

THE ETERNAL MIND BOUNDED :
PSYCHOLOGICAL ORGANIZATION IN
THE FOUR ZOAS

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William Blake's long poem, *The Four Zoas*, is a work based upon an idea which is easy enough to comprehend, but unusually complex in the way in which the details—the "minute particulars," to use Blake's phrase—of that concept are worked out and presented. In largest outline, *The Four Zoas* is an account of the fall, suffering, and eventual regeneration of Albion, the Eternal Man, who is the giant embodiment of all humanity conceived of as a single human form. Indeed, in this general shape, *The Four Zoas* fits familiar mythic dimensions. But to say only this much about the poem is about as useful as describing Joyce's *Ulysses* as concerning a day in the life of Leopold Bloom: neither description gives any indication of the manifold richness and value of the work described. Yet it is not enough to say just that *The Four Zoas* is an elaborate poem, for, aside from its wealth of detail, the poem is complex in special ways. For example, in a sense *The Four Zoas* is not about Albion at all, but is about a *fallen* Albion. This fact makes a great difference. It makes it possible, for one thing, to write a poem, for un-fallen Albion is the perfected form of humanity, and it is perhaps impossible to write convincingly at any length of perfection. Hence, what we learn of Albion is gained rather elliptically, and what there is of his story serves as a frame device for the poem. More important, however, is that when Albion is fallen, he is "broken" into his component parts, and these are the beings which Blake calls "Zoas": Urthona (Los), Tharmas, Luvah (Orc), and Urizen. In the fallen state, Urthona becomes known as Los, and Orc is essentially a manifestation

of the fallen Luvah. Additionally, each Zoa has a feminine counterpart, called an "Emanation." Correspondingly, they are Enitharmon, Enion, Vala, and Ahanian.

The Four Zoas is thus about the struggles back to harmony of Zoas and Emanations who find themselves suddenly plunged out of their fitting perfection as energies contained within the bounding lineaments of Albion and into a terrifying chaos. This fact helps account for the narrative complexity of the poem. Because the Zoas and Emanations as now-sundered individuals have various—and often conflicting—ideas about what has happened to them, the narrative of the Zoas varies with the Zoa or Emanation telling the story. The various accounts are given in character and from the individual's own point of view, and so the recollection of events is conditioned and limited by the nature and state of the teller, by the necessarily incomplete knowledge available to any one speaker, and by what has happened to the specific individual in the course of the Fall. The attempts of the Zoas and Emanations to recall what has happened form the most extensive portion of the narrative, while their actions in the fallen state provide the plot ("plot" being understood as the sequence of actions; "narrative," the accounts of what happened). There is an additional narrative strand, given from an "external" perspective, as the fallen perspectives of individual Zoas are interwoven with commentaries by and messages to "the Eternals," beings who are intimately concerned with the unfolding action but who are removed from the immediate effects of the Fall. Thus, the narrative structure of *The Four Zoas* consists of a doubled-stranded narrative of remembering and commentaries, and this two-fold means of telling is wound about the central core of the plot, which is given as immediately present dramatic action.

As a further complexity, there exist what can only be called "levels" of meaning within the poem. Blake makes the use of levels or dimensions explicit, as the Fall precipitates a four-leveled cosmos of action in the realms named Eden, Beulah, Generation, and Ulro.

Eden is the lost perfection; Ulro, the chaotic equivalent of Hell. Just as obvious, though not so explicitly named, is another stratification of significance, for the poem clearly contains various dimensions of meaning. There is, first of all, the literal story of the Fall and its consequences—the struggles of the Zoas and their ultimate reversal of the Fall. Yet much of the story of the fallen state is told in terms of sexual organization, for the Zoas and Emanations are male and female, and their lives while fallen are bounded by what Blake calls “The torments of Love & Jealousy.” The culmination of this story is the reunion or re-marriage of the Zoas and their proper Emanations. At the same time, *The Four Zoas* is manifestly psychological, for the Zoas are identified as mental components of Albion’s mind. In this regard, the poem is a *psychomachia*, and the central conflict of the poem between Los and Urizen is a psychological one of opposed modes of perception. Finally, the story of Albion ultimately becomes a cosmological one because the unfallen (or arisen) Albion is identified with the universe: he is the total human form of the universe.

Initially, however, the story of Albion is a framework which introduces the drama of the poem. While he is resting in the realm called Beulah, Albion makes the momentous epistemological error of believing his own imaginative creation to have an independent, objective existence—and subsequently thralling himself to that creation. The mistake is primarily a psychological one, since it is an error of perception which shows Albion to be confused and self-deluded. It is this error which leads directly and immediately to Albion’s division and fall, and the Fall calls into being the four-leveled psychological cosmos. In this frame of reference, Eden is the fulfillment or embodiment of the active creative imagination. It is the state of existence in which the completely unified mind is totally creative and engaged in mental warfare. Beulah, by way of contrast, is a garden of repose. It is a gentle retreat from the strenuous mental energy of Eden, and hence it is a land of dreams, the realm of that lower-keyed activity

which sustains the active mentality. In Generation, unified mental life becomes the fractional strife of the assertive and combative projection of individual mental states. Ulro is literally schizophrenic, for it is characterized by split, isolated, and hence "mad" minds, and is exemplified by the fallen and solipsistic Urizen who spins his Web and Vortexes out of his own flawed mind.

We know from the outset of the poem that the Zoas have a primary mental dimension, for the "Four Mighty Ones ... in every Man" (297. 3. 4) exist in "the Human Brain" (302. 11. 15-16).⁽¹⁾ Indeed, the Zoas and their attributes can be constellated as faculties which compose the mind of Man, for in this frame of reference they can be seen to be distinct psychological entities within Albion's encompassing mind.⁽²⁾ Thus Tharmas, the "Parent power" (297. 4. 6) or Zoa of the body, is, within the mind of Man, the faculty of bodily perception or sensation. In terms specific to him, the fall into chaos is a plunge into overwhelming and unrelieved sensation. He is quite literally "flooded" by the sensory overload generated in the collapse of the

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- (1) All quotations from Blake's poetry are taken from *The Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, ed. David V. Erdman with commentary by Harold Bloom (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1965). The method of citation is: page number in Erdman's edition, followed by plate or manuscript page number of the poem, and then by line number. For example, the latter citation (302. 11. 15-16) is to page 302 of the Erdman edition, Page 11, lines 15-16 of *The Four Zoas*.
- (2) There is general critical agreement that the Zoas have a marked psychological dimension. See, for example: Milton O. Pericval, *William Blake's Circle of Destiny* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1938), p. 168; J. G. Davies, *The Theology of William Blake* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1948), p. 83; Bernard Blackstone, *English Blake* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1949), pp. 71, 100; Kathleen Raine, *Blake and Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), II, 263; David V. Erdman, *Blake: Prophet against Empire*, 2nd ed. (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1969), p. 293; June Singer, *The Unholy Bible: A Psychological Interpretation of William Blake* (New York: Putnam's Sons, 1970), p. 210; Morton D. Paley, *Energy and the Imagination: A Study of the Development of Blake's Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), p. 94. W. P. Witcutt, *Blake: A Psychological Study* (London: Hollis & Carter, 1946), is often suggestive, but his book is a reductive attempt to analyze Blake's psyche by treating the poems as projections of "The Supreme Introvert" (p. 23).

body into the material world. His fall is so complete that he becomes nearly indistinguishable from the chaotic sea of materialism, which is why his struggles to precipitate a human form and to emerge from the sea show his near-epileptic helplessness :

But from the Dolorous Groan one like a shadow of smoke appeared
And human bones rattling together in the smoke & stamping
The nether Abyss & gnashing in fierce despair. panting in sobs
Thick short incessant bursting sobbing. deep despairing stamping
struggling
Struggling to utter the voice of Man struggling to take the features
of Man. Struggling
To take the limbs of Man at length emerging from the smoke
Of Urizen dashed in pieces from his precipitant fall
Tharmas reard up his hands & stood on the affrighted Ocean
The dead reard up his Voice & stood on the resounding shore
Crying. Fury in my limbs. destruction in my bones & marrow
My skull riven into filaments. my eyes into sea jellies
Floating upon the tide wander bubbling & bubbling
Uttering my lamentations & begetting little monsters
Who sit mocking upon the little pebbles of the tide
In all my rivers & on dried shells that the fish
Have quite forsaken. (323. 44. 14-45. 1)

Therefore, his response to a Los and Enitharmon who are able to emerge "In strength & brightness from the Abyss" is appropriately visceral: "his bowels yearnd over them ... Tharmas beheld them his bowels yearnd over them" (324. 47. 2-6). This physical and sensory longing for unity is borne out in Tharmas's desire for the universe to be rebuilt (325. 48. 3-5), so actually the first movement toward unity in the poem is the instinct of the body to wholeness.

On the psychological level of identification, Luvah, the "prince of Love" (302. 12. 14) whose proper physical locus in the body of Man is the loins (380. 126. 8), and who as the fallen Zoa of passion is imprisoned within the "Furnaces of affliction" (310. 25. 40), represents the feeling capacity of the mind. Urizen, the "prince of Light" (302. 12. 10) and "Schoolmaster of souls" (374. 120. 21) who is seen early on in the "porches of the Brain" (307. 21. 29), is unmistakably the Zoa

of reason (as perhaps the pun in his name is meant to emphasize). Finally, Urthona, referred to as the "visionary"—formally by Enitharmon (302. 11. 22) and scornfully by Urizen (303. 12. 25)—and whose vigorous voice carries prophecy (301. 9. 26), is specifically identified as poet, and his emanative achievement as poetry or song: "Urthona was his name / In Eden; in the Auricular Nerves of Human life / Which is the Earth of Eden, he his Emanations propagated / Faries of Albion afterwards Gods of the Heathen" (297. 3. 11-4. 3). Hence, as a psychological component of Albion—and even when fallen, Urthona (as Los) remembers that he *is* such (302. 11. 15-16)—Urthona is the intuition or power of visionary perception.

This description of the Zoas as mental faculties suggests the great importance of their co-ordinated functioning, for they can be seen to be paired in terms of the kinds of mental operations they perform. Tharmas and Urthona, as the personifications of sensation and intuition, are the faculties which *experience* the world: they perceive and apprehend facts. The other two, Luvah and Urizen, are the modes by which the mind *evaluates* and judges the information perceived. That is, a matter is felt to be either good or bad, and one can rationally determine whether information is true or false, right or wrong. Therefore, two faculties can be recognized as modes of perception, two as modes of evaluation. There is yet another way of relating the Zoas in psychological terms, for the poem makes a clear and useful distinction between Urizen, the Prince of Light, and "Dark Urthona" (391. 138. 16) as allied respectively to rationality and that dim and unknown mode of mentality which is called intuition or inspiration. Los-Urthona is the visionary, intuitive complement to reason. And, as the light/darkness imagery associated with the two suggests, this opposition provides a useful way of talking about a distinction between the conscious and subconscious mind, a distinction which is important in the poem.⁽³⁾

(3) Percival, p. 37, refers to Urthona as "the great smith ... who is heard relentlessly hammering in the darkness of the subconscious at the substance of thought."

In the accounts of the Zoas and Emanations, and particularly in the story of Los and Enitharmon, we learn that unity is the key which leads to creative vision and that the Fall is a name for the loss of that unity. *The Four Zoas* is thus about the loss of "a Perfect Unity" which exists when the "Four Mighty Ones" are harmoniously contained within "The Universal Man" (297. 3. 4-6). Consequently, the loss of unity which occurs when Albion's error in Beulah causes him to lose the Divine Vision has distinct and far-reaching psychological implications. Albion's basic mistake is in his evaluation of the world he imagines into being, and the reported revolt of Luvah and Urizen is a political and psychological metaphor for the error and its subsequent mental turmoil. Once this metaphorical expression of the story is recognized, the psychological meaning can be abstracted from the various accounts of the Fall: for Albion to become enamored of his own imaginative creation (no matter whether that creation is perceived as Vala or as his Shadow) is in effect for Luvah to take over control of Urizen's steeds (320. 39. 2-4), since conscious intellectual control in Albion has become dominated by feeling and passion. This usurpation of reason's guiding role by a "Love" or passion which seeks to gain dominion of the whole being is what appears to Ahania as "the terrible smitings of Luvah" (321. 41. 13-16). As a consequence, the body is overwhelmed by sensation, which is to say that Tharmas falls, and the Nine Nights of *The Four Zoas* has begun. The consequences of the Fall are appropriately imaged in what happens to the component faculties when the Mind of Man is fragmented. Tharmas, overwhelmed by the sheer sensory overload of the material chaos which engulfs him, and Luvah, who is tortured and tormented in the "Furnaces of affliction," are relatively fixed and immobile in the fallen state. Urizen and Los, on the other hand, are at least still mobile and active, and it is their actions (rather than physical condition) which explicitly and directly reveal their fallen state.

Both promise and hope are inherent in the description of Los's

flexibility and expansiveness (316. 34. 9-15), for those are attributes of the unfallen Eternals (306. 21. 1-3). It is of even more importance, however, that in his unfallen state Los was allied with the "dark" world, since that allows him (as the Spectre of Urthona) to retain some intuitive perception of the Divine Vision of unity even in the Ulro-darkness of the Fall. When Tharmas's material world is in chaos and when there is apparently no direct external help to heal the fallen mind, then the necessary help and healing impetus must come from within. This instinct for mental unity, this toward mental self-repair, is the province of intuition, the visionary faculty. As the Zoa of imagination or intuition, the fallen Los is set in direct contrast to Urizen, the embodiment of fallen reason. The conflicts among the divided faculties are summed up and played out in the struggle between Los and Urizen, and this struggle is the central portion of the poem.

As Albion loses the Divine Vision and sinks into his nightmarish "dark sleep of Death," he gives possession of his fallen being—and thus the fallen world—to Urizen (309. 23. 1-8). The "Human Brain" is the appropriate place for the Prince of Light to be, but he should not have the Scepter in his sole possession. Accordingly, the portent heralding Urizen's regency is a forboding one: "he stood in the Human Brain / And all its golden porches grew pale with his sickening light" (309. 23. 12-13). Although he has not yet fallen into Ulro, Urizen sees the dreadful Abyss, and, fearful of the "indefinite space ... of Non Existence" (309. 23. 14-24. 4), he begins his labors. Though he is flawed in his conceptions and ultimately dangerous in his work, Urizen is admirable for his efforts, which, though blighted from the beginning, remain heroic in their scope and energy.⁽⁴⁾ The fallen Urizen is "the great Work Master" (309. 24. 5) and "Architect divine" (313. 30. 8) who, commanding his bands, begins to build the Mundane

(4) Even though it is flawed, Urizen's world is a product of creative power. An analogue to the flawed mind creating a flawed world is the "all-miscreative brain of Jove" in Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*, I. 448.

Shell :

Divide ye bands influence by influence
Build we a Bower for heavens darling in the grizly deep
Build we the Mundane Shell around the Rock of Albion

The Bands of Heaven flew thro the air singing & shouting to Urizen
Some fix'd the anvil, some the loom erected, some the plow
And harrow formd & framd the harness of silver & ivory
The golden compasses, the quadrant & the rule & balance
They erected the furnaces, they formd the anvils of gold beaten in
mills
Where winter beats incessant, fixing them firm on their base
The bellows began to blow & the Lions of Urizen stood round the
anvil (309. 24. 6-15)

Unhappily for the result of such energy, Urizen is psychologically and symbolically "Among the Druid Temples" (310. 25. 8),⁽⁵⁾ and therefore in their work his "tygers of wrath" begin "Petrifying all the Human Imagination into rock & sand" (310. 25. 3, 6). This action essentially becomes a pervasive image and metaphor of Urizen's work, as his sons are soon seen measuring, rendering, and reducing the cosmos that was Man. Their efforts contain and restrict the once expansive and dynamic human universe, even going so far as to dilute the atmosphere, therein exhibiting a tendency which immediately results in an unmistakably reductive physical counterpart of Urizen's narrow mind :

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, then fix them in their awful stations
.....
While far into the vast unknown, the strong wing'd Eagles bend
Their venturous flight, in Human forms distinct ; thro darkness deep

(5) Which is to say that his fallen mentality is accurately represented in this image of repression. The most thorough discussion of the significance of Druidism to Blake is by Peter F. Fisher, "Blake and the Druids," *JEGP*, 58 (1959), 589-612. This has been reprinted in *Blake: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Northrop Frye (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1966), pp. 156-178. See also Fisher's *The Valley of Vision: Blake as Prophet and Revolutionary*, ed. Northrop Frye (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1961), especially pp. 32-47.

They bear the woven draperies; on golden hooks they hang abroad
 The universal curtains & spread out from Sun to Sun
 The vehicles of light, they separate the furious particles
 Into mild currents as the water mingles with the wine.

While thus the Spirits of strongest wing enlighten the dark deep
 The threads are spun & the cords twisted & drawn out; then the weak
 Begin their work; & many a net is netted; many a net
 Spread & many a Spirit caught, innumerable the nets
 Innumerable the gins & traps; & many a soothing flute
 Is form'd & many a corded lyre, outspread over the immense
 In cruel delight they trap the listeners, & in cruel delight
 Bind them, condensing the strong energies into little compass

(312. 28. 31-29. 2, 29. 8-313. 30. 5)

The encompassing image of the product of this kind of reductive labor is the "Golden Hall" Urizen builds and in which he imprisons his Emanation (313. 30. 15-45).

The mental dimension of Urizen's error is clear, for the poem has given a general statement of its nature:

Reuben slept on Penmaenmawr & Levi slept on Snowdon
 Their eyes their ears nostrils & tongues roll outward they behold
 What is within now seen without (310. 25. 21-23)

That is, Reuben and Levi (the natural or sensual man and the priest or spiritual man, though that is not important here), just as Albion in Beulah and just as Urizen now in Generation, project their mental disorder onto the world and in so doing give the confusion objective existence. In Urizen's work, we see the full horror of what is meant by the "Children of Man" who "see no Visions in the darksome air" (312. 28. 11, 17). If one sees no visions, then one cannot possibly see the Divine Vision, and that means there is no creative imagination. All the Zoa of reason can do is to "Measure the course of that sulphur orb that lights the darksome day ... To measure out the course of heaven" (312. 28. 18, 21). And that, of course, is to react to what he sees "out there" as if it had an independent, objective existence, for he does not realize that what he sees—the "guinea sun" as a sulphurous orb—is an objectified manifestation of his own flawed

mind.

Furthermore, the flawed being can only create in his own image. The Mundane Shell, while built to oppose the fluid chaos of Tharmas's fallen reign (315.32.15-33.7), is also that liquid world's solid counterpart, for if the Mundane Shell is a bulwark against the Abyss he sees and fears, it is also a concretion of Urizen's atomistic material state. For example, the stars which Urizen creates are in his own image. Hence, even though their purpose would appear to be a good thing—" Thus were the stars of heaven created like a golden chain / To bind the Body of Man to heaven from falling into the Abyss " (315.33.16-17)—we recognize the dire implications of chains (golden or not), for the bondage inherent in the image is manifest. Ordered by Urizen's prescriptive mathematics, each star moves in its "amazing hard subdued course in the vast deep" (316.33.36), a description which graphically reveals just how far the anti-visionary Urizen is from the Edenic and visionary state in which the stars are rightly "The Expanding Eyes of Man" (391.138.25).

Oppressive and ominous as this state of affairs is, matters get even worse. When Urizen casts out Ahanian, the "bounds of Destiny" are broken, and all falls into the Ulro of Tharmas's chaotic sea (322.43.23-323.44.5). When Urizen at long last becomes active again, as he does at the beginning of Night VI, we see him go through a similar, sad process of reducing all to his own flawed state. There is a moment of hope when, late in Night V, Urizen gives voice to his woes, for he has memories of the unfallen past, his once-expansive senses, and his proper role (336.63.23 ff.), yet once he begins to explore his dens and to survey the fallen world of the Abyss, his terror takes over. What he sees is a solipsistic hell of "ruind spirits" who are no longer expansive but are fixed and limited in various horrible ways:

Beyond the bounds of their own self their senses cannot penetrate

.....

The horrid shapes & sights of torment in burning dungeons & in

Fetters of red hot iron some with crowns of serpents & some
 With monsters girding round their bosoms. Some lying on beds of
 sulphur
 On racks & wheels he beheld women marching oer burning wastes
 Of Sand in bands of hundreds & of fifties & of thousands stricken
 with
 Lightnings which blazed after them upon their shoulders in their
 march
 In successive volleys with loud thunders (340. 70. 12, 18-24)

Seeing all this ruin, recognizing the various horrors to be "his Children ruined in his ruined world" (341. 70. 45), Urizen is a creature of blank misgivings moving about in a world he has literally "realized."⁽⁶⁾

Once again horrified by a fallen world, he once again creates; thus he repeats his error in, if anything, a gloomier tone. Instead of a Mundane Shell, Urizen now creates "Vortexes," which are explicitly mental systems:

Oft would he sit in a dark rift & regulate his books
 Or sleep such sleep as spirits eternal wearied in his dark
 Tearful & sorrowful state. then rise look out & ponder
 His dismal voyage eyeing the next sphere tho far remote
 Then darting into the Abyss of night his venturous limbs
 Thro lightnings thunders earthquakes & concussions fires & floods
 Stemming his downward fall labouring up against futurity
 Creating many a Vortex fixing many a Science in the deep
 And thence throwing his venturous limbs into the Vast unknown
 Swift Swift from Chaos to chaos from void to void a road immense

For when he came to where a Vortex ceasd to operate
 Nor down nor up remaind then if he turnd & lookd back
 From whence he came twas upward all. & if he turnd and viewd
 The unpassd void upward was still his mighty wandring
 The midst between an Equilibrium grey of air serene
 Where he might live in peace & where his life might meet repose

But Urizen said Can I not leave this world of Cumbrous wheels
 Circle oer Circle nor on high attain a void

(6) Harold Bloom, *Blake's Apocalypse: A Study in Poetic Argument* (1963; rpt. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970), p. 239, points out that the condition of fallen man is that "the mind fevers at its own false creation." Or, as Morton Paley, p. 129, puts it: "The world becomes an image of the spiritual condition of its perceiver ...".

Where self sustaining I may view all things beneath my feet
Or sinking thro these Elemental wonders swift to fall
I thought perhaps to find an End a world beneath of voidness
Whence I might travel round the outside of this Dark confusion
When I bend downward bending my head downward into the deep
Tis upward all which way soever I my course begin
But when A Vortex formd on high by labour & sorrow & care
And weariness begins on all my limbs then sleep revives
My wearied spirits waking then tis downward all which way
So ever I my spirits turn (342. 72. 6-33)

The experience of the chaos and void in which there is neither up nor down is the opposite of seeing the Divine Vision, in which the two directions exist, are distinct, yet both reveal the same comforting image of unity:

All Beulah stood astonishd Looking down to Eternal Death
They saw the Saviour beyond the Pit of death & destruction
For whether they lookd upward they saw the Divine Vision
Or whether they lookd downward still they saw the Divine Vision
Surrounding them on all sides beyond sin & death & hell
(358. 100. 12-16)

But the Vortex is obviously not the way to get out of chaos. True, Vortexes give Urizen a sense of direction, but they only indicate the direction he has been going: "tis downward all which way." In a sense, then, a Vortex only establishes and maps chaos, and so in its operation (343. 73. 21-25) is a demonic parody or inversion of Eno's "opend center" which provides "windows into Eden" (300. 9. 9-13).⁽⁷⁾ In Urizen's desperate wish to be "self sustaining" (and the horrible irony here is that he *is* sustaining the hell he sees), he resolves once again to measure and fix, the result of which is predictable, though the image is new:

(7) Eno, the "Aged Mother" who sings *The Four Zoas*, provides an avenue of psychological regeneration when she creates the opening center, for it promises the "windows into Eden" of restored visionary and imaginative power. On the Vortex, see Bloom, *The Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, p. 875. n. 72: 13: "The Vortex, developed more fully in *Milton*, is a mental system or way of looking at things. Here, a Newtonian way of observing the chaos of Urizenic space."

Here will I fix my foot & here rebuild
 Here Mountains of Brass promise much riches in their dreadful
 bosoms

So he began to dig form[ing] of gold silver & iron
 And brass vast instruments to measure out the immense & fix
 The whole into another world better suited to obey
 His will where none should dare oppose his will himself being King
 Of All & all futurity be bound in his vast chain

.....
 & wherever he traveled a dire Web
 Followd behind him as the Web of a Spider dusky & cold
 Shivering across from Vortex to Vortex drawn out from his mantle
 of years

A living Mantle adjoind to his life & growing from his Soul

(343. 73. 14-20, 31-34)

Thus the "Web of Urizen" joins the Vortex, the "books of iron & brass" (340. 70. 3), and the tree of Mystery (346. 78. 5) as an image of that mental process which attempts to fix, freeze, and petrify all it confronts.⁽⁸⁾ These images are in direct opposition to all the vegetative, expansive, and finally apocalyptic imagery in the poem, an opposition that is made in both dramatic and thematic terms in Urizen's confrontation with Orc. The thematic opposition is pointed up by Orc's "Cavernd Universe of flaming fire" (346. 77. 6) since the only light present in the fallen world (barring the "Globe of fire" with which Urizen lights his way [340. 70. 1-2]) is provided by the flames of constrained passion. Urizen, properly the Prince of Light, is no longer the light-bringer; rather, he is a purveyor of dark Vortexes and other symbols of his freezing intellect. Urizen's "forests of affliction" (346. 77. 10) are, as the roaming tygers emphasize, forests of mental night. And as long as Urizen continues to want to draw all into submission to himself (349. 81. 5-6), the dread result will be that the forests of affliction will stand and Albion's eyes will

(8) As John Beer, *Blake's Visionary Universe* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, and New York: Barnes and Noble, 1969), p. 81, notes, Urizen "cannot see that all things are constantly renewed and that permanence, paradoxically, is the one thing that kills."

be "faded & his ears heavy & dull" (351. 83. 18).

Los, as we would expect, is initially and immediately opposed to Urizen, even going so far as to say that one of the two "must be master" (302. 12. 7-303. 12. 20). It is in Los's struggle against Urizen, however, that the full horror of the fallen mind soon becomes apparent. First urged, then threatened by a Tharmas who desperately wants to regain Enion and his own human form (327. 51. 11 ff.), terrified on his own account by the "horrible Chaos" he sees (328. 52. 11-14), Los begins to rebuild out of the "ruins of Urizen." The far-reaching implications of Eno's chilling words about the "Children of Man" who "see no Visions" are recognized with shock, for Los's labors are one more act of petrification. In binding the fallen Urizen, Los in effect binds down the Eternal Mind, and the image of this act of bondage is elaborated into a detailed and comprehensive description of all the mental damage of the Fall:

The Eternal Mind bounded began to roll eddies of wrath ceaseless
Round & round & the sulphureous foam surgeing thick
Settled a Lake bright & shining clear. White as the snow

Forgetfulness dumbness necessity in chains of the mind lockd up
In fetters of ice shrinking. disorganizd rent from Eternity
Los beat on his fetters & heated his furnaces
And pourd iron sodor & sodor of brass

Restless the immortal inchaind heaving dolorous
Anguished unbearable till a roof shaggy wild inclosed
In an orb his fountain of thought

In a horrible dreamful slumber like the linked chain
A vast spine writhd in torment upon the wind
Shooting paind. ribbs like a bending Cavern
And bones of solidness froze over all his nerves of joy
A first age passed. a state of dismal woe

From the Caverns of his jointed spine down sunk with fright
A red round globe. hot burning. deep deep down into the Abyss
Panting Conglobing trembling Shooting out ten thousand branches
Around his solid bones & a Second Age passed over

In harrowing fear rolling his nervous brain shot branches
On high into two little orbs hiding in two little caves

Hiding carefully from the wind his eyes beheld the deep
And a third age passed a State of dismal woe

The pangs of hope began in heavy pain striving struggling
Two Ears in close volutions from beneath his orbs of vision
Shot spiring out & petrified as they grew. And a Fourth
Age passed over & a State of dismal woe

In ghastly torment sick hanging upon the wind
Two nostrils bent down to the deeps—
And a fifth age passed & a state of dismal woe

In ghastly torment sick. within his ribs bloated round
A craving hungry cavern. Thence arose his channelled
Throat. then like a red flame a tongue of hunger
And thirst appeared and a sixth age passed of dismal woe

Enraged & stifled with torment he threw his right arm to the north
His left arm to the south shooting out in anguish deep
And his feet stamp'd the nether abyss in trembling howling & dismay
And a seventh age passed over & a state of dismal woe

(329. 54. 1-330. 55. 9)⁽⁹⁾

This creation of the fallen being, its mind locked up and disorganized, is what has in effect happened to Albion. And since the individual Zoas are themselves the disorganized fragments which have been "rent from Eternity," this is also an adequate image of their condition. What is unmistakable is the danger of this mental fragmentation, for Los, in struggling against the Urizenic ruin, becomes what he beholds: "terrified at the Shapes / Enslav'd humanity put on he became what he beheld" (329. 53. 23-24). Hence Los and Urizen are linked in another way, for their errors are mirror images: Urizen sees and creates what he is; Los becomes what he beholds. Los, in undertaking the Urizenic activity of binding, becomes Urizenic. He is here, like Shem the penman, "in his bardic memory low."⁽¹⁰⁾ Indeed, he has become

(9) Albion's threat to Luvah is put in similar terms:

Saying, Go & die the Death of Man for Vala the sweet wanderer
I will turn the volutions of your Ears outward; & bend your Nostrils
Downward; & your fluxile Eyes englob'd, roll round in fear
Your withring Lips & Tongue shrink up into a narrow circle
Till into narrow forms you creep. (321. 42. 1-5)

(10) James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake* (1939; rpt. New York: The Viking Press, 1966), p. 172.

so much like Urizen that his lips move when Urizen howls:

He became what he was doing he was himself transformd

Spasms siezd his muscular fibres writhing to & fro his pallid lips
Unwilling movd as Urizen howld (331. 55. 23-25)

The way out of what is both literally and figuratively a mental "bind" is detailed in Night VIIa. The reunions and embracings of this pivotal Night indicate the growing mental unity and enlarging degree of self-repair of the fallen Mind. The visionary capacity is strengthening, and, like an eye made quiet by the power of harmony, it can now see into the life of things and behold the Divine Vision. The extent of Los's regeneration is indicated when he sees the inward vision of the Lamb (355. 87. 43-45) and is shown to be now able to govern his mental flames by Art (356. 90. 25-31).⁽¹¹⁾ Subsequently, Los feels love for Urizen—"Startled was Los he found his Enemy Urizen now / In his hands. he wonderd that he felt love & not hate" (357. 90. 64-65)—because he has accepted the Spectre of Urthona. Once he embraces the embodiment of the Urizenic portion of his own nature, he is no longer in danger of becoming Urizenic. That could only happen as long as Los believed that Urizen was a threatening presence which existed independently of and external to his own being. In that case, as we have seen, Los only chained himself to his mental error and finally became what he beheld.

But Urizen, in contrast, is still not united in any degree with Urthona, so, fallen and frightened, he launches a last-gasp war against Los's evident creativity. The imagistic opposition of Urizen and Los is quite clear, for in contrast to the "Bodies of Vegetation" which Los and Enitharmon weave and nurture, Urizen can only fabricate "warlike preparations":

Thus Urizen in self deceit his warlike preparations fabricated

(11) Which is why it is so nicely appropriate for Eno's opening center to be "ornamented ... with wondrous art" (300. 9. 13), for Art is the goal and manifestation of vision.

And when all things were finishd sudden wavd among the Stars
His hurtling hand gave the dire signal thunderous Clarions blow
And all the hollow deep rebellowd with the wonderous war

But Urizen his mighty rage let loose in the mid deep
Sparkles of Dire affliction issud round his frozen limbs
Horrible hooks & nets he formd twisting the cords of iron
And brass & molten metals cast in hollow globes & bor'd
Tubes in petrific steel & rammd combustibles & wheels
And chains & pullies fabricated all round the heavens of Los

(359. 101. 26-100. 31)

Los, "inspired by the holy Spirit ... builds the Walls of Golgonooza," as he and Enitharmon labor to "humanize" the "bestial droves" which fall in Urizen's battle (359. 101. 39-360. 101. 48). Urizen's opposed creations are non-human, mechanical, and the product of his own despair:

And Urizen gave life & sense by his immortal power
To all his Engines of deceit that linked chains might run
Thro ranks of war spontaneous & that hooks & boring screws
Might act according to their forms by innate cruelty
He formed also harsh instruments of sound
To grate the soul into destruction or to inflame with fury
The spirits of life to pervert all the faculties of sense
Into their own destruction if perhaps he might avert
His own despair even at the cost of every thing that breathes

(360. 102. 14-22)

Urizen, to be sure, cannot escape the effects of his own miscreative efforts any more than Los could avoid becoming what he beheld. As he tries to counter and reduce the work of Los and Enitharmon, Urizen is himself reduced. The nadir of his existence is reached when he is transformed so that the outer form of his being reveals his inner state: he becomes the stone-dragon (367. 106. 22-34).⁽¹²⁾ Yet even this terrifying transformation is of value, for the negatively transformed and utterly reduced Urizen, who bitterly regrets "the loss of

(12) George Mills Harper, *The Neoplatonism of William Blake* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1961), p. 106, writes that "the dragon is sometimes used to symbolize man's descent into deformity," referring to Urizen as dragon.

that fair form of Man" (367. 106. 38), finally learns and comes to understand the crucial lesson: " & now he finds in vain / That not of his own power he bore the human form erect / Nor of his own will gave his Laws in times of Everlasting" (368. 107. 12-14).⁽¹³⁾

Once Los and Enitharmon have begun working actively for recovery—that is, once the visionary capacity is allied with its centering vision and with the dark side of its own being which gives intuition its power—the fallen state becomes progressively regenerated. Indeed, the united work and its consequences revive Albion to the extent that he can begin to assume control of his faculties, as his command to Urizen reveals:

The Eternal Man sat on the Rocks & cried with awful voice
O Prince of Light where art thou I behold thee not as once
In those Eternal fields in clouds of morning stepping forth
With harps & songs where bright Ahania sang before thy face
And all thy sons & daughters gatherd round my ample table
See you not all this wracking furious confusion
Come forth from slumbers of thy cold abstraction come forth
Arise to Eternal births shake off thy cold repose
Schoolmaster of souls great opposer of change arise
That the Eternal worlds may see thy face in peace & joy
That thou dread form of Certainty maist sit in town & village
While little children play around thy feet in gentle awe
Fearing thy frown loving thy smile O Urizen Prince of light
(374. 120. 13-25)

As Albion begins to arise, the emphasis of the poem shifts sharply from the struggles of the isolated and individual Zoas in the horrors of the first eight Nights to their united and uniting work in the final

(13) I say "finally learns" because Urizen had known this before (337. 64. 19-20), but he had forgotten. Indeed, Urizen is soon to make a final, explicit statement about the mental nature and location of his error:

Urizen said. I have Erred & my Error remains with me
What Chain encompasses in what Lock is the river of light confind
(376. 122. 21-22)

The mental nature of the failing is further emphasized in the pun on Locke, the British philosopher who was a frequent target (along with Bacon and Newton) of Blake's poetic wrath.

one. Night the Ninth furnishes an elaborately worked-out metaphor of the growing mental harmony brought about with the re-integration of the faculties within Albion's bounding Mind. The physical (and metaphorical) counterpart of the psychological faculties working together within the active and expansive bounds of the Mind of Man is found in the Human Harvest: each Zoa takes a necessary part, each has distinct tasks, yet they all work for a greater, common end. Thus, Urizen, the plowman, plows, sows, and harrows the "Universal field" (379. 124. 25-125. 20), reaps "the wide Universe" (385. 132. 2-9), flails the harvest (387. 133. 34-134. 1), and gathers the vintage (388. 135. 6); Tharmas winnows out Mystery (387. 134. 2-17), tends and powers the mill (391. 138. 4-9), separates the wine from the Lees, and with Urthona carries away "the wine of ages" (390. 137. 18-27); Luvah, the vinter, treads the corn, draws the wagons, and tends his wine press (388. 135. 5 ff.); and Urthona, more familiar as the Eternal smith, finds his anvil and bellows transformed for purposes of the Human Harvest into the miller's wheel and baker's oven as he grinds the corn and makes the "Bread of Ages" (391. 138. 1-19).

This lesson of unity is emphasized in another passage near the end of the poem:

The Eternal Man darkend with Sorrow & a wintry mantle
Coverd the Hills He said O Tharmas rise & O Urthona

Then Tharmas & Urthona rose from the Golden feast satiated
With Mirth & Joy Urthona limping from his fall on Tharmas leand
In his right hand his hammer Tharmas held his Shepherds crook
Beset with gold gold were the ornaments formd by sons of Urizen
(390. 137. 5-10)

This is a superbly appropriate image of the now properly compensatory relationship between Zoas. Now Urthona-Los neither has to walk nor work alone and unaided, and this image of the two Zoas is a visual answer to the problem faced by the isolated Urizen, who, as he set out to explore his dens, had only his "Spear" on which to lean (338. 67. 1).

At the end of the poem, we are left with Tharmas and Urthona, the two Zoas who experience the world. And, since "all things are changd even as in ancient times" (391. 138. 40), they now experience the Human form of the universe. In its human form, the sun is not "that sulphur orb" (312. 28. 18) which Urizen wished to measure and chart, but a man. The creative, unfallen perception recognizes the human nature and form of all being, and thus the initial simile moves to identity:

One Earth one sea beneath nor Erring Globes wander but Stars
Of fire rise up nightly from the Ocean & one Sun
Each morning like a New born Man issues with songs & Joy
Calling the Plowman to his Labour & the Shepherd to his rest
He walks upon the Eternal Mountains raising his heavenly voice
Conversing with the Animal forms of wisdom night & day
That risen from the Sea of fire renewd walk oer the Earth

(391. 138. 26-32)

No longer is perception distorted by the "self destroying beast formd" and beast-forming "Science" of the fallen Urizen (375. 120. 40), but is instead the "sweet Science" the fallen Tharmas longed to know again, for he realized that in knowing it he would be a Man again (328. 51. 29-31). Because the fallen Albion has arisen and the Eternal Man is once again whole, the final lines of the poem speak triumphantly of the restored reign of "sweet Science." And the final image is of Urthona about his Eternal work, for he is the Zoa of the creative, intuitive, visionary faculty most fuully responsible for the glorious restoration:

& Urthona rises from the ruinous walls
In all his ancient strength to form the golden armour of science
For intellectual War The war of swords departed now
The dark Religions are departed & sweet Science reigns

(392. 139. 7-10)