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# Blake's Erotic Apocalypse: The Androgynous Ideal in "Jerusalem"

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# BLAKE'S EROTIC APOCALYPSE: THE ANDROGYNOUS IDEAL IN *JERUSALEM*

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The imagery of sexual warfare is central to the vision of apocalypse which Blake proclaims as his poetic mission. The political apocalypse of the earlier work, such as *The French Revolution*, fades as the spiritual gains prominence, for Blake's vision of the natural world seems to have darkened over the years so that by the time he was writing *Jerusalem* the only apocalypse he could endorse was one in which the "sexes must cease and vanish" in the psyche so that humanity can assume its spiritualized "body." It became clear to Blake that political reform of society could not be effected until an individual and spiritual redemption took place in every heart. To become androgynous, to overcome the flaws inherent in each sex, emerges as the central challenge for all Blake's characters.

Blake's poetry, then, is dominated by the image of the androgyne, which he envisions as a paradisaal state of consciousness that has resolved all dichotomies so that "man" possesses that complete harmony in which "he" is Albion-Jerusalem, both God and all external, "feminine" reality. For Blake the androgynous is a consciousness that is neither masculine nor feminine; rather, it is a distinct third psychic possibility in which neither sex predominates. Unlike Boehme, who envisions the androgyne as a male with a subordinate female element, and unlike Swedenborg, who thought the division of the sexes persisted even into paradise, Blake emphasized that sexual divisions must be annihilated psychically, because both sexes are equally fallen from the original divinity of the androgyne: " 'In Eternity they neither marry nor are given in marriage.' " <sup>1</sup>

Blake alludes to the androgynous ideal in *Milton*: 2 when he praises the "Eternal Great Humanity Divine" (E, 95; K, 481). Most of his poetry, however, centers on the dynamics of the fallen, divided states and the ensuing sexual warfare. To graphically illustrate the dichotomy between the apocalyptic and the actual, Blake's poetry contrasts the fallen physical body, constricted to the limitations inherent in the divided sexes and represented by the hermaphrodite, to the human-divine, the androgynous "body." In his poetic versions of the fall, an original androgynous union of masculine and feminine is destroyed, thereby giving rise to the fallen world of nature. This fallen physical world incorporates qualities that Blake depicts as feminine, while the other, and even greater, evil in his system is the conception of the

self, which is embodied in the male. These two separated principles cause the ensuing sexual warfare.

Blake, then, describes the androgynous condition chiefly by depicting what it is not. He contrasts the sacred image of redeemed sexuality to the profane image, the hermaphrodite. The contrast of the hermaphrodite and androgyne as opposites is a long-standing tradition in theological speculation.<sup>2</sup> Blake follows in this tradition by viewing the hermaphrodite as a sterile fusion of the physical male and female, while the androgyne transcends sexual divisions to become a spiritual and psychic ideal.<sup>3</sup>

The hermaphrodite in Blake's poetry is embodied in the fusion of the fallen male, a spectre representing the rational and reductive consciousness, and the fallen female, representing the secrecy and deceit that support abstract morality. In an early cosmology, "Then She Bore Pale Desire," Blake describes the Gods who were born from fear—"nor male nor female are, but single Pregnate, or, if they list, together mingling bring forth mighty powrs" (E, 437; K, 40). These Gods strengthen the demonic power of the Great Mother and aid in giving birth to "a Goddess fair, or Image rather, till knowledge animated it; twas call'd Self love." This power of self love will later be embodied in the Female Will and the Spectre, but even in this early prose piece Blake recognized that it was the concept of an all-sufficient self that was the most serious threat to reintegration. He observes, "Go see more strong the ties of marriage love—thou Scarce Shall find, but Self love Stands Between" (E, 439; K, 42-43).

Blake made his first attempt to physically describe a hermaphrodite in *The Four Zoas*: 7 (see Figure 1). Here the hermaphrodite appears as the merger of the fallen Enion and Tharmas, a physical parody of their eventual androgynous union in Night IX. This hermaphrodite is formed from the mixing of "his horrible darkness" and "his darkly waving colours" with "her fair crystal clearness." Together they produce a "wonder that nature shuddered at/ Half Woman & half beast." This "lovely" wonder wanders over the earth, its "rocky features" and its "female voice" wrapped in "self enjoying wonder." It is Enion, however, who dominates the merger, for she proclaims that this hermaphroditic union is "Glory, delight: & sweet enjoyment born/ To mild Eternity shut in a threefold shape delightful/ To wander in sweet solitude enrapturd at every wind" (E, 299-300; K, 381).<sup>4</sup> In this hermaphroditic union, then, the feminine entraps the masculine just as the Female Will dominates the history of the human race.

But Blake also condemns any attempts at self-redemption by the fallen reason, identified as masculine. For if the fallen female embodies the curse of the physical, unredeemed world, then the fallen male is "a ravening eating Cancer growing in the Female/ A Polypus of Roots of Reasoning Doubt Despair & Death" (J: 69; E, 220; K, 707). Any union or forced merger between these two fallen forms can only produce the monstrous hermaphrodite, embodiment of the horrors of sexual separation and "Blasphemous Selfhood."

Hermaphroditic unions also symbolize the merger of female religion with male warfare, the two powers that serve to institute and perpetuate humanity's fallen existence. History for Blake, then, can be viewed as a cycle



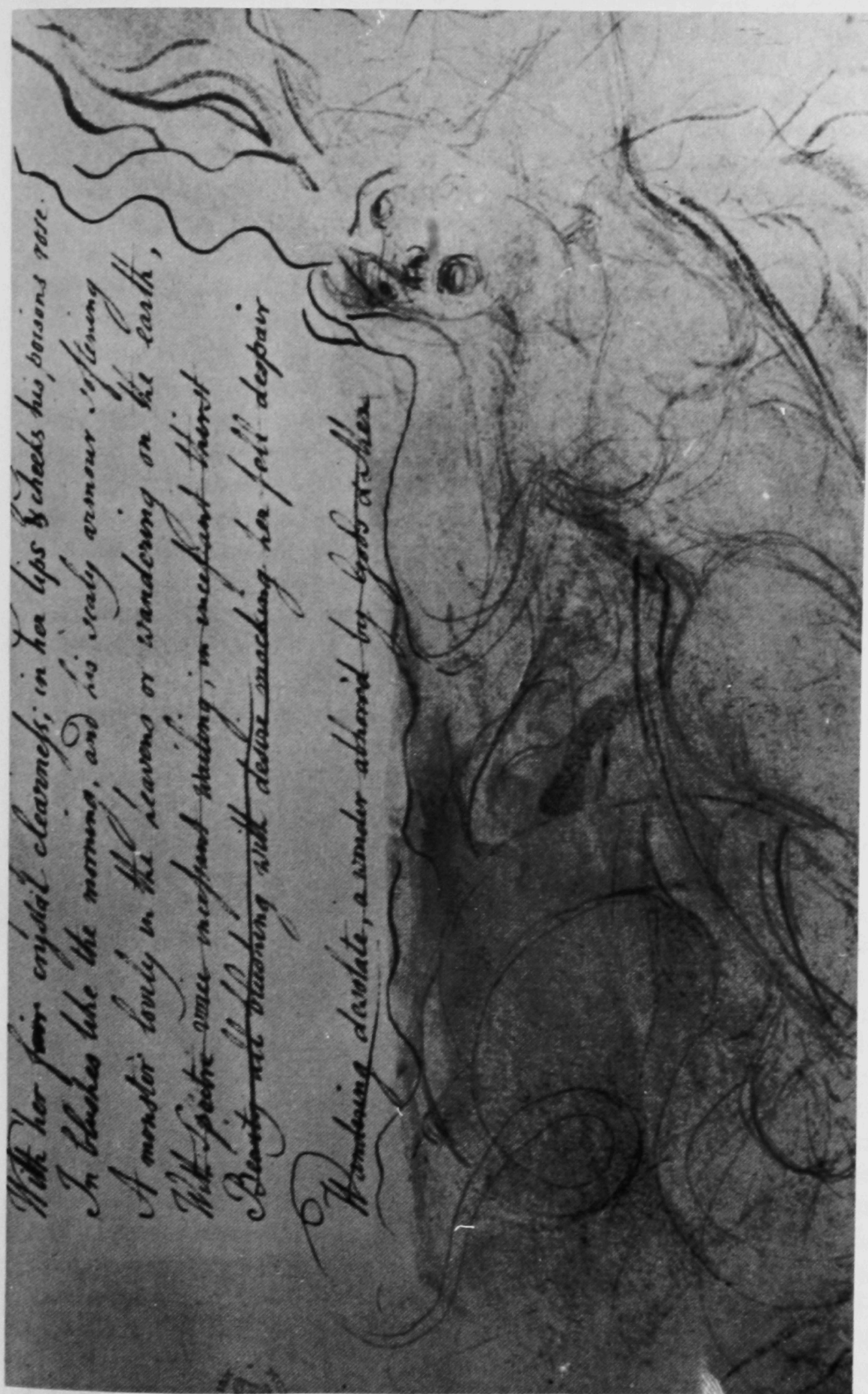


Figure 1

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of hermaphroditic unions between the fallen female and male as they struggle for dominance. In *Milton*: 37 and *Jerusalem*: 76 Blake presents this history as twenty-seven churches made up of three groups of nine, the hermaphrodites, the Female-Males, and the Male-Females.<sup>5</sup> Blake presents all of the possible forms that sexual separation can take, and then states that the only escape from history as a panorama of sexual conflict and religious perversion lies in transforming the sexual altogether.

Besides informing his vision of history, the hermaphrodite in Blake's poetry serves a crucial function at the conclusion of each of the epics. Before salvation can occur the central figures consistently confront the horrible figure of the hermaphrodite. In *The Four Zoas*: VIII the hermaphroditic form appears as haunting and demonic every time the characters move toward redemption. First it is Urizen who beholds the emblem of his life as a fallen, separate self: "a Shadowy hermaphrodite black & opake/ . . . unformd & vast/ Hermaphroditic . . . hiding the Male/ Within as in a Tabernacle Abominable Deadly" (E, 359; K, 343). The voices from Eternity repeat the message of salvation, that humanity must "put off the dark Satanic body" in order to regain the spiritual and imaginative (E, 369; K, 346). But the wars of redemption are not easily won, for the forces of the fallen world assume "a Vast Hermaphroditic form" which attacks Jerusalem's Gates. This horrible hermaphroditic form bursts to reveal its internal force, Satan, "dishumanizd, monstrous/ A male without a female counterpart . . . Yet hiding the shadowy female Vala as in an ark & Curtains" (E, 363; K, 347).

Satan's identity as a hermaphrodite is important for an understanding of *Milton*, for Milton's spectre is Satan as hermaphrodite. *Milton*: 14 presents Milton's realization that his masculine portion, his spectre, is a satanic selfhood that must be purged before he can reunite with Ololon, his true counterpart. But just as in *The Four Zoas* Urizen had to face the ultimate fallen form before his movement to regeneration could begin, so does Milton confront his own "Shadow;/ A mournful form double; hermaphroditic: male & female/ In one wonderful body" (E, 108; K, 496). For Blake, then, the hermaphrodite is a sterile monstrosity not because it is asexual, but because it is multi-sexual; it yokes together by force two sexes in their fallen forms.

As it does in *The Four Zoas*, the hermaphrodite appears near the conclusion of *Jerusalem* as the embodiment of the final and most fallen of earthly forms. As Los and Enitharmon rage during their struggle for dominance over each other, "A terrible indefinite Hermaphroditic form" appears with "A Wine-press of Love & Wrath double Hermaphroditic" (J: 89; E, 245; K, 734). The figure appears at this moment as an accusation and a reminder of what divided sexuality has produced throughout history. These hermaphroditic figures are the return of the Satan-Tirzah figure and the Satan-Rahab figure, the curses of man's history—war, Nature, and institutionalized religion. They appear at this moment to emphasize humanity's historic enslavement to their power. They are "Religion hid in War, a Dragon red & hidden Harlot/ Each within other, but without a Mighty-one/ Of dreadful power" (E, 246; K, 735).

*Jerusalem*: 90, however, presents Blake's most explicit statement on the nature of the sexes and the necessity for androgynous reintegration. As Los

explains,

When the Individual appropriates Universality  
He divides into Male & Female: & when the  
Male and Female,  
Appropriate Individuality, they become an  
Eternal Death. (E, 248; K, 737)

When Los finally defeats his Spectre and awaits his reunion with Enitharmon, he assures her that neither of them is being annihilated in their eternal, psychic forms, only in their fallen manifestations: " 'Sexes must vanish & cease/ To be, when Albion arises from his dread repose' " (*J*: 92; E, 250; K, 739). That is, he perverted forms that sexual bodies take in the fallen world must be transformed to androgynous "bodies" based on asexual consciousness.

The hermaphrodite, then, symbolizes the attempts made by the anti-christ figures of Satan, Rahab, and Tirzah to form a substitute androgyne. This parody of the spiritual ideal glories in the duality of the sexes and as such it exemplifies the horrors of cruelty and jealousy that are indigenous to the separate and exclusively male and female psyches.

In opposition to the hermaphroditic Satan, Blake endorsed the ancient belief in the androgynous ideal, represented in his poetry by Jesus, the second Adam who has the power to reinstitute the androgynous harmony of the original creation. In *Love's Body* Norman O. Brown observes,

the resurrection is the resurrection of the body; but not the separate body of the individual, but the body of mankind as one body. The fall of man is the fall into the division of the human race, the dismemberment of the first man, Adam; and the resurrection or rebirth through the second man, Christ, is to reconstitute the lost unity. . . . The unification of mankind into one is also the unification of humanity and divinity; St. Gregory of Nyssa says, 'Christ, by whome all mankind was united into divinity.' Unification is deification.<sup>6</sup>

The androgynous ideal in Blake's poetry is an apocalyptic union within the self that redeems the internal and external worlds. The model for Blake was Jesus, who was aware as no other human being has been of his own divinity and inner integration. Blake's art aims ultimately to depict the recovery of Paradise within, a state in which humanity is perfectly integrated with God, that is, integrated within itself.

The androgynous reunion of Albion and Jerusalem forms the focus of Blake's final epic, *Jerusalem*. Because of its subject matter, then, *Jerusalem* is a psychomachia, for the quest that Albion and Jerusalem undertake is internal. They are not searching for anything outside the self; rather, they are seeking their own reintegration. As Blake believed that all reality is ultimately mental, so are the landscapes in his poems eerily dream-like because they are internal. All activity in the poems take place as warfare within the fallen Albion, Blake's archetypal "man" who in "his" unfallen condition integrates the four Eternal principles.

Bloom admits that Albion does "faintly resemble the *Adam Kadmon* or Divine Man of Jewish Cabbalist tradition," but he denies Blake's debt to the tradition of androgynist speculation, stating that "Albion is not a speculative product of the Platonizing imagination."<sup>7</sup> It seems unlikely, however, that



Blake's Albion stands apart from two thousand years of speculation about a primal being who contains all reality within itself. Even Bloom echoes the many descriptions of the androgyne when he describes Albion as "a great Adam, a man who contains all of reality himself, and who is therefore human *and* divine, male *and* female, and a fourfold balance of the faculties of intellect, imagination, emotion and instinct."<sup>8</sup>

Significantly, Albion first appears in Blake's writings as a female. In the early fragment, "Prologue to King John," Albion is the spirit of England, an abused harlot, whose "sins are crimson dy'd." In a battle Tyranny stains "fair Albion's breast with her own children's gore," but in a final scene peace is restored and the poet hopes, "O yet may Albion smile again, and stretch her peaceful arms, and raise her golden head, exultingly" (E, 430-31; K, 34).

Blake's Albion differs from the *Adam Kadmon* of the Cabbalists precisely because of this feminine aspect. Blake's illustration of the Cosmic Man in *Jerusalem*: 25 (see Figure 2) bears a striking resemblance to the cosmic androgynes depicted in theosophical manuscripts of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (see Figures 3 and 4).<sup>9</sup> But Blake presents his cosmic man as the victim of the female figures who torture him by pulling out his entrails. Immediately following this plate Blake addresses the Jews in a mocking, even chiding tone about their tradition of a cosmic male. Blake attempts to correct this male-centered image by emphasizing the equality of Jerusalem as the counterpart of Albion. He writes, "You have a tradition, that Man anciently containd in his mighty limbs all things in Heaven & Earth." But he asserts that Jerusalem is "the Emanation of the Great Albion! Can it be? Is it a Truth that the Learned have explored? It is True, and cannot be controverted" (J: 27; E, 169-70; K, 649). Blake's depiction of Albion-Jerusalem as the androgynous cosmic being is an attempt to correct the "learned" Cabbalistic traditions that have presented the original being as a supreme male with no female counterpart. For Blake this cosmic male can only be a giant spectre who will be perpetually tortured by the female because he has rejected her and made her alien to himself.

Jerusalem is, then, the focus and redemptive power in this final version of the fall and salvation. In *The Four Zoas* Tharmas' opening lament implies that Jerusalem is the universal feminine and that all other female characters are ultimately derived from her. Tharmas asks Enion why she has taken "sweet Jerusalem from my inmost Soul" (FZ: 4; E, 297; K, 265). Jerusalem is the unfallen feminine within every being, who must be reconciled with each of the Zoas before she can reunite with Albion. Jerusalem, then, is not an appendage of Albion; she is the exact feminine equivalent who is fallen and incomplete when separated from Albion. She also needs to experience the return to her original androgynous union with Albion in order to redeem all her fallen manifestations. Humanity is reintegrated by Jerusalem, the "Emanative portion:/ Who is Jerusalem in every individual" (J: 39 [44]; E, 185; K, 675).

Albion learns the lessons of salvation, then, through understanding Jerusalem's true identity. As the poem opens Albion reveals his mistaken beliefs: "'We are not One: we are Many,'" while he also believes that "'Jerusalem is not! her daughters are indefinite:/ By demonstration, man



alone can live, and not by faith" (J: 4, E, 145; K, 622). Albion is fallen because he no longer can recognize his own divinity; he worships instead a "God in the dreary Void . . . wide separated from the Human Soul." Because of these delusions he sinks into "this dark Ulro & voidness" (J: 23; E, 167; K, 646). Albion's errors are those of fallen man who embraces the false beliefs of



Figure 2

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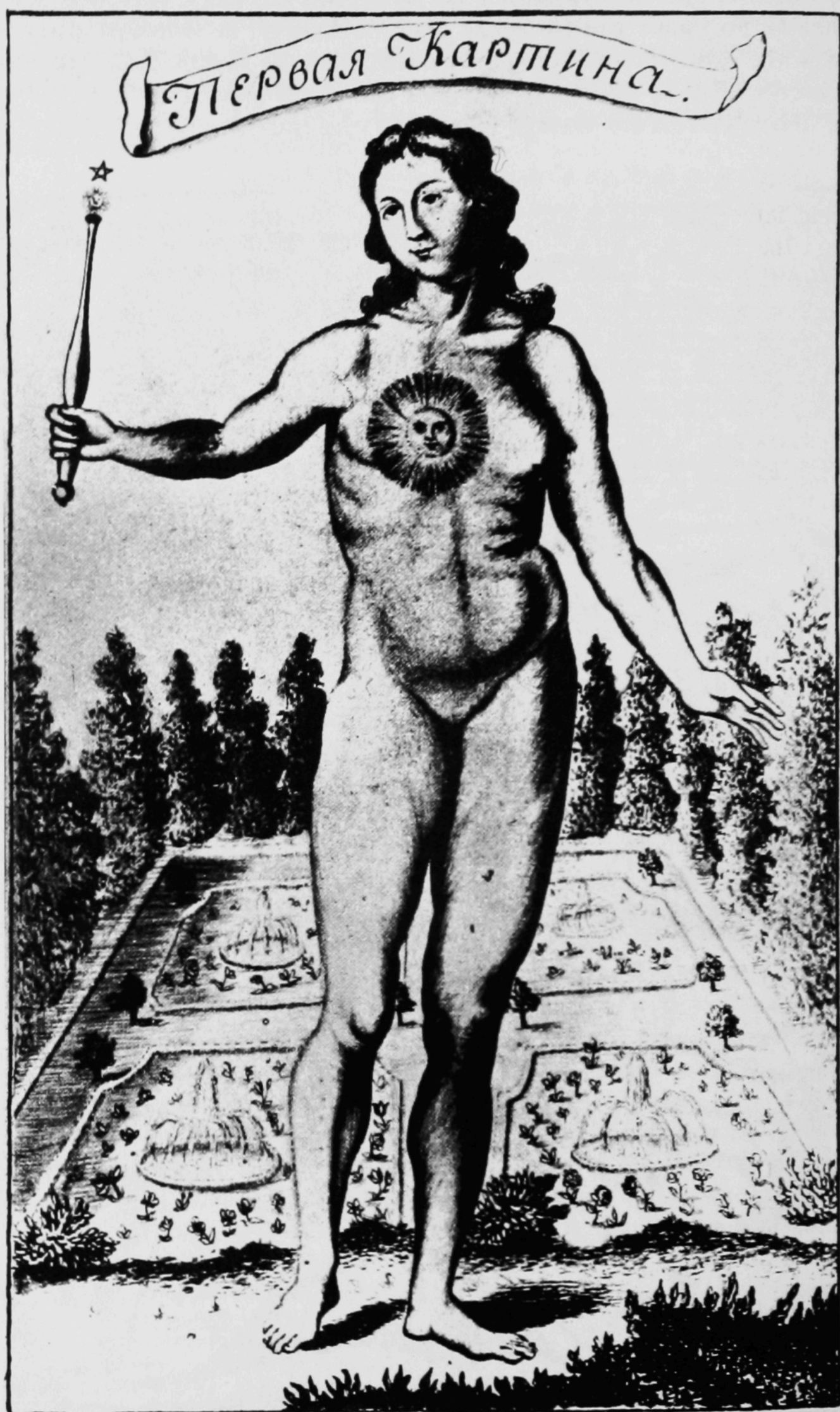


Figure 3



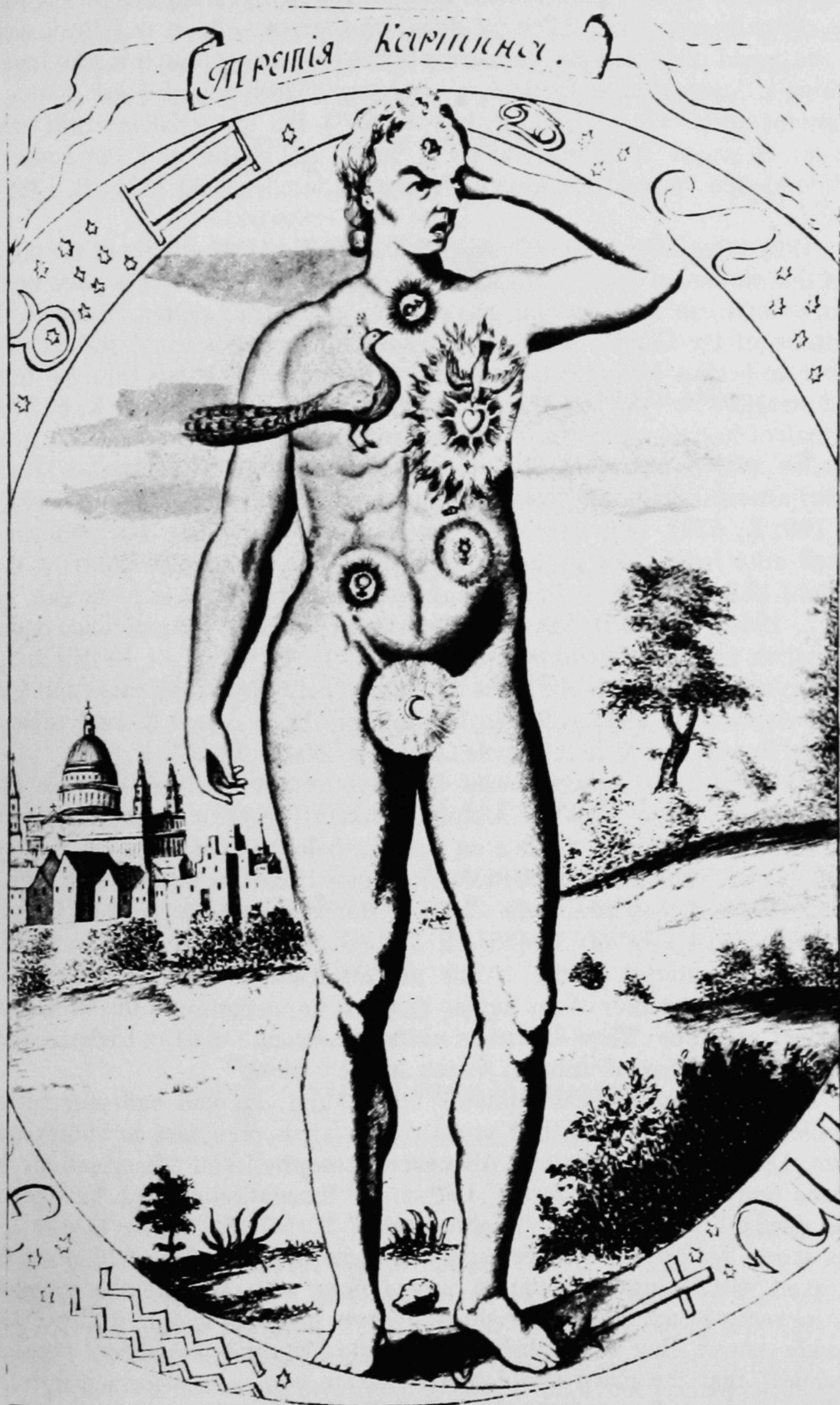


Figure 4  
Reintegration



rational individualism. The fallen faculty of reason, with its belief in the individual as self-sufficient, denies the necessity for androgyny. Vala is, then, the embodiment of the fallen faculties, who tempts Albion to a living death in the world of generation. Jerusalem is the true saving principle who honors Albion's "own Minute Particulars" because "They are of Faith & not of Demonstration" (*J*: 45 [31]; *E*, 193; *K*, 657). But in the fallen world Vala's power is much stronger, for it is based on reason and the sense of selfhood—the "Sexual Reasoning Hermaphroditic" (*J*: 20 [33]; *E*, 173; *K*, 659).

Only after Albion "dies," which occurs in the exact middle of the poem, can the movement toward salvation take place. Only after he has given up his own efforts can reunification occur. From the earth's center, "Beneath the bottoms of the Graves" where "Contrarieties are equally true," the action of salvation begins—Maternal Love awakes Jerusalem, who bursts from her tomb and struggles to "put off the Human form" (*J*: 48; *E*, 194-95; *K*, 677-78). Jerusalem has to reject the "Human form" because, in Erin's words, it has become a "Polypus of Death" ruled over by the "One Great Satan . . . the most powerful Selfhood," who has murdered the "Divine Humanity" (*J*: 49; *E*, 196; *K*, 679). Erin claims that salvation is possible only when humanity "shall arise from Self/ By Self Annihilation into Jerusalems Courts & into Shiloh/ Shiloh the Masculine Emanation among the Flowers of Beulah" (*J*: 49; *E*, 196-97; *K*, 680). Salvation is possible only when the masculine rejoins Jerusalem and the feminine rejoins Shiloh. In the world of Beulah sexual distinctions remain, but the sexes function in harmony, forgiveness, and love. Blake depicts this ideal as "Jerusalem in every Man/ A tent & Tabernacle of Mutual Forgiveness Male & Female Clothings" (*J*: 54; *E*, 201; *K*, 684).

Although it is Jerusalem who ultimately redeems Albion, it is Los who functions as instructor. When Albion mistakenly prays to a deity external to himself, Los condemns "Calling on God for help; and not ourselves in whom God dwells." Los also repudiates the "bloated General Forms" that reason creates because they insult "the Divine—/ Humanity, who is the Only General and Universal Form" (*J*: 38 [43]; *E*, 182-83; *K*, 672). Los is the archetypal artist, representative of the artistic process itself. He symbolizes creative activity and the power of the human imagination to transcend the limitations of space and time. When Los and Enitharmon reunite to form Urthona, they present a model for salvation to Albion and Jerusalem.

Since Los symbolizes Albion's imagination, his fall and redemption parallel Albion's. In this final poem, Los's fall is presented in abbreviated form. During a war between "Abstract Philosophy" and "Imagination, the Divine Body of the Lord Jesus," Urthona's "Emanation divided, his Spectre also divided" leaving Los a "frighted wolf" (*J*: 5-7; *E*, 146-48; *K*, 624-25). Los scorns his Spectre's taunts and yearns for the day when Albion will be reunited with Jerusalem and the united Zoas will compose the complete androgynous being: "tenfold bright rising from his tomb in immortality." Los already knows that it is through love and "mutual forgiveness between Enemies" that the fallen world of Generation will be transformed into the unfallen realm of Regeneration (*J*: 7; *E*, 149; *K*, 626).

Los knows that Albion is fallen because Los's "Emanation is divided

from him" and continues to divide. Los mourns, "What shall I do! or how exist, divided from Enitharmon?" (*J*: 12; *E*, 153; *K*, 631). This state of divisive warfare between the sexes is at the root of the fallen state in Blake's poetic world. After Los reunites with Enitharmon, he is able to understand the divisions that precipitated the fallen state of hermaphroditic sexuality:

The Feminine separates from the Masculine &  
 both from Man,  
 Ceasing to be His Emanations, Life to  
 Themselves assuming!  
 . . . that no more the Masculine mingles  
 With the Feminine. but the Sublime is shut  
 out from the Pathos  
 In howling torment, to build stone walls  
 of separation compelling  
 The Pathos, to weave curtains of hiding  
 secrecy from the torment. (*J*: 90; *E*, 247; *K*, 736)

When Los reunites with Enitharmon and his Spectre, "the Divine Vision" appears with him and he prays to Jesus in a passage that repeats Blake's belief in the androgynous ideal:

Humanity knows not of sex: wherefore are  
 Sexes in Beulah?  
 In Beulah the Female lets down her beautiful  
 Tabernacle;  
 Which the Male enters magnificent between  
 her Cherubim:  
 And becomes One with her mingling condensing  
 in Self-love  
 The Rocky Law of Condemnation & double  
 Generation & Death (*J*: 44 [30]; *E*, 191; *K*, 656)

Jerusalem echoes this statement when she accuses Vala of bringins only death to the world through her separate sexual identity. The hermaphroditic Vala endorses a divided male and female, "hardening against the heavens/ To devour the Human." Jerusalem retorts,

'O Vala! Humanity is far above  
 Sexual organization; & the Visions of the  
 Night of Beulah  
 Where Sexes wander in dreams of bliss among  
 the Emanations  
 Where the Masculine & Feminine are nursd  
 into Youth & Maiden.' (*J*: 79; *E*, 233; *K*, 721)

Los repeats this belief when he proclaims, "Sexes must vanish & cease/ To be, when Albion arises from his dread repose" (*J*: 92; *E*, 250; *K*, 739). But Albion cannot awaken until Enitharmon and Brittania, voices of the Female Will, renounce their dominion. Enitharmon is terrified of losing her separate existence, for she has forgotten her original identity as Urthona. All of the Zoas must learn the lesson presented by Jesus, the divine-human androgyne who appears in "the likeness & similitude of Los" to instruct Albion in love and forgiveness:



And if God dieth not for Man & giveth not himself  
 Eternally for Man Man could not exist for Man  
     is Love:  
 As God is Love: every kindness to another is a  
     little Death  
 In the Divine Image nor can Man exist but by  
     Brotherhood. (*J*: 96; *E*, 253; *K*, 743)

Only when Albion throws himself into the furnaces of affliction to save his brother can the Zoas reunite in harmony and again reside in his being. Ultimately, however, it is Jerusalem who must awaken and assume her proper station if the composite androgynous being is to participate in the continual flux between Eden and Beulah. By accepting and redeeming Beulah, the world of generation, Blake's erotic apocalypse leads to the assumption of a new "body"—a spiritual, androgynous psyche in imitation of the resurrected Jesus. The androgynous ideal in Blake's poetry corresponds to the Christian belief that if the Kingdom of God can be found on earth, it must be found within.

In this final epic and throughout his life, Blake believed, as he declared in "All Religions are One," that "the Poetic Genius is the true Man. and the . . . body or outward form of Man is derived from the Poetic Genius" (*E*, 2; *K*, 98). The Poetic Genius, humanity's divine imaginative power, is "the source" of the "true Man." These statements support the view that androgyny as an ideal in Blake's poetry is an imaginative construct and a spiritual state that symbolizes the mind's reintegration. The androgyne is an image based on sexual identities and polarities, yet it repudiates both and becomes the most paradoxical state the human mind can imagine. The androgyne is an oxymoron, a concept that combines contradictions and attempts to grasp the ideal as imaginative reality. For, as Blake pointed out in his Annotations to Berkeley's *Siris*, every object's "Reality is its Imaginative Form" (*E*, 653; *K*, 213). "Reality" is not what is perceived by the fallen senses, but what can be imagined. If humanity can imagine itself as androgynously and harmoniously unified, then Blake posits that imaginative vision as humanity's ultimate form.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> *Jerusalem*: 30 [34] in *The Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, ed. David V. Erdman with commentary by Harold Bloom (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1965), p. 174; *Blake: Complete Writings*, ed. Geoffrey Keynes (1957; rpt. London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1971), p. 660. All quotations will be from the Erdman edition, although page numbers from both texts will be cited in parentheses in the text. Major works such as *The Four Zoas* and *Jerusalem* will be abbreviated as *FZ* and *J*. References will be to Nights in *FZ* and to plate numbers in *Milton* and *Jerusalem*.

<sup>2</sup> The ancient world's distinction between the hermaphrodite and the androgyne is discussed by Marie Delcourt, *Hermaphrodite*, trans. Jennifer Nicholson (London: Studio Books, 1961), p. 45: "Androgyny is at the two poles of sacred things. Pure concept, pure vision of the spirit, it appears adorned with the highest qualities. But once made real in a being of flesh and blood [the hermaphrodite], it is a monstrosity, and no more." This ancient distinction was current during the early nineteenth century,



particularly among certain writers in the German Romantic movement. Novalis and minor figures, prose commentators like Michael Hahn, Johann Jacob Wirz, and Carl Gustav Carus, revitalized interest in the mythology. The most prolific German writer on the subject, Franz von Baader (1765-1841), based his religious writings on the distinction. Jean Halley des Fontaines, *La Notion D'Androgynie* (Paris: Dépôt Général, Le Francois, 1938), p. 139, summarizes von Baader's position: "the Androgyne is conceived of as an opposite to the Hermaphrodite. The Androgyne is the harmonious fusion of the sexes, resulting in a certain asexuality, a synthesis which creates an entirely new being, and which does not merely juxtapose the two sexes 'in an enflamed opposition' as the hermaphrodite does."

<sup>3</sup> See Peter L. Thorslev, Jr., "Some Dangers of Dialectic Thinking, with Illustrations From Blake and His Critics," *Romantic and Victorian*, ed. W. Paul Elledge and Richard L. Hoffman (Madison, New Jersey: Fairleigh Dickinson Univ. Press, 1971), pp. 64-66, for a brief discussion of "the theme of the Angelic Androgyne versus the Hellish Hermaphrodite" as an example of the "Both-And Syndrome" in Blake's poetry. Although Thorslev recognizes that the two images are contradictory states, he claims that Blake never makes the distinction clear: "both terms denote quite simply the union of the two sexes in one body, and it is difficult to see precisely where the distinction lies. Blake nowhere specifically defines it, and there is no basis for it in etymology or myth." The present article disagrees with that statement, asserting that Blake's poetic vision depends on a clear distinction which he develops throughout his career, most fully in *Jerusalem*.

<sup>4</sup> There is some uncertainty as to Blake's attitude toward this physical description of the hermaphrodite. He revised the passage several times, which Erdman presents as FZ: 143 (pp. 742-43). Erdman concludes that Blake's final intention was to present the hermaphrodite as "half woman and half beast." Keynes gives the line as "half woman and half spectre." Bentley notes that "Serpent" and "desart" were both possible revisions for the male component (*Vala*, p. 9).

<sup>5</sup> See Milton O. Percival, *William Blake's Circle of Destiny* (1938; rpt. New York: Octagon, 1964), chapter 6, and Peter Fisher, *The Valley of Vision* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1961), chapter 2, for extended discussions of the twenty-seven hermaphroditic churches.

<sup>6</sup> Norman O. Brown, *Love's Body* (New York: Random House, 1966), p. 83.

<sup>7</sup> Harold Bloom, *Blake's Apocalypse* (1963; rpt. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 1970), pp. 189-90.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 190.

<sup>9</sup> The source for these illustrations is Albert Béguin, "L'Androgyne," *Minotaure*, 11 (October, 1938), pp. 2, 13. He identifies them only as "from a Russian Theosophical manuscript." A search through the manuscripts of the period revealed that theosophy and Freemasonry reached Russia after 1750 and were politically repressed during the 1820's. The illustrations can be placed during that seventy year period, also roughly the period in which Blake was writing.

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