

Humanity Divine Incomprehensible: the cosmology of *The Four Zoas*

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Insofar as William Blake's poem is about the individual Zoas, it is about and is completely concerned with a fallen world. By their very existence as individual, discrete entities, the Zoas testify to the fallen state of their universe, for properly they exist as energies contained and defined within the bounding outline and lineaments of Albion, the Eternal Man. And just as their very existence as individuals bears witness to the fallen condition of the cosmos they inhabit, so the Zoas are both representative of and at the same time victims of the Fall. By the end of the poem, however, the Zoas are working together to reverse the Fall—and hence to revive Albion. Yet with the beginning of the psychic repairs of mental reintegration, presented in the reuniting of the Zoas and the corresponding regeneration of Albion, *The Four Zoas* expands into a further dimension of meaning. When mental union is finally achieved, when the Zoas are at last reunited with their Emanations and with each other, then their fourfold unity reveals the lineaments of Man, Albion is once again "All Human Forms identified," and, as the no-longer-fallen Humanity Divine, he is able to rise from the couch of death. That is, once the Zoas "renew their brightness & their disorganizd functions" and "reorganize till they resume the image of the human / Cooperating in the bliss of man obeying his Will," then the controlling form of Albion can again exist and be recognized as "the infinite

& Eternal of the Human form" (380. 126. 14-17).⁽¹⁾ But as Albion prepares to arise, spectacular cosmic events begin to occur, for Albion is Universal Man in two senses: he is a kind of Everyman—or all men in one Man—but he is also the total human form of the universe. As such, the unfallen Albion is the universe, and thus *The Four Zoas* is clearly recognizable as one of those "ambitious literary structures" which tends to become cosmological.⁽²⁾

With the identification of the Universal Man with the universe, *The Four Zoas* moves by means of this ultimate level of physical reality into the realm of cosmology or the nature of the universe. This identification only becomes possible, however, at the end of the poem, for Night IX presents the achievement of perfection or harmony in terms of the various organizational levels of the poem: the literal story of the Zoas culminates in the cessation of the war among the members, the revival of Albion, and hence the reversal of the Fall; sexual organization is brought to perfection in the reunion or re-marriage of the Zoas and their proper Emanations; psychological unity is depicted as the harmony following upon the reintegration of the Zoas as mental faculties within the controlling form of Albion. In terms of cosmology, fulfillment or perfection of being is figured forth as an apocalypse. The story of Albion finally becomes a cosmological story because the unfallen or arisen Albion is identified with the universe, and, moreover, stories about the universe or cosmos which reach completion present a culminating apocalyptic vision of the end or perfection of that universe.

There can be no mistaking or ignoring this apocalyptic dimension

(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, this citation (380. 126. 14-17) is to page 380 of the Erdman edition, Page 126, lines 14-17 of *The Four Zoas*.

(2) As described by Northrop Frye, "The Romantic Myth," *A Study of English Romanticism* (New York: Random House, 1968), p. 5.

within *The Four Zoas*, for Blake identifies his vision with that of the Revelation of St. John—"John Saw these things Reveald in Heaven / On Patmos Isle" (371. 111. 4-5)⁽³⁾—and Night the Ninth is explicitly titled "Being The Last Judgment." The term "apocalypse," however, has recently become a rather popular one in literary criticism, one which has been employed for various uses and in a variety of meanings. It has been used critically to mean an "imaginative disclosure" of a universal process that ultimately reaches "the epiphany of a divine and human Totality," an end-directed fictional paradigm which underlies "our ways of making sense of the world from where we stand, in the midst," a "transcendental state that is not located in history and the order of nature," and as a Last Judgment with "an other-worldly fulfillment."⁽⁴⁾ I shall use "apocalypse" in a sense

(3) Harold Bloom, *Blake's Apocalypse: A Study in Poetic Argument* (1963; rpt. Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1970), p. 264, points out that: "Here Blake not only follows the Revelation of John, but seeks to make his vision and John's a momentary identity." Bloom refers specifically to (371. 111. 1-7).

(4) In order, these are the definitions of Thomas J. J. Altizer, *The New Apocalypse: The Radical Christian Vision of William Blake* (East Lansing: Michigan State Univ. Press, 1967), p. 192; Frank Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1967), p. 29; Leland Ryken, *The Apocalyptic Vision in Paradise Lost* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1970), p. 3; Morton D. Paley, *Energy and the Imagination: A Study of the Development of Blake's Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), pp. 161-164. This list is not intended in any way to imply exclusiveness or restriction, but rather means to show something of the spectrum of working definitions. There are, of course, other valuable critical uses of the term: Northrop Frye's definition—"By an apocalypse I mean primarily the imaginative conception of the whole of nature as the content of an infinite and eternal body" (*Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* [Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton Univ. Press, 1957], p. 119)—emphasizes the relationship of apocalypse and cosmology, and grows directly out of his earlier study of Blake. M. H. Abrams, "English Romanticism: The Spirit of the Age," in *Romanticism Reconsidered*, ed. Northrop Frye (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1963), has valuably pointed out the pervasiveness of apocalyptic expectations and imaginings throughout the Romantic period, and the shift in a continuous poetic tradition from an apocalypse of revolution to one of imagination (pp. 53, 59). This insight has been impressively and persuasively expanded in Professor Abrams' recent book, *Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature* (New York: Norton, 1971); especially pertinent is Chapter Six, "Revelation, Revolution, Imagination, and Cognition," pp. 325-372.

close to the meaning of its Greek root, "to reveal or disclose," although in a somewhat broader fashion to mean the prophetic disclosure or revelation itself, specifically the poetic description of the final end of things.⁵ Taken in this sense, apocalypse is centrally important to any understanding of *The Four Zoas*.

There can be no denying that, as Northrop Frye puts it, the apocalypse of Night IX "simply starts off with a bang."⁶ It is this very abruptness, in fact, which is the basis of two common criticisms of Night IX: the Night has no connection with the rest of the poem, and there is no justification for Los as the agent of salvation.⁷ The poem itself *has* prepared us for Los's agency at this culmination, however, for the fall out of unity into division is stated in terms of Los:

Los was the fourth immortal starry one, & in the Earth
Of a bright Universe Empery attended day & night
Days & nights of revolving joy, Urthona was his name
In Eden ...

.....
Daughter of Beulah Sing

His fall into Division & his Resurrection to Unity

(297. 3. 9-12 ; 4. 3-4)

(5) More precisely, such a description should be called an eschatological apocalypse, but I will use the single word "apocalypse" as less cumbersome.

(6) *Fearful Symmetry: A Study of William Blake* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1947), p. 308.

(7) There is general agreement that Night IX has little or no connection with the rest of the poem: D. J. Sloss and J. P. R. Wallis, eds. *The Prophetic Writings of William Blake* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1926), I, 139, 289; Frye, *Fearful Symmetry*, p. 308; H. M. Margoliouth, ed. *William Blake's Vala: Blake's Numbered Text* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), p. 181; G. E. Bentley, Jr., *William Blake: Vala or The Four Zoas: A Facsimile of the Manuscript, a Transcript of the Poem, and a Study of Its Growth and Significance* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), p. 165; Bloom, *Blake's Apocalypse*, p. 283; David V. Erdman, *Blake: Prophet against Empire*, 2nd ed. (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1969), pp. 380-81; John Beer, *Blake's Visionary Universe* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1969), p. 170; Paley, p. 161. Frye, p. 308, and Bloom, p. 284, similarly agree that the apocalypse cannot be explained as the work of Los, and find the sudden beginning to be more fitting to the revolutionary doctrine of Orc.

To some extent, as we are told at the beginning of the poem, the story of *The Four Zoas* will be the story of Los's fall and resurrection. The necessary renewal or "Resurrection to Unity" must be worked in a direction opposite to that of the Fall, and Los has to advance the healing of divisions in order to create unity.

The poem further prepares us for its climax gained through Los's agency by specifically showing us just what it is that Los must learn and do. In Night VIIa, we see Los watching over "cold Enitharmon":

her shadow was drawn down
Down to the roots it wept over Orc, the Shadow of Enitharmon

Los saw her stretchd the image of death upon his witherd valleys
Her Shadow went forth & returnd Now she was pale as Snow
When the mountains & hills are coverd over & the paths of Men
shut up

But when her spirit returnd as ruddy as a morning when
The ripe fruit blushes into joy in heavens eternal halls.

(349-50. 81. 11-17)

Enitharmon without her Shadow or spirit is fragmented, and so appears cold and dead; united with her Shadow, Enitharmon contains the regenerative promise of the morning and ripe fruit. This visible contrast of division and unity is the lesson Los must learn, for only then will he be able to begin the essential process of regeneration.

The meaning of this observed action is emphatically borne out when the Shadow of Enitharmon gives her account of the fall from Eternity as a process of division (351. 83. 7-18), and when the Spectre of Urthona, who longs for "the morn of ages" which will reunite them in "undivided Essence" (352. 84. 3-5), describes his presently fragmented condition:

Thou knowest that the Spectre is in Every Man insane brutish
Deformd that I am thus a ravening devouring lust continually
Craving & devouring but my Eyes are always upon thee O lovely
Delusion & I cannot crave for any thing but thee not so

The spectres of the Dead for I am as the Spectre of the Living.

(352. 84. 36-40)

Fallen though he is, the Spectre of Urthona realizes that reunion is the essential act, and this awareness leads to the first embracing (353. 85. 2-3). This first step in the right direction leads to the birth of Vala-Rahab (353. 85. 6-7), the bursting of the gates of Enitharmon's heart (353. 85. 13), and the even more significant union of Los and the Spectre :

But then the Spectre enterd Los's bosom Every sigh & groan
Of Enitharmon bore Urthonas Spectre on its wings
Obdurate Los felt Pity Enitharmon told the tale
Of Urthona. Los embracd the Spectre first as a brother
Then as another Self; astonishd humanizing & in tears
In Self abasement Giving up his Domineering lust

Thou never canst embrace sweet Enitharmon terrible Demon. Till
Thou art united with thy Spectre Consummating by pains & labours
That mortal body & by Self annihilation back returning
To Life Eternal be assurd I am thy real Self
Tho thus divided from thee & the Slave of Every passion
Of thy fierce Soul Unbar the Gates of Memory look upon me
Not as another but as thy real Self I am thy Spectre
Tho horrible & Ghastly to thine Eyes tho buried beneath
The ruins of the Universe. (353. 85. 26-40)

Even fallen, Los and the Spectre retain enough of Vision to enable them to be the first to join together. Los chooses to embrace his Spectre, and it is important to recognize this act for what it is—the necessary and paradigmatic act of reunion :

Come then into my Bosom & in thy shadowy arms bring with thee
My lovely Enitharmon. I will quell my fury & teach
Peace to the Soul of dark revenge & repentance to Cruelty

So spoke Los & Embracing Enitharmon & the Spectre

(354. 86. 10-13)

It is even more crucial, however, to recognize that at the beginning of Night IX Los is wrong. At first glance, his cataclysmic actions of tearing down the sun and moon—"Los his vegetable hands / Outstretchd his right hand branching out in fibrous Strength / Siezd the Sun. His left hand like dark roots coverd the Moon / And tore them down" (372. 117. 6-9)—might appear to be correct, for the sun and moon only got "out there" during the fall-as-creation of the early Nights:

Albion gave his loud death groan The Atlantic Mountains trembled
Aloft the Moon fled with a cry the Sun with streams of blood
From Albions Loins fled. (310. 25. 9-11)

Yet the events following upon Los's actions make plain that the added lines at the beginning of Night IX present a negative apocalypse, one appropriate only to the gloomy view of life as a horrifying cycle as envisioned at the end of Night VIII.⁽⁸⁾

Los, though he has initiated the process of renewal, is here in error. He has already seen a vision which makes clear the distinction between Vegetative and Spiritual existence:

Los said to Enitharmon Pitying I saw
Pitying the Lamb of God Descended thro Jerusalems gates
To put off Mystery time after time & as a Man
Is born on Earth so was he born of Fair Jerusalem
In mysterys woven mantle & in the Robes of Luvah

He stood in fair Jerusalem to awake up into Eden
The fallen Man but first to Give his vegetated body
To be cut off & separated that the Spiritual body may be Reveald
(363. 104. 31-38)

(8) Textual scholars are in agreement that the early lines of Night IX are a later addition: Sloss and Wallis, I, 139; H. M. Margoliouth, *William Blake* (1951; rpt. n.p.: Archon Books, 1967), p. 127, and *Vala: Blake's Numbered Text*, p. 180; Bentley, pp. 123, 162-65; Erdman, *Prophet against Empire*, p. 380. See Frye, *Fearful Symmetry*, p. 304, for a description of the end of Night VIII as cyclic.

Yet even so, Los repeats Enitharmon's mistake (355. 87. 52-60) when he fails to see the spiritual Jesus and thus mistakes the condition and significance of bodily or vegetative existence (371-72. 117. 1-6). As a terrified reaction to what he mistakenly believes to be "Non Existence" but what is actually the separation of the spiritual from the vegetated body, Los's frantic apocalypse is a premature attempt. In case we miss this implication, Albion points it out:

Beyond this Universal Confusion beyond the remotest Pole
 Where their vortexes begin to operate there stands
 A Horrible rock far in the South it was forsaken when
 Urizen gave the horses of Light into the hands of Luvah
 On this rock lay the faded head of the Eternal Man
 Enwrapped round with weeds of death pale cold in sorrow & woe
 He lifts the blue lamps of his Eyes & cries with heavenly voice
 Bowing his head over the consuming Universe he cried

O weakness & O weariness O war within my members

I hear Mystery howling in these flames of Consummation

(373-74. 119. 24-32 ; 120. 4)

And shortly hereafter, specifically addressing Urizen, Albion cries:

See you not all this wracking furious confusion (374. 120. 18)

Los's too-early attempt at apocalypse results in the chaotic condition of "Universal Confusion" because it is still bound by Albion's fallen state. Los's action is yet one more aspect of the war within Albion's members.

As a premature attempt, this early apocalypse takes its place in a definite pattern of what can only be called "premature rebirths." When Urizen reassumes his human form as the Prince of Light, his too-early attempt to reunite with Ahania results in her death (376. 121. 27-39), and Urizen and Albion attempt too soon to enter the Consummation:

And the Falln Man who was arisen upon the Rock of Ages
Beheld the Vision of God & he arose up from the Rock
And Urizen arose up with him walking thro the flames
To meet the Lord coming to Judgment but the flames repelld them
Still to the Rock in vain they strove to Enter the Consummation
Together for the Redeemd Man could not enter the Consummation
(378. 123. 40-124. 5)⁽⁹⁾

The distinct pattern of such premature attempts makes clear that the early lines of Night IX are very important, but only valuable or useful if we have learned to be able to recognize the embodied error and so cast it off. We must avoid Los's error and benefit from his vision. The early lines of Night IX are a late addition to the poem, but certainly an addition which clarifies matters: the universe cannot be torn down, for apocalypse must begin *in the world* and grow out from the vegetative world into the universe. The rest of Night IX corrects Los.

Although Los's premature apocalypse is not the way to put matters right, he *has* begun the essential work of regeneration. In direct contrast to those who make up the catalogue of refusals to die for Satan in order to redeem him (366. 115. 42-49), Los, in his acceptance of his Spectre, has begun putting things back together.⁽¹⁰⁾ His "Self annihilation" and self-sacrificing decision to work for regeneration leads to his own regeneration, for Los now sees his "fires enlume afresh" (356. 90. 13). Los's harnessing of these flames of mental

(9) Erdman, *Prophet against Empire*, p. 352, points out that Urizen's rejoicing is premature; Harold Bloom, *Blake's Apocalypse*, p. 271, recognizes that both Urizen's attempt to embrace Ahaniah and the attempt of Albion and Urizen to enter consummation are premature, yet he does not include Los's early apocalypse in the pattern and thus finds the apocalypse "inexplicable" (p. 283).

(10) Thus Frye, *Fearful Symmetry*, p. 307, who says that Urizen takes the lead, and Bloom, *Blake's Apocalypse*, p. 269, who says that Albion begins the process of human integration, are not entirely accurate on this point. Paley, p. 143, is correct to stress that: "the agent of regeneration is the Imagination, identified with Los, whose function is now to restore Fallen Man to his original unity."

energy and regeneration—"studious the loud roaring flames / He vanquishd with the strength of Art" (356. 90. 26-27)—is described in terms of a harvest: "binding down as the binder of the Sheaves follows / The reaper in both arms embracing the furious raging flames" (356. 90. 30-31). And it is this union of the motif of regeneration with the imagery of harvest which accounts for the dominant strain of pastoralism in the last part of the poem, for, as Harold Bloom aptly says, "Whatever grows, whatever passes through generation, is now a stage towards redemption."⁽¹⁾

Los's work is to "fabricate forms sublime," to create bodies for the Spectres of the Dead—"Urthonas Spectre terrified beheld the Spectres of the Dead / Each male formd without a counterpart without a centering vision" (355. 87. 30-31)—because the vegetative body is the basis of all generation. However, the body is a base to work from, not a limitation; failure to perceive the spiritual body and the resultant consideration of existence as solely vegetable can only lead to that single vision expressed in Ahania's dreadful vision of the Ulro world of Experience (368-69. 108. 8-109. 13). Her mistaken perception of the universe calls forth Enion's immediate reply, a triumphant song of Generation which includes this instructive simile:

As the seed waits Eagerly watching for its flower & fruit
 Anxious its little soul looks out into the clear expanse
 To see if hungry winds are abroad with their invisible army
 So Man looks out in tree & herb & fish & bird & beast
 Collecting up the scatterd portions of his immortal body
 Into the Elemental forms of every thing that grows.

(370. 110. 3-8)

Renewal is a human harvest because all the elements of the material world are but particles of the immortal body, and the harvest is the fulfillment of vegetative being.

Los's crucial act of acceptance in Night VIIa presages the recovery

(1) *Blake's Apocalypse*, p. 263.

of Urizen in the sense that Los's acceptance of his Spectre—that portion of his being he had tried to deny, his “opposite”—implies the acceptance of Urizen, the Zoa who is the opposite of Urthona. Urizen submits to proper control by Albion, renounces his own previous repressions and restraints (375–76. 121. 1–26), and is consequently regenerated in his true form:

Then glorious bright Exulting in his joy
He sounding rose into the heavens in naked majesty
In radiant Youth. (376. 121. 30–32)

This momentous “clearing of his head,” so to speak—“Then Go O dark futurity I will cast thee forth from these / Heavens of my brain” (375. 121. 19–20)—indicates once again that renewal begins in the mind, but the process now moves to Generation on a universal scale when the reclaimed Urizen works the plow of cosmic regeneration:

The limbs of Urizen shone with ardor. He laid his hand on the Plow
Thro dismal darkness drave the Plow of ages over Cities
And all their Villages over Mountains & all their Vallies
Over the graves & caverns of the dead Over the Planets
And over the void Spaces over Sun & moon & star & constellation

Then Urizen commanded & they brought the Seed of Men
The trembling souls of All the Dead stood before Urizen
Weak wailing in the troubled air East west & north & south
He turnd the horses loose & laid his Plow in the northern corner
Of the wide Universal field. then Stepd forth into the immense

Then he began to sow the seed he girded round his loins
With a bright girdle & his skirt filld with immortal souls
Howling & Wailing fly the souls from Urizens strong hand
(379. 124. 25–125. 5)

First Los (Urthona), now Urizen, and next Luvah and Vala are saved. Once Orc—passion or desire without any sort of informing structure to direct or shape it—has “quite consumd himself in Mental flames” (380. 126. 1), Albion, the Regenerate Man, can save Luvah and Vala

by asserting his formative control:

Luvah & Vala henceforth you are Servants obey & live
 You shall forget your former state return & Love in peace
 Into your place the place of seed not in the brain or heart.
 (380. 126. 6-8)

Finally, Tharmas and Enion are reborn as children of innocence in the world of Luvah and Vala (383. 130. 1-8).

With all the four Zoas reclaimed, the culminating work begins.⁽¹²⁾ Urizen announces the apocalyptic theme—"Then Urizen sitting at his repose on beds in the bright South / Cried Times are Ended he Exulted he arose in joy he exulted", (385. 131. 30-31)—and proceeds to the universal human harvest:

Then Urizen arose & took his Sickle in his hand

 And went forth & began to reap & all his joyful sons
 Reapd the wide Universe & bound in Sheaves a wondrous harvest
 They took them into the wide barns with loud rejoicings & triumph
 (385. 132. 1, 6-8)

Tharmas threshes the nations and the stars, winnowing out Mystery—"O Mystery Fierce Tharmas cries Behold thy end is come" (387. 134. 5)—and Luvah attends the wine press to gather the final Vintage by pressing the "Odors of life" from the "Human Grapes" (388. 135. 5ff.). Urthona, the risen form of Los, the first healed, culminates this process. Unifying vision brings the labors to a valuable end, harnessing the contraries of nature to bake the Bread of Ages:

Then Dark Urthona took the Corn out of the Stores of Urizen

(12) Bloom's remark on the energy of the apocalypse is a useful one: "Before even redeemed Man can enter into his own unity again, the whole cosmos must be delivered by a great harvest and vintage, as in Revelation. But Blake's is the most active of revelations, and the Zoas ... must themselves work the process of rejuvenation" (*Blake's Apocalypse*, p. 272).

He ground it in his rumbling Mills ...
.....

The grey hoar frost was there
And his pale wife the aged Snow they watch over the fires
They build the Ovens of Urthona Nature in darkness groans
And Men are bound to sullen contemplations in the night
Restless they turn on beds of sorrow, in their inmost brain
Feeling the crushing Wheels they rise they write the bitter words
Of Stern Philosophy & knead the bread of knowledge with tears
& groans

Such are the works of Dark Urthona Tharmas sifted the corn
Urthona made the Bread of Ages & he placed it
In golden & in silver baskets in heavens of precious stone
And then took his repose in Winter in the night of Time
(391. 138. 1-2, 9-19)

The images of communion are richly meaningful, for men have been transformed into bread and wine that humanity may partake of its common divinity—but not in Mystery. The coming together of men, which finally reaches completion in the total form of Albion, is presented in the familiar image of human social union, the banquet: the feast “spread in the bright South” (386. 133. 2), the “Golden feast” (388. 135. 4).

After the final “Winter in the night of Time,” *The Four Zoas* reaches its culminating apocalypse. What is most significant about it is the *direction* in which the apocalypse goes, and an early indication of the nature of this apocalypse is given in Enion’s reply to Ahania in Night VIII. Following the key man/seed simile, Enion goes on to reveal more of the nature of Man:

he stores his thoughts
As in a store house in his memory he regulates the forms
Of all beneath & all above & in the gentle West
Reposes where the Suns heat dwells he rises to the Sun
And to the Planets of the Night & to the stars that gild
The Zodiac & the stars that sullen stand to north & south.
(370. 110. 12-17)

When Man at last collects his "scatterd portions" into his universal body, he will rise expansively into the cosmos. It is just this very expansiveness, in fact, which Ahania is shortly hereafter unable to contain within her own yet separated and hence limited body:

Ahania rose in joy

Excess of Joy is worse than grief—her heart beat high her blood
Burst its bright Vessels She fell down dead at the feet of Urizen

(376. 121. 35-37)

Urizen is silenced by the same dynamic "pangs of an Eternal Birth": "He ceasd for rivn link from link the bursting Universe explodes / All things reversd flew from their centers" (377. 122. 26-27). Finally, the cosmic apocalypse occurs when Man walks forth:

And Man walks forth from midst of the fires the evil is all consumd
His eyes behold the Angelic spheres arising night & day

The stars consumd like a lamp blown out & in their stead behold
The Expanding Eyes of Man.

(391. 138. 22-25)

The apocalypse of *The Four Zoas* is the absolute opposite of an ultimate collapse, for it is the dynamic expansion of Man into the human form of the universe.⁽¹³⁾ The stars are consumed not because of a fall from the heavens, but because "The Expanding Eyes of Man" fill the universe: they *become* the stars. When Emanations and Spec-

(13) This culminating expansion—or explosion—outward underscores the fact that Los's attempt at apocalypse at the beginning of Night IX was in error, a mistake generated by his fear, for to tear down the sun and moon would necessarily lead to the negative apocalypse of a total collapse into the chaos of "Universal Confusion." Los's hasty action would occasion just the sort of negative apocalypse, in fact, that the Augustan poets of the Eighteenth Century so strongly feared—and repeatedly envisioned. But *The Four Zoas* is no *Dunciad*, and its apocalypse is the first instance of an apocalyptic vision shared by the major Romantic poets: a cosmic renewal which is a dynamic expansion of the human image, so that ultimately the universe is envisioned as the perfected form of humanity drawn together in a Universal Brotherhood which can exist as one infinite Human Being. And it is to that Being that Blake gives the name "Albion."

tres are perceived as apart from Zoas, the order of mind has broken down, and Albion is fallen. But man has the power to effect regeneration within his Human Imagination. When man perceives as a complete man, then his falsely-perceived universe will be regenerated as imaginatively correct Space and Time: that is, Eden and Eternity. Men will become Man. Albion, the Eternal Man, will arise to become the human form of the universe.

All is changed, changed utterly, "even as in ancient times," but the change has been a movement back to the beginning and is a direct reply to Albion's earlier lamenting question: "When shall the Man of future times become as in days of old" (374. 120. 5). The final questions put by the renewed Tharmas and Urthona to Man—"How is it we have walkd thro fires & yet are not consumd / How is it that all things are changd even as in ancient times" (391. 138. 39-40)—are answered, appropriately, by the final page of the poem. Fittingly, our last vision is of the purified agent of the cosmic rebirth arising to his labors in the reborn cosmos:

Urthona is arisen in his strength no longer now
Divided from Enitharmon no longer the Spectre Los
Where is the Spectre of prophecy where the delusive Phantom
Departed & 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. 4-10)