

**ARCHETYPE AND ANALOGY:
THE SYMBOLIC ACTION OF WILLIAM BLAKE'S 'THE TYGER'**

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ABSTRACT

This study of William Blake's "The Tyger" examines a question familiar to Blake studies, "Who created the Tyger?" As in most previous studies of this question, Blake's mythological gods are considered as analogues to the tyger. In proposing answers to the question, Blake's lyrical and epic canons are explored to ascertain the presence of Blake's mythological gods in the early lyrical works and the dynamics of their characters and narratives in the political and prophetic epics. This study enlarges the question to include the tyger itself, a method that has the advantage of ascertaining the analogue of more than a single symbol, and offers the possibility of discovering the dramatic and symbolic action of the creation of the tyger in the narratives of the epical poetry.

By analyzing the imagery and prosody of "The Tyger," the dramatic relationship between the tyger and its creator is established. Particularly, an examination of the symbols of fire and of the tyger indicates the attributes of the mythological gods that are analogous to the maker and the made of the poem.

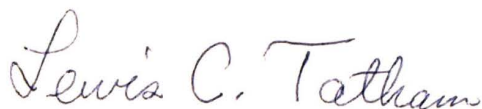
An examination of *The Book of Los* and *The Book of Urizen* finds that the act of creating the tyger compares with the narrative episodes of Los's forging of the sun and Los's chaining of the Zoa Urizen. Additional analogies to the dramatic and symbolic action of "The Tyger" are found in Milton, Jerusalem, and Blake's engraving of "A Divine Image," a plate he chose not to include in his editions of

Songs of Innocence and of Experience. The Zoa of Imagination, Los, is proposed as the mythological analogy for the tyger's creator, and the Zoa of Reason, Urizen, is considered as the analogue of the tyger.

An analysis of "The Tyger" and pertinent epical poetry shows that the archetype of the poem involves the dragonslayer motif, originally an ancient cosmogonical myth. "The Tyger's" relationship to this mythic tradition is established by analyzing the symbology associated with Los and Urizen, the mythological analogues for the creator and creature of Blake's lyric poem.


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I am submitting herewith a Thesis written by Larry L. Magnuson entitled "Archetype and Analogy: The Symbolic Action of 'The Tyger.'" I have examined the final copy of this paper for form and content, and I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts, with a major in English.



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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the English language few poems are so precisely pictorial and at the same time so elusive and enigmatic in meaning as William Blake's "The Tyger." The structure of "The Tyger," after all, is based on a metrically rapid succession of questions to which Blake does not pause to supply, or even imply, the answers. This study advances answers to the meanings of the symbols of "The Tyger" by examining its imagery and structure, by finding analogues for "The Tyger" in Blake's other works, and by considering the poem archetypally through an examination of Blakean symbols associated with "The Tyger" and found elsewhere in literature and myth. The central concepts of Jungian psychology are helpful in understanding the symbolism of "The Tyger," and so are the pan-cultural cosmogonic and dragonslayer myths. But this study depends on locating the recounting of the symbolic action of "The Tyger" in Blake's other poetry and engravings.

The foundation of this examination of "The Tyger" consists in discovering Blake's other analogues for the creator and the created in "The Tyger," an approach that follows a well-established tradition in Blake scholarship. Just as in most previous studies, this study relies on Blake's own mythology to provide allegorical and analogical answers to this question, but expands the question to include a query about the identity of the tyger itself, again using Blake's mythology to do so. Considering the

mythological identities of both the maker and the made in "The Tyger" is consistent with the intent of the original question and offers the advantage of determining, not the analogue of a single symbol, but of ascertaining the symbolic drama of the poem by identifying all the mythological players and their roles. Finding analogues for both the tyger and its creator reinforces the identification of each, especially when it can be shown that Blake dramatizes their relationship and returns to the symbolic action that underlies the creation of the tyger in his epic poetry.

A basic approach of this study is its consideration of "The Tyger" as more than a poetic statement of the problem of evil, the conventional view of the poem. I strongly agree with the majority of Blakean critics that the tyger is an unsurpassed emblem of evil. To know what the tyger may also symbolize, we must first see the tyger as the embodiment of evil, and perhaps even its apotheosis. But I view the poem *in toto* as an expression of wholeness, ethically, of evil and good, psychologically, of the conscious and the unconscious, and ontologically and cosmogonically, of the ideal and the corporeal. Blake everywhere insists upon the inseparability of these "heavens and hells," and "The Tyger" is more an expression of what Blake terms "Energy" than a representation of its destructive element. The imagistic and structural symmetry of the poem suggests that, as always in Blake, good and evil are aspects of an ultimately inseparable unity and

wholeness. Because the tyger is so obviously an incarnation of evil, distinguishing what Blake considers to be quintessentially evil provides an additional basis for deducing a mythological analogue for Blake's ferocious tyger.

The changing aspects of Blake's mythological gods is of concern in discussing the forces at work in "The Tyger," and it is a question which must be entertained in attempting to ultimately fix the mythological identities of the maker and the made in "The Tyger." In the first book of *Milton*, Blake says, "And Satan is the Spectre of Orc & Orc is the generate Luvah" (29:34).¹ What is implied in this statement is that Urizen is a form of Satan who, in turn, is represented as Orc, the revolutionary force who, in turn, is a time manifestation of Luvah, the god of Love. Metamorphosis is an important aspect of Blake's mythology, and as mythological analogues are advanced for "The Tyger," the possibility of sliding off into such a morass of shape-changers presents itself. However, "The Tyger's" force and energy have an unmistakable clarity, representing a significant moment of exposition in Blake's poetry, a realization in symbols whose emblematic appeal all readers have felt. Indeed, the deep symbolic language of "The Tyger" is archetypal, and its forceful symbols of fire are repeated as clearly in Blake's prophetic poetry and illuminations.

The rest of this chapter summarizes the arguments of the chapters which follow, beginning with a review of the

scholarship concerned with answering the question "Who created the Tyger?" The prospects for obtaining such elusive answers are briefly discussed. While keeping in mind the variety of responses offered thus far by students of Blake, the comprehensive certainty of Blake's own vision and belief is important, and the conclusion that such answers are possible can be anticipated. To use Blake's own encouraging words which suggest the sun symbolism that forms one element of this study: "I give you the end of a golden string, / Only wind it into a ball: / It will lead you in at Heavens gate, / Built in Jerusalems wall."

The ultimate nature of the tyger and its creator may be ineluctable. Like all great poetry, "The Tyger" has a special power to expand and to outdistance our personal experience of its symbols, a fact shown clearly by diverse criticism that considers its symbology. Varying assertions and sometimes startling reversals of them describe the findings of Blake critics to the questions asked in "The Tyger," even among those who choose to interpret the poem in terms of Blakean mythology.

Kathleen Raine's article "Who Made The Tyger?" (*Encounter*, June, 1954) now stands at the midpoint of twentieth-century studies of Blake. Her argument for Urizen as the creator of the tyger focuses on Blake's familiarity with Gnosticism. Blake's knowledge of various Gnostic tractates is demonstrable, and the reappearance of certain Gnostic formulations in his own poetry indicates that Gnosticism and its cosmogony influence Blake's thought.

Raine sees the creator of the tyger as the Gnostic demiurge who is responsible for material creation, itself a central evil in Gnostic thought. Philosophic idealism, so familiar in Blake's work, also underlies Gnostic cosmogony.

Gnosticism views creation as the work of a lesser, evil god and, like Blake, sees creation as an error to be redeemed from without by an interventive apocalypse. Raine's identification of Urizen as this demiurge through a close reading of certain Gnostic tractates has been challenged. Yet her idea about who created the Tyger, a figure she sees as "competitive, predacious Selfhood," receives Foster Damon's assent, for in *A Blake Dictionary*, he explains that, "As Kathleen Raine has demonstrated . . . the Tyger was created by Urizen" (414).

Damon's own original answer to the question of the creator, which he advanced in 1924, was that God the Father created the Tyger for "the Punishment of Sins" (2: 227). Raine also has moderated her claim; yet, in her later, two-volume work, she places her expanded views on "The Tyger" within the part of the book that deals with Urizen, and her continuing commitment to this answer is evident in her explication of the poem. But in this two-volume work she concludes: "Instead of seeking to find a yes or a no, we will be nearest to the truth if we see the poem as an utterance of Blake's delight not in the solution but in the presentation of the problem of evil as he found it" (2: 31).

Both Hazard Adams (58-74) and Stanley Gardner (123-130) see, not Urizen, but Los as the creator of the tyger, though

their readings of the character of Los differ. In Blake's mythological pantheon, Urizen and Los are diametrically opposed; indeed, Blake's corpus has its Urizenic phase, those early political and prophetic works through *The Four Zoas*, and its Losian phase, the epics *Milton* and *Jerusalem* in which Los, as Imagination, replaces the abstractioner Urizen as protagonist. Thus the best critics widely disagree over this absorbing question in Blake, and the mystery of the Tyger's creator is confirmed by the opinions of its closest readers.

For a summation of this critical interest in the creator of the Tyger, Hobsbaum's "A Rhetorical Question Answered: Blake's Tyger and Its Critics" (*Neophilologus*, May, 1964) provides a look at the above ideas and those advanced by David Erdman, F. W. Bateson, and Margaret Rudd. Hobsbaum's one objection to all the arguments put forth by these Blake scholars is formalist. He requires that the poem's meaning must finally be approached *in vacuo*. However, the integrative nature of Blake's poetic canons, both lyric and prophetic, encourages us to look beyond Hobsbaum's cautionary thesis. Especially, commentary on the epical works is in order, for in these Blake's vision parallels, advances, and clarifies the symbolism of *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*.²

The most serious question this article raises for most studies of "The Tyger" is contained in the common assertion that "The questions are there because the poet does not know the answer." In *William Blake: His Philosophy and Symbols*,

Damon states:

So it is evident that the climax of "The Tyger":
Did he who made the Lamb make thee? is not an
exclamation of wonder, but a very real question,
whose answer Blake was not sure of. (277)

In the 1971 *Dictionary*, he says:

Blake reaches his climax in the question 'Did he
who made the lamb make thee?' Blake knew the
answer, but he wanted the reader to find that
answer himself. (414)

The speaker of "The Tyger" indeed seems not to know the
answer, and thereby we are drawn to share his questioning
stance. But if answers to ethical, ontological, or
eschatological questions eluded Blake we do not know about
them. He, after all, was rewriting the Bible, albeit at
times as an intellectual satire, but pervasively with the
forth-telling voice of the prophet, with, as he says, "the
Savior over me/Spreading his beams of love, & dictating the
words of this mild song" (*J* 4:4-5). If answers to the
questions asked in "The Tyger" end in uncertainty, then they
are not Blake's answers, for conviction and certainty are
two of Blake's most discernable traits.¹

Jesse Bier has effectively compared the nature of
Blake's Tyger to Melville's whale, adducing their mutually
vast and unfathomable natures. A similar comparison of the
authors' own natures reveals Blake's visionary certainty and
Melville's clouded doubt. Hawthorne's sketch of Melville
shows that Melville was as skeptical as Blake was believing,

and Hawthorne's description of him resembles Blake's god of doubt, Urizen (at his best), rather than Blake:

Melville, as he always does, began to reason of Providence and futurity, and of everything that lies beyond human ken, and he informed me that he had "pretty much made up his mind to be annihilated"; but still he does not seem to rest in that anticipation. . . . He can neither believe, nor be comfortable in his unbelief.

(From *The English Notebooks*)

Blake's own religious certainty begins with his vision of a tree filled with angels when he was eight or nine years old, and the same visionary belief is evinced nearly fifty years later in *A Vision of The Last Judgement* where Blake uses the sun symbol to express Divinity:

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. (555)

The forces that threaten spiritual wholeness need to be discussed to illuminate the nature of evil at work within "The Tyger" and so advance explanations for the questions asked in the poem. What we find is that Blake's own visionary certainty, his connection to the Self in Jung's

paradigm, remains constant, though its expression through symbols and personifications often changes. All this suggests Blake believed he knew who created the tyger and, for that matter, all the "vegetable" world. The encompassing religious answer of God only begs the question, for we immediately wish to know which God.

Blake has a number of them, chiefly the "Starry Eight" of the four Zoas and their Emanations. Direct references to the Biblical God, whether the Elohim, Shaddai, or Jehovah, appear infrequently in Blake's work before *The Four Zoas*, though in the first books of his projected Bible of Hell, Blake is obviously acquainted with these distinctions and seems to base his satire of the *fiat lux* on the Elohim and his stern, law-giving Urizen on Jehovah. Thus here are nearly a dozen representations of God, all functioning at times as creators, though not all clearly developed in Blake's poetry by the time he writes "The Tyger." But it is Blake's chief method to represent both the Divine and the diabolical as aspects of human consciousness through his own mythological pantheon, and among these eight gods of his own creation, one is represented in the tyger and another dared to create its "fearful symmetry."

In summarizing the scholarly interest in the question of "Who created the Tyger?", we note that Damon's answer in 1924 is that "God the Father" creates the tyger for the punishment of sins, but, in the later Blake dictionary, he agrees with Raine that Urizen created the tyger. In 1924, Damon asserts that Blake himself was not sure of the answer,

but, later, says that "Blake knew the answer" (*Dictionary* 414). Raine moderates her position in her later works also, but continues to think of Urizen and the tyger's creator as sharing the same identity. Hobsbaum and Bier find, respectively, that the questions asked in "The Tyger" are enigmatic, and that the tyger's nature is as unfathomable as Melville's white whale. Gardner and Adams identify Los as the tyger's maker.

This study agrees with the opinion of Gardner and Adams. Los creates the tyger. The hammer, anvil, furnace, and chain belong to Los, the Eternal Prophet. Although both Urizen and Vala labor at Los's furnaces at different times, the furnaces of generation are the poet-figure Los's, where he forms "the glowing illusion" (*BL* 5:47) that is here the tyger, but elsewhere is Urizen himself. The connection by the agency of imagination of Jesus-Los-Milton-Blake that Blake makes clear in *Milton* opposes the Urizen-Satan-Newton-Locke array of abstract reasoning and material error, and this conflict, the essence of Blake's vision, is the struggle represented in "The Tyger." Urizen, his ferocity and destruction represented in fiery symbol of the tyger, opposes the Imagination represented by Los and his blacksmith's tools. Blake's two great evils, the material aspect of existence, which is alienation and desolation, and the rational mind that cannot see beyond material existence are Urizen's world of webs and his doubting spirit which sees only death. "The Tyger" is related to Blake's central myth of the fall into creation which then becomes "Abstract

Philosophy warring in enmity against Imagination" (*J* 5:58). In "The Tyger," Imagination is seen striking the crucial blow by "giving a body to Falshood that it may be cast out for ever" (*J* 12:13). "The Tyger" shows the beginning of the redemptive process, when the evil of the tyger is first revealed through the efforts of imagination. The remainder of this chapter summarizes the arguments advanced in this study for viewing "The Tyger" as a symbolic drama whose mythological counterparts are Urizen and Los.

Chapter II examines Blake's early poetry and engravings to determine which mythic characters he has conceived by the time he writes "The Tyger," and how much development he has given them. In examining these poems, we find an excellent basis for answering the question "Who created the Tyger?" Many of Blake's mythological gods already inhabit the early poetry. Though none are named, Los, Orc, Urizen, and other allegorical figures appear in these lyrics, and this chapter shows that their imagery, themes, and narrative episodes are discernable even in Blake's juvenile poems, some written nearly a quarter century before the first mythological figure appears in his poetry.

This first poetry also shows that Urizen has a dragon-like aspect, a symbolic connection Blake elaborates in the epic *Prophecies*. Discovering that Blake associates Urizen with the dragon demonstrates the Zoa's relationship to the tyger, for Blake scholarship identifies the tyger with the Biblical dragon Leviathan. We find that in "To Winter" Blake also associates Urizen with fire, and associates him

with the Newtonian stars of the material universe in early poems like "Earth's Answer." Both Urizen's dragon-form appearance and his connection to the images of sun and fire have implications for the understanding the symbology of "The Tyger" in which fire symbology predominates and which is related to the cosmogonic act of creation.

Chapter III explores the imagery and prosody of "The Tyger" to form a basis for discovering its mythological analogies in Blake's epical works. It finds that while the tyger is the primary image of the poem, fire is the recurrent symbol, and in Blake, fire is a positive and encompassing phenomenon, an affirmative image of total energy. A reading of the revisions of the poem shows good and evil coexist in the finished poem that Blake first conceived as a single vision of consummate evil. The contrasting forces within the poem also evince an equilibrium where one vision is related to and counterbalanced by the other. This symbolic parity and opposition extend to the tyger and its maker, both by structure and image, and suggest a connection between them. This chapter examines the inter-relationship of imagery of the maker and the made in "The Tyger" to further develop a basis for identifying in Blake's other works the symbolic drama of "The Tyger."

The poetic devices that render the poem's unity and its contrasts are examined. Meter, rhyme, anaphora, caesuras, and the image of fire all at times function both to unify and to enforce the distinctions made within the poem.

Because of this complexity of inter-relationships and the "Oriental latitude" of the poem to which Gilchrist refers (1: 116), "The Tyger" is seen as embodying an archetype of total consciousness, or "energy" in Blake's words. This observation is reinforced by considering the symbol of fire which Blake uses to express his concept of inclusive energy. In this regard, we find that in Jungian psychology, fire represents the "first concept of a God," and "The Tyger" is compared to the *complexio oppositorum* symbols of the alchemists and the Yin-Yang ideograph, both representations of inter-related universal forces.

The equilibrium of structure and image in "The Tyger" is also reflected in the ethical balance of the poem where the symbols of the immortal creator and the predatory tyger represent good and evil. The chapter concludes by examining Blake's epics for other examples of this ethical confrontation, specifically the Divine imposition of the Limits of Contraction and Opacity, the places or moments in Blake's system where evil and good necessarily meet. Blake's poetry shows the limits of evil are established as an act of Divine mercy at the moment of creation, an event related to the creative act of "The Tyger," as an examination of its "stars and spears" stanza reveals. This part of the discussion shows Los as the mythical god associated with limiting error, for Los constrains error by giving "a body to Falshood that it may be cast out for ever" (J 12:13). His action in the epic narratives of confronting evil near the moment of creation has significance for the

creation act described in "The Tyger," and for relating the figure of Los to the creator in "The Tyger."

Chapter IV reveals that the images of fire in "The Tyger" are indeed a "concept of God," and shows Los and Urizen as diametrically opposed sun-gods. Blake founds "The Tyger" on the idea of the immaterial sun which mirrors the material sun of the "vegetable world," the spiritual sun of Los and the dark sun of Urizen. The ideas of correspondence and Divine Analogy underlie these dual sun symbols, and the appearance of these suns in Blake's lyrics, epics, and miscellaneous writings is explored. This chapter finds that the fiery tyger and its creator reappear in *The Book of Urizen* and *The Book of Los* as the mythological gods Los and Urizen. In *The Book of Los* the dual sun symbols reflect the symbolic drama of both *The Book of Urizen* and "The Tyger": "Giving a body to Falshood that it may be cast out for ever" (*J* 12:13). The light and dark forces that "The Tyger" evinces are analogized in these Prophecies as Los and Urizen engage in a cosmogonic and ethical struggle that parallels the creation act of "The Tyger." The symbolic action of "The Tyger" is similarly retold in *Milton*, *The Four Zoas*, and in Blake's engraving "A Divine Image."

In Chapter V, "The Tyger" is compared to the dragonslayer myth. In the antagonistic relationship of the gods of Imagination and Reason, we find Blake retelling the myth of the dragon and the sun-god in the epic poetry, and as the creator and the creature in "The Tyger," Los and Urizen enact this myth within the poem.

This chapter finds that, as other sun-gods, Los performs the heroic task of stabilizing the newly created cosmos by defeating a monster, usually a serpent or dragon. Blake specifically associates the tyger with the Biblical dragon Leviathan, a relationship this chapter explores. Urizen also merges with the tyger through the image of the dragon. The relationship of Urizen and the tyger to Biblical dragon Leviathan is examined in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, reinforcing Urizen's analogic identity as the tyger. Urizen's dragon aspect is examined and the dual nature of his enormity is revealed. Urizen is an aggressive and threatening dragon, but he is also a "rational dragon," representing conscious mental forces. As a Leviathan-like dragon and as one-sided reasoning, Urizen epitomizes Blakean evil. Urizen engenders material existence through his subject-object thinking, and he uses only the rational mind in his pursuit of consciousness. These inflations and alienations can only be overcome by Los, the unifying function of the imagination. Los begins this healing communication by confronting the "rational dragon" Urizen and by "daring" to create the tyger.

CHAPTER II

THE ENTRANCE TO MYTH

We examine here Blake's lyrics and longer poems through 1793, the year when Blake printed and issued "The Tyger" in *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*.³ Because of the thematic similarities between Blake's songs and all his other works, it is helpful to consider "The Tyger" in relationship to the collateral mythology that Blake had evolved by this time, or, for that matter, would evolve in later works. Blake's central concern in *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* is the same theme he explores in his Prophetic Books, the evolution of spiritual perception or the unifying expansion of consciousness achieved by passing through planes of potentially liberating experience. In the *Songs* the planes are the eponymous stages of innocence and experience; in the Prophetic Books the levels become the four-fold vision, an expansion of thought and of "experience" but not of purpose or intent. Because Blake articulates this theme of inward growth by the narrative events of the Prophetic Books, events whose adumbration is in the shorter poems, a close comparison between Blake's two poetic canons is useful.

We look at Blake's early verse and his illuminations of them to determine which mythic characters Blake conceives by the time he writes "The Tyger," and thus to judge how much development Blake has given them and the narrative events that surround them by the time he finishes "The Tyger." In considering the question "Who made the Tyger?", this

examination shows that nominating mythological analogues for the maker and the made in "The Tyger" has a firm basis in Blake's earliest poetry.

The inquiry into Blake's first inclinations to mythologize begins by granting the question "Who created the Tyger?" an inclusive range. The presence of Los, Orc, and many other mythological figures inhabits these early poems, and the most clearly shown of the mythologic characters is Urizen. As noted in the last chapter, Blake's corpus divides well into two great periods: the Urizenic epoch that ends with *The Four Zoas*, and the epoch of Los's redeeming heroism shown in the later works *Milton* and *Jerusalem*. By 1793, in both the lyrics and the early political and prophetic works, Blake's Urizen and the images characteristically associated with him are significantly evolved. Blake's other mythological figures also receive his imaginative attention by the time of *Songs of Experience*, and various lyric outlines of their epical adventures attest that Blake had begun his mythic system.

That Blake associates Urizen with the symbols of fire and the sun is shown by examining several early poems, and these images of fire and the sun have implications for the symbology of "The Tyger." Additionally, Blake's poetry discloses that, early on, Blake attributes a dragon-like aspect to Urizen.

In this regard, as Robert Gleckner observes in *The Blake Quarterly*: "It has long been recognized, of course, that Blake's tiger 'includes' both Behemoth and Leviathan, the

penultimate 'Memorable Fancy' of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* establishing that relationship explicitly" (100).

Discovering in the early poetry that Blake also closely associates Urizen with the dragon form shows this Zoa's special symbolic affinity with the tyger.

Like "The Tyger," ascertaining the composition date of most of Blake's poems is difficult; but, for the purposes of exploring Blake's nascent mythology, the dating of Blake's poetry need not be precise. Some of Blake's juvenile poems and a significant number of poems in *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* indicate that Blake already has thoroughly envisioned crucial aspects of his myth of the Zoas at the time he writes "The Tyger." These mythologic figures are, in fact, never named in the lyric canon. However, Blake was at work on the *Minor Prophecies* when he wrote "The Tyger" (Frye, ed. 23), although on which ones and to what extent remain unclear. But observing just how far back into Blake's poetry some of these mythological figures extend, it is easy to understand the willingness of Blake readers to propose mythological counterparts for the creator in "The Tyger," and there is no need to go beyond the date of 1793 or to exactly fix the date of individual poems to do so. Finally, only Los, Orc, and Urizen from among the many mythological figures cited are likely to be related to the fiery creation drama of "The Tyger"; in these early poems, only Urizen and Orc, both shown as fiery gods, suggest they are related to "The Tyger's" pervasive symbol, fire, and only Urizen has an underlying affinity with its cardinal

symbol, the tyger itself.

In the poems written prior to 1793, the figure of Los appears chiefly as a part of a relationship with Orc and Enitharmon, and there is hardly an indication that Los will soon emerge as Blake's god of the imagination. Here Los evinces no fiery energy, although later he will. Unlike many other mythic figures who seem to have no relationship to the "problem of evil" in "The Tyger," nothing in the early poetry disallows Los from further consideration, and Blake does have the character of Los well in mind by 1793.

In this regard, Raine states: "Blake, when he wrote "The Tyger," had not completed his system, nor did the Zoas yet exist in his mind otherwise than in the most vague foreshadowing" (2: 23). Others have noted the rudimentary but early presence of Orc and Urizen in *Poetical Sketches*, printed in 1783 and comprised of Blake's juvenilia, written between the ages of twelve to twenty. Moreover, Frye considers *Poetical Sketches* "to be evenly divided between lyrics and embryonic prophecies" (*Symmetry* 4), and the lyrics themselves contain elements of the later prophecies.⁴

If the myth of the four Zoas is not evident by the time of *Songs of Experience* and, thus, "The Tyger," descriptive detail, narrative occurrences and character relationships are absolutely in evidence by this time. When we consider that by the next year the Urizen-Los relationship is fully detailed in *The Book of Urizen*, and that all the Zoas appear here in plate 15 (Fig. 1), it seems advisable to see Blake's myth as already having a significant degree of development

by the time he writes "The Tyger."

In *Songs of Experience*, the figures of Los, Enitharmon, Ahania, and Urizen are discernable. The speaker of "Earth's Answer" is a prototypic Ahania, the emanation of Urizen, who, as in *The Book of Ahania*, sings a lament as she endures a "Stony dread" because "Starry Jealousy does keep my den." Starry Jealousy is the "selfish father of men / Cruel jealous selfish fear" who is "Chain'd in night." In *The Visions of the Daughters of Albion*, it is Urizen that Blake calls the "Creator of men" (5:3). In "Earth's Answer," the words "cold and hoar" and "freeze" and the "heavy chain" of bondage, as well as reference to the Newtonian or material stars in the appellation "Starry Jealousy," indicate the northern Urizen who is the material sun (FZ 37:23-47) and who characteristically uses the devices of enslavement. The image of the "den" is also Urizenic, for after the creation of the material world, Urizen announces his intention to "explore his dens" (U 22:46 and FZ 65:9). The "night" in which Starry Jealousy is chained compares to the night of the opening lines of "The Tyger" as the darkness of error, which the accompanying image of "forests" also routinely symbolizes in Blake's poetry.

In "A Little Girl Lost," Urizen is the "father white" whose "loving look / Like the Holy Book / All her tender limbs with terror shook." Similarly, numerous illustrations of Urizen, notably the frontispiece of *The Book of Urizen*, depict him as an aged figure or "father white," who writes his "iron laws" on tablets or in massive books, his Books of

Iron and Brass. And significantly, the little girl's name is Ona, one of Urizen's three daughters (her name will not appear again until the seventh night of *The Four Zoas*).

In "The Human Abstract," Urizen is fully situated in his myth with his "loving look" shown now to be his deceitful pity. The title of the poem is wholly Urizenic, for, above all, Urizen is an abstractioner obsessed with the fact of corporeal existence. With his nets ("Then Cruelty knits a snare") and his mocking tears, he sits under the tree of Mystery which has sprung up beneath his foot. The ultimate symbol of error in Blake's symbology, this tree compares to the "forests" of "The Tyger." Moreover, the central narrative action of "The Human Abstract," the creation of the Tree, will be repeated throughout the Prophetic Books.

In the illustration for "The Human Abstract," the aged figure struggling under the net is clearly Urizen sitting underneath the Tree of Mystery his tears have nourished (Fig. 2). At least three years earlier, in the final illumination of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* this is Urizen also, himself debased by his repressive "One Law" (Fig. 3).⁵

A father, mother, and son, much like Los, Enitharmon, and Orc, appear twice in *Songs of Experience* in "Infant Sorrow" and "A Little Boy Lost." In "Infant Sorrow" the newborn's relationship to his father and mother is a succinct portrayal of Orc's strong maternal bond to Enitharmon and of his chaining by Los:

Struggling in my fathers hands:

Striving against my swadling bands:

Bound and weary I thought best

To sulk upon my mothers breast

In the epical works, Blake elaborates the chaining of Orc several times and also illustrates Orc's maternal attachment, as plate 21 of *The Book of Urizen* shows in its depiction of an adolescent Orc still nursing at Enitharmon's breast.

Comparably, in "A Little Boy Lost," Urizen, the "Priest" "who sets reason up for judge," is accompanied by a prefigurement of Orc as the boy lost, again beset by parents who act just as Los and Enitharmon will:

The weeping parents wept in vain:

They strip'd him to his little shirt.

And bound him in an iron chain.

Blake presents an extended narration of Orc's binding in *The Book of Urizen* (20:6-29) and in *The Four Zoas* (59-61).

Admittedly, the feminine emanations of Ahania and Enitharmon are not related to the symbolic action of "The Tyger" with its masculine imagery of the hammer, anvil, and furnace, and its reference to a male creator. But *Songs of Experience* shows that Urizen, Los, and Orc, on the basis of their discernable presences in these poems, should be closely examined for additional characteristics that might link them further with the symbols and the dramatic action of "The Tyger."

But, by 1793, what other mythological figures are clearly enough defined both to attest to the degree of

development of Blake's myth and to merit the same further investigation? In *The Vision of the Daughters of Albion* (1793), Oothoon, Theotormon, Bromion, and, again, Urizen are amply characterized. But Oothoon, Theotormon, and Bromion soon become relatively minor characters. Oothoon's femininity does not correlate with the symbols of "The Tyger," and her attributes are finally seen to be derived from Enitharmon. Theotormon and Bromion are minor characters whose respective jealousy and enslaving domination are most associated with "Starry Jealousy," Urizen. Similarly, Rintrah and Palamabron are important but minor characters associated most with Los as his two most renowned sons, Rintrah as a figure of prophecy and Palamabron as a figure of poetry. Urthona's presence throughout Blake's work is veiled; ultimately, Urthona is the most problematic of the Eternals because he is least characterized. Urthona is discernable only once in the poetry before 1793, in a single line of the "Song of Liberty."

Additionally, Fuzon appears by at least 1795, and he is the element of fire (*U* 23:9-18). The fiery natures of Orc and Fuzon are similar, for Blake says Orc "Arose like a pillar of fire above the Alps" (*Asia* 7:27) and then in *The Book of Ahania* says, ". . . the fiery beam of Fuzon / Was a pillar of fire to Egypt' (2:44-45). Of consequence for the imagery and action of "The Tyger," Morton Paley notes Fuzon's relation to the image of tygers:

In *The Book of Ahania* (1795), where the energy

principle temporarily overthrows repressive reason, "Fuzon, his tigers unloosing, / Thought Urizen slain by his wrath." The image of the tiger seems to have been almost inevitable. (52)

Fuzon does represent energy as a sun-god who, like his father Urizen, gives "light to the mornings of heaven" (*AH* 3:36). Yet Fuzon's rebellion quickly ends with his crucifixion on the Tree of Mystery, presumably because his insurgency is doomed by his direct descent from his totally repressive father whom he can fight against only with his inherited but less potent sun-weapons to which Urizen has an original and superior claim. Fuzon's thwarted rebellion relegates him to a minor and short-lived position in the epics.

We have so far examined poems written about the same time as "The Tyger." In at least two much earlier poems, we find evidence of a prototypic Urizen and, more importantly, evidence that Blake has long had in mind key narrative events of the later political and Prophetic works. In *"Poetical Sketches*, only the character of Urizen is explicitly presaged, but his lineaments are unmistakable in "To Winter":

O Winter! bar thine adamantine doors:
The north is thine; there hast thou built thy dark
Deep-founded habitation. Shake not thy roofs,
Nor bend thy pillars with thine iron car.

He hears me not, but o'er the yawning deep

Rides heavy; his storms are unchain'd; sheathed
 In ribbed steel, I dare not lift mine eyes;
 For he hath rear'd his sceptre o'er the world.

Lo! now the direful monster, whose skin clings
 To his strong bones, strides o'er the groaning
 rocks: [t/o]

He withers all in silence, and his hand
 Unclothes the earth, and freezes up frail life.

He takes his seat upon the cliffs, the mariner
 Cries in vain. Poor little wretch! that deal'st
 With storms; till heaven smiles, and the monster
 Is driv'n yelling to his caves beneath mount

Hecla. [t/o]

Blake composed this poem sometime prior to 1777, more than fifteen years before he engraves and prints *Songs of Experience*, but the degree of the resemblance between the personification of Winter and Urizen suggests Blake had this mythological character consciously in mind for at least ten years and perhaps for as long as two decades. The elements of description in "To Winter" that show the story of Urizen was more than a bare outline for Blake are obvious and striking: Urizen's creation of a caverned world after his fall into the Abyss is reflected in "thou . . . has built thy dark / Deep-founded habitation;" Winter's riding heavy "o'er the yawning deep" when his "storms are unchan'd" compares with Urizen's armies who "flew thro' the dark

night" in "deep thunder" over the Atlantic to loose the storms of reaction against the colonies in *America*, *A Prophecy* (11:3). The speaker's admonition to Winter not to bend his pillars and Winter "sheathed in ribbed steel" foreshadow Urizen's retreat to "the cove of armour" where he takes his shield down from a "trembling pillar" in a deep cavern (*AM* cancelled plate C, line 2). Winter's transformation into a bellicose and "direful monster" with sceptre compares with an etching for *America* (Fig. 4) where an aged figure like Urizen is depicted as an aerial monster who carries a spear.

In "To Winter," the phrase "The North is thine" may be more than a personification of Winter ruling the icy wastes, for in Blake's later epics Urizen is the southern Zoa who usurps the northern position to dominate in the north, a frozen "solid without fluctuation," a wasteland as "adamantine" and impervious as the doors in this poem.

Most remarkable in recognizing Blake's early development of Urizen's figure is the otherwise odd association here between winter and fire, the Mount Hecla of the poem, an Icelandic volcano. Although in the epics he most frequently appears old, hoary, and cold, Urizen's time-form is Satan, and his essence is heat and fire. Similarly, in "To Winter" the personification in the poem inhabits the freezing north, but his subterranean dwelling place is the interior of a fiery volcano. What Blake knew about Mount Hecla can be only inferred, although surely he knew something of it.⁶ An anonymous English poem circa 1600 relates Hecla's paradox:

Thule, the period of cosmography,

Doth vaunt of Hecla, whose sulphurous fire

Doth melt the frozen clime and thaw the sky

.

These things seem wondrous, yet more wondrous I,

Whose heart with fear doth freeze, with love doth

fry.

[t/o]

("Thule, the Period of Cosmography")

As the poem indicates, Hecla had been long regarded both as hellishly sulphurous and as representing the paradox of fire within ice, just as Blake's "To Winter" and, later, Blake's Urizen present this same paradox.

Although, like the personification of Winter, Urizen has the weapons of ice storms and snow in the later epics, he is first the charioteer of the eternal sun and also becomes the material sun of the created world. Thus, his nature is soon revealed (in *The Book of Urizen*, 1795) as again related to fire, despite his cold and subterranean guise.

Blake most often chooses to neutralize or reverse traditional mythologic iconography by inverting appearances, the role reversal of the angels and devils of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* being a notable occurrence of this technique. In Urizen's case, we suspect Blake's eye looks toward dramatic effect by avoiding anti-climax. Thus, in *The Book of Urizen*, after Urizen has already fallen into the lower world, Blake cautiously and obliquely refers to him as "Urizen (so his eternal name)" (*U* 10:11). Yet, at this moment, the Zoa of Reason has already become his time-form

Satan, his eternal name retained and his nature hellish but in the heavy disguise of winter.

Equally relevant to an examination of "The Tyger" is Winter's depiction as "direful monster, whose skin clings / To his strong bones" as he "strides o'er the groaning rocks." Here Blake characterizes the Urizenic figure of Winter as a monster, large and powerful, and quite conceivably a dragon, an aspect of Urizen's changing appearance that Blake's epical works confirm.

The dragon image itself is a well-recognized archetype of evil, and, as such, is related to "The Tyger," a poem about the creation of evil. Gleckner's above observation that the tyger encompasses the Leviathan image indicates also that this relationship has been the subject of much Blakean scholarship; but what has been less emphasized is the sharing of identity between the Leviathan, Urizen, and the tyger, and Blake's depiction of Urizen as a dragon relates him both to the fire symbology of the poem and to the tyger itself. If "To Winter" was the last written poem of *Poetical Sketches*, still Blake had ten years to further ponder the figure of Urizen before writing "The Tyger" in 1793.

That "To Winter" is a prototypic depiction of Urizen is unambiguous. That his early appearance here as a Leviathan-like creature bears directly on "The Tyger" requires additional elaboration and is an important concern of Chapter V. But already it is clear that Urizen, who was the charioteer of the eternal sun and who becomes the material

sun, and whose true nature is hellish fire, must be considered as a mythological analogue to the tyger who is "burning bright" and whose predacious nature matches Urizen's.

In "Urizen's Net Expanding" (Magnuson 1990), I argue that another poem in *Poetical Sketches*, the song "How sweet I roam'd from field to field" presages Urizen in the "Prince of Love['s]" use of nets and his association with the spider, both images that often characterize Urizen, the last also associated with the tyger-faced Leviathan, who, in the fourth "Memorable Fancy," emerges from "between the black & white spider." "How sweet I roam'd from field to field" indicates the early development of Blake's myth of the Zoas in its foreshadowing of the appearance of Urizen's three daughters. Here the speaker laments that her captor has ". . . shew'd me lilies for my hair, / And blushing roses for my brow" and that "He loves to sing and hear me sing . . . And mocks my loss of liberty." In *The Four Zoas* Urizen binds his daughters to him, saying: "I gave sweet lilies to their breasts & roses to their hair / I taught them songs of sweet delight" (FZ 68:10-11).

Thus, at least the figure of Urizen and many key symbols associated with his character are evident early in Blake's earliest poetry, and the narrative detail sometimes has a remarkable correspondence to the later Prophecies. In *Father's Memoirs of his Child* (1806), Dr. Benjamin Malkin, a friend of Blake's youth, testifies that Blake wrote the lyric "How sweet I roam'd" before his fourteenth birthday

(in Gilchrist 1: 52). This dates the poem about 1771, or roughly a quarter century before Urizen is named in Blake's works.

However, no other members of Blake's "Starry Eight," the four Zoas and their Emanations, are so clearly evidenced in the early *Poetical Sketches*, though, in "To Summer" the personification of the sun with "ruddy limbs and flourishing hair" adumbrates the fiery Orc who in *America* is described as "the hairy youth" whose "hairy shoulders rend the links" of his chains, and who in "A Song of Liberty" is described as one whose "fiery limbs, the flaming hair, shot like the sinking sun into the western sea."

Finally, though no named personifications of the Zoas or their emanations occur by the time of *Songs of Experience*, observably, Blake uses this technique only in the longer works, as a glance at the later poems of the Pickering Manuscript (1804 or thereabouts) will show. There, though the Orc cycle is the subject of "The Mental Traveller," Orc is not mentioned. Similarly, the three-fold vision of Beulah is alluded to in "The Crystal Cabinet," but Blake also eschews his mythological place-names despite the fact that they are available to him. Rather it seems that, if it were his method, Blake could have named Urizen, Los, Orc and others in *Songs of Experience*.

This chapter finds that a reasonable basis exists for answering the question "Who created the Tyger?" by looking among Blake's pantheon of gods. As evidenced in his early poetry, by the time he writes "The Tyger" in 1793 many of

these gods exist in Blake's imagination. Urizen is most fully articulated, but the presence of Los, Orc, and others is undeniable. The next chapter examines "The Tyger" and looks inside the poem to find in its images and structure the basis for discovering the precise analogues for the creature and the created in Blake's epical works.

CHAPTER III

THE COMPLEXITY OF FIRE

"The Tyger" radiates energy. Both its imagery and prosody suggest "The Tyger" is a poetic ideograph of inclusion, totality, and energy. Moreover, in analyzing the structure and imagery of "The Tyger" we find that the poem, while maintaining a separation of the symbols of good and evil, also expresses a distinct affinity between and conjoining of these contrary symbols.

This chapter looks at the creator and the tyger as they are related to each other within the poem, and develops a basis for identifying in Blake's other works the salient aspects of the drama of the creator and the created through a discussion of the structure and imagery of "The Tyger." That the creator of the tyger resembles Los by his hammer, anvil, and chain and that the tyger is a symbolized representation of Urizen is only noted here.

Finding the poem expresses the encounter of good and evil, the chapter concludes with a look at Blake's epics for other examples of this ethical confrontation, and looks specifically at the Divine imposition of limits for evil (and thus the point where good can begin). This part of the discussion shows Los twice as the mythical agent associated with restraining error. Los gives "a body to Falshood that it may be cast out for ever" (*J* 12:13), and his actions in the narratives have implications for the creative act described in "The Tyger," and for relating the figure of Los to the creator in "The Tyger." A reading of the revisions

and the final text of the poem prepares us for these observations by showing how good and evil coexist in the poem that Blake began as a single vision of incarnated evil.⁷

"The Tyger" is arguably the finest symbolist poem in English, precisely because of its concentrated imagistic focus, but also for other less sensible reasons, namely the inexhaustible aura of enigma that envelops its creation mystery. Within the poem, the glowing image of the tyger has a compelling and furious magnitude beyond its animal nature. Its flaming brightness is visually immediate and dangerous; but, outlined and silent, its fury is also of "distant deeps or skies," like a disturbance of a bright sun in black space, or, inwardly, like the mind transfixed in the vision of momentous fire that the tyger represents. In its strength and force and in the mystery of its symbols, "The Tyger" is naturally resilient and fit to survive reductive explications. Here is "The Tyger" itself:

Tyger, Tyger, burning bright,
In the forests of the night
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder and what art
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand? and what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain?
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears
And water'd heaven with their tears:
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

Tyger, Tyger, burning bright,
In the forests of the night:
What immortal hand or eye
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

The structural unity of the poem is as remarkable as the dominating fire imagery that gives "The Tyger" the aspect of a rising column of flame. Contrasting forces exist within it as separately visible forms, distinct as mortal creature and immortal creator, distinct as the Tyger and the Lamb, and ultimately distinct as symbols of evil and good; but "The Tyger" also possesses an extraordinary equilibrium where one powerful vision is related to and balanced by the

force and fiery aspect of the other. The structural unity is as striking as the efflorescing fire imagery which emblazons the poem and which itself importantly contributes to the presentation of good and evil as related if also competing forces. In this regard, the primary symbol of the poem is the fiery tyger, a fierce and dreadful figure quite naturally associated with evil, but it is opposed by the Lamb, a benign and pure form, and a symbol of Christ.

While the tyger is the primary image of the poem, fire is the pervasive symbol. There are some significant exceptions, but frequently in Blake, fire is a positive phenomenon, and where fire is not considered by Blake as an inclusively affirmative image, his presentation of it differs markedly, often appearing as an enclosed black fire, a heated flame or orb devoid of light. Especially in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* and *Songs of Experience*, Blake etches nearly every plate with the iconography of flames. Here the flames are not hell-fire and destruction, but a composite energy of positive and negative life forces and a symbol for the imagination.

In this regard, "The Tyger" may be viewed as a *complexio oppositorum*, or may be compared, as Bier has done, to the ideograph of Yin-Yang, a "graphic representation of universal forces" (43). Though obviously much more than a graphical paradigm, "The Tyger" is closely related to such pictorial symbols because the poem evinces both dark and light aspects fused into unity. The *complexio oppositorum*, originally an alchemical term denoting a totality or

wholeness formed through the uniting of opposites, was expressed by the alchemists in drawings of the squared circle, in hermaphroditic figures, and, as Dr. Jung has observed, in four-fold or quaternity images and in mandelic forms, such as the cosmological tables that Blake encountered reading Law's translation of Jacob Boehme. Similarly, speaking of "The Tyger" as another mystical expression of the mutual inclusion of opposites, Bier likens "The Tyger" to the Yin-Yang symbol:

Yin, we find, is the negative force, imagined as dark clouds over the sun, as water, too. Yang, we discover, is the positive force, the unclouded sun-disc, seen often as fire (coincidence of coincidences!). Yin and Yang, like the tiger and the lamb, are abstract correlates The upshot of the Yin-Yang polarity is not actually antagonism, in the deep sense, but a rhythmic mutuality, an alternating ascendance and decline, an ultimate balance. (23)

Blake's word for what the *complexio oppositorum* and the Yin-Yang symbolize is *energy*, a kinetic expression of his belief, well-established in his poetry before "The Tyger," that "Mental Warfare" best describes the condition of the human psyche. For Blake, energy is often imagined as fire and denotes an inclusive state of being where wholeness is at times expressed as a dialectic of liberating and constraining mental impulses and where "Opposition is true friendship" (MHH 20). For Jung, a state of psychic totality

is comprised of the conscious and unconscious parts of the mind, respectively, the ego and Self. Both Blake's energy and Jung's theoretical construct are well-represented by the symbols of the *complexio oppositorum* and Yin-Yang. Thus we may speculate that the energy of "The Tyger" may be chiefly a representation of psychical energy. The poem similarly evinces the attributes of these ideographic symbols in its use of the imagery of fire. The evil tyger and the immortal creator are each separately related to the fire symbology of the poem, but both meet in this image as well. Such paradoxes are typical of Blake who shows impatience with restrictive logic and prefers to envision separation as wholeness, a "marriage" of heaven and hell. Although vast differences of method and perspective are naturally evident between Blake the artist and Jung the psychologist, the symbolic action or myth that underlies "The Tyger" reflects this remarkable pattern of wholeness and union of opposites that, for Jung, is an archetype for the mind, and this unity in "The Tyger" is first discernable in the poem's complementary structure.

The wholeness of the poem is not simply explained, although the devices that render its unity are obvious. Blake's use of rhyme and anaphora is skillful and ingenious, at times functioning to unify and at times serving to enforce the distinctions he makes within the poem. The opposing forces within "The Tyger" would have been more conspicuous, except Blake, in the original draft and in his revisions, seeks to balance every contrast and to emphasize

equilibrium rather than difference. This symbolic parity extends to the tyger and its maker, both by structure and image, and suggests an underlying connection between them.

The unity of the poem is informed by the meter and line length, by the rhymes, by alliteration and anaphora, by interrogatives, and by the restatement of the opening stanza. Its particular vocabulary, the repetitions of "dare," "dread," "burnt" and "burning," and "heart," further unites the poem into its primary vision of the tyger as a living, dangerous form of fire, a fire that finally possesses all the "fury of a spiritual existence," that is, a psychical fire commensurate with Blake's idea of "Mental Warfare," the battle of imagination against doubt and reason.

"The Tyger's" aural unity is reflected in its constant rhythmic emphases, achieved by cataleptic lines whose generally trochaic meter places a marked stress at the beginning and end of the lines. The rapidity⁸ of the poem is accomplished as well by the poem's short line and by the couplets, both making for closely placed rhymes that draw the poem together and quickly advance the lines. Alliteration is frequent, bringing additional aural coherence and driving on the poem, while anaphora establishes patterns of word display which the listener quickly trusts and expects.

The questions unify the poem both by their ubiquity (fifteen in six short stanzas), and by the repetition of interrogative and personal pronouns. The reappearance of

the revelatory first stanza unifies by revisioning the primary image of the tyger, by reinforcing the question-asking force of the poem as it posits again the first question, and by giving an uncomplicated circular form to the poem that emphasizes, by simple enclosure, its cohesive structure.

The repeated images of fire endow "The Tyger" with its most conspicuous and most arresting unity. The words "burning," "bright," "fire" (twice), "furnace," "stars," and again "burning bright" run through the poem, establishing a visual brilliance that gives the poem its fiery, emblematic appeal. Thus the structural unity of the poem is complemented by the sensuous unity of images.

Blake achieves this harmony of image and structure in spite of the fact that the pattern of the poem establishes numerous contrasts, often emphasized metrically by caesuras. Rhyme and anaphora, both unifying devices, also convey these contrasts. Thus the beginning contrast of light and dark is redoubled by the end rhyme:

Tyger, Tyger burning bright

In the forest of the night

Other contrasts are achieved by giving alternatives: "hand or eye," "deeps or skies," "hand" and "feet"; by dual but dissimilar images: "what the shoulder and what the art," "what the hammer? what the chain," and "What the anvil? what dread grasp"; and by the decisive contrast of the Tyger and the Lamb.

The final effect of the contrasts, however, is balance

and symmetry. The revisions show Blake writing out the imbalances his first draft contains.⁷ The unrevised first draft describes a monstrous tyger whose furious magnitude suggests Blake first envisions the tyger as possessing a Leviathan ferocity. Blake deletes the word "cruel" from the second stanza, and he writes, then eliminates, the original third stanza:

Could fetch it from the furnace deep
 And in thy horrid ribs dare steep
 In the well of sanguine woe
 In what clay & in what mould
 Were thy eyes of fury rolld

In the final version the tyger and its creator are more equally emphasized. The fire imagery is most associated with the "burning bright" tyger, but now the heated anvil, the hammer, and the generating furnace of its creator become more visible because the third stanza, which contains so many references to the tyger, is deleted. In the poem as Blake finished it, besides the fire imagery, only "fearful" and "deadly terrors" remain to suggest the ferocity of the beast. Suggesting both immediate fright and anticipatory fear, "dread" is repeated three times, although significantly all of these repetitions refer to the creator not the tyger, making the blacksmith creator fearsome also, and pointing to some underlying connection between the creature and its creator.

Raine sees no clear indication for the attribution of dread, saying, "In the line, 'What dread hand? & what dread

feet?' Blake leaves us in doubt whether either, or both, belong to the maker or the made" (2: 17). Certainly, because Blake excised the line following ("Could fetch it from the furnace deep"), we may have a moment of indecision about the "feet," which, however, is cleared up as we read from the last line of the third verse down into the fourth stanza:

What dread hand? and what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain?

In what furnace was thy brain?

What the anvil? what dread grasp

Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

But no tyger ever had "hands." Nonetheless, Blake has diminished the terror of the tyger, and thereby, the "dread" attributed to the maker is more clearly seen.

Blake does leave us more in doubt as to the creator and the created in the final version. Again, the elimination of the original third stanza removes much detail about the created tyger, and, therefore, makes the nature of its creator remote by the same degree. Although Blake's inconsistent orthography must also be suspected, the capitalized "Immortal" of the first revision is "immortal" in the final version, making a bit more remote the inference of Deity. The "Could" of the first stanza of the original draft Blake changes to "Dare," which lets us doubt whether the creator is like the omnipotent Biblical God or another who challenges or defies His role as sole Creator. Blake

alters the "hand & eye" of the first revision to "hand or eye" in the last version, and thereby increases the mystery surrounding the method or agency of the creator. In incorporating the second and fourth stanzas, which Blake tentatively omitted in the first revision, the sense of uncertainty and mystery of the creator and created alike are increased because these two stanzas embody seven of the fifteen questions of the poem. Structurally, Blake further reinforces the sense of doubt by elongating the two crucial lines, "Could frame thy fearful symmetry?" and "Did he who made the Lamb make thee?" Here Blake increases the asking force of these questions by adding an unstressed syllable to the beginning of the line, lengthening and slowing it by casting the line in less insistent iambic tetrameter. As the Notebook revisions indicate, in many ways the mystery of both the creator and created increase, an effect Blake was methodically pursuing.

About ten years after Blake illuminated and printed "The Tyger" he made one last revision. In this copy, Blake altered the 12th line to read "What dread hand Formd thy dread feet" (in Damon, *Dictionary* 414). Thus, in this last version, the creator and creature are a bit more separated, though it is interesting to note that both are still quite related, sharing the physiologic metaphor in a precise way: the creator's hand, an instrument of consciousness and deliberate purpose, is contrasted to the "feet" of the Tyger, symbolizing its instinctual prowess and also, perhaps, the lower or subconscious origination of its force.

However, since this change exists in only one copy, a copy made a decade after Blake first etched "The Tyger" on copper plate and began issuing *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, we are probably quite safe in assuming that Blake considered "The Tyger" of 1794-1802 as a finished poem.

But why in the line "what dread grasp / dare its deadly terrors clasp?" does Blake choose the pronominal "its" rather than the expected "his" or "your?" The poem is an apostrophe and anything other than "your" or "thy" or "thine" presents a perplexing inconsistency, the inference being that the terror is either distributed or shared between the tyger and its maker or that the terrors belong only to the creator. Neither reading offers certainty.⁹ The pronominal, however, links the creator and created in a way that the expected pronoun "your" would not, and further suggests that, in examining Blake's mythological pantheon, some underlying relationship or similarity must unite the maker and the made.

The symbolic action of "The Tyger" is a drama deeply founded on the concatenation of good and evil. The final effect of the poem is balance or "symmetry"; the maker and the made attain a certain equality in the final version, and each shares the symbology of fire. Blake might well have put his epigram "Energy is the only life" under the poem's title, for by its structure and theme, "The Tyger" is vision of wholeness where good and evil are encompassed by and subjected to the unity of fiery energy that envelops the

numerous contrasts of the poem.

Though the reader of Blake quickly becomes familiar with his condemnation of the "cloven fiction" ("Rational Truth Root of Evil & Good"), for the purposes of analysis and discussion, we sometimes premise the poem as Blake never would. Thus Damon says, "*The Tyger* deals with the immense problem of Evil" (*Philosophy* 276). No doubt the poem deals with the concept of evil, though finally it does so in a synthetic fashion, for like *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, "*The Tyger*" shows Blake questioning the wholly separate categories of good and evil.

But because the creator is also essentially linked to his dangerous creation by fire symbology and through the poem's complementary structuring, is, then, the creator also evil, either because he creates evil or because he comes near enough such evil to become somehow inextricably "chained" to it?

In this regard, the episodes in Blake's etho-cosmogony where good and evil meet are significant for understanding the creation of the tyger, for this confrontation of coalescing forces is the drama of "*The Tyger*." This encounter of opposites correlates "*The Tyger*" with the moments, episodes, and symbols in Blake's allegorical world where the boundaries of good and evil meet, and the immense ethical dynamics of this confrontation have significance for discovering Los and Urizen as the mythological analogues for the creator and creature in Blake's other poetry.

The Lamb and Los share a spiritual energy, symbolized in

Los's hammer, for "The blow of his Hammer is Justice, the swing of his hammer, Mercy" (*J* 88:49), the mercy of Jesus and his symbol, the Lamb. Los and the Lamb are thus both in opposition to the wrathful tyger, Los by the symbols of his chain, anvil and hammer (which are Justice and Mercy), the Lamb by the inevitable contrast with the beast. In Blake's cosmogony, the limitation of evil is provided as an act of Divine mercy. If it were not granted, the fall into creation would be infinite and unredeemable descent. However, Providence mercifully gives to the world a "Limit of Contraction" (in Blake creation is an act of "shrinking"), a limit to gross materiality from which man's spirit eventually rebounds. Similarly, the dark energy of the error, the energy of Satan, Urizen, and the tyger, would mean an interminable darkness over man had not Providence set a "Limit of Opacity," an ethical limit which separates man from complete moral degeneration. These limits are the metaphoric and pivotal meeting places of good and evil from which the drama of Blake's ethical epics proceed. Of course, "The Tyger" also dramatizes such a crucial encounter of good and evil, symbolized chiefly in the Lamb and the beast.

Two epic episodes, both involving Los, and both early on in the chronology of Blake's epics, dramatize the idea of the Limits of Contraction and Opacity. In *The Book of Urizen*, Los's fall into materiality is an endless descent until a "contemplation" alters his fall "oblique" (*BL* 4:40-42). The nature of Los's contemplation can be inferred, taking into account Divine origination of the two Limits,

although Blake here chooses not to elaborate upon this. Also occurring early (nearly at the moment of creation) is Los's chaining of Urizen, a symbol for fixing the rushing and downward transformation into materiality.

More generally, the encounter with and limitation of evil is referred to as Los's task of "Giving a body to Falshood that it may be cast off for ever" (*J* 12:13). Various in the epics, this is the power of Jesus, the Lamb, Los, and Milton, and of Blake himself in his role of imaginative artist. The earliest narrative of this encounter with evil occurs in *The Book of Urizen* where Los forms Urizen's body, chains him to the rock of existence, and then pities him. Another compelling narrative of the heroic performance by Los in giving a form to error is contained in the Minor Prophecies in *The Book of Los*, an elaboration and expansion of the symbolic act of the chaining of Urizen in *The Book of Urizen*. The episode in *The Book of Los* is founded on the fire imagery of wholeness, and this confrontation of light and dark forces is a cosmogonic and ethical battle of related sun symbols which identifies Los, as the creator, and Urizen, as the created in "The Tyger."

The uncommon equilibrium of image and structure in "The Tyger" is also reflected in the ethical balance of the poem where the symbols of the raging tyger and the immortal creator are seen as representations of evil and good, interrelated by the shared symbology of fire. Further examination of Blake's other poetry suggests that at the

moment of creation (related to the creative act of "The Tyger," especially by its "stars and spears" stanza) the limits of evil are established as an act of Divine mercy. Los's fall into creation parallels the establishment of a limitation of evil as his fortuitously halted descent into materiality suggests; presumably this sun-god's descent is stopped by something very like the Limit of Contraction since this occurs at the moment of creation, and creation in Blake is shrinkage or contraction. After his fall is stopped, we see Los in *The Book of Urizen* proceed with the forming and chaining of Urizen, Blake's mythological Satan, in another portentous conjunction of good and evil forces. This action compares with the Limit of Opacity, for Los is attempting to fix the limit of sin by binding Urizen, the Satan-figure of Blake's epics. Thus, Los is a part of an epic drama concerned with the momentous confrontation of good and evil, first as a sun-god colliding with the dark limit of contraction, and second as a heroic figure attempting to contain the birth of evil by binding down Urizen with "Iron odor and odor of brass" (*U* 10:30). How this act of giving evil a form closely parallels the act of creating the tyger, itself a symbol of evil, depends on a more thorough examination and elaboration of the symbols of fire and the predatory tyger, the pervasive and primary symbols of the poem.

Because it is distinguished by possessing a high level of inclusion and synthesis, the "Oriental latitude" to which Gilchrist refers (1: 116), "The Tyger" poetically embodies a

an archetype of total consciousness.¹⁰ As we will more closely discuss in Chapter IV, this comprehensiveness of realization is primarily expressed through the symbol of fire, a primary "concept of God" as Jung recognized. But we must make a distinction in specifying the presentation of this fiery energy in "The Tyger." In "The Tyger," this total energy is as much a part of the maker as the made, as the language and structure of the poem have revealed. The expression of this total energy is not solely by the image of the tyger, but is expressed as well by the force of the Tyger's creator.

CHAPTER IV

THE MIRRORS OF CREATION

Fire, according to Jung's theory, symbolizes the total energy of consciousness and "the earliest form of a concept of God" (*Two Essays*, in *Collected Works* para. 106).¹¹ This chapter reveals that the images of bright and terrifying fire in "The Tyger" are indeed a "concept of God," and represent Los and Urizen as two aspects of a fiery and total sun, the sulphur sun of Urizen and the god-like sun of Los. A poem of the creation of evil, Blake founded "The Tyger" on the idea of the immaterial sun which mirrors the inferior material sun of the "vegetable world," to use Blake's alchemical phrase. These symbols of sun appear in Blake's poems so pervasively that they seem his image of choice for expressing the ideal and material worlds, or, in other words, the totality of experience, at least for the idealist Blake.

In Blake's genesis myth, the spiritual or inward sun does not passively mirror the corresponding dark or sulphurous sun, but casts its own mental image forth into corporeal existence as Los forges the "fierce flames" of the sun of Urizen. Gnostic and Neo-Platonic ideas of correspondence and Divine Analogy underlie this creation of the sun, ideas Blake observed in Boheme, Swedenborg, and the Bible.

The fire of the bright tyger and the sparking anvil and fiery furnace of the tyger's immortal creator effloresce again in *The Book of Urizen* and *The Book of Los*. In *The*

Book of Urizen the appearance of an alternate symbol for the physical sun, the "red globe of blood," indicates the underlying presence of a symbolic action that analogizes the creation act in "The Tyger." In *The Book of Los* the dual sun symbols are strikingly rendered by Blake and represent the same symbolic drama of *The Book of Urizen* and "The Tyger": "Giving a body to Falshood that it may be cast out for ever" (*J* 12:13). By observing the narrative action of both books, their shared symbolic action is evident. We again see the meeting of light and dark forces that "The Tyger" evinces as Los and Urizen engage in a cosmogonic and ethical struggle analogous to the creation act of "The Tyger." The symbolic action of the conjunction of momentous light and dark forces in "The Tyger" is similarly retold in *Milton*, *The Four Zoas*, and, succinctly but precisely, in the iconography of Blake's engraving for *Songs of Experience*, "A Divine Image."

Throughout his poetry Blake identifies Los with the spiritual sun, and Urizen with its dark, material counterpart. These two suns have significance for "The Tyger" when we examine its pervasive image, fire, and find, similarly, that Blake has two diametrical representations of fire. Two fires, one heat without light, the other illuminating energy, and double suns, one corporeal, the other spiritual, recur in Blake and project the same symbolic meanings. Their appearance in his poetry is of interest in understanding the symbolism of "The Tyger."

What we find specifically in the two Lambeth Prophecies,

The Book of Urizen and *The Book of Los*, is an act of creation on a cosmic scale that parallels the act of creation in "The Tyger." In these Prophecies, the drama does not involve the darkly enforested fire of the glowing tyger nor the spiritual fire of its immortal creator, but, instead, shows the interaction of opposing sun gods, another manisfestation of the *complexio oppositorum* in which contending but similar forces are united.

Unlike the lyrical poetry where the presence of Urizen is most discernable, in the Lambeth prophecies both Los and Urizen are equally defined characters and mutually involved in acts of creation. Moreover, Urizen appears in *The Book of Los* and in *Milton* as both the sulphurous material sun and as a dragon-like monster of the "deeps," like Leviathan. This has significance for the symbolism of "The Tyger," whose eponym "includes" Leviathan, as Gleckner observes. Finding Urizen again represented as a "direful monster" provides an introduction for Chapter V which further defines Urizen's identity as an analogue to the tyger and, consequently, reveals the symbolic paradigm of "The Tyger" within a historical and archetypal context.

Deciphering the meaning of the names of Blake's gods by finding their derivations (Enitharmon as "numberless") has been an intriguing though finally uncertain guessing game for Blake scholars. As Bloom remarks when discussing *The Four Zoas*: "The origins of the name 'Tharmas' are obscure, but this is really just as well, as it is usually misleading to interpret one of Blake's creatures by its name's supposed

etymology" (Bloom 105). Bloom yields to temptation and suggests that the name Los "may be derived from the Chaucerian *loos*, a word for poetic fame" (Erdman, *Complete Poetry* 820). But only Los's name, among all the mythic figures, carries an incontrovertible meaning within it, arrived at independently of Greek or Middle English derivation. Los is an anagram of Sol, the sun, or more precisely, the alchemical sun, and Los is the immaterial or spiritual sun (Damon, *Dictionary* 247). Raine provides an excellent background for the term "Sol" when she says:

It names the solar principle of the alchemists, present in the whole creation. It is fanciful to see the name of Los as Sol seen in reflection, or mirrored, in the water, or looking glass, of physical nature. . . . The name expresses the alchemical "as above, so below." The alchemical Sol is not so much as the sun as the solar fire-principle itself, diffused throughout nature. . . . Paracelsus writes: "This Terrene or earthly sun is kindled and bred by the Fire of the superior; even so kindled the Centre is of our matter, from the Centre of our World or *Anthor*; which is Fire, bearing a similitude and resemblance with the natural Sun." (1: 223-224)

This correspondence or Divine Analogy expresses the idea that God's "will be done on earth as it is in heaven," but, in its hermetical ramification, heaven and earth are mirror images of each other, reversed worlds to minute particulars,

one sublime and the other corrupt.

Blake uses the material sun ironically as an image of God in *Songs of Innocence*:

Look on the rising Sun: there God does live
And gives his light, and gives his heart away
.

And we are put on earth a little space,
That we may learn to bear the beams of love,
(*"The Little Black Boy"*)

But this sun is the physical sun, and the mother who tries to comfort her child presents an essentially inimical image of God to him in this sun which actually represents the trials he must endure in the world as its heat makes his face "sun-burnt" and his life like a "cloud, and like a shady grove." Only when he and his friend are "from white cloud free, / And round the tent of God" will justice be done. Similarly, Blake alludes to the gross sun again in *"Auguries of Innocence"*:

God Appears & God is Light
To those poor Souls who dwell in Night
But does a Human Form Display
To those who Dwell in Realms of day

The first line may be a satiric reference to Pope's "And God said Let Newton be, and there was Light," but, nonetheless, Blake is referring to the material or sulphur sun of Satan and Urizen. And of Satan, who is the time-form of Urizen, Blake says in the epilogue of *For the Sexes: The Gates of Paradise*:

Tho thou art Worshipd by the Names Divine
Of Jesus & Jehovah: thou art still

The Son of Morn in weary Night's decline

Blake was familiar with the idea of a double sun from Swedenborg's writings. Blake reads in Swedenborg that, "the Sun of the natural World is perfectly dead, but the Sun of the spiritual World is alive." In the margin of his copy of *Divine Love and Divine Wisdom* Blake agrees and writes: "The dead Sun is only a phantasy of evil Man" (594).

The idea of a double sun, this time identifying the immaterial sun with Los, occurs in Blake's verse-letter to Thomas Butts:

Then Los appear'd in all his power:

In the Sun he appear'd, descending before

My face in fierce flames; in my double sight

"Twas outward a Sun: inward Los in his might

seeing both through and with the eye. (693)

These "fierce flames" are the flames of the striated tyger and of the god of doubt, Urizen, but they are the same flames as the inward or spiritual sun of Los, for these two suns represent the same *complexio oppositorum* as "The Tyger." The difference is in the perception, not the phenomena, as Blake reminds us, and we recall Blake's idea in *A Vision of Judgment* of a "guinea" sun and its spiritual counterpart:

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. (555)

Blake read in Law's translation of Boheme that flames represent God's duality, the divine *complexio oppositorum*, and the unity and interdependence of two divine wills:

For you see the Fire hath two Spirits, one is that which proceedeth from the Heat, and the other that which proceedeth from the Light: Now the Heat is Nature, and the Light is the Eternal Liberty. . ."

(from Paley 43)

Light and imagination, the way to liberation, Blake personifies as the sun-god Los, whose "Hammer is Justice, the swing of his hammer, Mercy" (*J* 88:49).

But Urizen is also the sun, and he, too, is closely associated with the Eternal or immaterial sun. In "Night the Fifth," Urizen laments his former radiant glory as the charioteer of this sun, saying to himself, "O Fool could I forget the light that filled my bright spheres / Was a reflection of his face who call'd me from the deep" (*FZ* 64:19-20). In "Night the Eighth," however, Urizen's former radiance has fallen into a monstrous shape: "No longer now Erect the King of Light outstretched in fury / Lashes his tail in the wild deep his Eyelids like the Sun / Arising in his pride enlighten all the Grizly deeps" (*FZ* 106:41-43). Urizen's description still evinces sun symbology, but he

appears as a dragon-like monster, decidedly like the Blake's Leviathan with "two globes of crimson fire" (MHH 18). In the final "Night" Urizen's original sun-like nature, representing faith and certainty in Divinity, is finally restored:

So Urizen spoke he shook his snows from off his
 Shoulders & arose [t/o]
 As on a Pyramid of mist his white robes scattering
 The fleece white renewed he shook his aged mantles
 off [t/o]
 Into the fires Then glorious bright Exulting in
 his joy [t/o]
 He sounding rose into the heavens in naked majesty
 In radiant Youth . . . (FZ 123:27-32)

Blake envisioned the spiritual sun and the material sun near Primrose Hill, an event which he recounted to Crabb Robinson and which reminds us of Urizen's darkest nature:

"You never saw the spiritual Sun. I have. I saw him on Primrose Hill." He said, "Do you take me for the Greek Apollo?" "No!" I said. "That (pointing to the sky) is the Greek Apollo. He is Satan." (Robinson 2: 9)

Two of Blake's drawings especially reveal these diametric suns, while another suggests their ultimately unified nature. This last is Blake's illumination of *Jacob's Ladder* which shows the harmonious and undivided aspect of the *complexio oppositorum* in its radiant depiction of the sun (Fig. 5). Referring to the iconology of this

drawing, we recall that Blake's first vision of energy and wholeness goes back to the time he was eight or nine and saw a shining tree inhabited by angels as he walked at Peckham Rye (Gilchrist 1: 81); his *Jacob's Ladder* compares with his earlier vision of the tree of angels. To quote Edinger's understanding of Jung on this symbol:

Jacob's ladder symbolizes the ego-Self axis. . . . The ascending and descending angels correspond to the alchemical procedures of *sublimatio* and *coagulation*. *Sublimatio*, psychologically, is the process of raising concrete, personal experiences to a higher level, a level of abstract or universal truth. *Coagulation*, in contrast, is the concretization or personal realization of an archetypal image. For ascending and descending angels to be visible would mean that the personal ego-world and the archetypal psyche are seen as inter-penetrating. (268-269)

In Blake's illumination of Jacob's ladder, significantly, the sun symbol sits fiery atop the ladder, a symbol of spiritual Self and spiritual wholeness.

Forming a pictorial introduction to Blake's narrative of the creation of the sun, his illustrations for *The Song of Los* show Los and Urizen respectively associated with the sulphur and spiritual sun. The frontispiece of *The Song of Los* (Fig. 6) shows an occluded sun blindly worshipped by the "father white," Urizen; complementing this, the last illumination of the book depicts Los after he has created

the physical sun of Urizen, the narrative action of the text, and here the sun, associated with Los, its maker, glows clearly and serenely (Fig. 7). These two suns represent the same total energy of consciousness, the same "concept of a God," as Blake's imagery of flames, and he uses them both in retelling the story of the creation of fiery evil in the Minor Prophecies. It is a story of restraint, a rare but essential moment in Blake's ethical system where restraint is positive and heroic, though also threatening and dangerous. Urizen's fall into existence symbolizes the Limit of Contraction in Blake's cosmogony, the ethical moment when Los begins the reclamation of the spiritual world by fixing the limit of Urizen's fall both by binding him in the "chains of time" and by fixing him in the sky as the sulphurous material sun. Specifically, Los fuses Urizen's pernicious dragon-form into a dark sun, seemingly a doubtful step up, but it is the moment when evil and good first interact, an interaction ultimately predicting a reunification into spiritual wholeness.

Although they both relate momentous acts of creation, the action of *The Book of Urizen* may seem distant from "The Tyger," for neither the imagery of fire nor of the sun is apparent in *The Book of Urizen*. In the other epical narratives of this event, the fire symbolism is egregious; though these suns can be fathomed in *The Book of Urizen*, they appear here transubstantiated, as a cross-textual reading of the other epical works confirms.

The Book of Urizen's main episode presents the nine

cycles or "ages" in the forming of the body of Urizen by Los, and finding this drama told here is not a surprise. Although the critics have disagreed on this interpretation, elsewhere in Blake's Prophetic Books Los is mentioned as the creator of Urizen. In Adamic fashion, "Urizen was rent from the side of Los" (*U* 6:4); and in *Milton*, we find that Urizen is the son of Los and Enitharmon (3:41).

Although *The Book of Urizen* does, indeed, say "Urizen was rent from the side of Los," Easson correctly observes that in this account of the creation of the Urizen's body:

Los does not create these changes in Urizen,
despite the usual critical allegations that he
does. Los only throws nets around these changes,
binds the changes "with rivets of iron & brass,"
and forges chains for Urizen until Urizen's
"eternal mind" is "locked up." (76)

But what Los does here is crucial, for by binding Urizen to the rock of physical existence and by forging the links of the chains that bind Urizen, he begins the spiritual battle of "Abstract Philosophy warring in enmity against the Imagination." And certainly, Urizen does not create himself (nor the tyger as Raine says), for *The Book of Urizen* reveals his lack of significant creative power, especially at the genesis moment when the tyger is made. Blake does say he is the "Creator of men" (*FZ* 27:56), although this description contains more than a little irony. Urizen does build a plethora of sterile, geometric structures, "arches high & cities turrets & towers & domes" (*FZ* 121:6). He

creates the rectilinear Web of Religion that casts its "dismal shade" over mental reality, just as the sulphur sun of "The Little Black Boy" creates an ironic "shady grove." But the beasts the Zoa of Reason creates in *The Book of Urizen* are phantasmal creatures, pernicious nonetheless and symbolizing the terrors of the cloven fiction at the very moment when subject-object perception evolves in Blake's cosmos.

Although Urizen is credited as creating the material world on the basis of *The Book of Urizen*, what he creates, independent of Los, are "mountains & hills" which are "like a black globe," Blake's image for the void. These are projections of his mental battles with. ". . . shapes / bred from his forsaken wilderness, / Of beast, bird, fish, serpent & element / Combustion, blast, vapour, cloud" (*U* 3:14-17). Yet these shapes do not represent the creation of the material world, for they are Urizen's "unseen conflictions," of vapour and cloud that are "unseen in tormenting passions."

As Blake makes clear, "Earth was not: nor globes of attraction" (3:36); that is, the Newtonian world does not come into being solely as a result of Urizen's fall. Los's participation is crucial, and Blake's cosmogony itself partakes of the *complexio oppositorum*.

Urizen's abstractioner's "brain" is finally forged, as "The Tyger" says it is, in the blacksmith's generating furnace. All the "fightings and conflicts dire, / With terrible monsters" is an internal and "Sin-bred" activity,

the consequence of Urizen's "stern counsels" with futurity, which signify a loss of spiritual faith, represented also by his separation from "Eternal Light."

Urizen's act of creation is thus first an immaterial and inward creation of "Which the bosoms of all inhabit / Seven deadly Sins of the soul" (U 4:26-30). By considering existence abstractly, what he creates is evil, and the creations often attributed to him, the "terrible monsters" of Urizen's "self-begotten armies," are actually immaterial, though they are enormously threatening or alienating, for, as Blake remarks of both the negative power of abstract reasoning and the superior power of love: "Thought alone can make monsters, but the affections cannot" (annotation to Swedenborg's *Divine Love and Divine Wisdom*, margin p. 11). So all Urizen forms as a creator is an "abominable void. . . [a] soul shudd'ring vacuum." The mountains and hills merely symbolize his apprehension of "futurity" or death, for as the Eternals say when they observe Urizen after his parodic struggles to create: "What is this? Death. / Urizen is a clod of clay." For all his efforts, he is "formless, immeasurable death," and only creates a "roof," or division, between the Eternal and the Void. The fire he creates is curiously like the fire of the tyger's "forests of the night," an enclosed fire that does not spread through the forest or enkindle it, for here these fires are enclosed in "fiery spheres" amid spaces of blackness (SL 3:49).

That this account is a parody of creation and actually Blake's metaphor for Urizen's destructive fall into a state

of error, into his own "mind-forg'd manacles," is apparent when Blake retells the moment of this fall in *The Four Zoas*, describing Urizen as the "Prince of Light bound in chains of intellect among the furnaces" (5:15 emphasis added). And from Milton:

Urizen lay in darkness & solitude, in chains of
 the mind lock'd up [t/o]
 Los seized his Hammer & Tongs; he labourd at his
 resolute Anvil [t/o]
 Among indefinite Druid rocks & snows of doubt &
 reasoning. [t/o]
 Refusing all Definite Form, the Abstract Horror
 roofd. stony hard [t/o]
 And a first Age passed over & a State of dismal
 woe. (3:6-10) [t/o]

In the Milton account of the creation of Urizen, after seven "ages of dismal woe," Los's emanation Enitharmon brings forth "Satan Refusing Form" (*M* 3:41).

Los is an important part in the creation of the material world and of Urizen. Easson's specific remark that Los is not to be observed forming Urizen's body and that this action is never attributed to him in *The Book of Urizen* is accurate, but Easson does not recognize Los's heroic act of "giving Falshood a body," and instead relegates Los to the status of "false Prophet" (74). Until Los confronts and chains Urizen, creating Time out of its forged links, nothing exists but the semblance of substance. As his body forms, Urizen's "Ribs, like a bending cavern" appear and

"like a red flame a tongue." We recall the elided stanza of the first revision:

[Could fetch it from the furnace deep
And in thy horrid ribs dare steep
In the well of sanguine woe
In what clay & in what mould
Were thy eyes of fury rolld]

Though we see two sun gods in conflict here, which compares to the meeting of light and dark forces in "The Tyger," and though we have at least observed Urizen creating the black fire of the void, what is wanting in this narrative is the pervasive imagery of fire that appears in "The Tyger," and especially the imagery of the correspondent suns that will indicate the *complexio oppositorum*, the meeting and fusing of light and dark forces that characterize the imagery and structure of "The Tyger."

Sun symbolism underlies another accounting of Los's creation of Urizen, this time in *The Four Zoas*, though we must go to *Milton* to finally ascertain its transubstantiated fire imagery. But, in doing so, we also find the variant fire image that permits us to uncover the latent sun symbols in *The Book of Urizen*.

In "Night the Fourth" of *The Four Zoas*, another account of Los's binding of Urizen, Blake says: "In terrors Los shrunk from his task . . . terrifd at the shapes / Enslavd humanity put on he became what he beheld / He became what he was doing he was himself transformd" (55:16-23). Then a line is struck out by Blake:

"Bring in here the Globe of Blood as the B of
 Urizen." (at 55:23)

[t/o]

In Milton Blake says of these Globes of Blood: "For every
 Space larger than a red Globule of Man's blood / Is
 visionary, and is created by the Hammer of Los" (29:19-20).
 The Globe of Blood, or Urizen's body as the excised line
 tells us, is created by Los, and in Milton Los creates the
 material sun of Urizen, for the passage continues:

The red Globule is the unwearied Sun by Los

created

[t/o]

To measure Time and Space to mortal Men every

morning. (29:23-24)

[t/o]

As Erdman justly remarks, the red globe ". . . is a
 biological variant of this cosmological symbol" (*The
 Illuminated Blake* 181).

Thus, in *The Book of Urizen*, the sun image is revealed,
 now that the nature of the "Globe of Blood" is understood to
 be the sulphur or material "unwearied sun created by Los
 every morning." Here, in the second Age of his formation,
 Urizen:

Down sunk with fright a red

Round globe hot burning deep

Deep down into the abyss:

(11:2-4)

This abyss is the "distant deeps" of the second stanza of
 "The Tyger," as *The Book of Los* reveals as it recounts the
 fall into evil or matter told from Los's point of view.

In *The Book of Los*, the act of material creation is seen

as the act of creating the tyger. The correspondence of the fire and sun imagery is unmistakable, and other important imagery from "The Tyger" appears in this cosmogonic narrative. The backbone of Urizen appears, "Hurtling upon the wind / Like a serpent! Like an iron chain / Whirling about in the Deep" (BL 5:15-17). Los gathers "those infinite fires / The light that flow'd down on the winds" and from them "An immense Orb of fire he fram'd." Clearly, Los's hand is the "hand that dares seize the fire," and his is the hand that frames or completes the fearful symmetry of the material and immaterial worlds:

Oft he quench'd it beneath in the Deeps
 Then survey'd the all-bright mass. Again
 Seizing fires from the terrific Orbs
 He heatd the round Globe, then beat [,]
 While roaring his Furnaces endur'd
 The chaind Orb in their infinite wombs.

(5:35-40)

This passage, of course, closely parallels the second stanza of "The Tyger":

In what distant deeps or skies
 Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
 On what wings dare he aspire?
 What the hand dare seize the fire?

And it answers the question "In what distant deeps or skies / Burnt the fire of thine eyes?" The "deeps" of the final version of "The Tyger" leave some doubt as to whether the deeps are possibly a synonym for the following "skies," but

the original draft shows Blake was thinking of the different regions of water and air. In the originally drafted stanza, the third line reinforces the first:

Burnt in distant deeps or skies
 The cruel fire of thine eyes
 Could heart descend or wings aspire
 What the hand dare seize the fire

The "red round globe" that sinks "hot burning deep / Deep down into the Abyss" in *The Book of Urizen* is confirmed by the above passage from *The Book of Los* to be the "quenching" of the body of Urizen. Los, as a blacksmith, is quenching the material sun in the "deeps" and lifting his craftsmanship of Error into the "skies" to observe his progress as he gives "Falshood a body that it may be cast out forever."

"What the hand dare seize the fire" takes on additional meaning when we consider the account of forming the sun in *The Book of Los*. Within "The Tyger," we would not expect the blacksmith to actually seize the fire in the furnaces, but, knowing that the underlying symbolic action of "The Tyger" is the forming of the sulphur sun by beating the light falling from eternity, we realize what "fire" Los is seizing. This collateral reading avoids invoking Prometheus, often done, to explicate this line of "The Tyger," that, internally, is puzzling.

The Book of Urizen offers little direct indication that Los is creating Urizen as the material sun. But within that work, Urizen is described as "self-closd," "self-begotten,"

and "self-balanc'd," and in *The Book of Los* the sun is described in the words:

Nine ages completed their circles
 When Los heated the glowing mass, casting
 It down into the Deeps: the Deep fled
 Away in redounding smoke: the Sun
 Stood self-balanc'd . . . (5:41-47)

These nine ages are Urizen's "ninefold darkness" of *The Book of Urizen*. The passage shows Urizen both as the sulphur sun and as associated with Leviathan's "Deeps" which reappear in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* where "the sea fled away in clouds and smoke." These lines also suggest a correspondence between the self-balanced sun and the balanced symmetry of the Tyger as it suggests Leviathan nature of "The Tyger's" own "deeps," and, ultimately, the Urizenic nature of its fire-symbol.

The poem continues and Urizen becomes the physical sun while Los rejoices that he has "fram'd" Urizen as the fire of the new material sun:

. . . And Los smild with joy.
 He the vast Spine of Urizen seiz'd
 And bound down to the glowing illusion

(5:41-47)

This making of a material sun by beating it into a disk with a hammer explains a puzzlement within "The Tyger" that only a collateral reading of *The Book of Los* makes more sensible, that is, the blacksmith imagery: How is a Tyger "forged" with a hammer, unless it is Los's hammer forging

the adamant material sun? And how can the creation of the tyger be related to the chain, unless by *The Book of Urizen* where Los first gives Error a form by chaining Urizen with "rivets of iron and brass," or by *The Book of Los* where, not the tyger, but Urizen, his mythological surrogate, is "Like a serpent! like an iron chain"?

The "deeps" of *The Book of Los* belong to Urizen, here shown as the dragon-form Leviathan, as that "vast Spine" seen "Hurtling upon the wind / Like a serpent! an iron chain / Whirling about in the Deep" until "Los astonish'd and terrified, built / Furnaces: he formed an Anvil / A Hammer of adamant then began / The binding of Urizen day and night" (BL 5:15-23). Of course, the tyger has his own "distant deeps and skies," and the immortal creator his furnace, anvil, and hammer.

Granting the sun-like emblem of "The Tyger," especially the tyger's visage, projected so forcefully in the repeated stanzas, the sun itself appears here only as "stars." But these are the stars of error and of Urizen. As has been well remarked in Blake studies, "Night the Fifth" of *The Four Zoas* describes Urizen's moment of fall into creation. He is the charioteer of the sun, but as the "King of Pride" refuses to light Albion's difficult way:

I went not forth. I hid myself in black clouds of
my wrath [t/o]

I call'd the stars around my feet in the night of
councils dark [t/o]

The stars threw down their spears and fled naked

away

[t/o]

We fell. I seized thee dark Urthona In my left
hand falling. (64:25-28)

[t/o]

A quite similar line occurs in "The Tyger":

When the stars threw down their spears

And water'd heaven with their tears

That this moment is the genesis of all material creation is indicated by the appearance of Newtonian suns or "stars," and by the phrase "water'd heaven," suggesting, alchemically, the appearance of (hylic) matter in the immaterial heavens. Thus, "The Tyger" and *The Book of Urizen* and *The Book of Los* all share the same cosmogonic basis, close to the genesis event when "Error is Created," (VLJ 533), an occurrence signaling the beginning of the mental warfare to restore original unity. Blake does use repeatedly the image "spears" and the particular phrase "threw down their spears" to denote warfare, and the advent of the Newtonian "stars" signal the beginning of the crucial warfare of materiality against mental reality, of "Abstract Philosophy warring in enmity against the Imagination forever." Blake's illumination for *America, A Prophecy* (Fig. 4) shows Urizen descending with his spear into war. Thus Urizen's imagery, the imagery of Newtonian or sulphurous stars and the imagery of the momentous warfare engendered by physical creation are within the poem, and the Urizenic creation imagery parallels the creation of the tyger.

In *The Four Zoas*, Blake tells the story of these two suns, the suns of good and evil, slightly differently than he first does in the *Minor Prophecies*. In *The Four Zoas*, Urizen's "Priestesses clothd in disguises bestial" steal Los's spiritual sun. But, as it lowers, the sun reddens "like a fierce lion":

. . . & they took the Sun that glowd oer Los
 And with immense machines down rolling. the
 terrific orb [t/o]
 Compell'd The Sun reddning like a fierce lion in
 his chains [t/o]
 Descended to the sound of instruments that drownd
 the noise [t/o]
 Of the hoarse wheels & the terrific howlings of
 wild beasts [t/o]
 That dragd the wheels of the Suns chariot & they
 put the Sun [t/o]
 Into the temple of Urizen to give light to the
 Abyss. (7b:9-15) [t/o]

Appearing in the "b" or first version of "Night the Seventh," the "temple" of Urizen is, of course, the temporal world. The "terrific orb" of the immaterial sun transforms into the gross sulphurous sun as it descends to become the dark light of the physical world. We do not especially need to know that in Blake lions and tygers both generally symbolize wrath to compare this lion to "The Tyger," nor to note that in this retelling of the symbolic action of "The Tyger," fiery opposites unite at the midpoint of descent.

The symbolic action of "The Tyger" is retold in a rejected illumination of "A Divine Image" for the *Songs of Experience*, an illumination that never appeared with *Songs* until after Blake's lifetime. The poem is a verbal portrait of Urizen; not unexpectedly, its related counterpart, "The Divine Image" of *Songs of Innocence*, contemplates a truer divinity: ". . . Love, the human form divine." But "A Divine Image" speaks of "Cruelty" and "Jealousy," the "Starry Jealously" of Urizen. All ironically inhuman, the "Human Dress" is iron like the chain in "The Tyger," and the "Human Form" and "Human Face" are a "fiery Forge" and a "Furnace seal'd" like the anvil and furnace by which the tyger came into being.

Erdman judges the style of the illumination of "A Divine Image" as among the earliest of the *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* (Fig. 8). It shows Los with his hammer forging the sulphur sun which is depicted with closed eyes, like so many renderings of Urizen. One eye is beginning to open as this sun rises, and we may fancifully compare the terrible awakening of this dark sun god to the efflorescing of the tyger. The illumination forcefully answers a crucial question about Blake's mythology, specifically his development of the narrative event that comprises the symbolic action of "The Tyger." As we have seen, Los's only appearances in the lyrical poetry show him as a part of a triad with Enitharmon and Orc. Clearly, this engraving reflects Los's creation of Urizen as the sun, told later in *The Book of Los*, *The Four Zoas*, and in *Milton*.

The creation of the tyger is retold once again in
Milton:

. . . Silent Milton stood

before [t/o]

The darkend Urizen; as the sculptor silent stands

before [t/o]

His forming image; he walks round it patient

labouring. [t/o]

Thus Milton stood forming bright Urizen. . .

(20:113)

Here the forces of Los-Milton-Blake opposing Urizen-Newton-Locke underlie the symbolic action of imagination versus reason. Characteristically, Urizen is "darkned," and, ironically, Milton forms him as the "bright Urizen," the Urizen of external sun whose brightness represents only an occluded, rationalizing consciousness. Milton, as inspired poet and the imagination, functions just as Los, "giving a body to Falshood." The silence of "The Tyger" and the quietness here may both reflect the awe in realizing that existence has an evil or dark side, and that to transform it we must engage it, with the present danger that we may "become what we behold," the "dread" and "daring" of the tyger's immortal creator, Los. Milton's forming "bright Urizen" is another telling of "Abstract Philosophy warring in enmity against Imagination for ever," and here the creative side is winning.

A division of reason from imagination creates the fallen state, and Blake shows in *The Book of Urizen* that Urizen, as

spiritual doubt becoming reason, begins material creation by "dark contemplations," but Los finishes creation, as Imagination giving a form to this Error. In Blake's eschatology, not until the Last Judgment will man be delivered from this Error or "Satan's Accusation . . . of Unbelief" (VLJ 553). In *The Four Zoas*, Los tells Enitharmon that they must strive "Till we have drawn the Lamb of God into a mortal form" (FZ 1:293). This is not the story of "The Tyger," but the story of this mental war begins with the creation of the tyger and of Urizen, and Los's resolve to Enitharmon is the basis of the redemptive sequel.

This theme of spiritual re-unification is also the story of the material and spiritual sun, where good and evil have the same fiery symbol; in the same "deeps" and "skies" as "The Tyger," the movement towards spiritual wholeness has already begun by Los's efforts, and the black sulphur sun eventually re-absorbed in the spiritual sun atop Jacob's ladder through the synthesizing acts of imagination.

No tyger appears in the remarkable picture (Fig. 7) of the creation of the sun by Los, nor any Leviathans, but the engraving symbolizes quaternary wholeness, a recognition of the fourth or dark side, Urizen's or Satan's side, and the quite beautiful iconography of the illumination is an example of the creative triumph it depicts. In this illumination, Los rests from his creative effort, and the four-fold image of Los, his hammer, the cloud, and the sun seem to exude wholeness and "a concept of God." In Jungian terms, the Self-ego axis represented by the hammer of Los is

quite appropriate, for Blake maintained his connection with his creative sources through an arduous artistic regime of engraving, painting, and poetry. The break of the axis between ego (Los) and Self (the sun) by the cloud, always a pernicious symbol in Blake, is perhaps explained in the mildly troubled look on the face of Los. Blake writes that first seeing the results of his efforts to contain Urizen ". . . Los smiled with joy." But Blake knew that wholeness, including confrontation with the dark side, is achieved through the determined, restless life of the Prophet, the imagination. He recounts in the First Memorable Fancy:

I then asked Ezekiel, why he eat dung, & lay so long on his right & left side? he answerd, the desire of raising other men into a perception of the infinite this the North American tribes practise. & is he honest who resists his genius or conscience. only for the sake of present ease or gratification?

Los's "mental warfare" with the tyger cannot be deceived into pausing, even in victory, so Los must return again to confront evil and to warn, like the prophet, of the sources of Error. Los must "frame" Urizen again and again, and Los does so once as the tyger in the forest of Error.

An examination of Blake's mythological characters as found in his early lyrical works has shown that answering the question "Who created the Tyger?" by proposing mythological analogues has a firm foundation, for both

mythological figures and narratives events of the epical works are indeed discoverable in lyric works similar to "The Tyger." A structural and image analysis of "The Tyger" has revealed that the pervasive image of fire and its interdependent and balanced expression in the poem have predictive implications for finding mythological analogues for both the tyger and its creator and for identifying the underlying symbolic action of the poem. Los and Urizen are these mythological analogues as the comparisons between "The Tyger" and the epical works have shown. The archetypal significance of "The Tyger" is considered in the final chapter, as Urizen's dragon aspect is amplified, and the ultimately pernicious nature of the tyger similarly is confirmed. By showing how both Urizen and the tyger are related to the dragon-form image of Leviathan and how Los as the god of the spiritual sun opposes them, the archetypal symbolism of the poem is explored.

CHAPTER V

THE DRAGON IN SUNLIGHT

This chapter compares "The Tyger" to the myth of the dragonslayer, an archetype that symbolizes the clash of the conscious and unconscious mind. The dragonslayer myth first appears in the ancient cosmogonies where a sun-god creates the world or cosmos by defeating a pernicious monster. The drama of Los and Urizen, as the creator and the creature in "The Tyger," show Blake retelling the dragonslayer archetype in the creation of the predatory tyger, a beast that encompasses the Biblical dragon Leviathan, a sublime symbol of created evil.

In Blake's kaleidoscopic allegory, symbols transmute and appearances alter, but these various images are gathered around core experiences. "The Tyger" reflects such a central experience, the symbolic encounter of bright and dark elements of psychical energy which we have compared to the Yin-Yang symbol and the alchemical *complexio oppositorum*. Blake retells the symbolic action of "The Tyger" as the chaining of Urizen by Los in *The Book of Urizen* and as the creation of the material sun of Urizen by the infinite sun of Los in *The Book of Los*, and all three accounts reflect the ethical and psychological drama of "giving a body to Falshood so that it may be cast off for ever." The epical narratives show Blake changing the shape of a central myth by personifying the imagery of fire in Los and Urizen; yet their allegorization reflects the same symbolic drama of the conjoining of the good and evil

aspects of wholeness, Blakean "Energy." This meeting of light and dark psychical forces is also the archetype of the sun-god and dragon myth.

As a spiritual warrior, Los has his furnace and hammer ("his Hammer is Justice, the swing of his hammer, Mercy") to perform his creative and unifying tasks. As the spiritual sun and the god of imagination, Los has the same celestial symbol and heroic mission of the early cosmogonic sun-gods: to bring order into the world by defeating a monster that represents the chaos of physical nature. This chapter explores Urizen's appearance as a dragon-form monster and examines the nature of his enormity to show how "The Tyger" re-envisions the symbolic and psychological pattern of the dragonslayer myth.

Urizen begins and ends his mythological life as a noble sun-god. Ahania laments his loss of spiritual radiance and longs to "awake Bright Urizen, my king" who was once "the joy of my morning hour" (BA 5:5-7). Finally, in the last "Night" of *The Four Zoas*, Urizen's former spiritual glory is restored, as "The Sun has left his blackness & has found a fresher morning" (FZ 138:20). During his mythopoeic existence, Urizen transforms into a tyrannical father, an inflexible, gray-beard prophet, an imperious despot enforcing his "One Law," and a Druid priest proclaiming the materialism of Natural Religion. In his guises of prophet, tyrant, and priest, as well as in his change into the fiery, sulphurous sun, Urizen's dragon form accompanies him:

No longer now Erect the King of Light outstretched

in fury [t/o]
 Lashes his tail in the wild deep his Eyelids like
 the Sun [t/o]
 Arising in his pride enlighten all the Grizly
 deeps [t/o]
 His scales transparent give forth light like
 windows of the morning [t/o]
 His neck flames with wrath & majesty he lashes the
 Abyss [t/o]

(FZ 106:41-45)

The analogue of the ferocious creature of "The Tyger,"
 Urizen also is symbolically fused with the beast through the
 image of the dragon. Examining the relationship of Urizen
 and "The Tyger" with the Biblical dragon Leviathan further
 clarifies the affinity of Urizen and the tyger. The
 symbolic drama of "The Tyger" can then be explored as an
 archetype of the dragonslayer myth. Together, Urizen's
 dragon-form and Los's sun-god figure resemble dragonslayer
 myths like the Persian sun-god Mithras' slaying the primal
 bull to create the world, or the Scandinavian Sigurd's
 killing the treasure-guarding serpent Fafnir. Considering
 the etiology of dragon myths, Dr. Carl Sagan asks:

Is it possible that dragons posed a problem for
 our protohuman ancestors of a few million years
 ago, and that the terror they evoked and the
 deaths they caused helped bring about the
 evolution of human intelligence? Or does the
 metaphor of the serpent refer to the use of the

aggressive and ritualistic component of our brain in the further evolution of the neocortex? With one exception the Genesis account of the temptation by a reptile in Eden is the only instance in the Bible of humans understanding the language of animals. When we feared the dragons, were we fearing a part of ourselves? One way or another, there were dragons in Eden. (141)

As Sagan's observations suggest, the monster of the dragonslayer myth is a symbol for the threatening contents of the unconscious mind, and the defeat of the monster of this dark side is heroic in all these myths. Similarly, in Renaissance dragonslayer tales, the knight rescues the damsel (a reduction of the sun-god to a hero in *shining* armor), and a restoration of the balance between the ego and the potentially chaotic shadow side of the unconscious is effected.

This chapter's exploration of the tradition and psychology of the sun-god and dragon myth suggests that the momentous act of creating the tyger is Blake's own revisioning of these ancient myths which symbolize the meeting of conscious and subconscious mental forces.

As a dragon, Urizen is aggressive and threatening, but he is also a "rational dragon," representing conscious mental forces. For Blake, it is the conscious mind which holds both enclosing darkness and light-giving imagination. In Blake's "Mental Warfare," the perverse inflation of the rational mind entails the division of the psyche, and a

spectrous "Selfhood" arises, resulting in alienation from spiritual reality. This is the myth of Urizen. The Zoa of Reason represents "Abstract Philosophy" that is "warring in enmity against the Imagination for ever." Damon says dragons always symbolize warfare in Blake (*Dictionary* 107), and in the lyrics and the Prophetic books, Urizen rises as a combative dragon.

In the early lyric "To Winter," the isolated and wintry figure of Urizen forebodes war, and the imagery is military and despotic:

He hears me not, but o'er the yawning deep
Rides heavy; his storms are unchain'd; sheathed
In ribbed steel, I dare not lift mine eyes;
For he hath rear'd his sceptre o'er the world.

Then the dragon-form of Urizen appears, and the imagery becomes gothic: "Lo! now the direful monster, whose skin clings / To his strong bones, strides o'er the groaning rocks." Not until spiritual light triumphs ("til heaven smiles") will the dragon be "driv'n yelling to his caves beneath mount Hecla."

In "A Little Boy Lost" there is a suggestion of Urizen's dragon nature in the malicious priest. The Urizenic priest is aloof and "hears not" the troubled child. With the help of the parents, he binds the child in an iron chain and then burns him "in a holy place." The iron chains are the "mind-forg'd manacles" of societal restraint whose laws Urizen writes in his repressive Book of Iron. Blake alludes to the wicker-basket immolations of the Druids when he says they

"burn'd him in a holy place, / Where many had been burn'd before," and Urizen later evinces a perfidious relationship with the Druids as he appears as their dragon-like priest. More subtly than in "To Winter," the dark lyric of "A Little Boy Lost" intimates the Urizenic priest's infernal nature and its foundation in the rational mind: "Lo! what a fiend is here. . . / One who sets reason up for judge."

Urizen's dragon-form merges with his appearance as priestly Error in the Prophetic poetry. The early political poem *Europe a Prophecy* describes Albion's Angel as the "fiery King," and Urizen's aspects of dragon, Druid priest, and sun-god combine in his lineaments:

In thoughts perturd'd they rose from the bright
 ruins, silent following [t/o]
 The fiery King, who sought his ancient temple,
 serpent-formed, [t/o]
 That stretches out its shady length along the
 Island white [t/o]

(10:1-3)

We may ask whether this last image is a long oak grove, a Druid temple, or a sea-monster off Albion's shore, but the image denotes the dragon of reason, Urizen. As the passage continues, the image of Urizen's circular Druid temple merges with images of the sun of infinite spiritual light and the fiery finite sun, and the tyranny of Urizen's material world is established:

Then was the serpent temple form'd image of
infinite [t/o]

Shut up in finite revolutions, and man became an
 Angel, [t/o]
 Heaven a mighty circle turning, God a tyrant
 crown'd [t/o]

(10:21-23)

Urizen's temple, as a serpent coiled into a circle, recalls the serpent Uroboros of the Greek alchemists and the Gnostics, or Midgard, the serpent that encircles the world in Scandinavian lore. Like Urizen, the cosmological Uroboros represents both evil and material nature, just as the body of the Nordic serpent Midgard comprises the chaotic cosmos that must be redeemed by a sun-god.

In *The Four Zoas*, Urizen appears both as a bellicose dragon and a darkly militant Druid Priest. In his saber-rattling inflation, he claims Divine sanction for his call to war:

. . . The Prester Serpent runs
 Along the ranks crying Listen to the Priest of God
 ye warriors [t/o]
 This Cowl upon my head he plac'd in times of
 Everlasting [t/o]
 And said Go forth & guide my battles, like the
 jointed spine [t/o]
 Of Man I made thee when I blotted Man from life &
 light [t/o]

 The Prester Serpent ceased the War song sounded
 loud & strong [t/o]

Thro all the heavens Urizens Web vibrated torment
on torment

[t/o]

(90:23-31)

Blake says, "The Prester Serpent ceased the War song sounded loud & strong," and Morton Paley notes Urizen's naval preparations for war in "Night the Eighth," showing how Blake associates Urizen with Nelson and Pitt by depicting them all as the monsters of the land and sea, Leviathan and Behemoth (175-185). When Urizen says "Go forth & guide my battles, like the jointed spine / Of Man I made thee," we recall the "vast Spine" of Urizen in *The Book of Los*, and reverberations from *Job* are heard:

Behold, Behemoth, which I made as I made you.

. . . He is the first of the works of God, made to
be lord over his companions. (40:15)

Falling into the spiritual alienation of creation, Urizen, too, is "the first of the works of God." Blake engraves this verse in his illumination of Leviathan and Behemoth for *Illustrations of the Book of Job*. Damon describes the engraving as "a picture of the subconscious, the unredeemed portion of the psyche, which the bulrushes identify as Egypt—the unredeemed portion of mankind" (*Job* 40). Like Leviathan among the Egyptian bulrushes, Urizen breaks out of the thicket of the Tree of Mystery to throw his Net of Religion over mankind and "They call'd it Egypt" (*U* 28:22).

The dragon-form and Urizen are also associated through Rahab. In Blake's ramifying myth, Rahab, another Biblical name for Leviathan, is a "feminized" Urizen. "Weaving her

web of Religion around the Sepulcher" the dragon Rahab shares Urizen's Net of Religion (FZ 113:38-40). Like Urizen, Rahab is "Mystery" (Urizen sprouts Mystery's Tree); she is "Natural Religion" (Urizen is the chief priest of the Druids, Blake's personification of Natural Religion). As the state of Error, Rahab refuses definite form (J 75:4), just as Urizen resists Enitharmon's struggle to give birth to him and bring forth the "Satan Refusing Form" (M 3:41).

Urizen's dragon-form lurks beneath his other disguises in the early lyrics and the later Prophecies, often rising belligerently out of his repressive or rationalistic alter-egos of tyrant and priest. He is specifically associated with the Biblical dragon Leviathan in many passages and illuminations, and his relationship to Rahab underscores his Leviathan-like nature. *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* reveals Urizen's symbolic affinity to Leviathan; moreover, the Blakean ideas that inform the episode of Leviathan in the "Fourth Memorable Fancy" suggest Urizen is a conscious or "rational dragon," and describe the enemy that Los, as sun-god and dragonslayer, must meet and vanquish.

In *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, Leviathan appears in a scene surrounded with Urizenic imagery and characterized by inhibiting Urizenic rationality. Leviathan is a dragon of the rational mind, the chimera of the insular reasoning of the conventionally-minded Angel. Blake says man "becomes what he beholds," and Leviathan is threatening to those whose alienated vision engenders its presence. The depiction of the Biblical sea-serpent is gruesome and

apocalyptic, and it "appears [as] the most frightening creature that ever cursed the nightmare of man, whom Blake describes in words of unparalleled intensity" (Singer 151). The sea-serpent advances from "between the black & white spiders," and the contrasted spiders signify the polarized perceptions of the satanic Angel whose consciousness displays a Urizenic inflation of the rational, subject-object mind, Blake's "cloven fiction." Urizen is frequently characterized by spider as he "sits in his labourd web" of religion (*FZ* 18:4) which evolves "Like a spiders web, moist, cold, & dim / Drawing out from his sorrowing soul" (*U* 25:10-11).

"The sun, black but shining" appears "between the black and white spiders." This is the dark, sulphurous sun, the body of Urizen. The speaker says: ". . . looking east between the clouds and waves, we saw a cataract of blood mixed with fire." That is, appearing among these "deeps and skies" is the variant image for the material sun and the "B. of Urizen." Leviathan rears up "like a ridge of golden rocks," and, as Damon remarks, gold stands for the intellect and is ascribed to Urizen in Blake's symbolic metallurgy (*Dictionary* 162). These "golden rocks" which describe the Leviathan that the Angel has conjured recall the satire of Urizen's own creations, the rocky ridges of "the hills and mountains" of the Void that he "from redounding fancies had petrified" (*BA* 3:58).

The dragon-form of Leviathan advances toward the speaker and the Angel with "all the fury of a spiritual existence,"

but the monster is only the semblance of reality. A phenomenon of the Angel's polarized perception, it disappears when the Angel retreats into the mill. The speaker has the thought that the "man who never alters his opinion is like standing water, & breeds reptiles of the mind" (MHH 19). This is Urizen's imperious and inflexible reasoning expressed in Leviathan-like imagery, and these "reptiles of the mind" are like the Urizen's "beast, bird, fish, serpent & element" composed only of "combustion, blast, vapour, cloud" (U 3:14-17). Answering the Angel's false vision with his own, the speaker seizes the Angel, and they plunge beyond the dialectics of "the black spider and the white spider" and "directly into the body of the sun," into a symbol of fiery wholeness. Restored from his alienation by uniting with the sun symbol of spiritual totality, the Angel becomes his "particular friend."

The "Fourth Memorable Fancy" shows Leviathan's apparition preceded by the Urizenic symbols of the red globule of blood and the black sun, images which have had significance in discovering analogies for the symbolic action of "The Tyger." Leviathan and Urizen both appear hostile and malevolent as dragons, but their underlying nature is of the conscious mind, for the dragon is a phantasm of the consciousness of the Angel, a phenomenon of Urizenic reasoning. Los's "Mental Warfare" to defeat "Abstract Philosophy" is his dragonslayer's task, and the ferocity of the beast of "The Tyger" is founded in this same pernicious psychical energy. The tyger, too, is a dragon of

reason.

The lurid visage of the tyger appears as Leviathan's face in the "Fourth Memorable Fancy." Indeed, except for its "fearful symmetry," this is the single place in Blake's poetry the tyger's features are described. Leviathan rises up in "the scaly folds of a monstrous serpent" with "two globes of crimson fire, from which the sea fled away in smoke . . . his forehead was divided into streaks of green & purple like those on a Tigers forehead" (MHH 18).

Commenting on Blake's realistic coloration, his first biographer is puzzled by the illumination of "The Tyger":

Certainly an unaccountable perversity in colour may now and then be apparent, as where, in the same series, [*Songs of Experience*] the tiger is painted in fantastic streaks of red, green, blue, and yellow, while a tree stem at his side tantalizing supplies the tint which one might venture to think his due, and is a perfect tiger-colour! (Gilchrist 1: 418)

He goes on to say that "The Tyger" "is the only striking instance [of this strange coloration] I can recall in his published work" (1: 418). The vivid description of the Leviathan's tyger face and the same expressionistic tinting of the engraving of "The Tyger" show that Blake has the tyger in mind when he speaks of Leviathan. As these resemblances attest, the tyger "includes" the Biblical dragon. Blake joins the tyger with the monsters Behemoth and Leviathan in the "b" version of "Night the Seventh":

"The Tyger in redounding smoke The Serpent of the woods / And of the waters" (FZ 90:20-21). And, as this passage continues, the tyger rapidly transforms into the Prester serpent of Urizen, the verses cited above.

We have seen symbolism, narrative occurrences and iconographical analogies connect the Urizen and the tyger. The dragon image similarly unites Urizen and the tyger. As a Zoa and as a dragon, Urizen is a darkly conscious monster, and so must the tyger be. As a poem of conflicting but related psychic forces, "The Tyger" reflects the tradition of the dragon and sun-god myth in Blake's own style.

The symbols of the dragon and the sun-god are pre-historic. The sun and reptile-god cults of Egypt already existed in Pre-Dynastic times (3200 B.C.).¹² The scion of sun-god Horus and a sun-god himself, Re battles the serpent Apep as it returns nightly to attack the boat of the sun-god in the later Dynastic myths. The Hindu *Rg Veda* and the Babylonian *Enuma Elish*, the two oldest cosmogonic myths, show sun-gods warring dragons for the newly created world. The *Rg Veda* tells how Indra, "The Wielder of the Thunderbolt," brings forth the "sun, heaven, and dawn," by slaying "the first-born of dragons," the "shoulderless" Vrita (I.32.1-15). In the Babylonian epic of creation *Enuma Elish*, the sun-god Marduk defeats Tiamut, goddess of the chaotic waters, depicted as a dragon on cylinder seals. The defeat of Zu by the Mesopotamian sun-god Ninturta reflects the same conjoining of sun and dragon archetypes. In Greek mythology, the dragon-slaying legends of Cadmus and Apollo

continue the sun and dragon myths. And later in Rome, the dual worship of fire and the serpent was so common that their coins depicted the combined symbols of the fire and serpent (Newman 216-217). Blake was aware of the symbology of the sun and dragon. He engraves winged sun-symbols joined to a serpent in engraving Bryant's *Mythology* (vol I, plate VIII). He had read the Scandinavian myths of Thor and the World Serpent in Mallet's *Northern Antiquities*, and he had engraved Gray's "Descent of Odin," depicting a sea-monster much like the coiled serpent on the title page of *Europe a Prophecy*.

The first dragonslayer myths are cosmogonic and show man symbolizing his world as an inimical dragon, pitting himself against this chaos to bring cosmic order. The "water'd heaven" fifth stanza of "The Tyger" places the creation of the tyger within the encompassing cosmogonic creation. In the analogical retelling of "The Tyger" in the Prophetic epics, Urizen and Los oppose each other at this same moment of creation. Thus "The Tyger" and its analogues compare with the ancient cosmogonic myths where a sun-god opposes a serpent or dragon to create the world.¹³ Later the cosmogonic element of dragonslayer myths fades. The dragons remain terrifying and fabulous, but the sun-god is re-anthropomorphized into a heroic but human figure. The psychology of the myth remains unchanged: the conscious mind confronts the terrifying and unknown contents of the unconscious.

As Leviathan, Urizen is tyrannous and warlike, and his

"lashing tail" and "glowing eyes" suggest a nightmare from the subconscious mind. Urizen is aggressive and ritualistic as an enslaving conqueror of "Egypt" and as Druid priest, and the efflorescence of his dragon form often signals the chaos of war. Yet he is the Zoa of Reason and his conscious attributes conflict with Sagan's description of the primitive nature of the dragon image. Urizen's most representative trait is his conscious, rational thought that conflicts with imagination of Los.

In Blake's poetry, the cloven, subject-object mind rises as a barrier to spiritual consciousness. This is the internal Urizen. And in Blake, physical nature itself obstructs spiritual vision. This is the external Urizen. Urizen is the error of materiality, and the formation of his body and his finite sun symbolize the creation of the cosmos. He is the World Serpent, and he is a ratiocinative beast also.

Psychologically, a state of alienation is produced by the conscious mind, not by the dragons or serpents of the unconscious mind. The "rational" or "conscious" dragon Urizen embodies Blake's greatest evil, expressed as external and as internal division. Both these related states symbolize psychical alienation, or the separation of the unconscious and conscious contents of the mind. In Blake, the threat of the dragon begins in the rational mind where we "become what we behold" and the integrative powers of the imagination decay. Thus, though a cognitive phenomenon resulting from incomplete perception, the Leviathan of *The*

Marriage of Heaven and Hell is not innocuous for the estranged consciousness that engenders its appearance, and neither is the tyrant Urizen nor the evil tyger.

Evil, in Blake, is the "shrinkage" into creation, the cosmogonic moment from which all other evil comes. The loss of spirituality and the fall down to the Limit of Contraction begin when Urizen's subject-object mind develops and he becomes "Hidden, set apart in [his] stern counsels" (*U* 4:8). In Blake's idealist reality, the division of unified wholeness occurs as Urizen's objectifying mind produces spiritual alienation in the gigantic form of the cosmos. Like Fafnir and Uroboros, who are dragon symbols for cosmic evil, and like the myth of Midgard, Urizen's chained body symbolizes the created cosmos, just as his black, finite sun is another metaphor for the division of material existence from ideal reality.

Blake's evil is also alienation expressed in human terms as inward sin. Like the creation of the world, he calls this psychic alienation a "shrinkage" when he speaks of the rationalistic Spectre that is born from the Selfhood of man. Outwardly, this Spectre is a dragon or a huge flying bat appearing over Los and Albion in various illuminations (Fig. 9). Inwardly, the Spectre demonstrates inflated Urizenic reasoning. The Spectre divides Los and Enitharmon and exults, "knowing himself the author of their divisions and shrinkings" (*J* 88:34-35). Like the "self-enclosed" and "self-begotten" Urizen, "The Spectre is the rational power of the divided man" that becomes the "self-centered

Selfhood" (Damon, *Dictionary* 380-381). Urizen's alienating inflation is the divisive inflation of the Spectre.

Changing into Urizen's time-form Satan, the Spectre says, "I am God, O Sons of Men! I am your Rational Power" (*J* 54:16). Urizen says, "I alone, even I!" (*U* 4:19).

Internal and external alienation are often expressed together in Blake. Los complains that the alienating Spectre is a "false body: an Incrustation over my Immortal / Spirit" (*M* 40:35). "Incrustation" denotes the covering veil of physical nature, Los's imaginative spirit obscured by Urizen's mentalistic inflations and Los's infinitely bright sun masked by Urizen's sulphurous star.

In Blake, rational thought defeats and threatens the spiritual vision, but the Spectre's (and Urizen's) unifying and accompanying image is Los who, as imagination and spiritual illumination, harnesses the dark light of the Spectre, not by destroying it, but by compelling the Spectre to work at his furnaces in *Jerusalem* (8:10). This is one of the last integrative confrontations between reason and imagination, the division that originally caused the fall. With Los as the heroic sun-god, all these meetings are dragonslaying battles as the Leviathan-like tyger, the dragon Urizen, and the Spectre's gothic iconography show.

"The Tyger" recounts the commencement of this struggle of "Abstract Philosophy warring in enmity against Imagination for ever," and the creation drama of "The Tyger" symbolizes the inner struggle for psychological wholeness: first, its symbolic action involves a confrontation of

conflicting psychic forces represented in the immortal creator and the predatory tyger; second, the agency of this continuing, assimilative confrontation is the imagination, represented in the poem by the blacksmith creator, who in the epical works is Los. In Blake's eighth and final cycle, Los becomes Jesus the Imagination. At this point in Blake's epic the ideal and the eternal supercede the created world and division is resolved. "The Tyger" begins at the *fiat lux*. It is a poem about outward division, the moment of creation; it is a poem about the struggle to overcome the internal division that results from object-self acts of consciousness. For Blake the idealist, creation and alienation are intimately related, and the inimical beginning of mental division Blake symbolizes in the cosmogonical moment of the tyger's creation and Urizen's fall. As an archetype of the dragonslayer myth, "The Tyger" shows Los's first victory in daring to encounter the beast in the infernal caves of Contraction and Opacity and "giving a body to Falshood that it may be cast off for ever."

Expanding the question "Who created the Tyger?" to include a query about the tyger permits us to look for more than the analogue of a single symbol. Defining the dramatic relationship of the creator and creature in "The Tyger" provides a basis for finding its symbolic action re-enacted by the mythic figures of Blake's epical poetry. The counterbalanced and unified prosody of "The Tyger" and its interrelated fire imagery also have significance for determining the mythological gods who elsewhere enact the

symbolic drama of "The Tyger." The cosmogonic act of the creation of the material sun by the spiritual sun in *The Book of Los* evinces the same conjoining of dark and light fire embodied in the glowing tyger and immortal creator. The epical narrative of these suns shows Los creating the body of Urizen; Los's chaining of Urizen in *The Book of Urizen* is another telling of this creation drama with variant but related symbols. Milton reveals the creation of the inimically "bright Urizen" by Milton, another personification of imagination, and the rejected plate of "A Divine Image" of *Songs of Experience* shows Los enacting the creational drama of "The Tyger" as he forges the material sun of Urizen. These analogical recountings of the tyger's creation all suggest that the underlying symbolic action of "The Tyger" is the struggle of Los as Imagination against Urizen, the Zoa of Reason.

"The Tyger" is also an archetype of the sun-god and dragonslayer myth, originally a cosmogonic myth in which a sun-god creates the world by defeating a dragon. Los, the infinite sun of Imagination, seeks to recreate spiritual unity by confronting the alienating rationalism of Urizen. Los begins defeating the "rational dragon" by breaking the barrier between imagination and reason as he heroically struggles to give "a body to Falshood that it may be cast off for ever." As the Zoa of Reason and as a Leviathan-like dragon, Urizen epitomizes Blakean evil which the sun-god of imagination must slay. Urizen begins physical existence by thinking he is separate and "self-begotten," an inflation

that engenders cosmic creation which becomes symbolized in his chained body and his black sun. Urizen mistakes the rational mind as the ordering power of consciousness, an inflation that can only be overcome by Los, the unifying function of the imagination. Los begins this healing communication by confronting the "rational dragon" Urizen and by "daring" to create the tyger.

"The Tyger" and what the tyger symbolizes interest young students and serious scholars alike, though no number of intuitive or educated answers diminishes the asking force of the poem or quite describes its mystery. "The Tyger" radiates a boundless energy, and only the undivided experience of the poem can answer our important questions about it. An order of answers accompanies the admiration of its luminosity and becomes a part of the enjoyment we feel as Blake brings us into a vision of its symbols. As we contemplate Blake's poetry, these answers are the ones that suggest "Urizen" may mean "boundless" or "your reason" or "horizon." These answers make way to the clearing where the tyger can be seen burning in the night. For a great and complex symbolist like Blake, a believer in imagination, all things come together when man uses the creative power of the mind, looking through the world into life. Brighter than the sun and stars, as Blake might say, "The Tyger's" highly reflective symbols shine by the act of imagination.

ILLUSTRATIONS



Figure 1. Detail of Plate 15 from *The Book of Urizen*

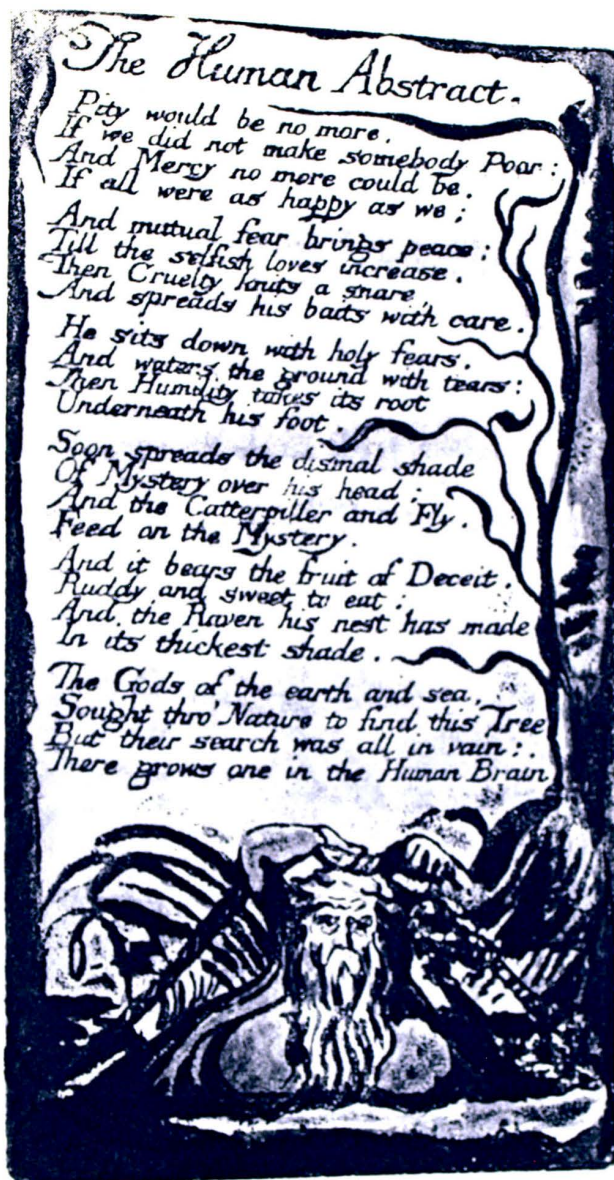


Figure 2. The Human Abstract from Songs of Experience

pulse not from rules.

When he had so spoken: I beheld the Angel who
 stretched out his arms embracing the flame of fire
 he was consumed and arose as Elijah.

Note. This Angel, who is now become a Devil, is
 a particular friend: we often read the Bible to
 her in its infernal or diabolical sense which
 the world shall have if they behave well.
 I say also: The Bible of Hell: which the world
 shall have whether they will or no.



One Lion for the Lion & Ox is Oppression

Figure 3. Tailpiece from *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*

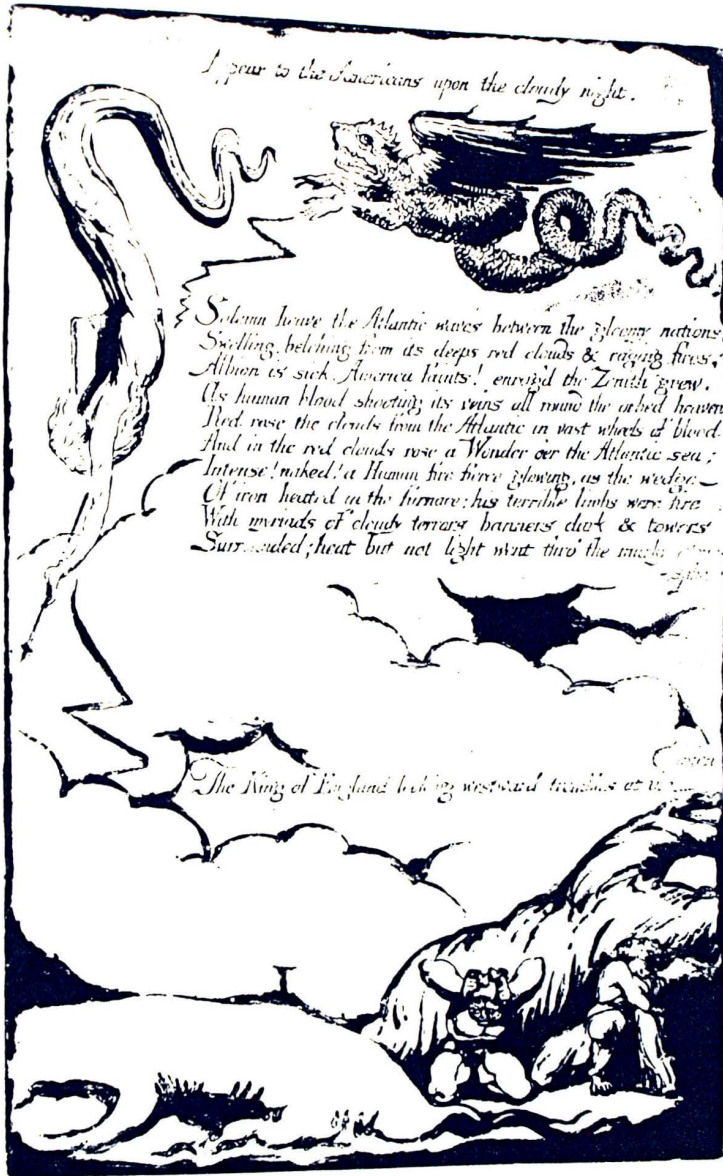


Figure 4. Plate 4 from *America, A Prophecy*



Figure 5. Jacob's Ladder

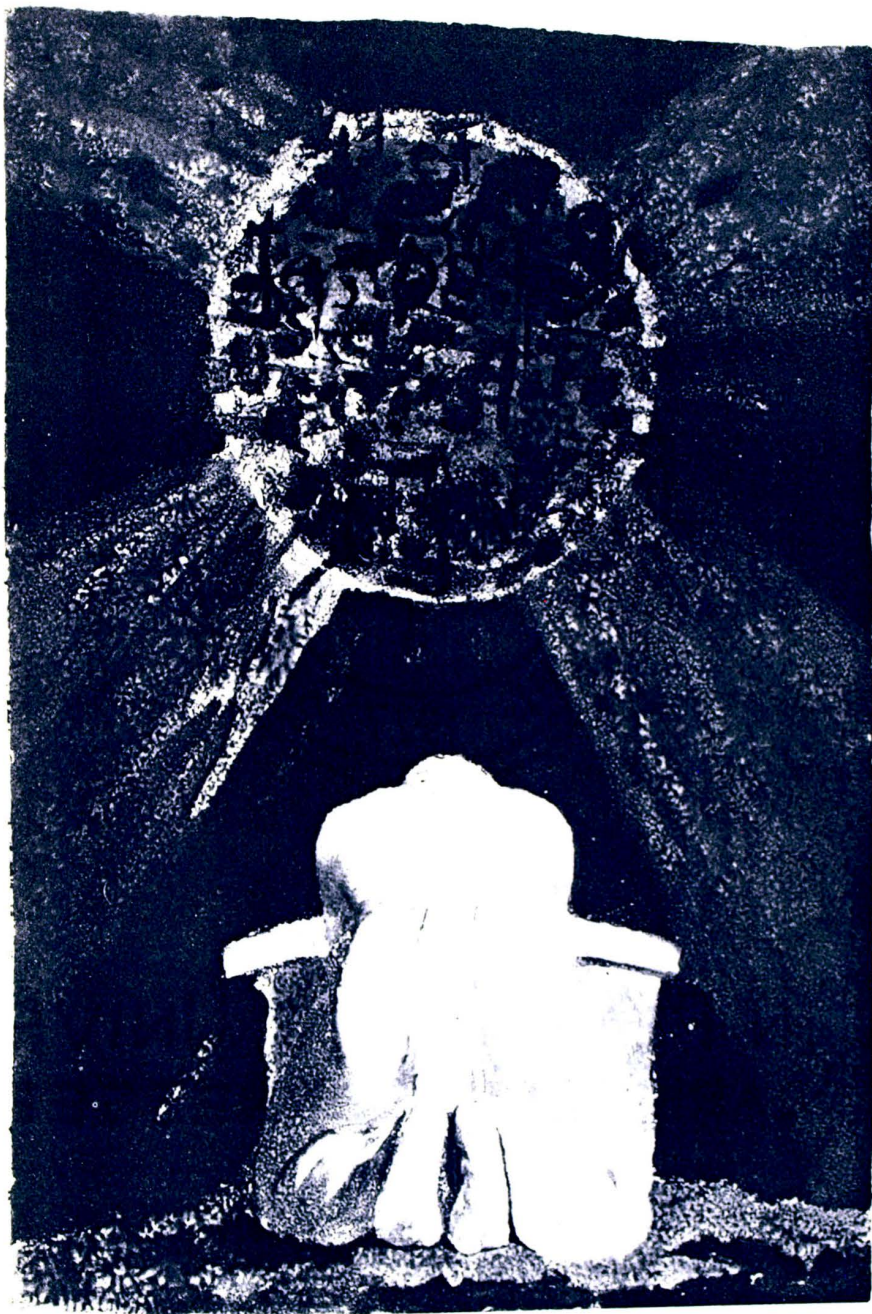


Figure 6. Frontispiece from *The Book of Los*



Figure 7. Tailpiece from The Book of Los

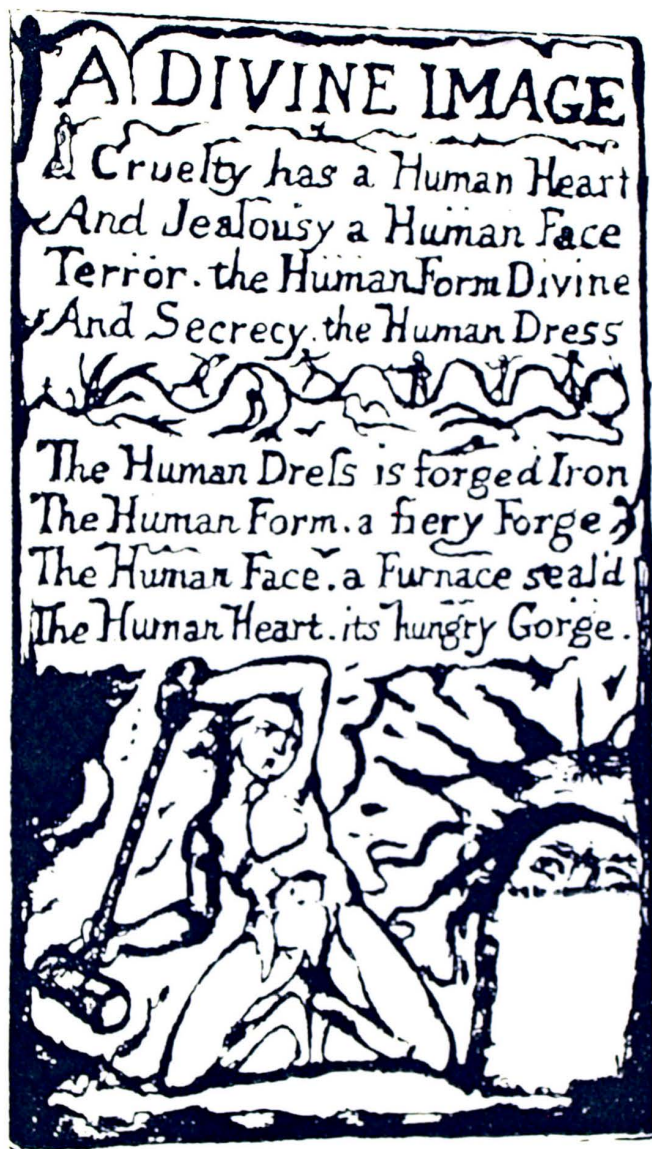


Figure 8. Blake's rejected plate A Divine Image
 from Songs of Experience

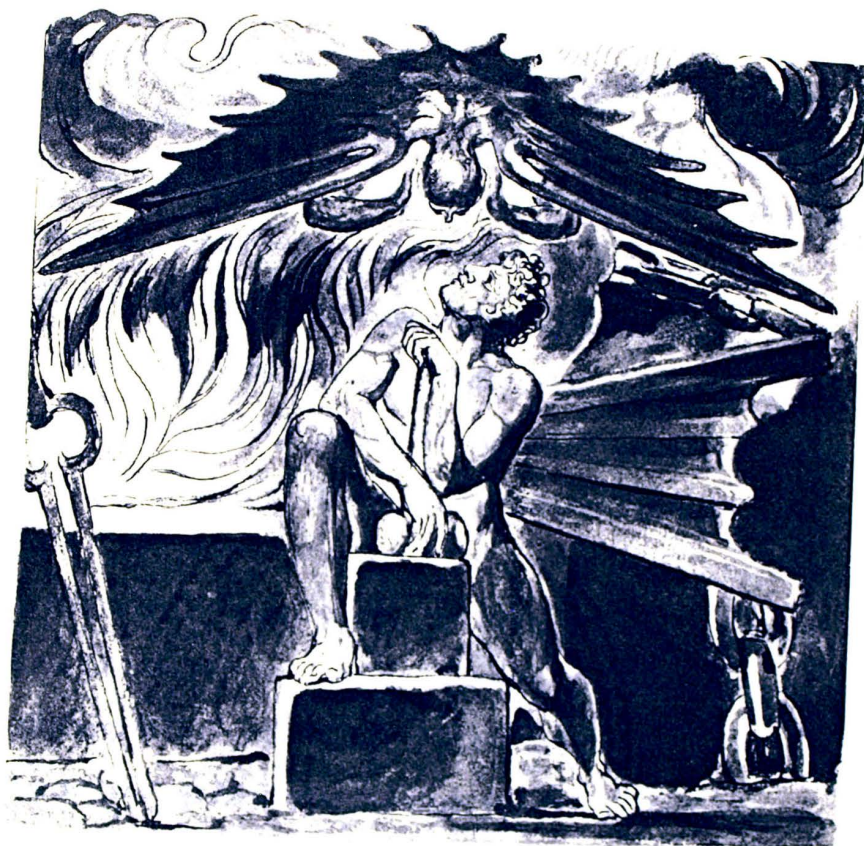


Figure 9. Detail of Plate 4 from *Jerusalem*

NOTES

¹ Throughout this study, citations of Blake's writing refer the reader to Erdman's 1970 edition of Blake listed in the bibliography. The illuminated epical works are cited by plate, then line number. *The Four Zoas* is cited by page and line number.

² The Hobsbaum article, too, falters as it would succeed. While recognizing that rhetorical questions "are those which do not demand an answer or, at least, which do not expect one," Hobsbaum, maintaining the poem's "sublime doubt," does not say that rhetorical questions are as often rhetorical because they contain their own answers. In this way, a formalist inquiry into the question of who created the tyger might begin, a question he maintains is unanswerable.

³ Nurmi remarks: "From their position in the Notebook, the drafts of 'The Tyger' appear to have been written sometime during 1792, or at the latest 1793" (671). The best that can be said is that *Songs of Experience* are advertised by Blake in his Prospectus of October, 1793, and that "The Tyger" was very likely among the poems of this first issue. The date of 1793 is used for the purposes of this study.

⁴ When Frye says "embryonic" he is specifying in a word the rudimentary but prototypic development of the prophecies in this early work, and it is a most apt characterization of Blake's myth-making attempts at this stage of his writing, with the slight but perhaps needed exception of "Gwin, King

of Norway," in which Blake's early but marked tendencies toward personification become situated in a complete myth, a story of brutal repression further expanded and retold in the political prophecies.

⁵ Both Erdman and Raine propose this figure to be Nebuchadnezzar. Raine finds similarities between this illustration and Blake's drawings for Jacob Bryant's *Mythology* (2, 126); Erdman refers to the spiked crown but does not give a reason for naming this figure Nebuchadnezzar (*Illuminated Blake, Marriage* 24E). The name "Nebuchadnezzar" never appears in Blake's poetry, though some mention is made of him (in this case unilluminating) in Blake's miscellaneous prose. I think Raine and Erdman both have in mind Blake's watercolor "Nebuchadnezzar," which he completed in 1795, and whose iconography closely resembles the tailpiece to *The Marriage*. But, the spiked crown is not an adequate basis for such an identification, as it frequently appears in Blake's illustrations, notably in Illustration XI of *The Book of Job*, where, significantly, the figure whose spiked hair forms a crown is related most to Urizen—by the stone tablets he points to, by the dragon that coils around him, and also by his reclined position. And in the tailpiece to *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, the figure walks on all fours, Blake's favorite way of depicting Urizen in the *Lambeth Prophecies*. The accompanying motto "One law for the lion and the ox is oppression," though spoken also by Tiriel and Bromion, figures related to Urizen, is most closely associated with Urizen, and never,

to my knowledge, with Nebuchadnezzar. The resemblances between the tailpiece and Blake's later depiction of Nebuchadnezzar cannot be underestimated, but I think it is also valuable to consider that Blake, when he painted the watercolor of Nebuchadnezzar, was working in a context entirely independent of his poetry; in this sense, because Blake never mentions Nebuchadnezzar in his verse and because "One law for the lion and the ox is oppression" is decidedly Urizen's aphorism, the correlation of Urizen with the figure in tailpiece illustration is quite well-founded.

⁶ It is unlikely that Blake knew about Hecla from the records contained in old English manuscripts and in English poetry, though this interest in Hecla goes back several hundred years. More likely, Blake did know of Hecla's commonly held reputation as a long standing symbol for the Satan's fire. Hecla's reputation as the gate to hell and the devil's jurisdiction is reflected in an Anglo-Norman poem by the monk Benedeit written in 1120. Thorarinsson remarks:

In the oldest reference to Hekla, the *Book of Wonders* dating from about 1180 . . . the following passage is found: "The renowned fiery cauldron of Sicily, which men call Hell's chimney . . . that cauldron is affirmed to be like a small furnace compared to this enormous inferno. . . . Who now is there so refractory and unbelieving that he will not credit the existence of an eternal fire where

souls suffer, when with his own eyes he sees the fire of which I have spoken?" (6)

If Blake never read anything of Mount Hecla, and even if he knew nothing of its devil lore through hearing about it orally, he appreciated the Hecla paradox and incorporated it into this early Urizenic poem. At any rate, in 1766, when Blake was a boy of eleven, Hecla began its most violent eruption, which lasted until March, 1768; the ferocity and duration of the eruption does suggest that Hecla introduced itself to Blake in his youth.

⁷ A photographic facsimile of the revisions of "The Tyger" is contained in Erdman's *The Notebook of William Blake* on pages N108 and N109. The appendix to this work contains a typographical version of the drafts of "The Tyger."

⁸ Grant notes that in the fifth stanza none of the lines contains a caesura and thus provides "a sense of release and relief after the labor of the preceding stanzas" (72). I prefer to remain optimistic that his remarks refer mostly to the labor of creation rather than to the labor in the rhythm, for Blake's caesuras give the impression of speed—short staccato bursts of it. The fifth stanza, the famous "stars and spears" stanza, does provide a rhythmic plateau in which a smoother line reinforces the feeling that here is a wider view of creation *in toto*, a moment of terrible awe for Blake the idealist.

⁹ Long views this pronominal as adding to the "classic confusion" and ambiguity of the poem (119). Certainly, however, the effect of fusion is as evident.

¹⁰ Paley contends that Gilchrist means "Middle Eastern, Semitic" when he says "Oriental" (540). It's impossible to judge exactly what Gilchrist does mean when he says this, except that he means both "grandeur" (or sublimity) and, generally, "Eastern." However, "latitude" is obviously intended to denote comprehensiveness of spiritual vision, and this part of Gilchrist's observation concerns us here.

¹¹ In "The Psychology of the Unconscious" Jung finds that the burning bush of Moses, the fiery tongues of the Holy Spirit, and the "ever-living" fire of Heraclitus all represent this unified mental energy (para. 106). Similarly, Jung sees the fire symbol of the sun as also particularly expressing this psychic totality (*Man and His Symbols* 233). Indeed, from this first symbol of fire, Jung goes on to develop his entire theory of archetypes. To compare the scene of Moses on the mountainside viewing the burning bush with the opening lines of "The Tyger" is to see in both a fiery symbol which represents the potential for overcoming internal division through the apperception of total psychic energy. According to Jung, at these moments the discernment of life purpose is often achieved; Blake says this Energy is "Eternal Delight." Moses' life from the moment of his vision of the fiery bush had heroic purpose and scope; he left the pastures of his father-in-law to lead his people; from *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* on, Blake's composite art flowered unabatedly for thirty years as he wrote his own epics of the liberation of the human spirit.

¹² One of the earliest recorded religious wars reflects the underlying mythic battle between the sun-god and a reptilian monster. In 3405 B.C. the Pharaoh Bineter defeated a cult of Set worshippers who were "among the aboriginal inhabitants of the Nile valley" (Newman 14). Bineter replaced the worship of the crocodile god Set (his reptilian form is called Sevekh) with rituals to sun-god Horus.

¹³ In cosmogonic myths, tigers are rare, but dragons plentiful; however, in *The Hypostasis of the Archons*, a Gnostic tractate (third century A.D.), a lion does appear. Like parts of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, the *Hypostasis* is a discourse between an Angel and his listener, and the Angel Eleleth speaks:

A veil exists between the world above and the realms that are below; and shadow came into being beneath the veil; and that shadow became matter; and that shadow was projected apart. And what she [Sophia] created became a product in the matter, like an aborted fetus. And it assumed a plastic form molded out of shadow, and became an arrogant beast resembling a lion... . Opening his eyes he saw a vast quantity of matter without limit; and he became arrogant saying, "It is I who am God, and there is none other apart from me." When he said this, he sinned against entirety. And a voice came forth from above the realm of absolute power, saying "You are mistaken Samael" — which is, "god of the blind." (*Nag Hammadi* 165)

In *The Book of Urizen*, the creation of the material world and Urizen's body are central; the Gnostic account describes the creation of the material world and a lion—not a tyger, but in Blake the lion and tyger are closely related and share the characteristic of wrath. The resemblances to Blake's Urizen and, especially, to *The Book of Urizen* are remarkable. Urizen frames "a roof, vast petrific around" that divides the spiritual world and the Void (5:28). Urizen is a "shadow of horror" (3:1), and he is "Hidden set apart" (4:8). The "Nine Ages" of Urizen's formation show the nine months of the growth of the fetus, the "fibres, blood, milk and tears" (18:5). Urizen claims only he exists: "I alone, even I!" (4:20). But the Eternals know he is mistaken and they say: "What is this? Death[.] / Urizen is a clod of clay" (6:10-11). Of course, Blake's illuminations of Urizen frequently depict him with eyes closed, a "god of the blind." Similarly, the Gnostic *On the Origin of the World* relates:

. . .there appeared for the first time a ruler,
out of the waters, lionlike in appearance,
androgynous, having great authority within him,
and ignorant of whence he had come into being . . .
. he called himself Yaldabaoth. But Ariel is what
the perfect call him, for he was like a lion. . .
he supposed that it was he alone who existed. His
[. . .] was completed by verbal expression: it
appeared as a spirit moving to and fro upon the
waters. (*Nag Hammadi* 175)

The lion's "self-begotten" hubris is much the same as Urizen's own arrogance. Because of the lacuna, we cannot tell who is moving upon the waters, whether Ariel or possibly the creator or "spirit" that completes him by "verbal expression." This ruler appears "out of the waters" of the first chaos, as the dragons of earlier cosmogonic myths, and as Urizen in *The Book of Los* who appears out of the water, "Like a serpent! an iron chain / Whirling about in the Deep." A lion-like god who also represents material existence suggests Urizen, and Ariel's appearance out of the water suggests a creature akin to "the king over the children of pride," Leviathan.

Blake could not have know of *The Hypostasis of the Archons* ("The Reality of the Rulers") or *The Origin of the World*, for they lay buried in the Egyptian sands until 1945. But the Gnostic tractates are assimilative and iterative. Although impossible to prove from what we know of Blake's reading list, he may have read a similar Gnostic cosmogonical account.

APPENDIX

First Draft, Blake's Notebook (page 109)

brackets indicate deletions

Tyger Tyger burning bright
In the forests of the night
What immortal hand or eye
Could [Dare] frame thy fearful symmetry

In what [Burnt in] distant deep or skies
[The cruel] Burnt the fire of thine eyes
On what wings dare he aspire
What the hand dare seize the fire

And what shoulder & what art
Could twist the sinews of thy heart
And what dread hand & what dread feet

[Could fetch it from the furnace deep
And in thy horrid ribs dare steep
In the well of sanguine woe
In what clay & in what mould
Were thy eyes of fury rolld]

What [Where] the hammer what [where] the chain
 In what furnace was thy brain
 What the anvil what [the arm arm grasp clasp] dread grasp
 Could [Dare] its deadly terrors [clasp grasp] clasp

Tyger Tyger burning bright
 In the forests of the night
 What immortal hand & eye
 Dare form [frame] thy fearful symmetry

Additional Stanzas (page 108)

Burnt in distant deeps or skies
 The cruel fire of thine eyes
 Could heart descend or wings aspire
 What the hand dare seize the fire

dare he [smile laugh]
 And did [he laugh] his work to see
 [What the ankle what the knee]
 [shoulder]
 Dare [Did] he who made the lamb make thee?

When the stars their down their spears
 And waterd heaven with their tears

Second Full Draft (p. 108)

Tyger Tyger burning bright
In the forests of the night
What Immortal hand & eye
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry

And what shoulder & what art
Could twist the sinews of thy heart
And when thy heart began to beat
What dread hand & what dread feet

When the stars threw down their spears
And waterd heaven with their tears
Did he smile his work to see
Did he who make the lamb make thee

Tyger Tyger burning bright
In the forests of the night
What immortal hand & eye
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry

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