to melt Urizen's books of brass and gold - an image of Christian natural law. But the other aspect to which human experience is enslaved - the five senses or "the warring elements" - is neither overcome nor mentioned again. Blake consistently rejects both the concept of a transcendent law-giving deity and the idea of a chaotic external natural world but his images of revolution deal with destroying the former and not constructing an alternative to the latter. Apocalyptic imagery concludes *The Song of Los* but Blake here, as earlier, is still presenting only a destruction of the old forms of kingship with "Orc raging in European darkness" (SL, 7: 26, E:69; K:248).

In *The Book of Urizen* Blake combines aspects of both Milton's and Newton's God in the figure of Urizen. Like Milton's self-sufficient and contemplative God Urizen is "solitary," "Self-closed," a "vacuum" and a "self-contemplating shadow." Like the empty ontological premise which is natural theology's modern God he is an "abominable void," "unseen," "unknown" and "Obscure." Urizen's laws are both the virtues of classical ethics ("Laws of peace, of love, of unity . . .") and the laws of modern science ("one weight, one measure"):

Laws of peace, of love, of unity:  
 Of pity compassion, forgiveness.  
 Let each chuse one habitation:  
 His ancient infinite mansion:  
 One command, one joy, one desire,  
 One curse, one weight, one measure  
 One King, one God, one Law.  
 (*Urizen*, 4: 34-40, E:72; K:224)

In *The Book of Urizen* Blake begins to explore the problem of overcoming the formlessness of Urizen who is "Unorganiz'd, rent from Eternity" (*Urizen*, 6: 8, E:74; K:226). Significantly, Orc is replaced by Los who takes the "formless unmeasureable death" which is Urizen as a clod of clay and binds it with rivets (*Urizen*, 7: 9, E:74; K:226). This event anticipates Milton's moulding of Urizen into a human form in *Milton*. But here Urizen remains outside time: "Ages on ages roll'd over him!" and continues to be "obscurd more & more / In dark

secrecy" (*Urizen*, 10: 1&12-13, E:75; K:227). Los's response is to give Urizen form and incorporate temporality into the chaotic "Sulphureous fluid:"

The Eternal Prophet heaved the dark bellows,  
 And turn'd restless the tongs; and the hammer  
 Incessant beat; forging chains new & new  
 Numb'ring with links. hours, days & years  
 (*Urizen*, 10: 15-18, E:75; K:227)

Los's response to Urizen's appearance as "Disorganiz'd, rent from Eternity" is to mould Urizen and his world into time. If we take the conventional (and Miltonic<sup>17</sup>) conception of eternity as atemporal then an attempt to bring Urizen back to eternity by constructing him *within* time seems paradoxical as does Los's title as "eternal" prophet if he is, similarly, identified with time. Only if we accept Blake's highly idiosyncratic idea of eternity as organised human time do Los's efforts make sense. Los strives to give Urizen a body but time continues to pass over and leave Urizen in a "state:" "And a first Age passed over, / And a state of dismal woe" (*Urizen*, 10: 42-3, E:75; K:228). Blake is beginning to formulate his distinction between the divine body which gives form and life and the external body of the natural man. In *The Book of Urizen* the body Los forms is still frightening, detached, material and other. Los's attempt fails because the body he gives Urizen is a biological body constructed of veins, sinews, bones and blood - the body dissected by science. Los himself is rent from Eternity as he becomes what he beholds:

All the myriads of Eternity:  
 All the wisdom & joy of life:  
 Roll like a sea around him,  
 Except what his little orbs  
 Of sight by degrees unfold.  
 (*Urizen*, 13: 28-32, E:77; K:230)

Los realises, when he encounters the "voidness unfathomable" of Urizen, that a process of embodiment and forming is necessary. However, Los fails to weld Urizen to eternity because he gives him the body of empiricist philosophy - a "horrible form" *within* time and the infinite chaos and not a body which incorporates time and infinity. Los has failed to differentiate the uniform expanse of Newtonian space. Los and Urizen still feel time pass over them

and are isolated within an external time and space:

Ages on ages roll'd over them  
 Cut off from life & light frozen  
 Into horrible forms of deformity  
 Los suffer'd his fires to decay  
 Then he look'd back with anxious desire  
 But the space undivided by existence  
 Struck horror into his soul.  
 (Urizen, 13: 41-7, E:77; K:230)

In *The Book of Los* Blake again defends a doctrine of excess. What Harold Bloom refers to as "the four prime Blakean sins of Covet, Envy, Wrath, and Wantoness"<sup>18</sup> are glutted to the point of transforming into their contraries:

4: But covet was poured full:  
 Envy fed with fat of lambs:  
 Wrath with lions gore:  
 Wantoness lulld to sleep  
 With the virgins lute,  
 Or sated with her love

5: Till Covet broke his locks & bars,  
 And slept with open doors:  
 Envy sung at the rich mans feast:  
 Wrath was follow'd up and down  
 By a little ewe lamb  
 And Wantoness on his own true love  
 Begot a giant race:  
 (BL, 3: 14-26, E:90-91; K:256)

*The Book of Los* continues with Blake's typical progress of fires of "destruction & plagues" (BL, 3: 30, E:91; K:256) but the fires are not only destructive; they are "Intelligent, organiz'd" countering formlessness as Los continues "Into vacuum: into non-entity" (BL, 3: 29 & 37-8, E:91; K:256). These flames are "Flames of desire" as well as flames of wrath; they are Los's weapons against the "darkness and shadowy obscurity." They still recall the hellish fires of *Paradise Lost*: "But no light from the fires all was / Darkness" (BL, 3-4: 49-1, E:91; K:257) and are therefore associated with the rebelling Satan. Though organised, the fires are still working by opposition; these furious and hellish fires bereft of light are therefore defeated as Los becomes bound by "fiery

spheres" and the flames are obscured: "heat was not; for bound up / Into fiery spheres from his fury / The gigantic flames trembled and hid" (BL, 4: 1-3, E:91; K:257). The fires then liken to the unchanging substance of natural science: "Coldness, darkness, obstruction, a Solid / Without fluctuation" (BL, 4: 4-5, E:91; K:257). The fires of fury have become as confining as matter while Los's previously expanding senses have become enclosed:

And the separated fires froze in  
 A vast solid without fluctuation,  
 Bound in his expanding clear senses  
 (BL, 4: 8-10, E:91; K:257)

Eternity becomes ossified and external to Los as time passes over the immobilised prophet:

The immortal stood frozen amidst  
 The vast rock of eternity; times  
 And times; a night of vast durance:  
 Impatient, stifled, stiffend, hardend.  
 (BL, 4: 11-14, E:92; K:257)

Los's response to this situation is to rent<sup>d/</sup> the rock of eternity, the "vast solid" which recalls the Newtonian concept of absolute time and space. But this total destruction of all limits precipitates Los's fall through the void which recalls Satan's fall in *Paradise Lost*. Blake is moving away from his use of Satan as a valuable counter to the angelic opinions of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* and concentrating more on the fallenness of Satanic rebellion. The allusion to both heat without light and Satan's indefinite fall suggest the hellish and absurd aspects of Satan's character rather than the energetic and wrathful "voice of the devil." Blake's developing reservations about the resulting void of an Orcian annihilation of boundaries become clear in *The Book of Los*. Not only does he put forward the possibility of "organiz'd" and intelligent flames of desire he also declares: "Truth has bounds. Error none" (BL, 4: 30, E:92; K:258). When Los approaches the end of his fall he becomes embodied into "finite inflexible organs" and "contemplative thoughts first ar[i]se;" he is thereafter referred to as "the falling Mind" (BL, 4: 40 & 49, E:92; K:258). Los becomes "Mind" because the formation of "finite, inflexible, organs" is the

precondition for the dualism which disrupts the integrity of the imaginative self and necessitates an independent principle of "mind." Los's disembodied "Mind" responds to the fall by "Organizing itself" and attempting to create some form of resistance in the void: "till the Vacuum / Became element, pliant to rise" (BL, 4: 50-1, E:92; K:258). The description of Los's body which follows is that of a biological and material body - a "Fibrous form" constructed from various functioning parts (BL, 5: 1, E:93; K:259). The emphasis upon the necessity for imaginative form and integrated embodiment continues with the first appearance of light from the fires. At this point Los discerns Urizen as "a Form of impregnable strength" (BL, 5: 19, E:94; K:259). Los responds by taking the fires of light on his anvil and re-forming Urizen - again anticipating Milton's moulding of Urizen in *Milton*. Los's efforts entail the expulsion of the chaotic sea of the external void: "the Deeps fled Away in redounding smoke" (BL, 5: 43-4, E:94; K:260). But this could be just where Los fails; for he expels rather than incorporates the voidness:

But no light, for the Deep fled away  
On all sides, and left an unform'd  
Dark vacuity; here Urizen lay  
(BL, 5: 48-50, E:94; K:260)

Los thus merely produces a finite and enclosed embodiment of Urizen. Los then binds Urizen to the "glowing illusion" of the "self-balanc'd" sun. By doing so Urizen becomes the God in the sky of an ordered and centred cosmos; what results is "a Human Illusion / In darkness and deeps clouds involvd" (BL, 5: 56-7, E:94; K:260). Los has given Urizen a "Form" although it is not a purely imaginative form but a form based on the empirical body. This natural form is then made transcendent when Los binds Urizen to the sun, thus creating a formed centre amidst "Dark vacuity." Los repeats here the process described in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* whereby a natural object is endowed with an imaginative form; this form is then hypostasised into a governing deity and seen as anterior to human creation. Blake makes it clear that such a forgetting of the immanence of deity arises with the formation of "system:"

The ancient Poets animated all sensible objects with Gods or Geniuses,

calling them by the names and adorning them with the properties of woods, rivers, mountains, lakes, cities, nations, and whatever their enlarged & numerous senses could perceive.

And particularly they studied the genius of each city & country. placing it under its mental deity.

Till a system was formed, which some took advantage of & enslav'd the vulgar by attempting to realize or abstract the mental deities from their objects: thus began Priesthood.

Choosing forms of worship from poetic tales.

And at length they pronounced that the Gods had orderd such things.

Thus men forgot that All deities reside in the human breast.

(MHH, 11: E:38; K:153)

Like Milton, Blake associates idolatry with political enslavement; but, unlike Milton, Blake does not aim to stress the transcendent and eternal aspect of God's being but rather God's immanence and the "poetic" character of Christianity. In *The Book of Los*, Los's attempts to "form" Urizen and thus make the external, alienated God of reason a poetic form fails because God is still both an elevated form of the material body and a God of mystery in "deep clouds." The efforts of Los and Orc to do away with all structures of transcendence result either in a formless and violent rejection of all boundaries (by Orc) or the return of the repressed types of transcendence in the figures which Los re-forms.

It is the issue of form which works itself out in Blake's later work. In rejecting the Platonic strain of Milton which sought a transcendent form of the virtues, Blake encounters the ethical relativism of the formless Newtonian void. Blake therefore sets himself the task of defining a concept of form which retrieves the character and particularity of the pre-modern world without the eternal and static essences which underpinned that traditional ontology. Blake's eventual use of the term "form" rejects both the Miltonic conception of a transcendent realm of the essences and the formlessness of modern science's world of matter.

- 1 Peter A. Schouls, Descartes and the Enlightenment (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press; Toronto: Queen's University Press, 1989) 37.
- 2 Donald Ault, Visionary Physics: Blake's Response to Newton (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974) 22.
- 3 The worldly rotational time of the seasons becomes simultaneity in Eden: "Spring and Autumn here / Danc'd hand in hand (PL.5.394-5)." There is still a form of time in eternity but it is gauged by the motion of heavenly bodies: ""For Time, though in Eternitie, appli'd / To motion, measures all things durable / By present, past, and future" (PL.5.580-82). Milton also refers to "heaven's great year" - after all heavenly bodies return to their original positions (PL. 5. 583). Adam juxtaposes the temporality of the world with the moment after the last judgment when time will stop: "this transient World, the Race of time, / Till time stand fixt" (PL.12.554-55). In his early sonnet, "On Time," Milton similarly refers to time's "race" and compares the destructive speed of time ("Whose speed is but the heavy Plummets pace") with the divinity of eternity: "Then long Eternity shall greet our bliss / With an individual kiss."
- 4 Immanuel Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (1929; London: Macmillan, 1986) 77.
- 5 Edmund Burke contrasted the unstable individual with the permanence of the commonwealth: "Individuals pass like shadows; but the commonwealth is fixed and stable." "Speech on Presenting to the House of Commons (On the 11th February, 1780), A Plan for the Better Security of the Independence of Parliament, and the Economical Reformation of the Civil and other Establishments," The Works of the Right Honourable Edmund Burke, vol. 2 (London: Oxford University Press, 1906) 357. Given the choice between state permanence and individual change, Burke made it quite clear in his Reflections on the French Revolution which he preferred. If the desire of present

individuals rather than tradition held sway "the commonwealth itself would, in a few generations, crumble away, be disconnected into the dust and powder of individuality, and at length be dispersed to all the winds of heaven." Edmund Burke, Reflections on the French Revolution, ed. A.J. Grieve (London: Dent, 1910) 93. Steven Lukes claims that the earliest known use of the word "individualism" is found in the significantly disapproving de Maistre who spoke of "this deep and frightening division of minds, this infinite fragmentation of all doctrines, political Protestantism carried to the most absolute individualism." Du Pape (1821) qtd. in Steven Lukes, Individualism (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1973) 4.

- 6 Edmund Husserl's interpretation of Cartesian subjectivity demonstrated that while Descartes proposed to doubt everything he never questioned that the self was a part of the world. Cartesian Meditations 1-25.
- 7 Harold Bloom asserts that "'The voice of the Devil' . . . is Blake's own, but diabolical only because it will seem so to Swedenborg or any other priestly Angel." Harold Bloom, Blake's Apocalypse: A Study in Poetic Argument (London: Victor Gollancz, 1963) 78.
- 8 Northrop Frye, Fearful Symmetry: A Study of William Blake (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1947) 192 & 237.
- 9 "The Songs of Innocence are the songs of the innocent state; they are not about Innocence. For Blake's 'Innocence' is from the start an equivocal term." Bloom, Blake's Apocalypse 38.
- 10 David Erdman, Blake: Prophet Against Empire, 3rd ed. (1977; New York: Dover, 1991) 118.
- 11 Alan Richardson, "The Politics of Childhood: Wordsworth, Blake and the Catechistic Method," ELH 56 (1989): 865.
- 12 G.E. Bentley Jr., "Blake's Songs of Innocence and of Experience," Unpublished Paper delivered at the Humanities Research Centre, The Australian National University, 2 May 1989.
- 13 Isaac Newton, Sir Isaac Newton's Mathematical Principles of Natural



- Philosophy and his System of the World, trans. Andrew Motte (1729), rev. and ed. Florian Cajori (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1934) 544.
- 14 James Thomson, "To the Memory of Sir Isaac Newton," The Poetical Works of James Thomson, vol. 2 (London, 1836) 214.
- 15 R.G. Collingwood has pointed out that ancient and post-Renaissance concepts of science are united by the desire to study a "changeless something". For the Greeks nature, because subject to change, was therefore not the correct object of study; for the moderns "it was argued that behind this world of so-called 'secondary qualities' there lay other things, the true objects of natural science, knowable because unchanging." R.G. Collingwood, The Idea of Nature (1945; London: Oxford University Press, 1965) 11.
- 16 For example: "The pendulous round Earth with ballanc't air" (PL.4.1000), "Upon her Center pois'd" (PL.5.579), "This pendant World" (PL. 2. 1052) and "And Earth self-ballanc't on her Center hung" (PL. 7. 242).
- 17 Although Milton acknowledges a form of heavenly time gauged by the motion of the celestial bodies, he describes the eternal life which follows the last judgment as a stopping of time. (See PL.12. 554-55 and "On Time.")
- 18 Harold Bloom, "Commentary," The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake, ed. David Erdman (New York: Anchor, 1988) 908.

## Chapter Six:

### *The Four Zoas, Milton and Jerusalem*

The emerging modern individualism which denies transcendence and defines its value economically is challenged by Milton's Platonic doctrine of the soul. Like Plato, Milton defines the virtues with regard to their transcendent and eternal form. For Milton, each individual possesses a soul capable of reason and contemplation which enables knowledge of the forms. Blake's response to Milton recognises and rejects the philosophical tradition of transcendent forms which informed the earlier poet's doctrine of individualism. Because Blake, like Milton, disagrees with the materialistic presuppositions of modern ideology he also needs some concept of form with which to challenge modern relativism. Where Blake differs most substantially from Milton is in refusing to make the forms transcendent.

In his book *The Neoplatonism of William Blake* G.M. Harper draws attention to the importance of the concept of "form" in Blake's work as evidence of Blake's debt to Plato. According to Harper, Blake went through a twenty year period of Platonism from 1784 to 1804. Harper deduces this Platonism from references made by Blake to "the immense flood of Grecian light & glory which is coming on Europe"<sup>1</sup> and from the influence of Thomas Taylor, the eighteenth-century Platonist. Harper goes on to claim that Blake became disillusioned with Grecian art after 1804 but still retained Platonic metaphysical notions such as the concept of "Imaginative form." Blake's supposed departure from this "Grecian period" occurred with his visit to the Truchsessian gallery in 1804:

Suddenly, on the day after visiting the Truchsessian Gallery of pictures, I was again enlightened with the light I enjoyed in my youth, and which has for exactly twenty years been closed from me as by a door and by window-shutters.

(Letter to William Hayley 23 October 1804, E:756; K:852)

S. Foster Damon has also noted a Platonic strain in Blake's symbolism:

Plato had long since been thoroughly assimilated into Blake's symbolic system. *The Book of Urizen* is steeped in the *Timaeus*, as we have seen; and naturally *The Four Zoas* did not escape.<sup>2</sup>

While Harper and Damon are correct in identifying Platonic imagery in Blake's work, Blake's appropriation of both discourse and symbolism is highly idiosyncratic. Harper's claim that "Blake's concept of a transcendent reason in man places him squarely in the stream of Platonic thought and idealism"<sup>3</sup> is at odds with Blake's insistent repudiation of such transcendence; it is Harper's argument about this aspect of Blake's neo-Platonism which this chapter will challenge.<sup>4</sup> Just as Blake takes terms from modern science and mechanics - such as vortex, vapour, attraction and repulsion, void, and the imagery of the machine - only to critically subvert those discourses, so his use of Platonic discourse and imagery actually contradicts the basic tenets of Platonism. Blake's use of form is a typical instance of his inversion of Platonic meaning. For Plato, the form of an entity is its supra-mundane essence; a form is unchanging, immaterial, anterior to worldly human existence and radically opposed to the actual thing of which it is a form.

As early as 1788 Blake had articulated a concept of form which was immanent. By doing so, he not only redefined the Platonic notion of form, he also challenged the modern view that the identity of entities lay in the quantitative arrangement of some uniform substance. In *All Religions are One* Blake stresses the "genius" of all things - using *genius* in its original sense of indwelling spirit - and claims that this genius determines form: "the forms of all things are derived from their Genius" (ARO, E:1; K:98). Here, Blake is closer to the pre-modern ontology whereby each thing has its own essence and character. Where he differs from this tradition is in his denial of the transcendence of form. The concept of the "human form" gains increasing importance in Blake's later work. The significance of Blake's use of "form" in this sense is that it provides a notion of form transcendent to *individual*

experience while insistently stressing that "form" is immanent to human experience in general. Furthermore, Blake's definition of form always reflected his involvement with the visual arts. Because Blake used the production of art as the primary analogy for all experience, form was never anterior to experience but was constituted by the imagination. In his annotations to *The Works of Sir Joshua Reynolds* Blake makes this point clearly: "All Forms are Perfect in the Poets Mind. but these are not Abstracted nor Compounded from Nature but are from Imagination" (E:648; K:459). Whereas the tradition of Platonic metaphysics saw Reason as the correct faculty for apprehending forms, Blake located the capacity for perceiving forms in the Imagination:

This is my Opinion but Forms must be apprehended by Sense or the  
Eye of Imagination  
Man is All Imagination God is man & exists in us & we in him

What Jesus came to Remove was the Heathen or Platonic Philosophy  
which blinds the Eye of Imagination The Real Man  
(Annotations to Berkeley's *Siris*, E:664; K:775)

What is at issue here is more than simply the shift of a capacity from one faculty to another. Blake assigns the forms to the *creative* rather than receptive aspect of human existence. In doing so the character of forms changes. They are constituted and dwell within a faculty of human being which is not only the primary faculty ("Man is All Imagination") but a faculty which Blake identifies with divinity. In *Milton* Blake describes the imagination as "the Divine Body of the Lord Jesus" (M, 3: 4, E:96; K:482). But whereas divinity had traditionally been transcendent, Blake's imagination is thoroughly human. Consequently, Blake is locating the apprehension of forms in an immanent, though divine, faculty of human being; the forms are no longer other-worldly. Furthermore, by involving *sense* in the perception of forms Blake sets himself against the Platonic denigration of sense experience. Blake's "Sense," however, is not the sense of the natural or biological body; that is, it is not the sense of a body conceived as an independent and material thing. It is the "Sense or the Eye of the Imagination." Blake is able to establish a notion of sense

perception which is not empiricist by redefining the status of the body. Blake's conception of the spiritual body overcomes the dichotomy between the soul and the body because the faculty of Imagination perceives and constitutes a "human form divine" which is the spiritual body. The body is therefore already involved with the imagination or creative faculty and can participate in the world of "forms." The Platonic distinction, then, between the realm of the forms and the realm of the material world becomes untenable, for the correctly perceived world is already "formed." In answer to Berkeley's definition of the Platonic soul Blake responds: "The Natural Body is an Obstruction to the Soul or Spiritual Body" (E:664; K:775). The sense which apprehends the forms is the sense of the spiritual body not the body limited by natural science.

Blake's doctrine of forms is also connected with both his ontology and his aesthetics. Blake insistently asserts the particular identity of things in response to modern science's drive to uniformity which he sees as the denial of form. Accordingly, in his fine art, he stresses the importance of bounding lines which will emphasise particularity and difference; and in doing so he values "form" above "tints:" "In a work of Art it is not fine tints that are required but Fine Forms, fine Tints without, are loathsom Fine Tints without Fine Forms are always the Subterfuge of the Blockhead" (*Public Address*, E:571; K:591). In "Night the Seventh" of *The Four Zoas* Los begins the process of universal redemption by giving form to Urizen's chaos. In doing so he uses line:

And first he drew a line upon the walls of shining heaven  
 And Enitharmon tincturd it with beams of blushing love  
 It remaind permanent a lovely form inspird divinely human  
 Dividing into just proportions Los unwearied labourd  
 The immortal lines upon the heavens with sighs of love  
 (FZ, p.98[90]: 35-39, E:371; K:332)

So while we can admit that Platonic terms such as "form" were important to Blake it is clear that they are not employed in the spirit of Platonic philosophy. As Harper demonstrates, it is evident that Blake was fully acquainted with neo-Platonic imagery and metaphysics. However, it is

questionable whether Blake went through a "Grecian Period" in which he adopted the philosophy of Plato. Blake's work did change direction around 1804 (although this shift in his thought is anticipated in *The Four Zoas*). Rather than being Platonic, Blake's work prior to *Milton* proclaims the repudiation of transcendence and the destruction of limits, laws and "selfhood." This "revolutionary" period of Blake's work eventually encounters problems with the valorisation of "negative" freedom (that is, freedom defined as the negation of all limits). The disillusionment with revolutionary fervour began, for most Romantics, around 1795.<sup>5</sup> According to M.H. Abrams, great Romantic poetry began with the acknowledgement of the failure and barbarism of the French Revolution:

The visionary poems of the earlier 1790s and Shelley's earlier prophecies show imaginative audacity and invention, but they are not, it must be confessed, very good poems. The great Romantic poems were written not in the mood of revolutionary exaltation but in the later mood of revolutionary disillusionment or despair.<sup>6</sup>

Abram's argument that the Romantics became concerned with "a spiritual and moral revolution" rather than political change cannot be applied to Blake's later prophecies. Commenting on the image of the bard shattering his harp which concludes *America*, David Erdman writes: "But Blake did not shatter, he merely hid, his heroic trumpet. He still wrote in utter condemnation of Britain's war. He still prophesied a revolutionary millenium for England."<sup>7</sup> In "fear of the shadow of Pitt's Inquisition,"<sup>8</sup> however, Blake expressed his thoughts in allegories. Blake did question his earlier faith in the powers of mass revolutionary action. As Erdman notes "Orc chained to the rock is not the human fire of 1776 or 1789 but an 'iron hand' which, having 'crushd the Tyrants head' has become 'a Tyrant in his stead.'"<sup>9</sup> But what is entailed in Blake's revision of Orc is not a rejection of the possibility and value of revolution. In order to overcome the "Grey Monk" cycle whereby the agent of transformation becomes what he beholds, Blake added the demand that revolution be directed towards some spiritual form and ethical content other than the mere destruction of opposition. Unlike the other Romantics, Blake

did not turn "inward" and despair of social and political solutions to alienation but he did see a "spiritual revolution" as a necessary precondition for worldly action. Sloss and Wallis long ago recognised Blake's "progress from the anarchic revolutionary doctrine of the Lambeth books to a not less revolutionary Christianity."<sup>10</sup> Although Blake is still critical of the concept of "selfhood," he formulates a doctrine of humanism which rejects both Platonic and modern individualism. The concept of "form" is integral to Blake's response to both his earlier work and the violence and compromise of the French Revolution.

The opening of *The Four Zoas* still emphasises the necessity for conflict but Blake now stresses the *intellectual* character of this battle. His quotation from Ephesians explicitly rejects a war "against flesh and blood" and the call is directed towards "Intellectual Battle" (FZ, p3: 3, E:300; K:264). Introducing the notion of an integrated and unified humanity, Blake invokes the concept of Universal Brotherhood:

Four Mighty Ones are in every Man;  
 a Perfect Unity  
 Cannot Exist. but from the Universal  
 Brotherhood of Eden  
 The Universal Man. To Whom be  
 Glory Evermore Amen  
 [What] are the Natures of those Living Creatures the Heavenly Father  
 only  
 [Knoweth] no Individual [Knoweth nor] Can know in all Eternity  
 (FZ p.3: 4-9, E:300-301; K:264)<sup>11</sup>

Here Blake explicitly declares that individual integration can occur only with the integration of others; "Universal Brotherhood" is the condition for spiritual unity. This "unity" or "Eden" is Albion, the universal man, the form to which revolutionary activity should be directed. By praising Albion with the words "To Whom be / Glory Evermore Amen" Blake situates the universal man in the position of God. The "Living Creatures" referred to are the "zoas" or the faculties of human experience. No *individual* can know the nature of these creatures. The knowledge of that aspect must transcend individual perception.

Therefore, the introduction of Albion provides an object of value and a form towards which action should strive; Albion in this sense provides a form of transcendence. But while this immortal structure of human existence cannot be reduced to the understanding of any particular individual, Albion is the transcendent form, not of a supra-human deity, but of the aggregate and collective of human life in its unity or "Universal Brotherhood." Blake's Albion transcends individual experience but he is still *human* while existing eternally. Similarly, the knowledge and existence of the zoas lies at the level of eternity, just as Blake's "mighty forms" exist in eternity. In Blake's earlier revolutionary poetry he had sought to break down forms and limits to human experience, to "open" societies which had been "closed" and limited by their subjection to transcendent forms of God or reason. In his later work Blake is still demanding the eradication of any transcendence which is external to humanity. However, he is adopting traditionally transcendent concepts (such as "form" and "eternity") and placing them within *human* though not *individual*, experience. As Ronald Grimes has noted, Blake's concept of eternity is neither atemporal nor transcendent: "For Blake, eternity is not sheer chronological sequence without beginning or end, because he does not hesitate to speak of the beginning or end of eternity. He can do so because he identifies eternity with the world of imagination."<sup>12</sup> As Blake started to etch the first plates of *Milton* in 1804 - the year which Harper identified as the beginning of a period of Platonism - this prophecy is perhaps the best place to examine Blake's sense of renewed vision.

Throughout the eighteenth century Milton was frequently aligned with classical thought, and in particular with Plato. In *The Spectator* Addison explicitly linked Milton's God with Plato's deity. Commenting on Book Seven of *Paradise Lost* he wrote: "The Golden compasses, in the above-mentioned Passage appear a very natural Instrument in the hand of him, whom *Plato* somewhere calls the Divine Geometrician."<sup>13</sup> In *The Laocoon* Blake protested against such a conception of God and saw it as thoroughly Platonic: "The



Gods of Greece & Egypt were Mathematical Diagrams See Plato's Works" (E:274; K:776). In *The Tatler* of June 1709 a letter regarding a man's love for a woman who was a "Platonne" complained: "To hear her talk Seraphicks, and run over *Norris* and *Moor*, and *Milton*, and the whole set of intellectual Triflers, torments me heartily."<sup>14</sup> Here, Milton is aligned not only with Platonism but with Henry More, the Cambridge Platonist, and John Norris, one of More's disciples. Much later in the eighteenth century Blake's friend William Hayley wrote in his life of Milton:

[Milton] wisely attached himself to those prime examples of literary perfection, the Greeks; among the poets he particularly delighted in Euripedes and Homer; his favourites in prose seem to have been Plato and Demosthenes; the first peculiarly fit to give richness, purity, and lustre to the fancy; the second, to invigorate the understanding, and inspire the fervid energy of public virtue.<sup>15</sup>

Hayley also referred to "Plato, a writer whom Milton passionately admired, and to whom he bore, I think, in many points, a very striking resemblance."<sup>16</sup> Here, also, Hayley describes Milton and Plato as "visionaries of public virtue." Hayley also demonstrated Milton's Platonism from an early letter to Charles Diodati in which Milton writes of his desire for immortality: "He shews himself, in this letter, most passionately attached to the Platonic philosophy."<sup>17</sup> According to Hayley, it was the doctrine of virtue which united Milton with Plato: "he [Milton] panted for immortality, and for the superior rewards of a laborious life, devoted to piety and virtue."<sup>18</sup> Hayley dismisses Dr. Johnson's criticisms of Milton's self-interest by asserting that Milton's concept of virtue was truly Socratic: "no man appears to have imbibed the principles of Socratic wisdom more deeply than our poet; his regard and attachment to them is fervently expressed, even in his juvenile letters."<sup>19</sup> According to Hayley, Milton's sonnet to Cyriac Skinner "taught the familiar and useful doctrine of the Attic philosopher" while *Of Education* was "the best proof that his ideas of moral discipline were perfectly in union with those of Socrates."<sup>20</sup>

It is not surprising, therefore, that after moving to Felpham in 1800 under Hayley's patronage Blake composed the preface to *Milton* where he condemns Milton's debt to the classics:

The Stolen and Perverted Writings of Homer & Ovid: of Plato & Cicero. which all Men ought to contemn: are set up by artifice against the Sublime of the Bible. but when the New Age is at leisure to Pronounce; all will be set right: & those Grand Works of the more ancient & consciously & professedly Inspired Men, will hold their proper rank, & the Daughters of Memory shall become the Daughters of Inspiration. Shakspeare & Milton were both curbd by the general malady & infection from the silly Greek & Latin slaves of the Sword. Rouze up O Young Men of the New Age! set your foreheads against the ignorant Hirelings! For we have Hirelings in the Camp, the Court, & the University: who would if they could, for ever depress Mental & prolong Corporeal War. . . .  
(M,1[i]: E:95; K:480)

In this preface Blake recalls Milton's *Reason of Church Government* where the earlier poet had similarly called for inspiration rather than memory. Here, Blake uses Milton's Platonism as a weapon against itself. Just as Milton had argued that no external law could be valid without being grounded in internal reason, so Blake criticises Milton for following the "artifice" of Greek and Latin philosophy. Whereas Milton had seen reason as the foundational faculty which preceded all law, Blake sees Milton's reason as a legacy of the Platonic tradition. Blake's primary faculty, on the other hand, is imagination: "We do not want either Greek or Roman Models if we are but just & true to our Imaginations, those Worlds of Eternity in which we shall live for ever; in Jesus our Lord" (M, 1: E:95; K:480). In this preface Blake is not simply elevating one body of texts (the Hebraic) over another (Greek and Latin); he is claiming that the classical tradition is a collection of texts (or "artifice") whereas the Bible is actually a model of the Imagination. Blake rejects the eighteenth-century opinion that the tradition of sublimity ran from Homer to Virgil to Milton.<sup>21</sup> The Bible is sublime because it is inspired, whereas the classics are secondary and parasitic upon the imagination. While Milton had already made a similar point in *Paradise Regain'd* ("Greece from us these Arts deriv'd" PR. 4. 338) Blake's argument here accuses Milton of retaining too much of these

"derivative" arts. Given that the narrative impetus of *Milton* is organised around the earlier poet's renunciation of "selfhood" and that Blake invokes Platonism in the preface it is clear that Blake connected Milton's individualism with his Platonism.

As early as *The Song of Los* Blake had associated Platonism with transcendent law: "Palamabron gave an abstract Law: / To Pythagoras Socrates & Plato" (SL, 3: 18-19, E:67; K:246). In *Milton* Blake criticizes Swedenborg's Platonism because, in its emphasis upon transcendent good, it is responsible for the division of believers into the elect and the damned and hence denies the forgiveness of Christ: "Swedenborg . . . With Laws from Plato & his Greeks . . . to deny the value of the Saviours blood" (M, 22[24]: 50-54, E:117-18; K:506). The preface to *Milton* associates Platonic philosophy with corporeal rather than intellectual war. This is because Platonic philosophy provides an eternal and transcendent conception of the good (thus denying the war of *conceptual* contraries) and uses this fixed conception to condemn others. Blake therefore associates the Greek and Latin tradition with the ruling power of both the State Church and the enlightenment:

Titus! Constantine! Charlemaine!  
O Voltaire! Rousseau! Gibbon! Vain  
Your Grecian Mocks & Roman Sword  
Against this image of his Lord!  
(J, 52: 21-24, E:202; K:683)

Against the accusatory self-righteousness of the Greek and Roman tradition Blake would set "this image" of forgiveness in the divine vision. Looking back on an age of violence (a violence which infiltrated his own early work) Blake insisted that it was the legacy of ancient tradition which produced the wars which dogged western civilisation. In *On Homer's Poetry* Blake refuses to see barbarism as entering the stage in the dark ages; the rot had set in well before that: "The Classics, it is the Classics! & not Goths nor Monks, that Desolate

Europe with Wars" (E:270; K:778). In *On Virgil* Blake reiterates his assessment of ancient Greece and Rome again seeing the classics as parasitic:

Rome & Greece swept Art into their maw & destroyed it a Warlike State never can produce Art. It will Rob and Plunder & accumulate into one place, & Translate & Copy & Buy & Sell & Criticise, but not Make.

(E:270; K:778)

Blake's criticisms of the classical tradition are also concerned with the concept of virtue. Hence, in *The Laocoon* Socrates is the saviour of the counter-religion which is Greek ethics: "If Morality was Christianity Socrates was the Saviour" (E:275; K:775). In his annotations to Bishop Watson Blake set the forgiveness of Christianity against the morality of the ancients: "The Gospel is Forgiveness of Sins & has No Moral Precepts these belong to Plato & Seneca & Nero" (E:619; K:395). Because the Socratic tradition of ethics stressed the self-sufficiency and transcendence of virtue Blake saw this "morality" as an alienation of good from the immanence of the Christian imagination. Consequently, he was highly critical of the concept of virtue. "Christ came not to call the Virtuous," he declares again in his annotations to Watson's *Apology for the Bible* (E:619; K:395). The Imagination, which is the constituting faculty of human existence, is at odds with the Platonic concept of virtue. Blake agrees with Milton in seeing virtue as intertwined with transcendent reason and so rejects the rational ethics of Plato in favour of the Imagination of the bible: "Christ addresses himself to the Man not to his Reason Plato did not bring Life & Immortality to Light Jesus only did this" (Annotations to Berkeley, E:664; K:774). Consequently, Blake's rejection of an ethics based on virtue is carried out in the spirit of Socratic ethics which aimed to provide internal reasons for the justification of goodness. Blake sees the transcendent aspects of virtue as alienating and judgmental and hence as warlike:

The Whole Bible is filld with Imaginations & Visions from End to End & not with Moral virtues that is the baseness of Plato & the Greeks &

all Warriors The Moral Virtues are continual Accusers of Sin & promote Eternal Wars & Domineering over others  
(Annotations to Berkeley, E:664; K:774)

Such attacks upon the concept of virtue are not the product of ethical relativism although this is what the "openness" advocated by Blake's earlier works might suggest. Like Milton, Blake would reject the Thrasymachan (and modern/Machiavellian) claim that justice is the advantage of the powerful. While exposing the way certain ethical terms have been *used* for political purposes, Blake does recognise some value independent of the corrupted moral discourse which has sustained oppressive societies. Hence the values of pity, forgiveness and love become important in Blake's prophecies. Blake targets the uniting feature of modern and Platonic metaphysics and ethics - its individualism - and sees this feature as the precondition for the violent, accusing, unforgiving and punishing nature of society. Blake's criticism of individualism (both in modern ideology and traditional ethics and theology) is clearly articulated in *Milton* - an epic which unites the themes of selfhood, form, transcendence - and attempts to ground ethics on a non-individualist basis.

In addition to Hayley's insistence on Milton's Platonism late seventeenth-and-eighteenth-century responses to Milton frequently mentioned the poet's sublimity and set him alongside the ancient epic writers. This alignment with the ancients elevated Milton into a realm of eternal truth while many of the tributes to the poet pictured Milton in an other-worldly realm, outside the vicissitudes of history and politics. A seventeenth-century poem quoted in Todd's *Life of Milton* refers to the poet's heavenly knowledge set over against the ephemerality of his present:

How could'st thou hope to please this tinsel race!  
Though blind, yet, with the penetrating eye  
Of intellectual light, thou dost survey  
The labyrinth perplex'd of Heaven's decrees<sup>22</sup>

In addition to interpreting Milton's blindness as a sign of the other-worldly nature of his prophetic vision commentators repeatedly saw Milton situated above the world as the following tribute of 1689 demonstrates:

Tiresias like, he mounted up on high,  
And scorn'd the filth of dull mortality;  
Convers'd with gods, and grac'd their royal line,  
All ecstasie, all rapture, all divine!<sup>23</sup>

In 1694 Addison repeated the motif of the poet existing above the world in eternity and added the image of Milton as a mighty figure in eternity:

But Milton next, with high and haughty stalks,  
Unfetter'd in majestic numbers walks;  
No vulgar heroe can his muse engage;  
Nor earth's wide scene confine his hallow'd rage  
See! see! he upward springs, and tow'ring high  
Spurns the dull province of mortality<sup>24</sup>

Thus elevated, Milton's poetry concerned itself not with this world but with supra-human truths. An early eighteenth century tribute insists upon Milton's "immortality" and locates the poet among the angels:

Whose elevated, more than human voice  
Is tun'd to Angels' ears, is tun'd too high  
For any theme but immortality<sup>25</sup>

Later, Cowper also associated Milton with the angels: "Milton, whose genius had angelic wings, / And fed on manna."<sup>26</sup> Akenside set Milton apart from the world as an opponent of sophistry and, typically, saw his poetry as celestial:

How Milton scorn'd the sophist vain,  
Who durst approach his hallow'd strain  
With unwash'd hands and life profane.<sup>27</sup>

Samuel Bishop's poem on genius saw Milton as typifying the eternal grandeur of the intellect and, again, placed Milton above worldly finitude:

Genius! . . .  
O'er *Time* it triumphs, winged with native force;  
Nor Past, nor Future, circumscribe its course  
Mark how it leads a MILTON's mental eye  
Thro' the vast glories of primeval sky;<sup>28</sup>

Blake would have been aware of at least one poetical tribute to Milton which expressed these themes of the poet's other-worldliness, his residence in eternity

and the sacredness of his verse. Hayley's *An Essay on Epic Poetry* also depicted Milton in eternity dwelling with angels:

Apart, and on a sacred hill retir'd  
Beyond all mortal inspiration fir'd,  
The mighty MILTON sits - an host around  
Of list'ning Angels guard the holy ground;  
Amaz'd they see a human form aspire  
To grasp with daring hand a Seraph's lyre,  
Inly irradiate with celestial beams,  
Attempt those high, those soul-subduing themes<sup>29</sup>

It is not surprising, then, that when Blake comes to write his epic response to Milton he brings the poet down from eternity and into Blake's own garden and body. In doing so he challenges over a century of commentary which placed Milton's poetry outside time and worldly locale. Not only does Milton enter Blake's body but he enters his foot - the part of the body furthest from the mind and closest to the earth:

But Milton entering 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.  
But I knew not that it was Milton, for man cannot know  
What passes in his members till periods of Space & Time  
Reveal the secrets of Eternity: for more extensive  
Than any other earthly things, are mans earthly lineaments  
(M, 21[23]: 4-11, E:115; K:503)

This passage at once asserts the integral role of the body - Milton must descend to an earthly body in order to achieve redemption - and the limits of the body: "man cannot know / What passes in his members." But it is only the *individual* body's perceptions which are confined; for there are eternal "earthly lineaments" transcendent to particular bodies: "far more extensive / Than any other earthly things, are mans earthly lineaments." Blake cannot know that Milton has entered his body because his body is not a finite thing which can be exhaustively known in a single perception. In this sense the body is transcendent - insofar as it precedes and makes possible perception. But unlike Milton's concept of transcendence (which was other-worldly) this

transcendent body is human. The individual is incapable of perceiving the body in its entirety but the body exists and can be known at the level of eternity. For Blake, eternity is not supra-human but only supra-individual. The eternal character of the "human form divine" is of central importance to Blake's ethics. Hence, Blake's epic is performed against the backdrop of the body of the sleeping Albion. Blake depicts "humanity" with the figure of an eternal individual. In doing so, he offers a form of humanism; the subject of his epic and its site is human being. Unlike Wordsworth's humanist epic *The Prelude*, though, Blake's epic takes as its subject not the particular individual poet and his mental life but an eternal man and the poet's role in restoring that man. Albion is eternal not because he exists outside and independent of human life but because he is a form of every individual. When Blake introduces the human body into epic he does not give it a Platonic form or make it transcendent in the traditional sense. Rather, Blake stresses that actual human being and all natural life is already eternal and infinite. It is

Milton's embodiment not his existence in eternity which will awaken Albion:

Now Albions sleeping Humanity began to turn upon his Couch;  
Feeling the electric flame of Miltons awful precipitate descent.  
Seest thou the little winged fly, smaller than a grain of sand?  
It has a heart like thee; a brain open to heaven & hell,  
Withinside wondrous & expansive; its gates are not clos'd,  
I hope thine are not: hence it clothes itself in rich array;  
Hence thou art cloth'd with human beauty O thou mortal man.  
Seek not thy heavenly father then beyond the skies:  
There Chaos dwells & ancient Night . . .  
(M, 20[22]: 25-33, E:114; K:502)

After Albion is roused by the descent of Milton, Blake reiterates the potential for even the minutest aspects of creation to reveal heaven and hell. Similarly, if the bodies "gates are not clos'd" it too will disclose eternity. The fallen or vegetable body is the body of the empiricists: a body which can be perceived and analysed as a material thing. Blake rejects this biological body which is the province of Tirzah and natural religion:

To Natural Religion! to Tirzah the Daughter of Rahab the Holy!  
She ties the knot of nervous fibres, into a white brain!



She ties the knot of bloody veins, into a red hot heart!  
(M, 19 [21]: 54-56, E:113; K:501)

Blake's body, on the other hand, is a form; it is inextricably intertwined with the imagination. Blake stresses the embodiment of the imagination in order to counter the Platonic/Miltonic tradition of the other-worldly character of genius but he also stresses the imaginative character of the body in order to disavow the physicalism of the empiricists. The vegetable body is finite and excluded from eternity: "These are the Visions of Eternity . . . / But we see only as it were the hem of their garments / When with our vegetable eyes we view these wond'rous Visions" (M, 26[28]:10-12, E:123; K:512). Although Blake emphasises the importance of eternity and the immortality of the imagination the passage to Golgonooza can only be reached by the redemption of the mortal body which can be neither mortified nor subordinated. The body of natural science, the vegetable polypus, must be overcome in order to achieve vision:

For Golgonooza cannot be seen till having passd the Polypus  
It is viewed on all sides round by a Four-fold Vision  
Or till you become Mortal and Vegetable in Sexuality  
Then you behold its mighty Spires & Domes of ivory & gold  
(M, 35 [39]: 22-25, E:135; K:525)

Consequently, within the same plate of *Milton* Blake speaks of both deliverance from the body and the glory of the body. The first reference, to deliverance, employs the neo-Platonic imagery of the descent of souls to the body through the south and north gates:

The Souls descending to the Body, wail on the right hand  
Of Los; & those deliverd from the Body, on the left hand  
(M, 26[28]: 16-17, E:123; K:512)

But Blake goes on to state that these souls are "With neither lineament nor form but like to watry clouds." However, after they are clothed, fed and housed (given material and bodily needs) they become generated bodies with "inward form:"

And every Generated Body in its inward form,  
Is a garden of delight & a building of magnificence,  
Built by the Sons of Los in Bowlahoola & Allamanda

And the herbs & flowers & furniture & beds & chambers  
 Continually woven in the Looms of Enitharmons Daughters  
 In bright Cathedrons golden Dome with care & love & tears  
 (M, 26[28]: 35-39, E:123; K:512)

The inward form of the generated body is built by Los's sons; it is a product of time and imagination. The dwelling of the body is provided by space - Enitharmon's daughters - and human feeling ("care & love & tears"). Similarly, the form which Milton creates for Urizen is an artistic sculptural form of clay, a product of human invention; it therefore differs from the attempts of Los in Blake's earlier work to give Urizen the body of natural science:

Silent they met, and silent strove among the streams, of Arnon  
 Even to Mahanaim, when with the cold hand Urizen stoop'd down  
 And took up water from the icy river Jordan: pouring on  
 To Milton's brain the icy fluid from his broad cold palm.  
 But Milton took of the red clay of Succoth, moulding it with care  
 Between his palms: and filling up the furrows of many years  
 Beginning at the feet of Urizen, and on the bones  
 Creating new flesh on the Demon cold, and building him,  
 As with new clay a Human form in the Valley of Beth Peor  
 M, 19[21]: 6-14, E:112; K:500)

Urizen's act of "baptism" uses formless water whereas Milton picks up malleable clay. By pouring icy fluid on Milton's brain Urizen hopes to numb Milton's own mental powers; reason therefore paralyses or freezes the individual imagination. This episode of *Milton* provides an allegory for Blake's response to his precursor poet. By giving Urizen a clay form, Milton is embodying reason, giving it a Human form. He is also bringing Urizen into present time: "filling up the furrows of many years." He is providing it with limits and circumscribing it such that he can now walk around it: "as the sculptor silent stands before / His forming image; he walks round it patient labouring" (M, 20[22]: 8-9, E:114; K:502).

In his invocation to *Milton* Blake again adopts a discourse of the body. Milton's invocation to Book Three of *Paradise Lost* summoned eternal and primordial light to "Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers / Irradiate" (PL.3.52-53). Blake calls to the Daughters of Beulah who are

associated with "soft sexual delusions" and describes the physical course of inspiration:

. . . Come into my hand  
 By your mild power; descending down the Nerves of my right arm  
 From out the Portals of my Brain, where by your ministry  
 The Eternal Great Humanity Divine. Planted his Paradise  
 (M, 2: 5-8, E:96; K:481)

Although Blake describes the bodily nature of this visitation he also describes a "paradise within." At the same time that Blake is answering Milton's spiritual invocation by including the body, he is also spiritualising the body with the visitation of the "Eternal Great Humanity Divine." Once again, this reinforces Blake's particular non-individualist humanism. Without the immanence of this divine form Blake is still the self of nerves and brain and incapable of vision. Later the poet laments:

O how can I with my gross tongue that cleaveth to the dust,  
 Tell of the Four-fold Man, in starry numbers fitly orderd  
 Or how can I with my cold hand of clay! But thou O Lord  
 Do with me as thou wilt! for I am nothing, and vanity.  
 (M, 20 [22]: 15-18, E:114; K:502)

It is only by participating in Eternal humanity that vision can be attained. By endowing the body with the status of "form" it becomes a symbol of human imagination and not an individual thing. Consequently both Milton's other-worldly individualism and modern limited physical individualism preclude access to four-fold vision. Milton's individualism directs itself towards a spurious transcendent deity while modern individualism is enclosed within the empirical limits of the self. Both selfhood and other-worldly transcendence are the targets of Blake's criticisms in *Milton*.

In the "Bard's Song" of *Milton* Satan attempts to exchange his role of labour with Palamabron. Los challenges Satan's request with the doctrine that "Every Mans Wisdom is peculiar to his own Individ[u]ality" (M, 4: 8, E:98; K:483). Satan's belief that individuals are interchangeable and have no specific character is in accord with the modern ideology of the self as *tabula*

*rasa*.<sup>30</sup> Blake lamented the doctrine of equalitarianism in a letter to George Cumberland in 1827:

I know too well that a great majority of Englishmen are fond of The Indefinite which they Measure by Newtons Doctrine of the Fluxions of an Atom. A Thing that does not Exist. . . . since the French Revolution Englishmen are all Intermeasurable One by Another Certainly a happy state of Agreement to which I for One do not Agree.  
(Letter to George Cumberland, 12 April 1827, E:783; K:878)

"The "Bard's Song" forms a moral fable to contest this doctrine of "intermeasurability." In replying to Satan Los asks: "Art thou not Newtons Pantocrator weaving the Woof of Locke / To Mortals thy Mills seem every thing & the Harrow of Shaddai / A scheme of Human conduct invisible & incomprehensible" (M, 4 :11-14, E:98; K:483). Satan's "Mills seem every thing" to mortals because being a son of Locke Satan presents the natural world as a mechanism and denies any spirit beyond that mechanism.<sup>31</sup> In *Paradise Lost* Satan had typified all the qualities of modern individualism. In Blake's earlier *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* Milton's Satan was hailed as the destroyer of the pre-modern individualism which was based on the division between the soul and the body. In *Milton*, however Blake uses the figure of Satan to conduct a criticism of modern individualism. Satan is now the spectre of Orc, the alienated and darker double of fiery destruction and unbounded energy. At the end of the first book of *Milton* Blake associates Satan with opacity, the substance which is the lowest limit of human existence. Satan is responsible for the fall of the vegetable body into sleep and so Blake describes him using the discourse of empiricism<sup>32</sup>:

But in the Optic vegetative Nerves Sleep was transformed  
To Death in old time by Satan the father of Sin & Death  
And Satan is the Spectre of Orc & Orc is the generate Luvah

But in the Nerves of the Nostrils, Accident being formed  
Into Substance & Principle, by the cruelties of Demonstration  
It became Opaque & Indefinite; but the Divine Saviour,  
Formed it into a Solid by Los's Mathematic power.  
He named the Opaque Satan: he named the Solid Adam  
(M, 29[31]: 32-39, E:127-28; K:517)

Significantly, Adam is the solid formed by Christ and is therefore ready for redemption. The opacity of Satan on the other hand suggests, not forming, but the obstruction of vision. In *Jerusalem* Blake celebrates the overcoming of the discourse of empiricism by "Divine Mercy": "And Length Breadth Highth again Obey the Divine Vision Hallelujah" (J, 32 [36]: 56, E:179; K:664).<sup>33</sup> Milton's Satan in *Paradise Lost* challenges God's divinity with the values of radical individualism; Blake's Satan goes a step further and claims that he *is* God. But the God Satan claims to be also asserts the doctrines of Miltonic individualism. Just as Urizen had been an amalgam of Miltonic and Newtonian conceptions of God in the Lambeth prophecies, so Satan becomes a hybrid form of Miltonic theology and modern individualism. Satan defending himself before the Assembly is a punishing tyrant deity; he asserts the concepts of both moral law and the inviolability of the inner self:

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 in its entrance to the earth  
With thunder of war & trumpets sound, with armies of disease  
Punishments & deaths musterd & number'd; Saying I am God alone  
There is no other! let all obey my principles of moral individuality  
I have brought them from the uppermost innermost recesses  
Of my Eternal Mind, transgressors I will rend off for ever,  
As now I rend this accursed Family from my covering.

Thus Satan rag'd amidst the Assembly! and his bosom grew  
Opake against the Divine Vision: the paved terraces of  
His bosom inwards shone with fires, but the stones becoming opake!  
Hid from sight, in an extreme blackness and darkness,  
And there a World of deeper Ulro was open'd, in the midst  
Of the Asssembly. In Satans bosom a vast unfathomable Abyss.  
(M, 9: 19-35, E:103; K:489-90)

This inward sphere of "moral individuality" ("uppermost innermost recesses") is Satanic opacity, an obstacle to divine vision and a predisposition to self-righteousness. Satan's claim to be God *alone* here is anathema to Blake for whom deity was in all humans. Satan's assertion of unique divinity recalls Milton's God. Blake implies, therefore, that Milton's God is not so far from

Milton's Satan and that it is the tenets of individualism which unite them. Consequently when Blake has Milton descend from eternity it is his Satanic "selfhood" which must be acknowledged and annihilated:

And Milton said, I go to Eternal Death! The Nations still  
 Follow after the detestable Gods of Priam; in pomp  
 Of warlike selfhood, contradicting and blaspheming.  
 When will the Resurrection come; to deliver the sleeping body  
 From corruptibility: O when Lord Jesus wilt thou come?  
 Tarry no longer; for my soul dies at the gates of death.  
 I will arise and look forth for the morning of the grave.  
 I will go down to the sepulcher to see if morning breaks!  
 I will go down to self annihilation and eternal death,  
 Lest the Last Judgment come & find me unannihilate  
 And I be siez'd & giv'n into the hands of my own Selfhood  
 The Lamb of God is seen thro' mists & shadows, hov'ring  
 Over the sepulchers in clouds of Jehovah & winds of Elohim  
 A disk of blood, distant; & heav'ns & earth's roll dark between  
 What do I here before the Judgment? without my Emanation?  
 With the daughters of memory, & not with the daughters of  
 inspiration[?]  
 I in my selfhood am that Satan: I am that Evil One!  
 (M, 14[15];, 14-30, E:108; K:495-96)

The overcoming of selfhood is related to the destruction of state religion. When Milton laments that despite his labours the nations still follow the warlike "detestable gods" and then sees that he must give up his "selfhood" he reveals the ways in which individualism has underpinned institutionalised religion. While Milton had insisted on the distinction between the individual Christian spirit and the state Church, Blake sees the two as part of a general doctrine of law. Milton fears that he may be seized by his own selfhood; this is because the selfhood is Satanic and accusatory. Like the state, the self constructs abstract laws to enslave itself and others.

Against this doctrine of law Blake posits the recovery of the emanation or alienated feminine portion of the self. In *Milton*, Milton's emanation is also his three wives and daughters; the poet's retrieval of his emanation is therefore also an act of unification with others. Whereas individualism concentrates on the submission to law, Blake has Milton view the distant image of the lamb of

God, a symbol of forgiveness. Throughout *Milton* Blake makes clear that self-righteousness is the negation of Christ's spirit of forgiveness, "Asserting the Self-righteousness against the Universal Saviour" (M, 22[24]: 42, E:117; K:506). After Milton's acknowledgement of self-annihilation he takes up his hermaphroditic shadow. This is Milton's divided form, the victim of his dualist denial of the interaction of sexual difference: "Then on the verge of Beulah he beheld his own Shadow; / A mournful form double; hermaphroditic: male & female / In one wonderful body" (M, 14[15]: 36-38, E:108; K:496). Blake then indicates that this becomes Milton's unified and immortal self: "for when he entered into his Shadow: Himself: / His real and immortal Self: was as appeared to those / Who dwell in immortality" (M, 15[17]: 10-12, E:109; K:496). Milton realises that he can only retrieve his emanation through the annihilation of selfhood (M, 17[19]: 2-3, E:110; K:498). In keeping with his descent from eternity the poet must also recognise his humanity: "also Milton knew; they and / Himself was Human" (M, 17[19]: 5-6, E:110; K:498). As Milton passes through Beulah to Ulro he is still "in conflict with Female forms" (M, 17[19]: 7, E:110; K:498) because he has still not given up selfhood and achieved unity with his emanation. He is still directed towards moral law: "his body was the Rock Sinai" (M, 17[19]: 14, E:110; K:498). When Milton eventually encounters Satan, his spectre, in the Second Book he again associates him with law, state religion and self-righteousness:

Satan! my Spectre! I know my power thee to annihilate  
 And be a greater in thy place, & be thy Tabernacle  
 A covering for thee to do thy will, till one greater comes  
 And smites me as I smote thee & becomes my covering.  
 Such are the Laws of thy false Heavns! but Laws of Eternity  
 Are not such: know thou: I come to Self Annihilation  
 Such are the Laws of Eternity that each shall mutually  
 Annihilate himself for others good, as I for thee[.]  
 Thy purpose & the purpose of thy Priests & of thy Churches  
 Is to impress on men the fear of death; to teach  
 Trembling & fear, terror, constriction; abject selfishnes  
 Mine is to teach Men to despise death & to go on  
 In fearless majesty annihilating Self, laughing to scorn  
 Thy Laws & terrors, shaking down thy Synagogues as webs  
 I come to discover before Heavn & Hell the Self righteousness

In all its Hypocritic turpitude, opening to every eye  
 These wonders of Satans holiness shewing to the Earth  
 The Idol Virtues of the Natural Heart, & Satans Seat  
 Explore in all its Selfish Natural Virtue & put off  
 In Self annihilation all that is not of God alone:  
 To put off Self & all I have ever & ever Amen  
 (M, 38[43]: 29-49, E:139; K:529-30)

In thus uniting the spectre with law and idolatry Blake continues his analysis (begun in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*) of the tendency for human beings to create idols and enslave themselves to their own idols. In *Milton*, Blake indicates that it is not just external gods who have been thus created but the self's spectre. The spectre is the lawful, reasoning part of the self set up as a "tabernacle." Milton acknowledges that the spectre can make Milton become a "covering cherub." If Milton tackles the spectre on the spectre's own aggressive terms Milton himself will become the inverted "tabernacle" of the spectre. To be a "greater" in the spectre's place is merely to continue the self-willing individualism of domination which Milton must annihilate. Rather than challenge the spectre in his terms of false law, Milton must annihilate law with the truly eternal law of mutual recognition. Rather than antagonism with the spectre "each shall mutually / Annihilate himself for others good." Milton then attributes his earlier valorisation of transcendent reason and virtue to Satan; virtue is criticised as "Idol Virtues" and "Selfish Natural Virtue." Virtue has, like the deities in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, started as human creation and become the self's law. Blake is using "selfish" here in a strict sense; the virtues are selfish because they ground an ethics immanent to the self rather than "others good." And for Blake "good" has become, not the evil energy of his early works, but the overcoming of selfhood through recognition of the intersubjective "human form." Satan responds to Milton's desire to annihilate selfhood by behaving like Milton's God; he asserts his will and invokes the Miltonic image of justice:

Satan heard! Coming in a cloud, with trumpets & flaming fire  
 Saying I am God the judge of all, the living & the dead  
 Fall therefore down & worship me. submit thy supreme  
 Dictate, to my eternal Will & to my dictate bow



I hold the Balances of Right & Just . . .  
(M, 38[43]: 50-54, E:139-40; K:530)

In Blake's earlier work Orc destroys the willful and accusing selfhood of Urizen without affirming any other form of self. In fact, Blake's early work, in general, denies the value of any concept of self. In *Milton* Blake makes the distinction between the Satanic spectre selfhood which is fixed, individual and rational and the spirit which is dynamic and imaginative. In *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* Blake defines two contrary states of the soul, while showing the inadequacy of either state. The spectre negates the fruitful interaction of either state; it obstructs the imagination which is not a state but existence itself. In *Milton* Blake lays less emphasis on the contrary states than on their site of exchange - imagination - which can only be freed with the annihilation of the spectre:

There is a Negation, & there is a Contrary  
The Negation must be destroyd to redeem the Contraries  
The Negation is the Spectre; the Reasoning Power in Man  
This is a false Body: an Incrustation over my Immortal  
Spirit; a Selfhood, which must be put off & annihilated alway  
To cleanse the Face of my Spirit by Self-examination  
(M, 40[46]: 32-37, E:142; K:533)

The "Immortal / Spirit" differs from the selfhood in that it is not individual. The spirit which Blake proclaims in *Milton* is the spirit of humanity. In opposition to the formlessness which ensues after Orc's destructive rages, the spirit of humanity has a forming function. After Milton has turned his back on the "Heavens builded on cruelty" the seven angels instruct him in the possibility of a human form which is not Satan's individualism but is based on "brotherhood." The angels themselves insist that they are not individuals but supra-individual states:

We are not Individuals but States: Combinations of Individuals  
We were Angels of the Divine Presence: & were Druids in Annandale  
Compelld to combine into Form by Satan, the Spectre of Albion,  
Who made himself a God &, destroyed the Human Form Divine.  
But the Divine Humanity & Mercy gave us a Human Form  
Because we were combind in Freedom & holy

Brotherhood  
(M, 32[35]: 10-16, E:131; K:521)

The angels go on to affirm the primacy of imagination. Not a state, the imagination is the spirit of humanity which is eternal and is therefore set against the alienated abstractions of reason and memory:

The Imagination is not a State: it is the Human Existence itself  
Affection or Love becomes a State, when divided from Imagination  
The Memory is a State always, & the Reason is a State  
Created to be Annihilated & a new Ratio Created  
Whatever can be Created can be Annihilated Forms cannot  
The Oak is cut down by the Ax, the Lamb falls by the Knife  
But their Forms Eternal Exist, For-ever. Amen Halle[l]ujah  
(M, 32[35]: 32-36, E:132; K:522)

Although the use of "form" here sounds Platonic, because eternal, Blake locates these eternal forms not in an other-worldly sphere but in the imagination. When these forms are detached from the imagination or interpreted Platonically they become states. The imagination is the transcendent ground for all being, although because of imagination's human character it is transcendent only to individuals. In *Jerusalem* the primordality of imagination is repeatedly stressed: "For All Things Exist in the Human Imagination" (J, 69: 25, E:223; K:707). Satanic "inwardness" is regarded by Blake as "opacity" because it obstructs divine vision and grounds self-righteousness. However, another figure of the inward sphere is the imagination, where what appears transcendent and eternal is made human. This type of inwardness is human, not individual; it is not self-enclosed like the Urizenic inwardness of the Lambeth prophecies. It expands to include heaven, earth and humanity. Unlike Satanic opacity this inwardness is translucent:

What is Above is Within, for every-thing in Eternity is translucent:  
The Circumference is Within: Without, is formed the Selfish Center  
And the Circumference still expands going forward to Eternity.  
And the Center has Eternal States! these States we now explore.

...

For all are Men in Eternity. Rivers Mountains Cities Villages,  
All are Human & when you enter into their Bosoms you walk  
In Heavens & Earths; as in your own Bosom you bear your Heaven  
And Earth, and all you behold, tho it appears Without it is Within  
In your Imagination of which this World of Mortality is but a Shadow.

(J, 71: 6-19, E:225; K:709)

Not only is imagination the ground and condition of all existence; it is also Christ or the lamb of God. At the beginning of *Milton* the "Divine Vision" is identified with the "Living Form" of the "Human Imagination / Which is the Divine Body of the Lord Jesus" (M, 3: 3-4, E:96; K:482). For Blake the imagination is Jesus and the "Divine Humanity;" the figure of Christ unites humanity with the eternal spirit of inspiration. Later in *Milton* the Bard reiterates the identification between humanity, the imagination and divinity: "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, 14[15]: 1-3, E:108; K:495). The consequence of this coupling of imagination with the divine humanity of Christ is that religion and faith no longer manifest themselves in the worship of external deities but in the active creation and exercise of the imagination. To Milton's static and rational theology Blake opposes a dynamic and ethical aesthetics. In the "To the Christians" section of *Jerusalem* Blake declares that true religion entails the flourishing of human creativity: "I know of no other Christianity and of no other Gospel than the liberty both of body & mind to exercise the Divine Arts of Imagination" (J, 77, E:231; K:716-17). The imagination is the eternal ground against which all natural being is secondary: "Imagination the real & eternal World of which this Vegetable Universe is but a faint shadow & in which we shall live in our Eternal or Imaginative Bodies, when these Vegetable Mortal Bodies are no more" (J, 77: E:231; K:717). Although the Imagination is eternal it creates a temporal world. In *Jerusalem* Blake describes this constitutive function of the imagination. The "Visionary forms dramatic" which are human precede and condition all individual existence:

In new Expanses, creating exemplars of Memory and of Intellect  
 Creating Space, Creating Time according to the wonders Divine  
 Of Human Imagination, throughout all the Three Regions immense  
 Of Childhood, Manhood & Old Age[;] & the all tremendous  
     unfathomable Non Ens  
 Of Death was seen in regenerations terrific or complacent varying  
 According to the subject of discourse & every Word & Every Character

Was Human according to the Expansion or Contraction, the  
 Translucence or  
 Opakeness of Nervous fibres such was the variation of Time & Space  
 Which vary according as the Organs of Perception vary & they walked  
 To & fro in Eternity as One Man reflecting each in each & clearly seen  
 And seeing according to fitness & order. . . .  
 (J, 98: 30-40, E:258; K:746)

Like Kant, and only slightly later historically, Blake realised that it was absurd to consider such profoundly *human* experiences as time and space as existing independently of human life. For a thing to be temporal it had to be experienced in succession by an experiencing being, through the regions of past, present and future (or "Childhood, Manhood & Old Age"). The world would be a Urizenic chaos if it were not for the forming and space-creating faculty of the human imagination. In all this Blake, like Kant, can be considered as a transcendental idealist. He sees experience as the condition for the possibility of the world. However, this is not individual experience but human experience *in general*. Where Blake differs from Kant, and he does so significantly, is in the rejection of any noumenal world, prior to the phenomenal world we create. Locke, a philosopher whose work Blake knew, also made a distinction between the phenomenal world and the actual world: "We are then quite out of the way, when we think, that Things contain within themselves the Qualities, that appear to us in them."<sup>34</sup> The "unfathomable Non Ens," as Blake refers to this noumenal or actual world, must be regenerated into human meaning. Originally "Man anciently contained in his mighty limbs all things in Heaven & Earth" (J, 27: E:171; K:649). The present fallen condition is a consequence of forgetting that all being is originally human. Hence, *Jerusalem* ends by reiterating the necessity for "humanising" all aspects of being. All being is humanised, brought into the sphere of temporality and made immanent to human life:

All Human Forms identified even Tree Metal Earth & Stone. all  
 Human Forms identified, living going forth & returning wearied  
 Into the Planetary lives of Years Months Days & Hours reposing  
 And then Awakening into his Bosom in the Life of Immortality.  
 (J, 99: 1-4, E:258; K:747)

The imagination is not only the primary faculty; it is the primary ground of existence itself; to speak of existence beyond the imagination is to invent fictitious entities to which the imagination can become enslaved. The traditional idea of God or the empiricist's concept of substance are such entities. Where Blake's transcendental idealism also differs significantly from that of Kant is over the issue of individualism and other persons. For Kant, the self on its own can gain access to the structure and laws of transcendental subjectivity; Kantian ethics is grounded on the possibility of the individual realising his or her own individual duty to obey moral law. For Blake, on the other hand, the individualism of moral virtue must be overcome by the recognition of the importance of others. In order to gauge the significance of Blake's rejection of individualism it is useful to consider his intersubjective ethics in relation to the valorisation of solitude by Milton and the later Romantics.

The importance of solitude in traditional ethics stems from the Platonic reverence for contemplation which enables the apprehension of forms. Milton's Christian individualism reinforces the necessity of solitude, for God's transcendence is revealed only through the intense self-reflection of the isolated and contemplative subject. In *Comus* the elder brother lectures on the value of solitude for the self-sufficiency of virtue:

Vertue could see to do what vertue would  
By her own radiant light, though Sun and Moon  
Were in the flat Sea sunk. And Wisdoms self  
Oft seeks to sweet retired Solitude,  
Where with her best nurse Contemplation  
She plumes her feathers, and lets grow her wings  
That in the various bussle of resort  
Were all to-ruffl'd, and sometimes impair'd.  
(COM. 372-379)

In *Paradise Regain'd* Milton describes Christ in contemplative solitude:

One day forth walkd forth alone, the Spirit leading  
And his deep thoughts, the better to converse  
With solitude, till farr from track of men,  
Thought following thought, and step by step led on,

(PR.1.189-192)

Christ's solitude is again referred to in *Paradise Regain'd* as he spends his forty days in the desert.

And he still on was led, but with such thoughts  
 Accompanied of things past and to come  
 Lodg'd in his brest, as well might recommend  
 Such Solitude before choicest Society.  
 (PR.1.299-302)

Milton is not just emphasising that Christ is alone; he is asserting that the powers of reflection are heightened and that the self is most inclined to direct itself towards spiritual thought when removed from society. Adam and Eve are described as existing in "blissful solitude" in Eden (PL.3.69). In the invocation to Book Seven of *Paradise Lost* Milton proclaims that contemplative solitude is only solitude from other persons; such solitude enables the company of the holy muse: "And solitude; yet not alone, while thou / Visitst my slumbers Nightly" (PL.7.28-29).

Wordsworth continued the Miltonic regard for solitude, particularly in *The Prelude*, where solitude is frequently seen as a precondition for poetic inspiration. In Book Seven Wordsworth finds persons in the city "Each fondly reared on his own pedestal;" such atomised anonymity leads to "the strife of singularity" (P.7.577). Whereas the city is the occasion for the captivation of the self within its own prison, the solitary's turn to Nature, for Wordsworth, is a renovating turn away from others. When the poet begins *The Prelude* he departs from London where he has been "captive" in "a house of bondage." The public self is, in this sense "unnatural" insofar as the self, subjugated to the uncreative routine of "many a weary day", becomes its own "burden:"

That burthen of my own unnatural self,  
 The heavy weight of many a weary day  
 Not mine, and such as were not made for me.<sup>35</sup>  
 (P.1.21-23)

The poet fears that absorption in the quotidian world precludes reflection and displaces individuals from their actual selfhood. This actual selfhood is

ethically distinguished from the mundane social self: "When from our better selves we have too long / Been parted by the hurrying world" (P.4.354-55). More importantly for Wordsworth, it is the paradoxical nature of the social self that physical proximity is coupled with spiritual isolation:

Above all, one thought  
Baffled my understanding: how men lived  
Even next-door neighbours, as we say, yet still  
Strangers, not knowing each the other's name. (P.7.115)

The city promulgates the privation of identity and an atrophy of sensibility. In London, the "monstrous ant-hill on the plain / Of a too busy world," humanity is reified as an "endless stream of men and moving things!" (P.7.149-51) - men and things seeming little different from each other (and by contiguity associated with the ants of an ant-hill). For the reflecting poet this later, in solitude, becomes a scene "With wonder heightened" but what he actually describes is a "deafening din" with no identity: "Face after face; the string of dazzling wares, / Shop after shop" (P.7.153-58). It is the "deafening din" and the absence of nature which impoverishes the urban self and fails to satisfy the aesthetic and ethical conditions which are the necessary requirements for true and moral selfhood:

Love cannot be; nor does it thrive with ease  
Among the close and overcrowded haunts  
Of cities, where the human heart is sick,  
And the eye feeds it not, and cannot feed.  
(P.13.202-05)

The city trivialises and reduces the existence of individuals to a meaningless throng. It is the atomisation of the self in city life which leads to a loss of true identity. In the plethora of meaningless differences the self becomes subjected to the weight of labour and is alienated from any identity which could be achieved in the "ennobling Harmony" of nature. The city's "sons" become

. . . reduced  
To one identity, by differences  
That have no law, no meaning, and no end -  
Oppression, under which even the highest minds  
Must labour, whence the strongest are not free. (P.7.726-30)

When the poet retreats from the city, the solitude achieved becomes the condition for an encounter with transcendence: "In solitude, such intercourse was mine" (P.1.422). For Wordsworth, solitude is never an absolute value; if it results in a sense of detachment the poet is wary: "And I was taught to feel, perhaps too much / The self-sufficing power of Solitude" (P.2.77). But when the poet departs from Cambridge to pace the fields, the state of solitude acts as a catalyst for self-reflection. The mind returns to itself in order to emerge from the captivity of the busy throng of college life, "the injurious sway of place / Or circumstance" (P.3.102-03). However, rather than finding the self in its individual particularity the reflecting mind sees not itself but "A higher language" (P.3.100). Cambridge becomes for the young poet a realm of meaningless particularity - "place and circumstance" - while the outlying fields become the site for self-reflection which leads to a communion with the world. The surrounds take on a mythological meaning which transcends the life of the individual poet. The "earth and sky" become semantically laden with the "trace" of that which precedes the poet. It is the historical transcendence which he encounters in solitude which draws him out of himself:

As if awakened, summoned roused, constrained,  
I looked for universal things; perused  
The common countenance of earth and sky:  
Earth, nowhere unembellished by some trace  
Of that first Paradise whence man was driven.  
(P.3.105-09)

Solitude is the occasion for revealing the "community with highest truth" (P.3.123) and is therefore both the ascendance and surpassing of the self. The self is both realised in "independent solaces" (P.3.101) and united with the transcendence which links the self to eternity, the thoughts themselves becoming "visitings":

Or turning the mind in upon herself,  
Pored, watched, expected, listened, spread my thoughts  
And spread them with a wider creeping; felt  
Incumbencies more awful, visitings  
Of the Upholder of the tranquil soul,  
(P.3.113-17)



In *Europe*, when Enitharmon awakes from her dream (which is the eighteen hundred years of history between Christ and Blake's birth), she declares that "the night of holy shadows / And human solitude is past!" (E, 13: 18-19, E:65; K:243). This, and Blake's continued emphasis on mutual recognition and the importance of others is evidence of Blake's profound disagreement with the individualist ethics of "solitude." In *Milton* Blake refers to Jerusalem as a "building of human souls" (M, 6: 19, E:100; K:485). The significance of this figure lies in Blake's rejection of the Miltonic (and later Romantic) belief in the power of the solitary self to gain personal salvation. Jerusalem, the agent of redemption is not an individual but an aggregate of souls, a symbol of intersubjectivity. Satan, on the other hand, is a very different type of building, a non-human construction: "I also stood in Satans bosom & beheld its desolations! / A ruind Man: a ruind building of God not made with hands" (M, 38[43]: 15-16, E:139; K:529). Although the doctrine of forgiveness and the importance of others is amplified in *Jerusalem, The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* had already declared that "The most sublime act is to set another before you" (MHH, 7: 17, E:36; K:151). The seven angels in *Milton* affirm the possibility of being "combind in Freedom & holy / Brotherhood" (M, 32[35]: 15-16, E:131; K:521). It is in *Jerusalem*, however, that Blake defines the communal or intersubjective character of all experience.

Again using the figure of the building Blake refers to Babylon as a building of human suffering. While Wordsworth sees the city itself as the site for human destruction and alienation Blake insists that we have simply built the wrong sort of city. The city of Babylon is constructed upon moral law:

O Human Imagination O Divine Body I have Crucified  
 I have turned my back upon thee into the Wastes of Moral Law:  
 There Babylon is builded in the Waste, founded in Human desolation.

...

But Albion is cast forth to the Potter his Children to the Builders  
 To build Babylon because they have forsaken Jerusalem  
 The Walls of Babylon are Souls of Men: her Gates the Groans  
 Of Nations: her Towers are the Miseries of once happy Families.  
 (J, 24: 23-32, E:169; K:647)

Jerusalem, on the other hand, is a city built, not on moral law, but on the mutual recognition of other persons, on intersubjectivity: "Mutual each within others bosom in Visions of Regeneration; / Jerusalem coverd the Atlantic Mountains & the Erythrean" (J, 24: 45-46, E:170; K:648). Insofar as *Jerusalem* emphasises the need to rehumanise being, Blake can be considered a humanist. The Christian aspect of Blake's work, however, adds a further dimension. Although Blake is unwilling to accept an external and non-human deity the Christian strain in his work imparts a quality of transcendence. While all nature is dependent upon human experience, human experience itself is grounded upon the "Eternal Vision." This transcendence is figured by Blake with images such as imagination, eternity, Albion and Christ. But this ground of humanity is actually humanity in its collectivity which then produces a divine form greater than itself. When Christ is described in *Jerusalem* he is seen as encompassing humanity:

Displaying the Eternal Vision! the Divine Similitude!  
 In loves and tears of brothers, sisters, sons, fathers, and friends  
 Which if Man ceases to behold, he ceases to exist:  
 (J, 34[38], 11-13, E:180; K:664)

The only true form, then, in the Platonic sense is the form of humanity; for this only can be transcendent: "the Divine / Humanity, who is the Only General and Universal Form" (J, 38[43]: 19-20, E:185; K:672). In Milton's hierarchical cosmos all human endeavour directed itself towards the transcendence of God and divine law. Blake rejects any attention towards an external God or divine law seeing this as an abnegation of human agency. Hence Los, in *Jerusalem*, demands that the zoas or "howling victims of Law" renounce their calls to God and take up the human form:

Then Los grew furious raging: Why stand we here trembling around  
 Calling on God for help; and not ourselves in whom God dwells  
 Stretching a hand to save the falling Man: are we not Four  
 Beholding Albion upon the Precipice ready to fall into Non-Entity:  
 Seeing these Heavens & Hells conglobing in the Void. Heavens over  
 Hells  
 Brooding in holy hypocritic lust, drinking the cries of pain  
 From howling victims of Law: building Heavens Twenty-seven-fold.  
 Swelld & bloated General Forms, repugnant to the Divine-

Humanity, who is the Only General and Universal Form  
 To which all Lineaments tend & seek with love & sympathy  
 All broad & general principles belong to benevolence  
 Who protects minute particulars, every one in their own identity.  
 (J, 38[43]:12-23, E:184-85; K:672)

This retrieval of transcendent humanity is enabled by "benevolence." Furthermore, unlike the modern philosophers for whom the rejection of transcendence produced an equalitarian world, a sphere of undifferentiated matter or substance, Los asserts that the renewal of the human form will reinforce individual identity: "Who protects minute particulars, every one in their own identity." Consequently, Blake's references to God, the traditional form of transcendence, reinforce the sense that God arises from relations between persons. Los proclaims that the lamb of God is born with forgiveness: "'O point of mutual forgiveness between Enemies! / Birthplace of the Lamb of God incomprehensible!" (J, 7: 66-67, E:150; K:626). The idea of an external God is concomitant with the concept of external and punishing law; once God is internalised then "the Worship of God, is honouring his gifts in other men." Such a doctrine has for Blake the added advantage of challenging Locke's *tabula rasa*. If all human beings harbour a God within, then they are not the mere recipients of sense data but creative and divine beings of genius. Blake rejects any conception of the isolated individual because he sees personal identity as grounded on the form of humanity. Nevertheless, the divinity of human life heightens individual identity. Not only does Los declare that "the Worship of God, is honouring his gifts / In other men: & loving the greatest men best, each according / To his Genius: which is the Holy Ghost in Man" (J, 91: 7-9, E:251; K:738); he also describes Christ as an aggregate of individuals: "But General Forms have their vitality in Particulars: & every / Particular is a Man; a Divine member of the Divine Jesus" (J, 91: 29-30, E:251; K:738). Blake's eternal man, his image of the human form, has a uniting function which is also redemptive: "for the Eternal Man / Walketh among us, calling us his Brothers & his Friends: / Forbidding us that Veil which Satan puts between Eve & Adam" (J, 55: 9-11, E:204; K:686).

Blake therefore rejects Milton's concept of a transcendent God which precedes and informs all human life and grants individual essences to entities; at the same time he refuses the modern levelling of the world into uniform matter. He decentres the neo-Platonic/Miltonic universe by placing God not at the zenith of a chain of being but within each human life. Ethics is a matter of "setting another before you"; there is no central transcendence to which all human attention should be directed. Consequently Blake frequently employs images of centres opening towards vision: "Wonder siezd all in Eternity! to behold the Divine Vision. open / The Center into an Expanse, & the Center rolled out into an Expanse" (J, 57: 17-18, E:207; K:689). Eno's amelioratory function in *The Four Zoas* involves opening out centres to reveal eternity: "She also took an atom of space & opend its center / Into Infinitude" (FZ.1. p.9: 12, E:305; K:270). In *Milton* the fall of the zoas is depicted as a fall into the centre: "All fell towards the Center sinking downward in dire Ruin" (M, 34[38]: 39, E:134; K:524). But the rejection of transcendence, while decentring, does not for Blake mean an "economic" or systematised ontology. Each entity has its own particular identity, not because it is bestowed by God, but because the world is human, and hence formed and created in minute particularity: "every Class is determinate / But not by Natural but by Spiritual power alone" (M, 26[28]: 39-40, E:124; K:512).

Blake recognised the economic temperament of his day and inveighed against it, recognising its denial of individual quality:

Commerce Cannot endure Individual Merit its insatiable Maw must be fed by What all can do Equally well at least it is so in England as I have found to my Cost these Forty Years

Commerce is so far from being beneficial to Arts or to Empire that it is destructive of both as all their History shews for the above Reason of Individual Merit being its Great hatred.

(PA, p.57, E:573-74; K:593-94)

In *The Four Zoas* the fallen universe is described as a world where market value triumphs: "The Horse is of more value than the Man" (FZ, p.15, 1,

E:309; K:275). Blake on the other hand constantly insists on the intrinsic character of entities. This is because his conception of nature is grounded upon the imagination. Blake, unlike "Bacon, Newton & Locke," relies upon a notion of eternal imagination which endows each entity with its particular essence. In the Satanic world "every thing is fixd Opake without Internal light" (M, 10[11]: 20, E:104; K:491). Because Satan, as a competitive modern individual, sees his own identity as excluding the will of others and because he assumes the form of a law-giving deity "making to himself Laws from his own identity" his world loses character; it becomes the chaos over which he must rule tyrannically (M, 11[12], 10, E:104; K:491). The fall of the Eternal Man in *The Four Zoas* is accordingly described as a loss of definition: "The Mans exteriors are become indefinite" (FZ.1. p.22: 40; K:279). In "Night the Second" Albion gives up his power to Urizen, "the great Work master" (recalling Milton's great Work-Maister [PL.3.696]) whose fallen universe is an abyss of "Non Existence," "Voidness" and "indefinite space" (FZ.2. p.24: 1-5, E:314; K:280). Once power has been handed to the centred Nobodaddy or reasoning God, form is lost and chaos ensues. In an unfallen world, however, authority is decentred and "Every thing in Eternity shines by its own Internal light" (M, 10 [11]: 16, E:104; K:491). Blake repeats this idea in *Jerusalem*:

In Great Eternity, every particular Form gives forth or Emanates  
 Its own peculiar Light, & the Form is the Divine Vision  
 And the Light is his Garment This is Jerusalem in every Man  
 (J, 54: 1-3, E:203; K:684)

Jerusalem or the Divine Vision (or whatever term Blake uses for transcendence) is what determines form and identity; without the divine vision, or the spiritual power which individuates, the world is alien and limited.

Although there is an anti-idealist strain in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* revealed in Blake's rejection of the conventional conceptions of soul, reason and heaven, at this early stage Blake still imagines an apocalyptic overcoming of the natural world where "the whole creation will be consumed." But Blake makes it clear that such a transformation involves altering vision

through a retrieval of the body and not rejecting the natural world itself: "the whole creation will be consumed, and appear infinite. and holy whereas it now appears finite & corrupt" (MHH, 14: E:39; K:154). The corrupt vegetable world is a consequence of limited vision. In *The Song of Los*, Blake attributes the Lockean ontology to the limiting of vision:

And all the vast of Nature shrunk  
Before their shrunken eyes.

Thus the terrible race of Los & Enitharmon gave  
Laws & Religions to the sons of Har binding them more  
And more to Earth: closing and restraining:  
Till a philosophy of Five Senses was complete  
Urizen wept & gave it into the hands of Newton & Locke  
(SL, 4: 11-17, E:68; K:246)

The images used to describe this alien natural world in Blake's later work - the mundane shell, the concave earth - describe the closed and finite character of nature. In *The Four Zoas* Blake refers to the fallen world as a "Circle of Destiny;" recalling Milton's "self-balanced" world in *Paradise Lost*:

But on the tenth trembling morn the Circle of Destiny Complete  
Round rolld the Sea Englobing in a watry Globe self balancd  
(FZ.1. p.5: 24-25, E:302; K:266)

When nature is such an independent entity it becomes an "indefinite space;" it is non-human and lifeless. Blake's image for this self-sufficient and free-standing nature is the mundane shell:

The Mundane Shell, is a vast Concave Earth: an immense  
Hardend shadow of all things upon our Vegetated Earth  
Enlarg'd into dimension & deform'd into indefinite space,  
In Twenty-seven Heavens and all their Hells; with Chaos  
And Ancient Night; & Purgatory. It is a cavernous Earth  
Of labyrinthine intricacy, twenty-seven folds of opakeness  
(M, 17[19]: 21-26, E:110-11; K:498)

When nature is seen imaginatively and when it is recognised that "every Natural Effect has a Spiritual Cause" (M, 26[28]: 43, E:124; K:513) nature has a redemptive function. The epistemological doubt which characterised the seventeenth century is based on the premise of an independent and alien world.<sup>36</sup> I can only question my senses and their ability to know the world if I

have already posited an independently existing world. This problem of doubt has no relevance for Blake who identifies the phenomenal world with the world *per se*:

I assert for My self that I do not behold the Outward Creation & that to me it is hindrance & not Action it is As the Dirt upon my feet No part of Me. What it will be Questiond When the Sun rises do you not see a round Disk of fire somewhat like a Guinea O no no I see an Innumerable company of the Heavenly host crying Holy Holy Holy is the Lord God Almighty I question not my Corporeal or Vegetative Eye any more than I would question a Window concerning a Sight I look thro it & not with it.

(VLJ, p.95, E:565-66; K:617)

In seeing the world through the physical eye Blake can redeem natural imagery: the Sun becomes a host of angels. Consequently, despite his rejection of nature's "cruel holiness" there is a pastoral element in Blake's work; this reveals itself in the *Songs of Innocence* and the eventual renovation of Vala as well as the lark and the thyme as symbols of Milton's redemption in *Milton*.

In *Milton*, Milton's moulding of Urizen in clay renews and subordinates the faculty of reason to the imagination. Indeed, the epic in general is concerned with overcoming alienated transcendence. Milton descends from eternity, becomes embodied, encounters Urizen and in doing so enables a retrieval of his female emanation. In *The Four Zoas* these themes are also present but Vala, as a symbol of nature, provides a figure for the possible renewal of the alienated physical world. In "Night the Fifth" Vala is described as "the lovely form / That drew the body of Man from heaven into this dark Abyss" (FZ.5. p. 59: 1-2, E:340; K:306). She is the alluring quality of nature which can lead to a forgetting of the spiritual character of human existence. While the introduction to *Milton* is concerned with overcoming Platonism, the characters in *The Four Zoas* desperately fight against the naturalisation of the self and the discourse of empiricism. After Albion has handed over power to Urizen a world is built with "golden compasses, the quadrant & the rule & balance" (FZ.2. p.24: 12, E:314; K:281). In response to Enion's jealousy of

Tharmas's display of pity towards Jerusalem, Tharmas laments Enion's dissection of his soul:

Why wilt thou Examine every little fibre of my soul  
 Spreading them out before the Sun like Stalks of flax to dry  
 The infant joy is beautiful but its anatomy  
 Horrible Ghast & Deadly nought shalt thou find in it  
 But Death Despair & Everlasting brooding Melancholy

Thou wilt go mad with horror if thou dost Examine thus  
 Every moment of my secret hours . . .  
 (FZ.1. p.4: 29-35, E:302; K:265)

Tharmas imagines Enion as a natural being: "Sometimes I think thou art a flower expanding / Sometimes I think thou art fruit breaking from its bud" (FZ.1. p.4: 41-42, E:302; K:265). He sees himself, however, as a scientific entity: "I am like an atom / A Nothing left in darkness yet I am an identity" (FZ.1. p.4: 43-44, E:302; K:265). The division between Tharmas and Enion symbolises the division between man/science and woman/nature. Natural feminine being separated from masculinity and viewed as independent becomes Vala the cruel nature goddess. As soon as Enion has separated from Tharmas she builds a tabernacle for Jerusalem while Tharmas encloses the world in a "circle of destiny" - an enclosed and determined universe.

Vala is the emanation of Luvah/Orc and despite the fact that Blake no longer believes in the redemptive power of Orc alone there is still the necessity to temper the reign of reason/Urizen with the natural instincts or passions. Although Vala in *The Four Zoas* represents a frightening and alien form of nature, Blake still accords her a place in the original unity from which the eternal man fell. Enitharmon narrates the "Song of Vala" in which she describes how "Luvah and Vala woke & flew up from the Human Heart / Into the Brain" (FZ.1. p.10: 11-12, E:305; K:271). Like nature, Vala herself is part of the total unity of existence; it is only when elevated above the imagination that she can become enslaving. Despite the reunion and wedding of Los and Enitharmon the two are still hostile to each other, sitting "in discontent & scorn" at their own wedding feast (FZ.1. p.16: 18, E:310; K:276). Part of the



reason for their continued antagonism is indicated by the isolation of Luvah & Vala: "But Luvah & Vala standing in the bloody sky / On high remaind alone forsaken in fierce jealousy / They stood above the heavens forsaken desolate suspended in blood / Descend they could not" (FZ.1. p.13, 4-7, E:308; K:274). Without the integration of the natural or passionate level of human existence no harmony is possible. Consequently, after depicting the forsaken Luvah and Vala, Blake describes the shift in the world from a pastoral landscape to a barren Newtonian void:

But purple night and crimson morning & golden day descending  
Thro' the clear changing atmosphere display'd green fields among  
The varying clouds, like paradises stretch'd in the expanse  
With towns & villages and temples, tents sheep-folds and pastures  
Where dwell the children of the elemental worlds in harmony.  
Not long in harmony they dwell, their life is Drawn away  
And wintry woes succeed; successive driven into the Void  
(FZ.1. p.13: 11-17, E:308; K:274)

In "Night the Second" Blake describes the "Children of Man" refusing vision and insisting on an economically conceived and mechanistic universe: "let us buy & sell / Others arose & schools Erected forming Instruments / To measure out the course of heaven" (FZ.2. p.28: 19-21, E:318; K:283). Accordingly, the world of Urizen is formed mathematically and Luvah (or passion) is expelled from the human form: "For measurd out in orderd spaces the Sons of Urizen / With compasses divide the deep; they the strong scales erect / That Luvah rent from the faint Heart of the Fallen Man / And weigh the massy Cubes" (FZ.2. pp.28-29: 31-32 & 1-2, E:318-19; K:283). Blake's descriptions of Urizen's great building adopt the discourse of geometry which atomises the world into a uniform aggregate of discrete entities: "Quadrangular the building rose the heavens squared by a line. / Trigon & cubes divide the elements in finite bonds" (FZ.2. p.30: 10-11, E:319; K:284). Blake then describes the order of Urizen's universe again using the discourse of geometry; not only Urizen's building but the movements of his sons and daughters have become enslaved to "mathematic motion wondrous:"

Others triangular right angled course maintain. others obtuse  
 Acute Scalene, in simple paths. but others move  
 In intricate ways biquadrate. Trapeziums Rhombs Rhomboids  
 Parallelograms. triple & quadruple. polygonic  
 In their amazing vast subdued course in the vast deep  
 (FZ.2. p.33, 32-36, E:322; K:287)

The descriptions of Urizen's building draw attention to the process of labour and the ways in which labour also reduces the individual's particularity into an undifferentiated multitude: "Multitudes without number work incessant" (FZ.2. p.30: 12, E:319; K:284). But despite the oppressive mathematical nature of Urizen's architecture Blake insists on the building's beauty; for even in the most perverted acts of creativity lies the possibility of redemption. At the same time that the closure of Urizen's work is depicted its beauty and potential for letting in light are also revealed:

But infinitely beautiful the wondrous work arose  
 In sorrow & care. a Golden World whose porches round the heavens  
 And pillard halls & rooms recieved the eternal wandering stars  
 A wondrous golden Building; many a window many a door  
 And many a division let in & out into the vast unknown  
 [Cubed] in [window square] immoveable, within its walls & cielings<sup>37</sup>  
 The heavens were closd and spirits mournd their bondage night and day  
 And the Divine Vision appeard in Luvahs robes of blood  
 (FZ.2. p.32: 7-14, E:321; K:286)

In Blake's earlier work Los's creation of a body for Urizen continually failed because it was the body of natural science. In *The Four Zoas* Blake sees that even the discourses of the sciences are still creative; we have only forgotten their basis in the imagination and interpreted them as objective. In *Milton* Blake includes science as one of the four eternal arts. In the fallen world the arts other than science have been excluded; consequently science's portion of existence has come to seem all:

But in Eternity the Four Arts: Poetry, Painting, Music,  
 And Architecture which is Science: are the Four Faces of Man.  
 Not so in Time & Space: there Three are shut out, and only  
 Science remains thro Mercy: & by means of Science, the Three  
 Become apparent in Time & Space, in the Three Professions

Poetry in Religion: Music, Law: Painting, in Physic & Surgery:  
 That Man may live upon Earth till the time of his awaking,  
 And from these Three, Science derives every Occupation of Men.  
 (M, 27[29]: 55-62, E:125; K:514)

Consequently, Christ allows Urizen's scientific constructions. Total formlessness - the formlessness a destruction of Urizen by Orc would create - would mean annihilation: "For the Divine Lamb Even Jesus who is the Divine Vision / Permitted all lest Man should fall into Eternal Death" (FZ. 2. p.33, 11-12, E:321; K:287). In *The Four Zoas* it is the loss of limit and definition which constitutes the fall. Los admits to Tharmas that "We have drunk up the Eternal Man by our unbounded power" (FZ.4. p.48, 13, E:332; K:298). Urizen's architecture is oppressive; the discourse of science binds man to the earth but were it not for these basic and crude gestures towards form, human existence would be cast into chaos. Urizen's fixed stars, the image of his closed universe, are thus a mixed blessing: "Thus were the stars of heaven created like a golden chain / To bind the Body of Man to heaven from falling into the Abyss / Each took his station, & his course began with sorrow & care" (FZ.2. p.33: 16-18, E:322; K:287). The reforming of Urizen in *The Four Zoas* is therefore also coupled with the embrace of Urizen and his reincorporation into the eternal man. Urizen is neither cast out nor destroyed; the image of forgiveness as the condition for redemption is exemplified in the embrace and retrieval of Urizen in "Night the Seventh:"

Startled was Los he found his Enemy Urizen now  
 In his hands. he wonderd that he felt love & not hate  
 His whole soul loved him he beheld him an infant  
 Lovely breathd from Enitharmon he trembled within himself  
 (FZ.7. p.98: 64-67, E:371; K:332)

Earlier in *The Four Zoas*, as Los once again attempts to give a body to Urizen, repeating the image begun in *The Book of Urizen*, Blake adds a dimension to explain Los's initial failure. As Los forms Urizen, Enitharmon is still separate. Los's labours are the product of a vengeful and alienated masculinity in which both Enitharmon and Urizen are solidified by iron. Los's self-division is emphasised both by Enitharmon's cries and the presence of his spectre; his

labour cannot therefore be redemptive for he has yet to redeem himself through the embrace of Enitharmon and Urizen:

The lovely female howld & Urizen beneath deep groand  
 Deadly between the hammers beating grateful to the Ears  
 Of Los. absorbd in dire revenge he drank with joy the cries  
 Of Enitharmon & the groans of Urizen fuel for his wrath  
 And for his pity secret feeding on thoughts of cruelty

The Spectre wept at his dire labours when from Ladles huge  
 He pourd the molten iron round the limbs of Enitharmon  
 But when he pourd it round the bones of Urizen he laughd  
 (FZ.4. p.53: 10-17, E:335-36; K:302)

The fall of the eternal man is recounted by Ahania to Urizen where the emergence of the spectre is followed by Albion turning "his back on Vala" (FZ.3. p.41: 4, E:327; K:293). Los's attempts to reform Urizen indicate the importance of reintegrating the faculty of reason to its correct place in the human form. Similarly, the rejection and subsequent elevation of Vala also contributes to the fall of Albion. After the eternal man has turned from Vala both she and Luvah are displaced and fall into an alienated form of Nature. The heart, the realm of the passions which should be a paradise, becomes a serpent-form:

. . . Luvah & Vala  
 Went down the Human Heart where Paradise & its joys abounded  
 In jealous fears in fury & rage, & flames roll'd round their fervid feet  
 And the vast form of Nature like a Serpent play'd before them  
 And as they went in folding fires & thunders of the deep  
 Vala shrunk in like the dark sea that leaves its slimy banks  
 And from her bosom Luvah fell far as the east & west  
 And the vast form of Nature like a Serpent roll'd between.  
 (FZ.3. p.42:10-17, E:328; K:294)

Nature also has a renewing function in *The Four Zoas* but this is only when nature is seen imaginatively. Tharmas, cursing Urizen and Luvah, calls his sons to rebuild his universe and demands that corrupted human forms be created from a nature reduced to its elements:

Weave soft delusive forms of Man above my watry world  
 Renew these ruind souls of Men thro Earth Sea Air & Fire  
 To waste in endless corruption. renew thou I will destroy

(FZ.4. p.48, 6-8, E:332; K:298)

But Tharmas's declaration that he is God and that the universe is his only causes him despair. Rather than reducing nature to his will he yearns for humanity and a benovolent pastoral: "Is this to be A God far rather would I be a Man / To know sweet Science & to do with simple companions / Sitting beneath a tent & viewing sheepfolds & soft pasture" (FZ.4. p.51: 29-31, E:334; K:301).

Vala can thus be seen to have a redemptive function in *The Four Zoas*; she is the nature made alien and idolised who later becomes pastoral and benign, thus prefiguring the pastoral/apocalyptic imagery of the harvest of "Night the Ninth." In "Night the Seventh" Vala is described in a pastoral context recalling an unfallen and integrated nature:

And she went forth & saw the forms of Life & of delight  
 Walking on Mountains or flying in the open expanse of heaven  
 She heard sweet voices in the winds & in the voices of the birds  
 That rose from waters for the waters were as the voice of Luvah  
 Not seen to her like waters or like this dark world of death  
 Tho all those fair perfections which men know only by name  
 In beautiful substantial forms appeared & served her  
 As food or drink or ornament or in delightful works  
 To build her bowers for the Elements brought forth abundantly  
 The living soul in glorious forms & every one came forth  
 Walking before her shadowy face & bowing at her feet  
 (FZ.7. p.94: 37-47, E:367; K:340)

Despite this taming of nature around Vala her counterpart, Orc, remains a "howling Melancholy." Consequently Vala adjoins herself to Beulah, becoming part of the benign and innocent pastoral state which becomes the site of the "Eternal Promise:" "If ye will believe your B[r]other shall rise again" (FZ.7. p.87[95]: 6, E:367 K:340). As soon as Vala has thus united with Beulah and ceased to be a separate and idolised nature goddess, Los, enabled by pity and Enitharmon, embraces his spectre: "Los embracd the Spectre first as a brother / Then as another Self; astonishd humanizing & in tears / In Self abasement" (FZ.7. p87 [95]: 29-31, 367; K:328). If we accept this ordering of the text, then the logic of the narrative suggests an overcoming of selfhood once nature is no

longer a separate and tyrannising "female will." The Spectre reminds Los that the individual is not the true or real self but that individuality is secondary and parasitic upon a more general creating "life:" "For thou art but a form & organ of life & of thyself / Art nothing being Created Continually by Mercy & Love divine" (FZ.7. p.86[95]: 2-3, E:368; K:329). As Los's selfhood is decentred and its finitude overcome, Blake employs the image of the opening gates: "Even I already feel a World within / Opening its gates" (FZ.7. p. 86: 7-9, E:368 K:329). And as Los embraces Enitharmon the image of the opening centre begins a description of the new tripartite soul, no longer centred on reason (as in Milton or Plato) but equally "threefold" and created by the imaginative labour of Los:

But Enitharmon trembling fled & hid beneath Urizens tree  
 But mingling together with his Spectre the Spectre of Urthona  
 Wondering beheld the Center open'd by Divine Mercy inspired  
 He in his turn Gave Tasks to Los Enormous to destroy  
 That body he created but in vain for Los perform'd Wonders of labour  
 They Builded Golgonooza Los labouring builded pillars high  
 And Domes terrific in the nether heavens for beneath  
 Was open'd new heavens & a new Earth beneath & within  
 Threefold within the brain within the heart within the loins  
 A Threefold Atmosphere Sublime continuous from Urthonas world  
 (FZ.7. p.87: 1-10, E:368; K:329)

Instead of picturing the different faculties of the self organised in a hierarchy with only reason gaining access to transcendence, Blake describes each function revealing a new heaven and earth. Three-fold vision is achieved by turning "inward" or within. However, the context of *The Four Zoas* quite clearly demonstrates that the heaven within must be preceded by "Self annihilation back returning / To Life Eternal" (FZ.7 p.95[87]: 34-35, E:368; K:328). Four-fold vision is the total unity achieved when the integrated three-fold self merges with integrated others. Consequently, in *Milton* Blake describes London (when it is renewed) as the city of art, as "Golgonooza the spiritual Four-fold London eternal" (M, 6: 1, E:99; K:485). Blake repeats this figuring of the city later in the first book of *Milton*: "the City of Golgonooza / Which is the spiritual fourfold London, in the loins of Albion" (M, 20[22]: 39-40, E:114;

K:502). Blake at once humanises the city by placing it in the loins of Albion at the same time as he sees the city, not the individual, as the site for complete vision. Furthermore the city, while being a renewed London, is still London - Blake's own temporal city and not a lost or other-worldly realm. Blake's choice of London as the spiritual four-fold city, and his inclusion of London's topography in *Jerusalem* also exercises a performative function. By including Blake's own locale in his prophecies he inscribes his own historical position into the epic tradition. The suburbs of London and cities of Britain become, like the cities of the Bible, a spiritual as well as geographic topography. The invocation to *Milton* claims that we do not need classical models if we are but just and true to our imaginations. Blake's use of London creates a new imaginative model altering both the classic and Hebraic traditions.

While Vala represents nature and its renewal in *The Four Zoas*, she is also important in the process of reunification because of her femininity. Although she is the "female will" of *The Four Zoas*, the process of reintegrating the feminine is central to the narrative of this and Blake's later prophecies. The horror of the "Spectres of the Dead" in "Night the Seventh" is a consequence of their being without their female counterparts thus precluding their possibility of vision: "Each Male formd without a counterpart without a centering vision" (FZ.7. p.87: 30, E:369; K:330). Vala as a representation of alienated female will and independent nature is joined by Jerusalem. The emergence of Jerusalem occurs after Enitharmon has woven bodies for the spectres; this process is described as "humanising" (FZ.8. p.101: 46, E:374; K:344). It is only after the embodiment of the male spectrous self that the retrieval of the female emanation can occur. Los and Enitharmon together create a form for human life, "a Vast family wondrous in beauty & love" (FZ.8. p.103: 37, E:376; K:345). Immediately after this Enitharmon names and acknowledges Jerusalem:

And Enitharmon namd the Female Jerusa[le]m the holy  
Wondring she saw the Lamb of God within Jerusalems Veil  
The divine Vision seen within the inmost deep recess

Of fair Jerusalems bosom in a gently beaming fire

Then sang the Sons of Eden round the Lamb of God & said  
 Glory Glory Glory to the holy Lamb of God  
 Who now beginneth to put off the dark Satanic body  
 Now we behold redemption Now we know that life Eternal  
 Depends alone upon the Universal hand & not in us  
 Is aught but death In individual weakness sorrow & pain  
 (FZ.8. p.104: 1-10, E:376; K:346)

With the appearance of Jerusalem, the body is no longer dark and Satanic, but a created and imaginative body woven by Enitharmon.<sup>38</sup> More importantly, the atomisation of the individual self is overcome with the recognition of the transcendence of the "Universal hand." Jerusalem, the agent of this moment of redemption becomes the site against which a war of sexual difference is conducted:

The war roard round Jerusalems Gates it took a hideous form  
 Seen in the aggregate a Vast Hermaphroditic form  
 Heavd like an Earthquake labring with convulsive groans  
 Intolerable at length an awful wonder burst  
 From the Hermaphroditic bosom Satan he was namd  
 Son of Perdition terrible his form dishumanizd monstrous  
 A male without a female counterpart a howling fiend  
 Fo[r]lorn of Eden & repugnant to the forms of life  
 Yet hiding the shadowy female Vala in an ark Curtains  
 (FZ.8. p.104: 19-28, E:377; K:347)

Blake uses the figure of Satan elsewhere (for example, the Bard's Song of *Milton*) to represent the impulse towards an annihilation of identity and particularity. Here, Satan as an "Hermaphroditic form" is a figure of the primary loss of difference - the difference of gender. He becomes the warlike "female hid within male" by concealing Vala. He is protecting Vala's alienated femininity which expresses itself in external nature and idolatry; hence the hermaphroditic character of Satan is associated with a "dishumanizd" form. But the mystery Vala encourages is overcome when the Lamb of God descends through Jerusalem's gates (FZ.8. p.104: 30-35, E:378; K:347-48). Vala herself is later redeemed in "Night the Ninth." As Albion awakes he gives Luvah and Vala their rightful place in the human form (FZ.9. p.126: 5-10, E:395; K:366). After this has been achieved Vala, united with Luvah, emerges from a pastoral



landscape and acknowledges to Luvah the vegetative sleep which has consumed her past:

Come forth O Vala from the grass & from the silent Dew  
Rise from the dews of death for the Eternal Man is Risen

She rises among flowers & looks toward the Eastern clearness  
She walks yea runs her feet are wingd on the tops of the bending grass  
Her garments rejoice in the vocal wind & her hair glistens with dew  
She answerd thus Whose voice is this in the voice of the nourishing air  
In the spirit of the morning awaking the Soul from its grassy bed  
Where dost thou dwell for it is thee I seek & but for thee  
I must have slept Eternally nor have felt the dew of thy morning  
(FZ.9. pp.126-27: 31-37 &1-2, E:395-96; K:367)

Following this image of Vala's resurrection, Vala conducts a dialogue with the sun. She at first accuses the sun: "O be thou blotted out thou Sun that raisedst me to trouble" (FZ.9. p.127: 20, E:396; K:368). But after being reprov'd by the sun Vala begins an ode which praises the sun and natural harmony in general:

Rise up O Sun most glorious minister & light of day  
Flow on ye gentle airs & bear the voice of my rejoicing  
Wave freshly clear waters flowing around the tender grass  
And thou sweet smelling ground put forth thy life in fruits & flowers  
Follow me O flocks & hear me sing my rapturous Song  
I will cause my voice to be heard on the clouds that glitter in the sun  
I will call & who shall answer me I will sing who shall reply  
For from my pleasant hills behold the living living springs  
Running among my green pastures delighting among my trees  
I am not here alone my flocks you are my brethren  
And you birds that sing & adorn the sky you are my sisters  
(FZ.9. p.128: 4-14, E:397; K:368)

Vala, no longer a nature goddess, is now more like the Christian shepherd. Her discourse is no longer that of individual will but of reciprocity, sisterhood and brotherhood. Vala's overcoming of her own selfhood prefigures the conclusion of "Night the Ninth" where the importance of the recognition of others, rather than individualism, is proclaimed by the Eternals:

In families we see our shadows born. & thence we know  
That Man subsists by Brotherhood & Universal Love

We fall on one anothers necks more closely we embrace  
 Not for ourselves but for the Eternal family we live  
 Man liveth not by Self alone but in his brothers face  
 Each shall behold the Eternal Father & love & joy abound  
 (FZ.9. p.133: 21-26, E:402; K:374)

The importance of gender to the fall lies in Blake's interpretation of the fallen state as self-division. The emanation emerges before the separation of the spectre. Antagonistic sexual opposition is the first stage towards self-disintegration. The pathology of this type of sexual difference is made clear by Urizen who likens Ahania to Vala, the archetype of female will, as he casts her out:

Saying Art thou also become like Vala. thus I cast thee out  
 Shall the feminine indolent bliss. the indulgent self of weariness  
 The passive idle sleep the enormous night & darkness of Death  
 Set herself up to give her laws to the active masculine virtue  
 Thou little diminutive portion that darst be a counterpart  
 Thy passivity thy laws of obedience & insincerity  
 Are my abhorrence. Wherefore has thou taken that fair form  
 Whence is this power given to thee! once thou wast in my breast  
 A sluggish current of dim waters.  
 (FZ.3. p.43: 5-13, E:328-29; K:295)

Urizen's yearning for a past when Ahania was not a counterpart but a "diminutive portion" is similar to the Miltonic idea of hierarchical subordination, where Ahania would be a necessary but inferior aspect of Urizen's masculine self. S. Foster Damon has argued that Blake actually reinforced the Miltonic advocacy of gender hierarchy: "he believed completely in the Miltonic ideal, that woman should submit to man, as man in turn submits to God."<sup>9</sup> In *The Four Zoas*, however, Blake demonstrates the futility of this model of sexual difference; it is the self-enclosed and domineering Urizen who demands subordination. Because Urizen perceives himself as pure masculine activity, feminine passivity can only be a threat; even in his supposedly unified past Ahania's passivity is likened to a "sluggish current." Urizen cannot envision a sexual difference of equal contraries; he even adopts a perverted form of the Miltonic trope of the feminine self as a reflection of the masculine superior: "Reflecting all my indolence my weakness

& my death" (FZ.3 p.43: 18, E:329; K:295). As we have seen, this metaphor of reflection is subverted in *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* where Oothoon challenges Theotormon's subordination with the rejoinder: "How can I be defiled when I reflect thy image pure?" (VDA, 3: 16, E:47; K:191). The problem with Urizen's attitude towards sexual difference is the same as with his attitude towards being in general. Reason must always totalise, define and assimilate that which it examines. Urizen's assertion that Ahania is a diminutive portion of his existence is all part of his "self-closed" universe which cannot acknowledge others or otherness. In his epics Blake's reintegration of the femininity of Jerusalem which opens to divine vision symbolises both the reintegration of the "other" part of the self as well as "others."

In the "Bard's Song" of *Milton* Blake offers a fable of female atonement and in doing so subtly contradicts the Miltonic conception of women as conducive to sin; he also challenges the idea of atonement as a form of divine justice. As James Rieger has noted, the narrative of the Bard's Song is concerned with the offering of the innocent to take on the sins of the guilty. According to Rieger, Blake adopts this model in order to avoid becoming a Satanic "accuser." In order to overcome the legalistic system of guilt and punishment sin must be displaced: "True wrath, pity, and love purge themselves of their Satanic counterfeits by taking on the imputation of guilt that boggles the legalistic understanding of the Sons of Albion."<sup>40</sup> Blake's doctrine of self-effacement before others takes here the ethical turn of the attainment of unwarranted forgiveness by an innocent for the guilty: "If the Guilty should be condemn'd, he must be an Eternal Death / And one must die for another throughout all Eternity" (M, 11[12]: 17-18. E:105; K:491). Consequently, Leutha (a daughter of Beulah) offers "herself a Ransom for Satan, taking on her, his Sin" (M, 11[12]: 30, E:105; K:492). In order to take on Satan's sin Leutha recounts how she "sprang out of the breast of Satan" (M, 12[13]: 10, E:105; K:492). This clearly recalls Milton's account of Sin springing from Satan's head in Book Two of *Paradise Lost*. But Leutha, here, has *taken on*

Satan's sin. When she announces that "I am the Author of this Sin" she is offering herself to the Assembly, as an innocent, to take on Satan's guilt. The entire fable she recounts is, then, less a story of the feminine origins of sin than it is an account of the taking on of sin by the feminine. After Leutha has recounted Satan's fall she recalls how Satan has expelled her from his "inmost Palace of his nervous fine wrought Brain" in a self-righteous demand for purity:

Cloth'd in the Serpents folds, in selfish holiness demanding purity  
 Being most impure, self-condemn'd to eternal tears, he drove  
 Me from his inmost Brain & the doors clos'd with thunders sound  
 O Divine Vision who didst create the Female: to repose  
 The Sleepers of Beulah: pity the repentant Leutha  
 (M, 12[13]: 46-50, E:106; K:493)

The important point is not so much that Leutha is Innocent but that Satan expels her in order to appear pure. Leutha is repentant while Satan remains the accuser. Her offering of herself is a subtle prefiguring of the theme of self-annihilation which both Milton and Blake will later undergo.

The renunciation of selfhood or individualism which forms an integral part of Blake's prophecies is, however, not a mystical annihilation of the self before an absolute transcendence.<sup>41</sup> Blake rejects mystery as a political weapon used to conceal the immediately apparent spirituality of human existence: "The good of the Land is before you for Mystery is no more" (FZ.9. p.134: 29, E:403; K:375). Once mystery is overcome, human enslavement to an other-worldly realm of fulfilment will cease: "Then All the Slaves from every Earth in the wide Universe / Sing a New Song drowning confusion in its happy notes" (FZ.9. p.134: 30-31, E:403; K:375). Mark Schorer rejects the view that Blake is a mystic by insisting on the poet's ethical vision: "his intuitions do not have a religious but an ethical content, do not deal with man's relationship to God but with man's relationship to his total being and to other men."<sup>42</sup> The renewal of the Eternal Man is accompanied by Luvah's realisation that conceptions of a transcendent and external deity are dehumanising. As soon as Luvah recognises this fact he ceases to be an image of the suffering Christ:

Attempting to be more than Man We become less said Luvah  
 As he arose from the bright feast drunk with the wine of ages  
 His crown of thorns fell from his head . . .  
 (FZ.9. p.135: 21-23, E:403; K:376)

The annihilation of selfhood in Blake's prophecies is not confined to Milton and Blake's Eternals. Blake includes himself as a character in *Milton* who is subsumed beneath the identity of Los. Blake's own experience of visitation in *Milton* highlights the possibility for contemporary and not deferred apocalypse. Like Wordsworth who asked of Paradise and the Elysian fields: "why should they be / A history only of departed things?"<sup>43</sup> Blake stresses that redemption can occur here and now:

While Los heard indistinct with fear, what time I bound my sandals  
 On; to walk forward thro' Eternity, Los descended to me:  
 And Los behind me stood; a terrible flaming Sun: just close  
 Behind my back; I turned round in terror, and behold.  
 Los stood in that fierce glowing fire; & he also stoop'd down  
 And bound my sandals on in Udan-Adan; trembling I stood  
 Exceedingly with fear & terror, atanding in the Vale  
 Of Lambeth: but he kissed me and wishd me health.  
 And I became One Man with him arising in my strength:  
 Twas too late now to recede. Los had enterd into my soul:  
 His terrors now possess'd me whole! I arose in fury & strength.

I am that Shadowy Prophet . . .  
 (M, 22[24]: 4-15, E:116-17; K:505)

Whereas Wordsworth's *Excursion* is "a review of his own mind"<sup>44</sup> and other individual minds, Blake's epic concentrates on the spiritual four-fold of London and the annihilation of his own individuality into the "One Man." The "I" of "I became One Man" shifts to "I arose in fury & strength" and becomes the "I" of Los's "I am that Shadowy Prophet." Blake enacts the dissolution of the lyric and Romantic "I" in this moment of *Milton* where his "I" is subsumed beneath the "I" of eternal imagination. While individuality, even the poet's own, is sublated, the specificity of history is not obscured. Blake as Los emphasises the importance of worldly existence and the here and now: "for not one Moment / Of Time is lost, nor one Event of Space unpermanent / But all

remain" (M, 22[24], 18-20, E:117; K:505). The world is not consumed in the apocalypse but renewed. As Ronald Grimes has noted "The 'vegetable world,' the world of time and space, is not left behind in a flight to the timeless but becomes the foundation for a walk through eternity."<sup>45</sup> Similarly in *The Four Zoas* each of the dead is resurrected "as he had livd before" bearing all the marks of labour and suffering. The apocalypse neither annihilates nor justifies the cruelty of human history:

And every one of the dead appears as he had livd before  
 And all the marks remain of the Slaves scourge & tyrants Crown  
 And of the Priests oergorged Abdomen & of the merchants thin  
 Sinewy deception & of the warriors ou[t]braving & thoughtlessness  
 In lineaments too extended & in bones too strait & long

They shew their wounds they accuse they sieze the oppressor howlings  
 began  
 (FZ.9. p.122-23: 40 & 1-5, E:392; K:363)

The doctrine of forgiveness which is emphasised to a greater extent in *Jerusalem* is still significant in *The Four Zoas* which advocates a mutual harmony of the four eternal rather than their continuing strife. But despite Blake's renunciation of a punishing law the dead must still emerge with all their marks and accuse their oppressor. This is done less in a spirit of revenge than in a desire to recognise the multitudes of the city and their importance in the spiritual London. The vengeful dead conduct a battle until they "see him whom they have piercd." When they see this vision of Christ they cease being warlike and "the Judge springs from his throne / Hiding his face in the dust beneath the prisoners feet" (FZ.9. p.123: 20-25, E:392; K:364). Judgment ends, forgiveness begins and eventually the plow of Urizen is taken up to begin the harvest. Forgiveness for Blake does not mean forgetting the dead or compensating for the world's injustice with an eventual atonement. The harvest only begins when the dead have emerged, when the spectres have been clothed and embodied and when the marks of suffering are acknowledged. Renewal involves the cessation, not the effacement, of the history of war and suffering.

Blake's response to Milton, therefore, challenges the logical ethics of justice and virtue with a doctrine of forgiveness and an aesthetic theory reinforcing the importance of intersubjective imagination. For Milton and the later Romantics, solitary reflection enabled the self to surpass its worldly limits and gain transcendence. For Blake the individual self is the consequence of a fall into disunity; only by annihilating the self and regaining the original condition of brotherhood can the imagination be liberated. Against Milton's hierarchisation of contraries Blake sets mutual integration; energy and its bounding form. The mind and the body and masculinity and femininity are not distinct modes of being in an ordered hierarchy but facets of a unified being grounded in the imagination. Blake adopts the overarching figure of the divine imagination, Christ or Albion in order to give a ground and form to the formless void of modern ideology. The Aristotelian ontology, in which each being has its own place in the cosmos because of its ontological mode, relies upon a theory of natural law and is therefore anathema to Blake. But Blake still rejects the equalitarianism of the Newtonian void and asserts the "minute particulars" of each being. In order to achieve a differentiation of the void without drawing upon a transcendent order or divine law, Blake places all experience and activity against the background of the human form.

- 1 George Mills Harper, *The NeoPlatonism of William Blake* (Chapel: University of California Press; London: Oxford University Press, 1961) 35. Harper quotes from Blake's letter to George Cumberland of July 1800 (E:706; K:797).
- 2 S. Foster Damon, *William Blake: His Philosophy and Symbols* (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1958) 166.
- 3 Harper 57.
- 4 I would therefore agree with Harold Bloom who, writing about the first chapter of *Jerusalem*, states: "Nothing can be further from Platonism than this doctrine of the utter dependence of nature upon art for its energies, as the ultimate forms are made by Los, the imaginative principle in man, and do not exist apart from any man's creativity." *Blake's Apocalypse* 385-86.
- 5 Erdman, *Prophet* 286.
- 6 M.H. Abrams, "English Romanticism: The Spirit of the Age," *Romanticism Reconsidered: Selected Papers from the English Institute*, ed. Northrop Frye (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963).
- 7 Erdman, *Prophet* 293.
- 8 Erdman, *Prophet* 293.
- 9 Erdman, *Prophet* 308.
- 10 D.J. Sloss and J.P.R. Wallis, *The Prophetic Writings of William Blake*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1926) 143.
- 11 I have followed David Erdman in placing deleted, erased, written over or replaced material in italics and square brackets.
- 12 Ronald L. Grimes, "Time and Space in Blake's Major Prophecies," *Blake's Sublime Allegory: Essays on The Four Zoas Milton Jerusalem*, ed. Stuart Curran and Joseph Anthony Wittreich Jr. (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1973) 65.
- 13 Joseph Addison, *The Spectator* [339, (Sat. Mar. 29, 1712)], ed. Donald F. Bond, vol. 3 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965) 258.



- 14 "To Isaac Bickerstaff Esq." [32, Thursday, June 23, 1709] *The Tatler*, ed. Donald F. Bond, vol.I (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987) 237.
- 15 William Hayley, *The Life of Milton*, 2nd ed. (1796); Facsimile Reproduction, ed. Joseph Anthony Wittreich Jr. (Gainesville: Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints, 1970) 206.
- 16 Hayley, *Life* viii-ix.
- 17 Hayley, *Life* 26.
- 18 Hayley, *Life* 48-49.
- 19 Hayley, *Life* 56.
- 20 Hayley, *Life* 57 & 58.
- 21 See Arthur Barker, "And On His Crest Sat Horror: Eighteenth Century Interpretations of Milton's Sublimity," *University of Toronto Quarterly* 11 (1941-2): 421-36.
- 22 F.C., "To Mr. John Milton, On . . . *Paradise Lost*," H.J. Todd ed., *The Poetical Works of John Milton with Notes of Various Authors*, 3rd ed., vol. 1 (London, 1826) 199-200.
- 23 "A Propitiatory Sacrifice to the Ghost of John Milton . . ." Todd, *Poetical Works of John Milton* 202.
- 24 Joseph Addison, "An Account of the Greatest English Poets, To Mr Henry Sacheverell, April 3. 1694," *The Poetical Works of the Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.* (Edinburgh, 1773) 32.
- 25 W.S., "An Epistle to Mr. W\_\_\_\_, Fellow of This Coll. Cantab." qtd. in John Walter Good, *Studies in the Milton Tradition* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1915) 60.
- 26 William Cowper, "The Task," Book 3, *The Poetical Works of William Cowper*, ed. Charles Whitehead (London, 1857) 301.
- 27 Mark Akenside, "To Thomas Edwards, Esq. On the Late Edition of Mr. Pope's Works," *The Poetical Works of Mark Akenside*, Charles Cowden Clarke ed. (London, 1880) 220.
- 28 Samuel Bishop, "Genius," *The Poetical Works of the Rev. Samuel Bishop*, Thomas Clare ed., vol.1 (London, 1796) 222.

- 29 William Hayley, "An Essay on Epic Poetry." *Hayley's Poems and Plays*, vol. 3 (London, 1785) 73 .
- 30 Michael C. Ferber has argued that although Locke's rejection of innate ideas was popular with late seventeenth-and-early-eighteenth-century radicals and dissenters, by the mid-eighteenth century the radical tradition began to doubt the philosophy of unbridled individual freedom and commercialism. According to Ferber, the Quaker tradition, which emphasised the "inner light" provided an antidote to Locke's equalitarianism. By returning to seventeenth-century Christian thought it could be argued that "man's potential innate autonomy requires for its fulfilment not the 'right' to enter into contracts with other isolated selves but the radical mutual interpenetration of others in a total community." Michael Ferber, *The Social Vision of William Blake* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985) 25.
- 31 Blake summarises this modern world-view in his annotations to Thornton's *The Lord's Prayer, Newly Translated*: "Thus we see that the Real God is the Goddess Nature & that God Creates nothing but what can be Touchd & Weighed & Taxed & Measured" (E:670; K:789).
- 32 Satan does not only represent aspects of modern individualism; he is also associated with the traditional virtues of which Blake was critical, including justice, Milton's central virtue. The "four iron pillars of Satans Throne" are "Temperance, Prudence, Justice, Fortitude." Blake describes these virtues as "the four pillars of tyranny" (M, 29[31]: 48-49, E:128; K:517).
- 33 This line in *Jerusalem* also recalls Milton's description of chaos in *Paradise Lost*: "Without dimension, where length, bredth, and highth, / And time and place are lost" (PL.2.893-94).
- 34 Locke, *Essay*, bk.4, ch. 6, 10 585.
- 35 William Wordsworth, "The Prelude," (1805) *Wordsworth: Poetical Works*, rev. ed. ed. Thomas Hutchinson and Ernest de Selincourt (1969; Oxford:

- Oxford University Press, 1987). All quotations are taken from this edition.
- 36 Harold Bloom, writing of *There is No Natural Religion*, points out that Blake's reaction to Cartesian doubt was to endow the natural world with as much truth and meaning as possible: "As Descartes had resolved to doubt whatever could be doubted, so Blake in reaction resolved to find an image of truth in everything it was possible to believe." *Blake's Apocalypse*, 24.
- 37 Following David Erdman I have included deleted material in italics and square brackets.
- 38 Morton D. Paley has argued that Blake's theory of creation-as-emanation in *The Four Zoas* forces him to see the body as fallen despite his avowed valorisation of the body elsewhere. The figure of weaving, or the garment, is therefore introduced to overcome this difficulty by placing an intermediary between the spiritual and natural levels of being: "In introducing the figure of the garment, Blake makes it possible for us to view the body as a buffer zone between the drives and appetites which constitute man as mere spectre and Beulah, the potential earthly paradise within." Morton D. Paley, "The Figure of the Garment in *The Four Zoas*, *Milton* and *Jerusalem*," Curran and Wittreich, *Sublime Allegory* 126.
- 39 S. Foster Damon, *William Blake* 113.
- 40 James Rieger, "The Hem of Their Garments': The Bard's Song in *Milton*," Curran and Wittreich, *Sublime Allegory*, 270.
- 41 S. Foster Damon defined Blake as a mystic but used the Evelyn Underhill definition of mysticism as the belief that heaven is "an actual state within us." S. Foster Damon, *William Blake* 2. Even employing this definition Blake is not quite a mystic, for heaven not only lies within but between human beings in human interaction.
- 42 Mark Schorer, *William Blake: The Politics of Vision* (New York: Henry Holt, 1946) 47.

- 43 William Wordsworth, Preface to *The Excursion*, (ll.49-50), *Poetical Works* 590.
- 44 Wordsworth 589.
- 45 Ronald L. Grimes, "Time and Space in Blake's Major Prophecies," Curran and Wittreich, *Sublime Allegory* 61. Harold Bloom also insists that "Blake's heaven . . . is a radical renewal of this world, an Earth more alive to the awakened senses than the one that so fearfully turns away." *Blake's Apocalypse*, 131. I consequently disagree with G.M. Harper who claimed that "Blake agreed with the Neoplatonists in considering time as essentially evil because of its connections with the world of generation." [Harper, 137.] Blake only sees time as evil when it is the external empty container of Newtonian philosophy. Once time is commanded by Los or the imagination it is redemptive and merciful.

## Conclusion

In his early work, *De Idea Platonica*, Milton satirises the Aristotelian realism which refuses to understand the transcendent nature of the Platonic "idea" or "form."<sup>1</sup> The realist speaker asks "who that first man was according to whose likeness cunning nature moulded all the forms of men . . . the pattern used by God." The literal-minded speaker fails to understand the Platonic relationship between universals and particulars. By asking who and where "that first man" is the speaker is asking particular questions of universals and fails to grasp the eternal and transcendent character of the idea. Significantly, the exemplary "idea" used by Milton in *De Idea Platonica* is that of the eternal form of "man," a "mighty giant, this archetype of man." The idea of the archetypal man is actually a neo-Platonic conception. The Christian neo-Platonists usually explained the Platonic forms as "ideas" of the divine mind. Milton seems to support this interpretation with his repeated insistence that knowledge of what is eternally true can only be achieved through the soul's relationship to God. In his Platonic Seventh *Proclusion* Milton insists that contemplation of the forms, spiritual devotion and perfect knowledge are intertwined (CPW.1.292-306).

Unlike the literalist Aristotelian speaker of *De Idea Platonica*, Milton is able to argue coherently about eternal forms or ideas because he has established a transcendent God. Blake, like the speaker of *De Idea Platonica*, is also concerned with the "mighty giant, or eternal man" (*De Idea*.) and similarly repudiates the concept of transcendence. It is not surprising, therefore, that given Milton's defence of transcendence, Blake's response is to re-humanise the archetypal man. Albion is not a "pattern used by god" nor is he "lodged in the brain of Jove" (*De Idea*.) Blake's insistence that each particular entity has its own form refuses the transcendence of form in the Platonic sense. At the same time, his positing of an "eternal man" provides an

intersubjective ground for each particular form - a point of forgiveness and renewal - which is, again, not transcendent in the Platonic or Miltonic sense.

Blake's "eternal man" exists at the level of imagination and creation. Milton's descent from eternity in Milton which precipitates the awakening of Albion is primarily an aesthetic and communicative act. Milton refuses the transcendence of reason by sculpting Urizen in clay and overcomes the divisive and antagonistic behaviour of Satan by acknowledging his complicity with the accuser:

Satan! my Spectre! I know my power thee to annihilate  
And be a greater in thy place, & be thy Tabernacle  
A covering for thee to do thy will, till one greater comes  
And smites me as I smote thee & becomes my covering.  
(M, 38[43]: 29-32, E:139; K:529)

The "grey monk" cycle of accusation and punishment is overcome by Milton's refusal to be "a greater" in the place of Satan - a refusal to become a holy tabernacle only to be succeeded by another accuser.

The Miltonic notion of the integrity of justice is challenged by Blake's doctrine of forgiveness. The logical necessity and transcendence which grounded the classical conception of the virtues subordinates human existence to an external command or form. Milton, whose main aim was the internalisation of the law, allowed for this element of exteriority because for him the soul, by its transcendent nature, was a part of divine transcendence. Blake's refusal of transcendence, however, grounds an ethics thoroughly immanent to human being where the only transcendence allowed is the imaginative aggregate of other human beings. For Milton, God *must* expel Adam from paradise in accord with divine law which is anterior to will. The moderns, reacting against the traditional logic of divine law, created a voluntarist and willing God and a corresponding worldly ethics based on human will rather than virtue. Blake rejects both the transcendence of divine law and the atomisation of individual wills in the modern state of nature. Whereas for

Milton grace could not be extended without the satisfaction of justice, Blake's ethics of forgiveness is based upon the compelling and spontaneous recognition of others prior to law or self-interest.

In traditional ethics the passions and the will were limited and ordered by the virtues. Once the traditional concept of the virtues was abandoned modern ethics confronted the problem of how ethical behaviour could be legitimated. What could limit the desires of the self? For Hobbes, only the state can control self-interest, the state being an outgrowth of longer-term self-interest. Critics of Hobbes's arguments maintained that ethical behaviour was not a function of self-interest and that the self could outstep its own desires. Hazlitt, who articulated the most vehement opposition to Hobbesian self-interest argued for disinterestedness but did so from the empiricist's premise of the isolated individual. While arguing that the self could surpass its own interests Hazlitt still maintained the ontological self-sufficiency of individuals. Concern for the welfare of others is analogous to concern for our own future affairs. While it is true that we cannot experience the feelings of our own future concerns we can project ourselves "forward" to what we cannot presently feel. By the same argument, just as I can project towards my own future affairs so I can project into the affairs of others. While the present and past can only be known by the "mechanical" effect of sensations,

I have not the same sort of exclusive, or mechanical self-interest in my future being or welfare, because I have no distinct faculty giving me a direct present interest in my future sensations, and none at all in those of others. The imagination, by means of which alone I can anticipate future objects, or be interested in them, must carry me out of myself into the feelings of others by one and the same process by which I am thrown forward as it were into my future being, and interested in it.<sup>2</sup>

Hazlitt still presupposes modern individual self-presence in order to argue that self-love entails "loving others."<sup>3</sup> His imagination is still the individual imagination, albeit one which can seek the good of others. For Hazlitt we can only experience our own feelings or interests directly; interest for others has to be derived from this basis. Consequently both Hobbes and Hazlitt argue for

the "mechanical" and individual nature of experience, although Hazlitt extends the perimeters of this experience. Blake denies the modern individualist premises on both sides of this debate. It is not necessary to prove or argue that the self can or cannot act above and beyond its interest, for the "self" is an aberration of the fallen world of traditional ethics and modern ideology. Appropriately conceived, selves are not selves at all but are by their very nature mutually constitutive aspects of an eternal imagination. Selves do not need to step out of their own interests; they are already formed and created by the existence of others. The grounds of existence for Blake - the imagination, Jerusalem the building of human souls, and the body of Christ of which all believers form a part - are primarily intersubjective. Such "intersubjectivity" is not a "connection" of individuals but the ground from which individuals are formed.

In his invocations to *Paradise Lost* Milton had expressed the impotence of individual genius without the influx of divine aid. Milton's ethics, in general, centred on the recognition of human finitude - a fact lamentably overlooked by his Satan. Blake refutes the finitude of human being, constantly stressing the infinite and all-encompassing character of the imagination. At the same time, like Milton, Blake also challenges the modern drive to autonomy and self-grounding. The individual is finite but human being in general is infinite. Milton's reason could be autonomous and self-grounding once it received the influx of divine light. Blake's images of redemption, on the other hand, do not involve inward vision (as in *Samson Agonistes*) but interaction and recognition: the retrieval of the female emanation, the embodiment and embrace of reason/Urizen, the construction of a building of souls (Jerusalem) and the renewal of the eternal human form (Albion). This move outwards beyond the self is not, however, a move to alienation or exteriority but a return to imagination's proper dwelling. Such a return is never final precisely because the imagination is appropriately not a static and self-enclosed entity but a dynamic, renovating and inclusive act of a plurality of beings. In contrast to



Milton's transcendent and eternal God of truth and justice Blake sets the ever-renewing imagination: not the solitary imagination, but the renovative powers in the continually recreated art of the eternal man: "All things acted on Earth are seen in the bright Sculptures of / Los's Halls & every Age renews its powers from these Works" (J, 16: 61-62, E:161; K:638).

- 1 John Milton, "On the Platonic Idea, as Aristotle Understood it," trans. Charles Knapp, Poetical Works, ed. Darbishire 607.
- 2 William Hazlitt, "An Essay of the Principles of Human Action," *The Complete Works of Hazlitt in Twenty-One Volumes*, P.P. Howe ed. vol. 1 (London: J.M. Dent, 1930) 1-2. John Howard refers to the importance of the philosophical debate surrounding self-love in his book, *Blake's Milton: A Study in the Selfhood*, (Cranbury, New Jersey: Associated University Presses, 1976) 58-9.
- 3 Hazlitt 4.

## Works Cited

- Abrams, M.H. "English Romanticism: The Spirit of the Age." *Romanticism Reconsidered: Selected Papers from the English Institute*. Ed. Northrop Frye. New York: Columbia University Press, 1963. 26-72.
- Addison, Joseph. "An Account of the Greatest English Poets." *The Poetical Works of the Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.* Edinburgh, 1773. 30-35.
- Adorno, Theodor and Horkheimer, Max. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Trans. John Cumming. London: Verso, 1979.
- Aers, David and Hodge, Bob. "Rational Burning: Milton on Sex and Marriage." *Milton Studies* 13 (1979): 3-33.
- Agar, Herbert. *Milton and Plato*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1928.
- Akenside, Mark. "To Thomas Edwards, Esq. On the Late Edition of Mr. Pope's Works" *The Poetical Works of Mark Akenside*. Ed. Charles Cowden Clarke. London, 1880. 218-220.
- Aristotle, *The Ethics of Aristotle: The Nicomachean Ethics*. Trans. J.A.K. Thomson. 1953. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976.
- Armstrong, A.H. "Augustine and Christian Platonism." *Augustine: A Collection of Critical Essays*. Ed. R.A. Marcus. New York: Doubleday, 1972.
- Augustine. *Sermons on Selected Lessons of the New Testament*. vol.2. Oxford, 1845.
- . *The City of God Against the Pagans*. Trans. Philip Levine. vol. 4. Loeb Classical Library. London: Heinemann; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University

Press, 1966.

---. *The City of God Against the Pagans*. Trans. William Chase Green. vol. 6. Loeb Classical Library. London: Heinemann; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960.

Ault, Donald. *Visionary Physics: Blake's Response to Newton*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974.

Bacon, Francis. "An Advertisement Touching the Controversies of the Church of England." *The Letters and the Life of Francis Bacon; Including All his Occasional Works*. Ed. James Spedding. vol.1. London: Longman, 1861. 74-95.

Barker, Arthur. "And On His Crest Sat Horror: Eighteenth Century Interpretations of Milton's Sublimity." *University of Toronto Quarterly*. 11 (1941-2): 421-36.

Barker, Arthur. *Milton and the Puritan Dilemma: 1641-1660*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1942.

Behrendt, Stephen C. *The Moment of Explosion: Blake and the Illustration of Milton*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983.

Belsey, Catherine. "The Romantic Construction of the Unconscious." *Literature, Politics and Theory: Papers from the Essex Conference 1976-84*. Ed. Francis Barker, Peter Hulme, Margaret Iversen and Diana Loxley. London: Methuen, 1986. 57-76.

Bentley, G.E. Jr., "Blake's Songs of Innocence and of Experience." Unpublished Paper delivered at the Humanities Research Centre. The Australian National University, May 1989.

Bettenson, Henry., ed. *Documents of the Christian Church*. 2nd ed. London: Oxford University Press, 1963.

Blake, William. *Blake: Complete Writings*. Ed. Geoffrey Keynes. 1957. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1989.

Blake, William. *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*. Ed. David V. Erdman. Rev. ed.<sup>(1982)</sup> New York: Anchor-Doubleday, 1988.

Bishop, Samuel. "Genius." *The Poetical Works of the Rev. Samuel Bishop*. Ed. Thomas Clare. vol. 1. London, 1796. 221-225.

Bloom, Harold. *Blake's Apocalypse: A Study in Poetic Argument*. London: Victor Gollancz, 1963.

---. *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry*. London: Oxford University Press, 1973.

---. Introduction. *John Milton's Paradise Lost*. Ed. Harold Bloom. Modern Critical Interpretations Series. New York: Chelsea House, 1987.

---. Commentary. *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*. Ed. David Erdman. New York: Anchor, 1988. 894-970.

Blumenberg, Hans. *The Genesis of the Copernican World*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1987.

Bond, Donald F., ed. *The Tatler*. vol.I. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987.

---, ed. *The Spectator*. vol. 3. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965.

Broadbent, J.B. *Some Graver Subject: An Essay on Paradise Lost*. London: Chatto and Windus, 1960.

Burke, Edmund. *Reflections on the French Revolution*. Ed. A.J. Grieve. London: Dent, 1910.

Burke, Edmund. "Speech on Presenting to the House of Commons (On the 11th February, 1780), A Plan for the Better Security of the Independence of Parliament, and the Economical Reformation of the Civil and other Establishments." *The Works of the Right Honourable Edmund Burke*. vol. 2. London: Oxford University Press, 1906. 303-385.

Calvin, John. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Trans. Ford Lewis Battles. Rev. ed. London: Collins, 1986.

Carey John, ed. *Complete Shorter Poems*. By John Milton. 1971; Harlow: Longman, 1987.

Carlyle, R.W, and A.J. Carlyle. *A History of Mediaeval Political Theory in the West*. vol. 1. Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1903.

Cixous, Helene. "Sorties." *New French Feminisms*. Ed. Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron. 1980. Sussex: Harvester, 1985. 90-98.

Collingwood, R.G. *The Idea of Nature*. 1945. London: Oxford University Press, 1965.

Cowper, William. *The Poetical Works of William Cowper*. Ed. Charles Whitehead. London, 1857.

Curran, Stuart, and Joseph Wittreich eds. *Blake's Sublime Allegory: Essays on*

The Four Zoas Milton Jerusalem. Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1973.

Damon, S. Foster. "Blake and Milton." *The Divine Vision: Studies in the Poetry and Art of William Blake*. Ed. Vivian de Sola Pinto. London: Gollancz, 1957. 91-96.

Damon, S. Foster. *William Blake: His Philosophy and Symbols*. Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1958. (1924)

Danielson, Dennis Richard. *Milton's Good God: A Study in Literary Theodicy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982.

---, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Milton*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

Davies, Stevie. *The Idea of Woman in Renaissance Literature: The Feminine Reclaimed*. Sussex: Harvester, 1986.

Diekhoff, John S. "The Function of the Prologues in Paradise Lost." *PMLA* 57 (1942): 697-704.

DiSalvo, Jackie. *War of the Titans: Blake's Critique of Milton*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1983.

Dumont, Louis. *From Mandeville to Marx: The Genesis and Triumph of Economic Ideology*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1977.

---. *Essays on Individualism: Modern Ideology in Anthropological Perspective*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988.

Dunbar, Pamela. *William Blake's Illustrations to the Poetry of Milton*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980.

Easthope, Anthony. *Poetry as Discourse*. London: Methuen, 1983.

Erdman, David. *Blake: Prophet Against Empire*. 3rd ed. 1982. New York: Dover, 1991.

Eusebius, *In Praise of Constantine: A Historical Study and New Translation of Eusebius' Triennial Orations*. Trans. and Ed. H.A Drake. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976.

Ferber, Michael. *The Social Vision of William Blake*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1985.

Froula, Christine. "Pechter's Spectre: Milton's Bogey Writ Small: or, Why Is He Afraid of Virginia Woolf?" *Critical Inquiry* 11 (1984-5): 171-78.

---. "When Eve Reads Milton: Undoing the Canonical Economy." *Critical Inquiry* 10 (1983-4): 321-47.

Frye, Northrop. *Fearful Symmetry: A Study of William Blake*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947.

---. "The Typology of Paradise Regained." *Modern Philology* 53 (1956): 227-238.

---. *Five Essays on Milton's Epics*. 1965. London: Routledge, 1966.

Gallagher, Philip. "Milton's Bogey." *PMLA* 94 (1979): 319-21.

Gilbert, Sandra. "Patriarchal Poetry and Women Readers: Reflections on



Milton's Bogey." *PMLA* 93 (1978): 368-382.

Gilson, Etienne. *The Christian Philosophy of Saint Augustine*. Trans. L.E.M. Lynch. London: Victor Gollancz, 1961.

Good, John Walter. *Studies in the Milton Tradition*. Urbana: University of Illinois, 1915.

Gosson, Stephen. *The School of Abuse: Contayning a Pleasant Invective against Poets, Pipers, Players, Jesters and such like Caterpillars of a Commonwealth*. London, 1579.

Grimes, Ronald L. "Time and Space in Blake's Major Prophecies." *Blake's Sublime Allegory: Essays on The Four Zoas Milton Jerusalem*. Ed. Stuart Curran and Joseph Anthony Wittreich Jr. Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1973. 47- 65.

Harper, George Mills. *The Neoplatonism of William Blake*. Chapel: University of California Press; London: Oxford University Press. 1961.

Hartman, Geoffrey H. "Nature and the Humanisation of the Self in Wordsworth." *English Romantic Poets*. Ed. M.H. Abrams. 2nd ed. London: Oxford University Press, 1975. 123-132.

Hayley, William, *The Life of Milton*. 2nd ed. 1796. Facsimile Reproduction. Ed. Joseph Anthony Wittreich Jr. Gainesville: Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints, 1970.

---. "An Essay on Epic Poetry." *Hayley's Poems and Plays*. vol. 3. London, 1785. 1-131.

Hazlitt, William. "An Essay of the Principles of Human Action." *The Complete Works of Hazlitt in Twenty-One Volumes*. Ed. P.P. Howe. vol. 1. London: J.M. Dent, 1930. 1-49.

Heidegger, Martin. *Being and Time*. Trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson. 1962. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985.

---. *What is a Thing*. Trans. W.B. Barton and Vera Deutsch. 1967. Lanham: University Press of America 1985.

Hill, Christopher. *Milton and the English Revolution*. London: Faber and Faber, 1977.

---. *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas During the English Revolution*. 1972. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982.

---. "Samson Agonistes Again." *Literature and History* 1 (1990): 24-39.

Hobbes, Thomas. *Leviathan*. Ed. Richard Tuck. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Husserl, Edmund. *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*. Trans. Dorion Cairns. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1960.

Irigaray, Luce. *Speculum of the Other Woman*. Trans. Gillian C. Gill. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985.

Jameson, Fredric. "Religion and Ideology: a Political Reading of Paradise Lost." *Literature, Politics and Theory: Papers from the Essex Conference 1976-84*. Ed. Francis Barker, Peter Hulme, Margaret Iversen and Diana Loxley. (London: Methuen, 1986) 35-56.

Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Pure Reason*. Trans. Norman Kemp Smith. 1929. London: Macmillan, 1986.

Kermode, Frank. *An Appetite for Poetry: Essays in Literary Interpretation*. London: Collins, 1989.

Ketchum, Sara Ann. "Liberalism and Marriage Law." *Feminism and Philosophy*. Ed. Mary Wetterling-Braggin, Frederick A. Elliston and Jane English. 1977. Totowa: Rowmans and Allenheld, 1985. 264-276.

Koyre, Alexandre. *From the Closed World to the Infinite Universe*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1957.

Landy, Marcia. "Kinship and the Role of Women in Paradise Lost." *Milton Studies* 4 (1972): 3-18.

Lewalski, Barbara. "Milton on Women - Yet Once More." *Milton Studies* 6 (1974): 3-20.

Lewis, C.S. *A Preface to Paradise Lost*. London: Oxford University Press, 1942.

Lloyd, Genevieve. *Man of Reason: "Male" and "Female" in Western Philosophy*. London: Methuen, 1984.

Locke, John. *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Ed. Peter H. Nidditch. 1975. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979.

---. *Two Treatises of Government*. Ed. Peter Laslett. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

Lovejoy, Arthur O. *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea*.

Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1936.

Lukes, Steven. *Individualism*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1973.

Lycos, Kimon. *Plato on Justice and Power: Reading Book I of Plato's Republic*. London: Macmillan, 1987.

MacIntyre, Alasdair. *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*. 2nd ed. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984.

MacPherson, C.B. *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962.

McColley, Diane Kelsey. *Milton's Eve*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983.

Milner, Andrew. *John Milton and the English Revolution: A Study in the Sociology of Literature*. London: Macmillan, 1981.

Milton, John. *The Poetical Works of John Milton*. Ed. Helen Darbishire. London: Oxford University Press, 1958.

Milton, John. *Complete Prose Works of John Milton*. Ed. Don M. Wolfe et al. 8 vols. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953-82.

Newton, Isaac. *Sir Isaac Newton's Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy and his System of the World*. Trans. Andrew Motte. 1729. Rev. and Ed. Florian Cajori. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1934.

O'Keefe, Timothy J. *Milton and the Pauline Tradition: A Study of Theme and Symbolism*. Washington: University Press of America, 1982.

Orgel, Stephen. "Nobody's Perfect: or Why Did the Renaissance Stage Take Boys For Women." *South Atlantic Quarterly* 88 (1989): 7-29.

Overton, Richard. *An Arrow Against all Tyrants*. 1646. Exeter: The Rota, 1976.

Parker, William Riley. "The Date of *Samson Agonistes*." *Philological Quarterly* 27 (1949): 145-66.

---. "The Date of *Samson Agonistes*: A Postscript." *Notes and Queries* 5 (1958): 201-2.

Patrides, C.A. *Milton and the Christian Tradition*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966.

Paley, Morton D. "The Figure of the Garment in *The Four Zoas*, Milton and Jerusalem" Curran and Wittreich ed. *Sublime Allegory*.

Pechter, Edward. "When Pechter Reads Froula Pretending She's Eve Reading Milton; or, New Feminist Is But Old Priest Writ Large." *Critical Inquiry* 11 (1984-5): 163-170.

Plato. *Portrait of Socrates: Being the Apology, Crito, and Phaedo of Plato in an English Translation with Introductions and Notes*. Trans. R.W. Livingstone. 1938. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966.

---. *The Republic*. Trans. H.D.P. Lee. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1955.

Popper, K.R. *The Open Society and its Enemies*. 5th ed. London: Routledge, 1991.

Prynne, William. *Histrion-mastix: The Players Scourge, or, Actors Tragedie*. London, 1633.

Quilligan, Maureen. *Milton's Spenser: The Politics of Reading*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983.

Richardson, Alan. "The Politics of Childhood: Wordsworth, Blake and the Catechistic Method." *ELH* 56 (1989): 853-868.

Rieger, James. "'The Hem of Their Garments': The Bard's Song in *Milton*." Curran and Wittreich ed. *Sublime Allegory*.

Richmond, Hugh M. *The Christian Revolutionary: John Milton*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974.

Samuel, Irene. *Plato and Milton*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1947.

Saurat, Denis. *Blake and Milton*. London: Stanley Nott, 1935.

Schorer, Mark. *William Blake: The Politics of Vision*. New York: Henry Holt, 1946.

Schouls, Peter, A. *Descartes and the Enlightenment*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press; Toronto: Queen's University Press, 1989.

Shakespeare, William. *Romeo and Juliet*. Ed. Brian Gibbons. The Arden Shakespeare. London: Methuen, 1980.

Sharpe, Kevin and Steven Zwicker, eds. *Politics of Discourse: The Literature and History of Seventeenth Century England*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987.

Sirluck, Ernest. "Some Recent Suggested Changes in the Chronology of Milton's Poems." *Journal of English and German Philology* 60 (1961): 749-85.

Sloss, D.J. and J.P.R. Wallis. *The Prophetic Writings of William Blake*. 2 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1926.

Swaim, Kathleen M. "Hee for God Only, Shee for God in Him': Structural Parallelism in *Paradise Lost*." *Milton Studies* 9 (1976): 121-50.

Swedenborg, Emmanuel. *Heaven and Hell: From Things Heard and Seen*. Trans. J.C. Ager. Ed. Doris H. Harley. London: The Swedenborg Society, 1958.

Tawney, R.H. *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism: A Historical Study*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1938. (London, 1926).

Tertullian. *Apology*. Trans. T.R. Glover. Loeb Classical Library. London: Heinemann; New York: G.P. Putnam, 1931.

Thomson, James. "To the Memory of Sir Isaac Newton." *The Poetical Works of James Thomson*. vol. 2. London, 1836. 213-219.

Todd H.J., ed. *The Poetical Works of John Milton with Notes of Various Authors*. 3rd ed. vol. 1. London, 1826.

Toennies, Ferdinand. *Fundamental Concepts of Sociology: (Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft)*. Trans. Charles P. Loomis. New York: American Book Company, 1940.

Troeltsch, Ernst. *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*. Trans. Olive Wyon. 2 vols. London: Allen and Unwin; New York: Macmillan, 1931.

Weber, Max. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Trans. Talcott Parsons. 1930. London: Allen & Unwin, 1976.

Werner, Bette Charlene. *Blake's Vision of the Poetry of Milton: Illustrations to Six Poems*. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1986.

Whitehead, A.N. *Science and the Modern World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932.

Wittreich, Joseph Anthony Jr. "Blake's Philosophy of Contraries: A New Source." *English Language Notes* 4 (1966): 105-10.

---. *Angel of Apocalypse: Blake's Idea of Milton*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1975.

---. *Feminist Milton*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987.

Woodhouse, A.S.P. "Samson Agonistes and Milton's Experience." *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada* 43 (1949): 157-75.

Wordsworth, William. *Wordsworth: Poetical Works*. Rev. ed. Ed. Thomas Hutchinson and Ernest de Selincourt. 1936. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987.