

SYMBOLIC HISTORY

Through Sight and Sound

28. Blake: Fire-Fugue of Delight

- 1) *Blake, c. 1790 (inscribed 1780), "Glad Day" engraving, British Museum, London*

Blake's Albion as rebel Orc (dated 1780, but engraved ten years later) announces a threefold prophecy:

One: Innocence: In the "Glad Day" of free desire "everything that lives is holy": (America 6)

Let the slave grinding at the mill run out into the field:
Let him look up into the heavens & laugh in the bright air;
...his chains are loose, his dungeon doors are open...
For Empire is no more, and now the Lion & Wolf shall cease.

- 2) *Blake, 1794 (1818), Urizen, pl. 17, The Fall, Library of Congress (Rosenwald)*

Two: Experience: In the material world that proclamation of hope enters an Orc-cycle, an eternal Fall, as from Lucifer to Satan: "serpent form'd... Lover of wild rebellion, and transgressor of God's Law" (America 7). Where "Rintrah roars and shakes his fires," Freedom, Equality and Brotherhood can only shade into terror: "The Winepress of Los is call'd War on Earth."

- 3) *Blake, 1804-20, Jerusalem, pl. 76, Albion Worshipping Christ, Mellon*

Three: Regeneration: In this plate from Blake's last prophetic book, Jerusalem, the Orc-Albion of his rebel youth turns the cruciform joy toward Christ self-sacrificed on the tree of prohibition.

These are not (and that is the crux of Blake's prophecy) Hegelian sequences of time, but simultaneous states of every clarified vision.

For 2nd 2)Detail of The Fall

Thus the arm-spread gesture is preserved through the snake-wrapped fall into our cramped Ulro of imbruted sense and mind's repression — a complicity of Blake-Orc, Satan and Christ — "Luvah, King of Love, thou art the King of Rage and Death" (Four Zoas, v, 42); and "The Lamb of God clothed in Luvah's Robes" (Four Zoas viii, 62) —

For 2nd 1) Glad Day, detail, worm, moth, etc.; video then shows the whole

2nd 1a) Leonardo da Vinci, c. 1492, Canon of Proportions, Academy of Fine Arts, Venice

2nd 1b) Glad Day, center detail; + V detail of head

already shown in the "Glad Day," under which Blake would write (after 1800): "Albion arose from where he labour'd at the Mill with slaves. Giving himself for the Nations he danced the dance of Eternal Death."

In his break with the Venetian oil shadowing of his own time — "Go send your Children to the Slobbering School" — Blake claimed the clarity and defining line of Renaissance, Michelangelo and Raphael, the canons of intellectual form: "A tear is an intellectual thing." Here he turns the proportions of anatomy as formulated by Vitruvius and drawn by Leonardo and Dürer, into a leap of freedom.

Music: Joseph Haydn, 1772, 4th movement (middle), F Minor Quartet, Op.20, #5, Qualiton SLFX 1133a

Similarly in the Revolutionary fugue, baroque discipline heightens the defiance of release.

First Haydn's Opus 20 makes the old order spirit's battleground.

(fade Haydn)

3rd 2) Again, detail of The Fall; first, video close detail

Sixteen years later, Mozart took off in his fiercest fugue, the C Minor of 1788:

Music: Mozart, 1788, close, fugue of Adagio and Fugue K. 546, G DB 3391 (end)

2nd 3) *Again, Albion Worshipping Christ, detail of Christ; first, video detail of Albion*

Beethoven climaxed the sequence in the *Grosse Fuge* of 1825.

Music: Beethoven, 1825, from the *Grosse Fuge*, Col. M5L-277 (c. 1/3 through)

- 4) *Blake, 1823-4, Job, (watercolor) pl. 14, upper detail, Angels as "The Morning Stars," New Zealand*
- 5) *Same, pl. 15, above, God and Job, below, Behemoth and Leviathan, New Zealand (video: lower detail only)*

(fade *Grosse Fuge*)

That fugal energy presupposes the inwrought joy of conflict.

a2nd 4) *Again, Job, pl. 14, central and lower sections: God, with Job group beneath*

2nd 4) *Same, whole; + V closer detail of angel-stars*

2nd 4a) *Blake, 1825, Same, lower section, from the Engraved Design, Leviathan beneath, British Museum, London*

At the height of the illustrations for *Job*, the outcast of Uz, with whom Blake increasingly identified —

that I cannot live without doing my duty to lay up treasures in heaven... I have long made up my mind, & why this should be made an objection to Me, while Drunkenness, Lewdness, Gluttony & even Idleness itself, does not hurt other men, let Satan himself Explain —

Job sees his cloud-cave of misery and false friends, embraced in the cruciform likeness of his Divine Imagination, with sun-reason and passion-moon, and above, the eternal singing of the morning stars. Such the vision of which Blake wrote to Butts, the patron who, as Palmer would testify, "for years stood between the geatest designer in England and the workhouse":

Till the Jewels of Light,

Heavenly Men beaming bright,
 Appear'd as One Man.
 Who complacent began
 My limbs to infold
 In his beams of bright gold...

In the engraved plate, Leviathan coils in the margin below;

2nd 5) Again, Job, (watercolor) pl. 15, whole, God shows Job Behemoth, and Leviathan

while the next design shifts the threefold scheme downward. Job's God, above, points through this cloud-hollow, to the depths of our subconscious Egypt, the time-and-space sea of war and repression: "Behold now Behemoth" (and Leviathan) "which I made with thee."

6) Blake, 1808, Last Judgment, watercolor, Petworth House, Sussex (video: a sequence of details only: cf. V6a, b, and c)

For Blake Judgment is the ecstasy which subsumes all that. It is not, as with the orthodox (even Michelangelo), a post-temporal reward or punishment.

whenever any Individual Rejects Error and Embraces Truth a Last
 Judgment passes upon that Individual...

His whole rejection of materialism and jealous condemnation, of "Bad Art and Science" and the emergence of energy as Eternal Delight, swirls, as within a symbolic skull, around the forgiveness of the redeemed Humanity:

Mental things alone are Real... Error, or Creation, will be Burned up &
 then & not till then Truth or Eternity will appear. It is Burnt up the
 Moment men cease to behold it...

Those thrown down on Christ's left are not vicious persons, "but States Signified by those Names" — stations, through which individuals pass.

7) Last Judgment (1808) superimposed on life-mask of Blake (by J. S. Deville, 1823); with video details of forehead and features)

7a) Life-Mask, 1823, (J. S. Deville), profile, National Portrait Gallery, London

- V76) *Blake, c. 1805, watercolor, God Writing Upon the Tables of the Covenant, National Gallery, Edinburgh*
- V7c) *Again, Deville Life-Mask, full face*
- 7d) *Blake, Double: [A] Songs of Innocence, 1789, pl. 25; and [B] Songs of Experience, 1794, pl. 39; both (Rosenwald) copy of 1825-26, Library of Congress, Washington D.C.; + V details*

The whirling of that Judgment within that deep-browed head set Blake further from the life (for him the death) of his time than any other creator has ever been.

I am laid by in a corner as if I did not Exist... Profit never ventures upon my Threshold, tho' every other man's doorstone is worn down into the very Earth by the footsteps of the fiends of commerce.

There elation —

I have Conquer'd, and shall Go on Conquering. Nothing can withstand the fury of my Course among the Stars of God & in the Abysses of the Accuser —

and loss —

Tuesday, Janry. 20, 1807, between Two & Seven in the Evening —
Despair —

with cheerful work — in Palmer's words "practically sane, steady, frugal and industrious"; and in Blake's letters:

I go on Merrily with my Greek & Latin... am now learning my Hebrew... I read Greek as fluently as an Oxford scholar... I live by Miracle. I am Painting small Pictures from the Bible... The Ruins of Time builds Mansions in Eternity —

sustained those "enjoyments of Genius" which, in The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, look "like torment and insanity." So Leigh Hunt of the 1809 Exhibition:

William Blake, an unfortunate lunatic, whose personal inoffensiveness secures him from confinement... fancies himself a great master, and has painted a few wretched pictures... unintelligible allegory... very badly drawn... of which he has published a Catalogue... the wild effusions of a distempered brain...

So Wordsworth (shown the Songs of Innocence and of Experience thirty-five years after their appearance — Blake still producing in always more divine obscurity):

There is no doubt this poor man was mad, but there is something in the madness of this man which interests me more than the sanity of Lord Byron and Walter Scott!

- a8) *Blake, 1804-18, Jerusalem (Rinder copy), pl. 76, Christ on the Cross, detail (video: closer detail only)*
- 8) *Bernini, 1669, Terra-Cotta model, Equestrian Louis XIV, Gallery Borghese, Rome; + V details*

The price, in that Augustan extension of Baroque and Enlightenment, of Blake's personal reshaping of radical Christianity.

Music: Händel, 1742, Messiah, Overture, allegro (close), Philips C 71 AX 300 (side 1)

Since what had come to dominance in Christendom was the secular antithesis: the rational, realist and assertive pomp of Bernini's Louis XIV: in thought "this Newtonian Phantasm/ This Voltaire & Rousseau: this Hume & Gibbon & Bolingbroke/ This Natural Religion," "Covering Cherubs... of the... Tabernacle of Bacon, Newton & Locke." We cannot know if Blake, who sang his lyrics to his own tunes, would have specified also the music which Europe was vaulting to the keystone of Händel's Messiah, though he implies as much: "Music as it exists in old tunes or melodies... is Inspiration"; "Demonstration, Similitude & Harmony are Objects of Reasoning..."

(fading the Overture)

- 9) *John Closterman, c. 1711, Duke of Marlborough, Royal Hospital, Chelsea (video detail only, then whole after Blenheim Palace)*
- 9a) *Sir John Vanbrugh, 1705-22, Blenheim Palace, North Court over Ha-ha (CGB '84)*

A grandeur the great Duke of Marlborough turned on its origins in the Battle of Blenheim — as, in the monstrous palace so named, he outflanked the vaunts of Louis.

(having skipped to the close of the Overture)

- 10) *David, 1800, Napoleon on Horseback, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna; + V detail*

Music: Cherubini, 1815, Symphony in D (close), RCA-LSC 3048

In the hundred year shift from Baroque through Neo-classic to Revolutionary, what David's mounted Napoleon charges with romantic impulse is the old assertion — still for Blake, Urizen's conquest of the space-plotted material earth: "Let each choose one habitation/...One curse, one weight, one measure/ One King, one God, one Law." In Cherubini, whom Napoleon asked why his music was so Germanic, complex, and noisy, the crescendo of Haydn and Mozart swells toward Beethoven.

(end Cherubini)

Yet the very fugues we earlier compared with Blake coil in that plot we have called his antithesis. As he himself wrote: "I must invent a system or be enslaved by another man's".

How roundly our Western equestrians converge in formulable consciousness,

- 11) *South Indian Hindu, late 16th cent., Mounted Warrior, Horse Court, Spirangam*
- 11a) *Blake, 1793 (1825 copy), Marriage of Heaven and Hell, pl. 27, detail of leaping horses, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge*

a contrast will reveal: this mounted warrior from South India about fifty years before the Bernini Louis XIV. Its huge energies are mythopoetic. Of course it exists in space and time, but not as determined there. Its battle is of another realm than Marlborough's at Blenheim or Napoleon's crossing the Alps. With Blake, Western temporality seeks such a realm.

Music: Beethoven, 1807-8, 3rd Rasumovsky Quartet, last movement, fugue, Col. ML 5587

- 12) *Blake, 1809, The Spiritual Form of Nelson Guiding Leviathan, Tate Gallery, London (here, video details only)*
- V12a) *Blake, 1805(?), The Spiritual Form of Pitt Guiding Behemoth, Tate Gallery, London (video then returns to Nelson Guiding Leviathan, detail and whole)*

Though leaping eternal horses illuminate his pages, it is hard to think Blake could have mounted monumental Pegasus — even had he been commissioned, as he proposed,

to fresco the halls of England (Beethoven commissioned by Count Rasumovsky). **(fade Quartet)** Blake's most public designs were this Nelson guiding Leviathan and Pitt guiding Behemoth, inspired, the Descriptive Catalogue tells us, by Asiatic and Biblical originals seen in vision — source of all Greece and Rome owed to the Muse of Memory. Here, as in "those wonderful originals", "more is meant than meets the eye." Nelson is Hero in the ambivalent mode of Urizen, sterile delimiter: "Father of Jealousy, be thou accursed from the earth." He stands on the serpent of rational and material power, which Job would see in the abyss; it wreathes and swallows the nations, reined by the haloed British angel of Establishment: (Europe 10)

Then was the serpent temple form'd, image of infinite
 Shut up in finite revolutions, and man became an Angel,
 Heaven a mighty circle turning; God a tyrant crown'd.

- a13) *Blake, 1827, Dante Engravings, Whirlwind of Lovers, detail, lower left, Brit. Mus., London; with video details (cf. Va13 and views of the whole)*
- 613) *Blake, 1793, Marriage of Heaven and Hell, pl. 20, Snake-Leviathan, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge*
- 13) *Again, Whirlwind of Lovers, whole (video adds details of Paolo and Francesca, Dante and Virgil, cf. V13a)*
- 136) *Same, detail of the englobed kiss*

The French have submitted to paradox only in their broken, Pascalian phase. English empiricists and Newtonians eschew it, Berkeley as rationally as any: "Impossible even for an infinite mind to reconcile contradictions." But the Italo-Germans, from Bruno through Leibniz to Schelling, burn in the flame of mating opposites. Where they systematize paradox, Blake intuitively rides it: "Without Contraries is no progression". In his moony Beulah "Contrarieties are equally true" — far more in "the great Wars of Eternity, in fury of Poetic Inspiration." At the Judgment close of Jerusalem, with the eternal forms of nature and life (even Bacon, Newton, Locke, fourfold clarified) awaking to immortality, Blake sees "the all wondrous Serpent clothed in gems & rich array Humanize."

So in the Dante engraving of Paolo and Francesca (at the end of Blake's life), it is as the coiled suppressed snake of The Marriage of Heaven and Hell ("advancing toward us with all the fury of a spiritual existence") that the whirlwind sucks up lovers from stormy Ulro, a fugal flame of bondage tilted skyward like a vine.

Music: Beethoven, 1807-8. 3rd Rasumovsky Quartet, last movement, close, Col. ML 5587

While Dante swoons under the radiant kiss to the ground of repressive thorns.

- 14) *Blake, 1793 (1825 copy), Marriage of Heaven and Hell, pl. 3, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge (now two slides, A: detail above, and B: detail below; to which the video adds the whole, V14, and closer details) (end Beethoven)*

Blake was 33 when he began The Marriage of Heaven and Hell: "As a new heaven is begun, and it is now thirty-three years since its advent: the Eternal Hell revives," taking his own birth for the fulfillment of a Swedenborgian prophecy — Blake stretched at the top of the page in the delight of creative fire; and below: "Attraction and Repulsion, Reason and Energy, Love and Hate, are necessary to human existence." The page epitomizes Blake, both accepting and at war with the poised antinomies, Innocence and Experience, the kiss of joy, the birth in pain.

Music: Again, Mozart, 1788, Fugue from the Adagio and Fugue in C Minor, opening, G DB 3391

15) *Blake, 1794 (copy of 1818), Urizen, pl. 24, The Four Elements, Rosenwald, Library of Congress, Washington D.C.; first, video details*

From his earliest years Blake was compelled to frame existence in recurrent wheels of two, three and four; and yet to give himself in impassioned identification to a freedom that defies them. Of these elements: Water, Earth, Air, Fire, prototypes of his later Life-powers the Zoas, it is Blake's destiny to be Fire, yet linked with the others in vital strife — (as in Mozart's C Minor Fugue) a frenzy almost intolerable to Hegelian programmers. Such in Urizen is the petrification of Body through seven ages of dismal woe:

A roof, shaggy, wild inclos'd
In an orb his fountain of thought;

or in "The Mental Traveller" the reciprocating historical gyres, from burning Babe and Woman Old, through freezing Age and Female Babe, back to frowning Babe and Woman Old:

She nails him down upon the Rock
And all is done as I have told.

(fade Mozart Fugue)

- 16) *Blake, 1824-27, Dante Drawings, #4, Hell Gate, Tate Gallery, London; + V detail*

This is the material world created in one sense by demonic Elohim, but more deeply by Los and Jesus as an act of Mercy, to stay the fall toward Eternal Death, weaving for the fallen a protective garment of generation. It is the hell to which Dante in Luvah's red robe must be led by Virgil in the blue of Los. Its four continents appear through flame, and under the sea of Time and Space the lost Atlantis of our unity, "infinite mountains of light now barr'd out by the atlantic sea" (Marriage of Heaven and Hell, 25:8), "when the five senses whelm'd in deluge o'er the earth-born man." (Europe 10:10)

- 17) *Same, Dante Drawings, #60, Primeval Giants*
 V17a) *Blake, 1793 (1799 copy), America, plate 14, detail, Snake from woman's loins, Mellon*
 17b) *Same, America, plate 17, detail, Blake as Los-Orc, Mellon*
 17c) *Blake, 1793 (1825 copy), The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, plate 16, Ugolino and his Sons, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge*

Dante's Giants deep in hell become for Blake those five earth-sunk senses, "giant beauty and perfection fallen into dust" (Jerusalem 19:8), when man ...closed himself up, till he sees all things thro' narrow chinks of his cavern" (Marriage of Heaven and Hell 14). Only touch (hardly differentiated here) opening through the entire body into the ecstasy of sex ("The lust of the goat is the bounty of God"), yet smitten, like Job, with boils (Tiriell's fifth daughter, left alive, but with her hair turned to snakes) — only touch affords a model for cleansing the rest:

the whole creation will be consumed and appear infinite and holy
 whereas it now appears finite & corrupt.

This will come to pass by an improvement of sensual enjoyment.
 (Marriage of Heaven and Hell 14)

Yet the giants brood, whelmed in hell, like pot-bellied Hume, Concerning Human Understanding: "there appears not, throughout all nature, any one instance of connection which is conceivable by us." And Blake: "Doubt, doubt, & don't believe without experiment."

- 18) *P. G. Batoni, 1776, Marshal Cyril G. Razumowski, Razumowski Collection, Vienna (with various video details)*

Blake's Hell was just the Enlightenment court painters of the 18th century were celebrating; as Battoni did this earlier Razumowski, with his classics and copies of classics — (Blake)

the silly Greek & Latin slaves of the sword... We do not want either Greek or Roman models if we are but just & true to our own imaginations —

the displayed medals for royal intrigue — (Lord Chesterfield to his son)

I recommended to you in my last an innocent piece of art, that of flattering people behind their backs, in presence of those who... will not fail to repeat, and even amplify, the praise to the party concerned —

Chesterfield, who as Johnson observed, taught the morals of a whore in the style of a dancing master:

your dancing-master (he wrote that son) is at this time the most useful and necessary of all the masters you have or can have.

While the Earl of Shaftesbury extended the decorum of dress to literature:

I hold it very indecent that a man should publish his meditations or solitary thoughts. These are the froth & scum of writing which should be unburdened in private and consigned to oblivion, before the writer come before the world as good company.

- 19) *J. Reynolds, 1787, Lord Heathfield, Governor of Gibraltar, National Gallery, London; + V details*

Against that Old Regime of Form, this Reynolds 1787 defender of Gibraltar seems to herald the new republic of Humanity — as if Lord Heathfield were George Washington, roused by the strains of Lallan Burns: "Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled":

Lay the proud usurper low!
Tyrants fall in every foe!
Liberty's in every blow!
Let us do or die!

Yet Reynolds was Blake's despised priest of establishment:

This man was Hired to Depress Art... A Pretence of Art: To Destroy Art.

Reynolds or Chesterfield, Whig or Tory, all shared the Enlightened fabric Blake had pursued from childhood with "contempt and abhorrence" — Montesquieu:

of the necessary tie between laws and the constitution of each government, of its manners, climate, religion, commerce...

20) *Blake, 1794 (copy of 1818), Urizen, plate 3, Los striding in flames, Library of Congress, Washington D.C.; + V detail*

While Blake, Los-Orc striding in flame, cries what his cry almost makes true: "Ages are All Equal, But Genius is Always Above the Age."

Music: Beethoven, 1807, Fugal bit from 1st movement, 1st Rasumovsky Quartet, HS Q-41, or other

(Quartet fades for Hammerklavier)

a21) *Blake, 1794 (1815 copy), Urizen, plate 18, Los in Flames, Rosenwald, Library of Congress, Washington D.C. (video: detail only)*

21) *Blake, 1804-18, Jerusalem (Rinder), plate 26, Hand and Jerusalem, Rinder Collection*

21a) *Blake, 1793, "Fire," from the Gates of Paradise (3rd State), Miss Carthew Collection*

Music: Beethoven, 1818-19, Sonata in B Flat (Hammerklavier), opening of fugue, Seraphim IC/ 6066

Yet in what sense above the age, where the cruciform gesture of delight hardens to the vulture oppression of Hand — Jerusalem's news of freedom script for a Reign of Terror:

Rebellion struck the tyrant dead,
Became a tyrant in his stead.

Thus the fugal play of the 1st Rasumovsky turns to the time-tangle of the Hammerklavier — of all late Beethoven fugues: as when Schindler visited in 1819 and heard from the next room the hammerings and howlings of the Missa Solemnis Creed, "the door opened & Beethoven stood before us with distorted features... as if he had been in mortal combat with the whole host of contrapuntists, his everlasting enemies."

22) *Goya, 1815-24, Proverbs 7, Matrimonial Folly, etching (Dover); + V detail*
(fade Hammerklavier)

The rational mode of that crisis had been satire, the acid of Swift, which spills into the new century most fiercely in Goya — this Matrimonial Folly from the Proverbs. Blake too had begun with satire, in An Island in the Moon:

Hail Matrimony made of Love
To thy wide gates how great a drove
On purpose to be yok'd do come;
Widows & maids & Youths also
That lightly trip on beauty's toe
Or sit on beauty's bum.

For 2nd 21) Blake, 1795, "Good" and "Evil" Angels struggling for a Child, Tate Gallery, London (video: detail of "Evil" only)

No doubt all Blake's Ulro pictures have that cutting edge; and in The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, the seven church houses of brick in which "monkeys, baboons, & all of that species"

2nd 22) Again, Goya, Matrimonial Folly, detail

are "grinning and snatching at one another... the weak... caught by the strong, and with a grinning aspect, first coupled with, & then devour'd," as recklessly envenoms Swift,

23) Chardin, c. 1736(?), Monkey Antiquary, Chartres (other versions, Louvre, etc., are variously dated)

as Swift's lacerated heart had soured the prevailing monkey-play — this pensive antiquary by Chardin. With Storm and Stress, such irony is everywhere possessed by alienating furies, personal, demonic, political. So Blake to the Reverend Trusler, who had condemned his pictures:

I really am sorry that you are fallen out with the Spiritual World... you ought to know that what is Grand is necessarily obscure to weak men...

24) Rowlandson, c. 1802, Blood Royal: the detested Duke of Cumberland, British Museum, London; + V detail

V24a) Blake, 1825-27, Dante, plate 27, Hell 14, Capaneus the Blasphemer (as rebel hero), British Museum, London

a25) Blake, c. 1826, The body of Abel found by Adam and Eve, Tate Gallery, London

I perceive that your Eye is perverted by Caricature Prints, which ought not to abound so much as they do...

The caricaturist was Rowlandson, whose caustic pen had etched every phase of Georgian excess, as in this 1802 depiction of the hated Duke of Cumberland. But to Blake (though republican friend of Tom Paine) the satiric, stripped of prophecy, seemed trivial. Again to Trusler:

I know that This World is a World of Imagination & vision. I see Every thing I paint in This World but Every body does not see alike. To the Eyes of a Miser a Guinea is more beautiful than the Sun...

Music: Beethoven, 1818-9, Hammerklavier, closing fugue, conclusion, Seraphim IC 6066

625) Caspar David Friedrich, c. 1810, Landscape with Rainbow, formerly Staatliche Kunstsammlung, Weimar, now lost

- c25) *Goya, 1825-28, Milkmaid, Prado, Madrid (video: detail only)*
 25) *Blake, 1804-18 (printed 1820), Jerusalem, plate 37, Albion sustained by Christ etc., Mellon Collection, Washington D.C.; + V details, as V25a*

If the giants of 1800 share a prophetic reforging of the Enlightened and sophistic heritage, Blake has this Pascalian distinction: In the others, when, as in Beethoven's Hammerklavier, the demonic battle eases, (**Hammerklavier, sempre dolce cantabile**) it is into the irradiated "calm that nature breathes among the hills and groves" (even Goya's last Milkmaid takes that gleam); whereas in Blake, any such respite hangs between Ulro and the flaming wars of Eternity, a sleep of dreams in moony Beulah: It is not nature but Christ who sustains this fainting Albion ("between the Palm tree and the Oak of weeping"), Albion's left foot planted on the winged red sun of chaos, his knee as in false prayer to that Druid oak of sacrifice, while below Urizen's starry sky, his Emanation, Jerusalem, vegetates on an arc-bier in the sea of time and space, ravened over by the vulture specter of possessive jealousy (caricature indeed, but far from Rowlandson). As the Reverend Dibdin said: "The sublime and grotesque seemed...forever amalgamated in his imagination." (**fade Hammerklavier**)

- 26) *Blake, 1804-1818 (printed 1820), Jerusalem (Census copy E, "Stirling"), plate 99, Reunion of Soul and God, Mellon Collection, Washington D.C. (video: details only)*
 26a) *Same, Jerusalem, Title page*
 26b) *August Kjöber, c. 1812(?), portrait of Beethoven (video returns to a detail of 26a, Spectre of Jerusalem)*

At the close of Jerusalem, in the union of soul and God, it is ambiguous (because complementary) whether the dark-haloed brooding God is drawn down by the "eternal womanly" into hell flames of generation, or she upward into the ecstasy where those "furnaces of affliction" are the fountains of life. The text reads:

All Human Forms identified even Tree Metal Earth & Stone, all
 Human Forms identified, living going forth & returning wearied
 Into the Planetary lives of Years Months Days & Hours reposing
 And then Awakening into his Bosom in the Life of Immortality.
 And I heard the Name of their Emanations they are named Jerusalem.

No wonder vegetated Southey fled from that visit when Blake showed him "a perfectly mad poem called Jerusalem":

his madness was too evident, too fearful. It gave his eyes an
 expression such as you would expect to see in one who was possessed.

What fear, in Christian England, of divine possession! Beethoven had it better in
 Faustian Germany.

(here the Hammerklavier comes in again for the closing bars)

27) *Hogarth, 1758, The Bench, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge; + V detail*

The curse of satire, the blessing of heart, embrace the comic reality Fielding
 admired in Hogarth. These 1758 judges on the bench are just such as bear the brunt in
Amelia, Tom Jones, Joseph Andrews: (the bribed justice of Joseph and Fanny)

"I have only ordered them to Bridewell for a month." — "But what is
 their crime?"..."A kind of felonious larcenous thing. I believe I must
 order them a little correction too, a little stripping and
 whipping"..."Still," said the squire, "I am ignorant of the crime — the
 fact I mean." "Why, there it is in peaper," answered the justice...

(showing the deposition about the breaking of a twig)

"Jesu!" said the squire, "would you commit two persons to Bridewell
 for a twig?" — "Yes," said the lawyer, "and with great lenity too; for if
 we had called it a young tree, they would have been both hanged."

28) *Hogarth, 1757, Garrick and his Wife, Royal Collection, Windsor; + V detail*

At the same, time, Hogarth painted this portrait of Garrick working late, his wife
 teasing him to bed. Here is the impulsive humanity which — limbed round with the
 scalpel of wit — makes Fielding promise his heroes and heroines a lifetime of actual
 good:

Mr. Jones appears to be the happiest of all humankind; for what happiness this world affords equal to the possession of such a woman as Sophia, I sincerely own I have never yet discovered.

- a29) *Blake, 1800, The Infant Jesus riding on a Lamb, formerly Stirling Collection; + V detail*
 29) *Hogarth, c. 1735-40, Satan, Sin, and Death, Tate Gallery, London*

Fielding had still to wrestle with the Christian calling, from Parson Adams to Amelia's benefactor: "If one of my cloth should begin a discourse of heaven in the scenes of business or pleasure... would he not... be thought by all men worthy of Bedlam?" Even Hogarth, beyond the enlightened field where Voltaire and Rousseau traffic in reason's irony and heart's worth, felt a weird stirring (through Milton, Dante, and the Bible: as in this Satan, Sin, and Death at the gate of hell) toward the evidence of things not seen — yet so whelmed in the Cartesian bulk of operatic Baroque, as almost to have lost the revelation it gropes for; though even this picture became for Blake a point of departure.

- 30) *Double: [A] Bosch, 1506-8, Fragment of a Judgment, detail, Alte Pinakothek, Munich (CGB '59); and [B] Rubens, c. 1620 (copy), Fall of the Damned, detail, Aachen Gallery (CGB '74)*
 V30a) *Titian, c. 1550-60(?), Martyrdom of St. Lawrence, lower detail, Jesuit Church, Venice (video returns to the double, 30, and then shows a detail of the Bosch, from V30A, CGB '59)*

If spirit cannot speak without body, there remains a graded stair from stripped symbol to spatial representation. Blake's continual rage against the post-Venetian —

labouring to destroy Imaginative power, by means of that infernal machine, called Chiaro Oscuro... The spirit of Titian was particularly active in raising doubts... Rubens is a most outrageous Demon —

springs from an absolute clarity: that in all the 17th- and 18th-century schools, the life of Gothic invention (as in this Bosch detail) had been buried under the brown-shadowing earth-laws of codified matter.

As Bosch had fleshed out Medieval symbol with Renaissance techniques,

31) *Blake, 1823-24, Job, plate 11, Thou affrightest me with Dreams, New Zealand*

Blake had to shear Newtonian fulness into prophetic reality, though like his radical contemporaries, he sweeps the world heritage with him — in storm.

Job in the 11th design, "Thou affrightest me with visions," lies on the mat of penitence under the cloven-hoofed and snake-wrapped God of his own jealous making:

And is there not eternal fire and eternal chains
To bind the phantoms of existence from eternal life?

a32) *Joseph Vernet, 1773, Seaport by Moonlight, Louvre, Paris*

32) *Winchester, end of the 10th cent., Pentecost, Pontifical of Archbishop Robert, Municipal Library, Rouen*

In the Leviathan depths of reason's limitation, of which Eliot in our time would write —

Because I know that time is always time
And place is always and only place —

what hungers must have mounted to break through again into the realm of vision (this Winchester miniature from before 1000, where the Holy Ghost spills like molten metal to a spaceless and selfless whirl of Apostles flattened on the rainbow arch of that upper

room). What was Blake's madness but to heed some apostolic cry of modern consciousness?

- Va33) Blake, 1794 (copy of 1818), Urizen, plate 11, Urizen fettered weeps, Rosenwald, Library of Congress, Washington D.C.*
- 633) Blake, c. 1804, Milton (Census copy D), plate 16, Milton advancing disrobed, Rosenwald, Library of Congress, Washington D.C.*
- 33) Blake, 1804-20, Jerusalem, plate 53, detail, Vala Throned on a Sunflower, British Museum, London*

At Felpham false-friend Hayley (in Byron's quip, "For ever feeble and for ever tame") tried to wean Blake from such "Abstract folly," to chain his "feet to the world of Duty and Reality." And as Blake wrote Butts, his own return to London was

that I may converse with my friends in Eternity. See Visions, Dream
Dreams, & prophecy & speak Parables unobserv'd & at liberty from
the Doubts of other Mortals...

— to see this Vala, beauty of nature, materialize into the Female Will, throned on the sunflower of sexual desire (an ellipse of projective geometry):

(Ah, Sunflower! weary of time):

They took their Mother Vala & they crown'd her with gold;
They named her Rahab & gave her power over the Earth,
...to destroy the Lamb & Usurp the Throne of God
Drawing their Ulro Voidness round the Four-fold Humanity.
(Jerusalem 78: 15-20)

- 34) *Roman Baroque, 1595 ff., Santa Trinita de' Monti with the Spanish Stair, 1723-26 (CGB '47)*

Music: Händel, 1742, Messiah #9, chorus: "O thou that tellest" Philips C71 AX300

In the assertive rationalization of Christianity, Händel's Messiah, warhorse of oratorios, stands at a Urizenic limit of opacity, culmination of a century and a half of Baroque: — Rome: Santa Trinita de' Monti over the Spanish Stair;

- 35) *Piazza Navona, Rome: Bernini, 1647-52, Fountain; Rainaldi & Borromini 1652-57, St. Agnese, etc. [slide show CGB '48; video CGB '86 with detail from CGB '48]*

or the Piazza Navona with Bernini's Fountain and Borromini's Church, from which, they used to say, the statue of the Nile veils his face.

(close Messiah #9)

- 36) *Claudio Coello, c. 1690, Charles II adoring the relics, Sacristy, Escorial (video: details only, above and below)*

Music: Messiah #12. close of chorus: "unto us a Child". Philips C71 AX300

By 1690 in Spain, Coello had opened within a frame of florid marble and bronze this extraordinary pomp of space.

- 37) *Mexican Baroque, early 18th cent.(?), Façade and Towers, Cathedral Taxco (CGB '70) (video: upper detail only)*
 V37a) *Mexican Baroque, finished 1752, façade detail, Cathedral, Zacatecas (CGB '70)*

A grandeur which by the time of Handel had gathered native workmen and the remains of Indian style, as at Taxco, into the sacred conquests of the New World.

(close Messiah #12)

- 38) *Mansart, Coypel, etc., 1661-1722, interior, columned apse, Chapel at Versailles (CGB '59); + V detail of painting*

Music: Messiah #18, opening "He shall feed his flock" Philips C71 AX300

Nor had the style-restraint of France held the Corinthian chapel of Versailles from as flagrant a proclamation of Cartesian victory.

- 39) *Straub (with Günther?), c. 1767, Gabriel, High Altar, Berg-am-Laim, München (CGB '59); + V detail*

In Bavaria the currents from Italy and France fructify, as at Berg-am-Laim, in the richest outpouring of all Baroque; yet its sensuous passions but complement the underlay of heroic formulation and proud rationality. (fade

Messiah #18)

- 40) *Sabastiani Ricci, c. 1712-16, Resurrection, sketch for Chelsea Hospital, Dulwich College, London; + V detail*

Music: Messiah, #42. Halleluja, opening, Philips C71 AX300

About the time of Händel's coming to London, Ricci imported the festive Venetian Baroque. (fade Halleluja)

- 41) *Thomas Archer, 1725, West Tower, Cathedral of Birmingham (CGB '74)*
 41a) *Borromini, 1650-59, Sant' Ivo, from the Courtyard, Rome (CGB '86)*
 41b) *Sir Christopher Wren, 1673-1711, St. Paul's Cathedral, London (CGB '77)*
 V41c) *Same, another view of the dome (CGB '77)*

Music: Händel, Messiah, #52, Amen, close, Philips 671 AX300

While Thomas Archer, trained in Rome, gave the tower of Birmingham a wonderful sweep of counterpointed curves.

If the grandiose display of earthly religion is a Blakean antithesis, it is an antithesis which contains the fugue, already in creative struggle (like the 3-body problem in Newton) stretching the rationale it exemplifies.

(close Messiah)

- 42) *Double: [A] Bramante, 1499-1502, Tempietto, and [B] Borromini, 1642-60, Sant' Ivo; both, Rome (CGB '86); + V single of St. Ivo (from 41a)*
 42a) *Double: [A] Raphael, 1510-11, detail of Homer, Parnassus, Vatican, and [B] Rembrandt, 1662-63, Homer dictating, fragment, Mauritshuis, The Hague*

- 42b) *Double: [A] Bramante, Tempietto, Trastevere, Rome; and [B] Raphael, 1504, Temple in La Sposalizio, Brera, Milan*

In Rome two courtyard chapels oppose Bramante's High-Renaissance island of calm, 1500 (left), to the Miltonic and Pascalian implosion of Borromini (right) 1650, that waged marriage of passion and method. From its first tactile declaration, the Baroque was revolutionary, fantastically overpushing its always heroic might — to contain Blake's heaven in the laws of earth.

Through what maze of paradox genius searches its style-affinities — Blake extolling Renaissance Raphael against Baroque Rembrandt, while Milton's dark Baroque remained his creative center. "Grecian," he said, "is Mathematical Form: Gothic is Living Form." What is implied for Bramante's Temple, so linked to Raphael's in the Sposalizio?

- 43) *Double: [A] Borromini, 1650-59, Lantern of Sant' Ivo, Rome; and [B] Borromini, 1649-52, sketch for the same, Albertina, Vienna (video uses Berlin sketch for A; see V43)*

What revealed of Borromini's spire-tribute to the heraldic Barberini bee? Surely its Baroque incorporates, beyond Renaissance, the soul-leap of Gothic — how transparently if, as in one of Borromini's drawings, we might experience at once its outward flaming gyre and (right) the lanterned vault within.

- 44) *Double: [A] English Gothic, 1286-1325, Wells, Chapter House (CGB '84); and [B] Borromini, 1650-59, St. Ivo Dome, within, Rome; + V singles*

Here the teaching of Greece and Rome is caught up in a soaring as radical, as (three centuries before) in the Gothic groining (left) of Wells Chapter House.

The music which most designedly challenges the possible is of the string tradition Bach climaxed, where an essentially one-voiced instrument delivers itself of the polyphonic and fugal. Thus Casals chose Bach's Sixth Cello Suite as the vehicle of ultimate modern reach.

Music: Bach, c. 1720, Prelude, Cello Suite No. 6 in D Major, last part, (Casals) Angel COLH 18

- a45) *Borromini, 1666-76, Façade detail, San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane, Rome*
- b45) *Same, Façade, another view (CGB '86)*
- Vc45) *Same, Façade, detail over the main door (CGB '86)*
- Vd45) *Same, Interior, vault with organ (CGB '86); video: detail only*
- 45) *Same, Interior, vault (CGB '86); video: detail only*

Again Borromini: San Carlo of the Four Fountains.

- V45a) *Guarini, 1667, Sidona Chapel dome, Duomo, Turin (CGB '84)*
- a46) *Narcisco Tomé, 1721-32, The Transparente Altar, in the Apse of Toledo Cathedral. Where the slide sequence opens with the central tower of carved figures only, the video draws first from the lower spread of slide 46 the same structure against clerestory windows of the choir.*
- Vb46) *Middle-height of the same carved tower: a gold-rayed marble whirl of Mary and Angels*
- Vc46) *From the base of the same structure, an altar with Mary and the infant Christ*
- 46) *Vertical slide of the same: the altar tower in the window-lighted cathedral, from a glory-dome opened in the vault, down the pillar of saints and angels, to the Madonna below; here the video shows a middle-spread of the whole, and last a detail of the radiant heaven above.*

(end Casals Bach)

In Spain, Baroque daring peaks in the Transparente, where Tomé lifted the apse of Toledo Cathedral for a carved and painted spill of angels from Heaven's vault above, to an altar of the Virgin below. Here, as at the same time in Bach, what would seem the Blakean opposite of pyrotechnic display, swells with conscious prophecy.

So Blake, to Butts, from Felpham:

I have written this Poem from immediate Dictation twelve or sometimes twenty or thirty lines without Premeditation and even against my will... & an immense Poem exists which seems to be the labour of a long life... My heart is full of futurity.

- 47) *Double: [A] Roman Christian, c. 420, Crucifixion, from Ivory Pyxis, British Museum, London; and [B] Irish, late 7th cent., Bronze, Crucifixion Plaque, National Museum, Dublin (with video details of singles, A before, B after)*

Music: Gregorian, Libera me (Burial Service), closing chorus, MHS OP 349

In Blake's merger of flesh and spirit, time and eternity, self and Christ ("Mine has a snub nose like to mine") the pendulum of Incarnation has swung all the way from ritual abstraction of God's humanity — these Crucifixions from 5th-century Rome to 700 Ireland: the spaceless distance of Gregorian Chant (with its Celtic and other irrecoverable offshoots) — to all of which Blake, in the arm-flung immediacy of Albion-Christ might say, "thou readst black where I read white."

(fade with "saeculum")

48) *Grünewald, c. 1512-15, Crucifixion from Isenheim Altar, Museum, Colmar; + V details of John the Baptist and Christ*

48a) *Same, closer detail of Christ*

48b) *Same, detail of the group on the left*

Music: Morales, published 1543, Lamentabatur Jacob, (Turner) ARC ST-2533 321

From the anguished Plague Crucifixes of 14th-century Germany, to this Grünewald ordeal of sacred body, painted about 1515 for the abbey church and hospital of the Anthonites in Alsatian Isenheim, we feel the build-up of Incarnate identification — in music, the harmonic pain Morales learned from Josquin.

(fade Morales, after "Heume")

49) *Feichtmayr and Christian, 1747-58, Christ on the Cross, Pulpit, Zwiefalten (video details only: above, below, and Christ's head)*

Such passion, grappled into form, mediates the Baroque. In Bach's great Chaconne from the Second Partita, the Caesarian extraction of so much glory from scraped gut, adumbrates, in divine cat-fight, spirit's war on itself — as if Feichtmayr's God had "pitched his mansion in the place of excrement."

Music: Bach, 1717-23(?), from Chaconne, Partita #2, Odnoposov (or better: H. Szeryng, DGG 2709-028)

By the end of Bach's life, Baroque was the matrix of pre-romantic, like that Arcana Coelestia, in which Swedenborg pours Divine Love and Wisdom through a universe of nebular astronomy, fashioning salvation, as soul fashions body.

50) *Blake, c. 1799-1800, Agony in the Garden, Tate Gallery, London; + V detail*
 50a) *Blake, 1807-08, First Temptation, watercolor, from Paradise Regained, T.H. Riches, Esq. (video: detail only)*

The Blake of this Agony in the Garden was reared in the Swedenborg circle of London. And though he left the prophet behind like the linen clothes folded at the tomb:

Any man of mechanical talents may from the writings of Paracelsus or Jacob Behmen, produce ten thousand volumes of equal value with Swedenborg's, and from those of Dante or Shakespear, an infinite number —

he and his art consummate the personal transcendence of Northern Baroque — in his case, of Milton. (fade Chaconne)

How would Jane Austen's clergyman Pharisee —

nothing to do but be slovenly and selfish... his curate does all the work, and the business of his life is to dine

— have seen this mystic heir to embodiment as anything but mad?:

Now the sneaking serpent walks
 In mild humility
 And the just man rages in the wilds
 Where lions roam.

- a51) *Sir Joshua Reynolds, 1776-77, Lady Caroline Scott as "Winter," Duke of Buccleugh, Bowhill, Selkirk*
- V651) *Reynolds, 1788-89, Master Hare, Louvre, Paris*
- 51) *Reynolds, 1777-80, Lady Elizabeth Delme and her Children, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; + V detail*
- 51a) *Blake, 1793 (copy of 1799), America (Census copy M), plate 11, below, Nude Children Riding a Snake, Mellon*
- V51b) *Same, upper detail, Boy riding a Swan*
- V51c) *Blake, 1794 (copy of 1818), Urizen (Census copy G), plate 21, Chain of Jealousy (Los, Enitharmon, Orc), Rosenwald, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (video: detail only)*

Music: Thomas Arne, c. 1751, Andante from Overture #1, Argo 2RG-577

"Active Evil, " said Blake, "is better than Passive Good." He must have shared more with the great Baroque, as with Milton, than with the social sweetness of his time: — easy Thomas Arne (through Christian Bach a likely influence on Mozart); this Sir Joshua Reynolds — no contrary, but a negation. "Reynolds & Gainsborough" (Blake wrote) "Blotted & Blurred one against the other & Divided all the English World between them. Fuseli indignant almost hid himself — I am hid."

It was not just that the youthful Blake had shown Reynolds some designs and been told to correct his drawing. Nor was it envy of what was beyond him. Blake could have been successful. In his most productive period, he had taught the children of the wealthy, and, as Tatham tells, so pleased patrons of rank that he had been offered the post of tutor to the Royal family. Aghast, he surrendered his pupils, preferring want and his own art to betrayal of principle. As Southey allowed in his caustic 1809 review: "Nothing but madness had prevented him from being the sublimest painter of this or any other country.

(close Arne)

- 52) *Gainsborough, c. 1759, Painter's Daughters Chasing a Butterfly, National Gallery, London*
- 52a) *Gainsborough, c. 1762, The Painter's Daughters, Victoria and Albert Museum, London (video returns to details from Painter's Daughters Chasing a Butterfly, then to left detail from Painter's Daughters)*

Like every admired artist of the time, Gainsborough was on the social rack — as between the lacy brilliance of Lady So-and-so and the unfeed sensibility of his own daughters chasing a butterfly, or tousling each other. It was more and more the century of youth: Rousseau's *Emile*, Pestalozzi's invention of progressive education, leading toward Wordsworth's "Intimations of Immortality":

Thou little child, yet glorious in the might
Of heaven-born freedom on thy Being's height...

Mozart was freer than Gainsborough, and paid the price; but even in him there is a spread between social performance and, as in the Romanza from the D Minor Concerto, its inspired surpassing.

Music: Mozart, 1785, from Piano Concerto #20, K 466, Romanza, Piano entrance ff., (Fisher) V. LCT 6013 (or Richter, Murray Hill S2957)

- 53) *J.A. Houdon, c. 1777, Bust of Alexandre Brogniart as a child, Louvre, Paris (cf. his Daughter Sabine, Huntington, San Marino, California); first, V detail (fade Mozart Romanza)*

Houdon, too, most delights in his salon skills when he models children, especially his sylphid daughter Sabine.

- a54) *George Romney, c. 1780(?), Lady Arabella Ward, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.*
 54) *Romney, c. 1781-83, Miss Willoughby, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.*
 54a) *Blake, 1805, "The Dog" (for Hayley's Ballad), British Museum, London*
 54b) *Jean Baptiste Isabey, 1812, Fürsten Katharina Bagration Skawronska, collection Fürst Franz Auersperg (video returns to a detail of Romney's Miss Willoughby, from 54)*

And Romney, who had wanted to paint Allegory and History, seems happiest when his bombast ladies freshen in the fountain of youth toward Burns' Highland Mary, or Wordsworth's Lucy, of whom Nature would say:

This Child I to myself will take;
She shall be mine, and I will make
A lady of my own...

Blake, after refusing the Royal Children Copley had lately painted, was saved from destitution by Hayley, given a cottage in Felpham, and, of course, set to pick-thank tasks, engraving after minor artists, decorating Hayley's Library, portraying the gentry in miniature.

Miniature [he writes] is become a Goddess in my Eyes, & my Friends in Sussex say that I Excel in the pursuit. I have a great many orders, & they multiply.

Until the break his poem Milton treats in symbols, with the return to poverty in London:

Hayley... thinks to turn me into a Portrait Painter as he did poor Romney, but this he nor all the devils in hell will never do...

55) *Blake, 1793 (copy of 1799), America, plate 7, Children Sleeping with a Ram, Paul Mellon; + V lower detail*

Perhaps Blake too is at his happiest with children, but his are of the Imagination, out of Georgian context altogether:

Piping down the valleys wild
Piping songs of pleasant glee,
On a cloud I saw a child,
And he laughing said to me:

"Pipe a song about a lamb!"
So I piped with merry cheer,
"Piper, pipe that song again";
So I piped: he wept to hear.

Or:

Little Lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?...
He is meek, & he is mild;
He became a little child...

56) *English MS, early 14th cent., Angel leads St. John to Heaven, MS Roy. 19B, XII, 5v., British Museum, London; + V detail*

Music: French, c. 1260(?), Codex Bamberg, Hoquetus VII, *d'Amiens longum/ In seculum* (4th phrase); from (Munrow) Archiv 2723 045

Blake's pastoral Beulah reaches far back to the living innocence of the Gothic, which he copied as a boy in Westminster Abbey — this 1300 John, led up the symbolic ladder, above what Blake would have recognized as the Vegetative world. But the pre-personal suspension in creed attested by the formal faces or the bare-fifths of the music, could not have been the element of revolutionary Blake.

(close Hoquetus)

57) *Albrecht Dürer, 1496-98, Apocalypse Woodcuts, #14, Angel Locks Dragon in Abyss (with a view of New Jerusalem); video: details only*

57a) *Dürer, 1522, Self as Man of Sorrows, Kunsthalle, Bremen; first, video detail*

Music: Mouton, 1515, 8-voice motet, "Exsultet," 1st half, SAWT 9561-B

That City, which the Angel showed John from a spirit mountain, has come to earth in Dürer, 1498, to spread over the plain by a river, like any of the Renaissance towns of Germany — as the 8-voice "Exsultet" of Mouton incorporates soul's victory. So where was Blake to look for renewal but in man's incarnate imagination: "Energy is the only life, and is from the Body"; or as he said to Robinson: "Yes, Jesus is the only God... and so am I, and so are you." His appeal was not to the Middle Ages, but to the corporeal powers of Renaissance: Dürer, Raphael,

- 58) *Double, Two Expulsions: [A] Jacobo della Quercia, 1425-38, door panel, San Petronio, Bologna; and [B] Michelangelo, 1508-18, Sistine Ceiling, Vatican; + V singles*
- 58a) *John Flaxman, 1778, Plaque from Vase of the Apotheosis of Homer, British Museum, London*

Michelangelo (right), with a prototype Blake could hardly have known, this 1430 della Quercia. Yet surely the physical conglobing of symbol, exhibited in this sequence, was what Blake had to reverse; as he says: "Thus is the heaven a vortex pass'd already, and the earth a vortex not yet pass'd by the traveller thro' Eternity." (end Mouton, 1st half) Though Michelangelo's fresco line, against the fog Blake scorned in Titian and Correggio, is such a carrier of force as that process of relief-etching brother Robert, dead, showed William in vision:

melting apparent surfaces away, and displaying the infinite which was hid.

If Blake had known Florentine art before Michelangelo, could he have called Flaxman "Dear Sculptor of Eternity"?

- 59) *Blake, 1795, Elohim Creating Adam, Tate Gallery, London; + V details*

Yet he caught enough from doubtful prints (the 10-year-old boy at art auctions, Langford's "little connoisseur": "from my earliest childhood... I knew the difference between Raffaele and Rubens") to rival the ceilings of Catholic Rome — though shrunk to the illuminated privacy of a page: this 1795 Creation and Fall crushed into one. In Albion's "Chaotic State of Sleep, Satan & Adam & the whole World was Created by the Elohim" (third of the seven eyes of God, creator and judge) "a very Cruel Being." Such the dæmon who shapes, under cloud and by setting sun, this Adam stretched on the thorn bank over the Sea of Time and Space, already wrapped in the snake-spire of sin and doubt. How was Christian art to regain its ancient might but by such appropriation of heretical power?

- a60) *Blake, 1825, Job, plate 13, God Appearing in a Whirlwind, British Museum, London*
- 60) *English, late 13th cent., St. Peter from a Retable, Westminster Abbey, London; + V detail*

For all Blake's "Gothic is living form," his art had no backward road. With the personal fury of Goya and Beethoven, he had to launch Pascal into Revolutionary transcendence. There is none of the anonymous refinement of cloister mysticism — Westminster 1300 — with Richard Rolle of Hampole:

But fleschly lufe sal fare as dose the flowre in May,
And lastand be na mare than ane houre of a day,
And sythen syghe ful sare thar lust, thar pryde, thar play,
When thai er casten in kare til pyne that lastes ay...

Jesu es lufe that lastes ay, til Hym es owre langing;
Jesu the nyght turnes to the day, the dawying intil spryng.
Jesu, thynk on us now and ay, for The we halde our keyng;
Jesu, gyf us grace, as Thou wel may, to luf The withowten endyng.

61) *Raphael and School, 1518-19, Jacob's Dream, Loggia, Vatican*

61a) *Blake, 1800-03, Jacob's Ladder, British Museum, London (video returns to the Jacob's Dream of 61)*

We can even understand Blake's admitting Giulio Romano, Raphael's chief helper in the scenes of the Loggia, as his fourth art hero. These forms are still incised; the famous capture of nature looks symbolic now; and what the scene shows is what Blake was sure of: that the sleeper in moony Beulah is offered visions of the eternal stair. We say "if Blake could have seen Giotto, Angelico, Botticelli"; but this Jacob's Dream gave him what he required.

Raphael chanced on symbols, painting the Bible;

62) *Blake, 1827, Queen Katharine's Dream, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; + V details*

Blake searched all literature for images of his own symbolic themes. Here Shakespeare's Queen Katharine, dying in detention, sees

a blessed Troupe
Invite me to a Banquet, whose bright faces
Cast a thousand beams upon me, like the sun...

It is not *with* but *through* the eye, as Los in Jerusalem

...beheld the Divine Vision among the flames of the Furnaces;
Therefore he lived and breathed in hope...

(Jerusalem 62: 35-6)

So Blake, when his brother Robert died, saw the spirit rise from the body "clapping his hands for joy." And thus his own death was described by Richmond:

Just before he died His countenance became fair — His eyes
Brighten'd and He burst out in singing of the things he saw in Heaven.
In truth He Died like a Saint.

63) *Fuseli, 1786-89, Titania and Bottom, Tate Gallery, London*

63a) *Fuseli, 1793-94, Titania and Bottom, Kunsthhaus, Zurich; first, video detail*

Fuseli treats Shakespeare in another mode. His are illustrations, picturesque or dramatic. It is a measure of Blake's isolation that in his life-search for co-workers he found none nearer than this Swiss-English explorer of the grotesque and fanciful:

The only Man that e'er I knew
Who did not make me almost spew
Was Fuseli, he was both Turk and Jew.
And so, dear Christian friends, how do you do?

The artist who could say "Blake is damned good to steal from" had perception and humor; and there is that story of the old Blake's joining the students at the Royal Academy to sketch from the cast of the Laocoön, and Fuseli's saying: "What! you here, Meesther Blake? We ought to come and learn of you, not you from us!" But what could that irony have made of the Prophetic Books?

64) *Fuseli, 1780, Thetis Mourning over Achylles, Art Institute, Chicago; + V detail*

64a) *George Romney, c. 1792, Witches Cave, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge*

64b) *Blake, c. 1808, Satan Calling his Legions, detail, formerly Lord Leaconsfield*

If we go back to a Fuseli drawing, Achilles mourned by Thetis, of 1780, the date Blake engraved on his "Glad Day" (though ten years after), there is no doubt that the older Swiss immigrant, already the stir of London and to influence David and Goya, helped Blake to a whole vocabulary of Mannerist gestures. But such Storm-and-Stress abstractions (with the related ink washes by Romney) end where Blake begins — their theater, his Halls of Los in Golgonooza.

It is hard to credit the obscurity of England's greatest living poet and artist. There is the evening at Lady Caroline Lamb's, 1820, when Blake was invited

- 65) *Sir Thomas Lawrence, 1810, Viscount Castlereagh, National Portrait Gallery, London*
- 65a) *Blake, 1794, separate print from Urizen, plate 2, Enitharmon Floating at Dawn with Infant Orc, British Museum, London; + video return to 62, Blake, Queen Katharine's Dream, detail of Katharine*
- 65b) *Again, Viscount Castlereagh, detail*
- 65c) *Lawrence, 1819, Portrait of George IV, detail, Vatican Museum, Rome*

with the courtly Sir Thomas Lawrence, who painted this portrait of Viscount Castlereagh, English Foreign Secretary. Lady Charlotte Bury records:

Blake... an eccentric little artist... not a regular professional painter... full of beautiful imaginations... one of those whose feelings are far superior to his situation in life... I could not help contrasting this humble artist with the great and powerful Sir Thomas Lawrence... [Lawrence] looked at me several times whilst I was talking with Mr. B., and I saw his lips curl with a sneer, as if he despised me for conversing with so insignificant a person...

Later, at Linnell's urging, Lawrence bought and apparently treasured, among other Blake, Queen Katharine's Dream. Who was truly powerful? The man who lived for his vision, or the portrait flatterer of Castlereagh, of whom Byron had just written:

The intellectual eunuch Castlereagh
Cold-blooded, smooth-faced, placid miscreant!
Dabbling its sleek young hands in Erin's gore,
And thus for wider carnage taught to pant,
Transferr'd to gorge upon a sister shore,
The vilest tool that Tyranny could want...
Cobbling at manacles for all mankind...

As Blake had commented on Sir Joshua:

The Enquiry in England is not whether a man has Talents & Genius?
But whether he is Passive & Polite & a Virtuous Ass: & Obedient to
Noblemens Opinions in Art & Science. If he is; he is a Good Man: If
Not he must be Starved.

- 66) *Samuel Palmer, c. 1826, A Hilly Scene, Tate Gallery, London*
- V66a) *Palmer, 1830, Coming from Evening Church, detail, Tate Gallery, London*
- 66b) *Palmer, c. 1826, Self-Portrait, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford*
- 66c) *Palmer, 1835, A Pastoral Scene, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford*
- 66d) *Blake, c. 1790-93, Marriage of Heaven and Hell (copy of 1794-5), Title Page, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (video: detail only)*
- V66e) *Blake, c. 1794 (copy c. 1818), Urizen, Title Page, detail, Book of Laws, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.*

In Blake's age, a group of young artists gathered around him. Palmer was the genius among them, and the most possessed by Blake's vision. The little pictures he painted at Shoreham before Blake's death change the phenomenal into imagination. As Palmer quoted Blake on the vastness of space: "It is false, I walked the other evening to the end of the earth, and touched the sky with my fingers." But Palmer, too, had to suffer neglect, and he was not as strong as Blake, nor was his wife Blake's selfless Kate. His career is a pathos of compromise. Perhaps the God-tie gives the clue. Palmer's modernism is of art; Blake's of soul. It is typical that Palmer, who, seeing Blake in his plain black suit among the swells at the Royal Academy, thought "How little you know who is among you!" — that even Palmer prefaces his praise of Blake's sanity, genius, and industry, with the proviso: "Without alluding to his writings, which are here not in question." Palmer could not face the prophetic books without quaking at Blake's heresies: "Misled by erroneous spirits... he suffered fancy to trespass within sacred precincts."

And Linnell, who commissioned Blake for the Dante drawings and engravings, wrote: "With all admiration... it must be confessed that he said many things tending to the corruption of Christian morals..."

- a67) *Blake, 1820, Woodcut # 11 for Virgil's First Eclogue (Thornton), British Museum, London*
- 67) *Blake, 1820, Same, #3, proof of 1st state, British Museum*
- 67a) *Constable, 1813-14, Page from a sketch book, #1, Victoria and Albert Museum, London*

Among Blake's works, those that most inspired Palmer (or Linnell and Calvert, for that matter) were the 1820 woodcuts for Thornton's Virgil, (another commercial disaster),

and surely, their alchemizing of nature is more than magical. For Palmer, they were pictures only, freed of the apostolic; though old Thenot, glad under the boughs of fruitfulness against young Colinet, mournful under the oak of error, is, like all Blake, mystically personal. Yet how romantically full, the nature through which his threefold vision looks — like a Constable, of which he said: "Why this is not drawing, but inspiration." To which Constable: "I meant it for drawing."

- 68) *Giovanni di Paolo, 1455-60, St. Nicholas of Tolentino Saving a Ship, Museum of Art (Johnson Collection), Philadelphia; first, video detail*

When Blake rebelled from the visual as model — "Natural objects always did and do weaken, deaded, and obliterate imagination in me" — he quoted Milton, preferring "devout prayer for the hallowed fire" to "Memory and her Siren Daughters."

The historical shift Vasari had praised, from Gothic sharpness, as in this Giovanni di Paolo storm at sea,

- 69) *Giorgione, Palma Vecchio, etc., c. 1510, Storm Miracle, Scuola di San Marco, Venice (video: detail only)*
 69a) *Blake, c. 1824-26, Dante, plate 2 (Hell ii, 140), Dante and Virgil enter an oak forest, Tate Gallery, London*

to the cloudy bondage of the phenomenal net Blake ascribed to the malice of the Venetians — and indeed this miracle of Venice saved from a ship of demons on a stormy night, which Giorgione left for Palma and others to finish, is the first of its kind — Blake saw that shift as tied to the deceits which, from the infernal trinity of Bacon, Newton, and Locke, had spread oak groves and Druid temples over the Earth,

mocking God [he writes] & Eternal Life, & in Public Collusion calling themselves Deists, Worshipping the Maternal Humanity, calling it Nature and Natural Religion...

- 70) *Blake, 1804-05 (1815 copy), Milton, plate 42, Albion and Jerusalem on the Rock of Ages, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; with video details*

Music: Haydn, 1796-98, The Creation, opening, Vanguard VRS 471/2

Yet we are struck again how awesomely Blake carries natural bodies, rock, sea, and sky, across into symbol; what earth-life fills this eagle of prey transformed to the

Eagle of Genius ("lift up thy head!") as he wakes Albion and Jerusalem from their sleep on the Rock of Ages (the actual sleep of History); and how the long slip of light on the Sea of Time and Space unfolds space itself, with all its mood and longing: —

71) *Schinkel, 1803, View of Trieste, formerly Kronprinzenpalais, Berlin; + V detail*

almost as in this Schinkel, or later in Courbet and Böcklin — or in the musical chaos shot through with searching rays which Haydn's Creation bequeathed to Beethoven and Wagner. (fade Creation)

Once Cartesian reason had precipitated Pascalian paradox, there seemed two directions mind could take: One: to forge a dialectic which, like calculus, might embrace the exhibited antinomies in organic reaffirmation (Leibniz, Hegel, Whitehead). It was for being of this camp that Wordsworth, Blake's "only poet of the age," was also called by him "a landscape painter": "I see in Wordsworth the Natural Man rising up against the Spiritual Man."

a2nd 70) *Blake, 1794, Europe, A Prophecy, Frontispiece, The Ancient of Days (with compasses), Sir Geoffrey Keynes*
 For 2nd 70) *Blake, c. 1804, Milton (Rinder uncolored), plate 38, detail of Albion and Jerusalem on the Rock of Ages*

The second, the Pascalian way — reverting to our disproportion and incapacity — must strip the temporal for saving miracle: Kierkegaard's Christ in the moment now.

Yet no sooner are the possibilities formulated than they prove inadequate — any polar field admitting of infinite life-solutions. Thus Blake, who abandons nature and Cartesian reason, fires personal Christianity with more than Transcendental daring. In this, he leaps at once backward and forward from the landscape men:

...in your own Bosom you bear your Heaven
 And Earth, & all you behold, though it appears Without it is Within
 In your Imagination of which this World of Mortality is but a Shadow.

For 2nd 71) *Schinkel, 1815, Gothic Church on a Rock by the Sea, National Gallery, Berlin; video: detail only*

2nd 71a) *Blake, 1804-20, Jerusalem (copy E), plate 28, detail, Vala and Jerusalem in the Lily, Mellon Collection, Yale Center*

No doubt the Faustian Germany of Hegel, Beethoven, Hölderlin and the rest became the center of the landscape rapture — of the romantic irradiation of time. Even Goethe's break with Newton was to rear a science of organic interplay, salvaging what Blake would discard. As with Spinoza and Leibniz against Pascal, we cannot tell which was the forward motion. At least Germany for a while seemed kinder to the creative. It is curious that the strongest recognition of the old Blake came from a traveling German, Götzenberger. He had seen many men of talent in England, he said, "but only three of Genius, Coleridge, Flaxman, and Blake, and of these Blake was the greatest."

Va72) *Thomas Girtin, c. 1797, The Rocking Stone, Tate, London; video: detail only*

72) *Girtin, c. 1802, Fells Near Bolton, watercolor, T. Girtin, Esq.*

72a) *John Varley, c. 1810(?), Mountain Lake: Afterglow, watercolor, Victoria and Albert Museum, London*

V726) *Blake, 1797-1807, Vala (later, The Four Zoas), MS., plate 86, pencil and crayon of Vala as a nude, British Museum, London*

Of English painters, perhaps Girtin, in his early watercolors, best suggests the solemn affinity of soul with a nature of "huge and mighty forms" which Wordsworth enshrined in The Prelude and in "Tintern Abbey":

Until the breath of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul:
While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things...

And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;
A motion and a spirit, that impels

All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things...

Blake would not have overlooked that both passages close with the word "things"; both seat godhead in nature;

- Va73) John Constable, c. 1825, Clouds over Branch Hill Pond, Hampstead Heath, with a boy sitting on a bank, Tate Gallery, London*
- 73) Constable, 1821-22, Streaming sun over Branch Hill Pond, Hampstead Heath, Victoria and Albert Museum, London*
- 73a) Blake, 1821, from Taylor's De Antro Nympherum, Odysseus Throwing the Girdle, National Trust, Arlington Court*
- 73b) Detail of 73, Sunlit Branch Hill Pond*
- 73c) Blake, c. 1805, God Blessing the Day, Private Collection, Great Britain; video: was detail, now revised to whole*
- 73d) Blake, 1804-18, Rinder Jerusalem, plate 25: Dominion of Vala, Rahab, and Tirzah over the fallen Man; video first returns to 33, detail of Vala Throned on a Sunflower [so revised. 1995]*
- 73e) Again, Branch Hill Pond, the sun-rayed central section; which video pre-faces with a cloud-detail and closer cloud-detail of Va73)*

as Whitehead would say of The Prelude (and it is true of this Constable as well), show nature "as exhibiting entwined prehensive unities, each suffused with modal presences of others..."

Thus Coleridge:

Ah! slowly sink
Behind the western ridge, thou glorious sun!
Shine in the slant beams of the sinking orb
Ye purple heath-flowers! richlier burn, ye clouds!
Live in the yellow light, ye distant groves!
And kindle, thou blue Ocean!

But when Blake sees "the real and eternal World of which this Vegetable Universe is but a faint shadow," he sees all objects as human forms. Where Constable shows the sun "as a round Disk of fire somewhat like a Guinea," Blake cries:

O no no I see an Innumerable company of the Heavenly host crying
Holy Holy Holy is the Lord God Almighty.

To paint landscape as real is Deism for Blake, enthrones Vala, emanation of Emotion (Luvah) —

A creation that groans, living on Death,
Where Fish & Bird & Beast & Man & Tree & Metal & Stone
Live by Devouring —

Wordsworth: "Knowing that Nature never did betray/ The heart that loved her"; and
Coleridge: "I shall know/ That Nature ne'er deserts the wise and pure."

As if Chaos itself, in Haydn's Creation, has summoned from its depths the musical ecstasy of Light:

Music: Haydn's Creation, continued, the phrase: "*Und es war Licht*"
(fade)

- a74) *C.D. Friedrich, 1808, Morning Mist in the Mountains, Museum, Rudolstadt; where videos have previewed 74: Mist in the Riesengebirge [revised 1995]*
- 674) *Constable, 1821, Cloud Study, Horizon of Trees, London, Royal Academy; where video has previewed 676, Cirrus Clouds, Victoria and Albert Museum, London [revised 1995]*
- Vc74) *Friedrich, 1823, Lone Tree, Staatliche Museen, Berlin*
- 74) *Friedrich, Mist in the Riesengebirge, Neue Pinakothek, München*

The paradox of the Romantic landscape is that where the old dimensional absolute becomes in one sense merely a veil, it is a veil of working power — the huge sea of mist Wordsworth saw from Snowdon,

The perfect image of a mighty Mind,
Of one that feeds upon infinity,

Which Wordsworth, in orthodox revisions, would later tone down. Blake had not misread The Recluse —

All strength, all terror, single or in bands.
That ever was put forth in personal Form —
Jehovah — with his thunder & the choir
Of shouting Angels & the empyreal thrones —
I pass them unalarm'd —

to cry out: "Does Mr. Wordsworth think his mind can surpass Jehovah?"

For the depiction of nature as living spirit, Caspar David Friedrich, north German contemporary of Beethoven, looms over the century. So at the close of Beethoven's last sonata, the solid soars into light and air.

Music: Beethoven, 1822, Sonata #32, Opus 111, near close, Seraphim IC-6066

75) *C.D. Friedrich, c. 1823, Drifting Clouds and Pool, Kunsthalle, Hamburg*

— Friedrich's Pool under rising mist, such a reminder as Wordsworth's in The Prelude, where "the hiding-places of [our] power seem open."

V75a) *Friedrich, 1825-30, Bohemian Landscape, Gemäldegalerie, Stuttgart*

Va76) *Friedrich, c. 1835, Twilight, Riesengebirge, National Gallery, Berlin*

676) *Constable, c. 1821-22, Study of Cirrus Clouds, Victoria and Albert Museum, London [originally other Friedrichs; revised, as here, 1996]*

76) *Friedrich, 1824, Evening Sky, Kunsthalle, Mannheim*

Constable and Turner painted views of nothing but sky; but their clouds are actual, those of Friedrich, God-signs. As his wife said: "On the day he is painting air, he may not be spoken to."

(close of Beethoven)

77) *Blake, 1795, Newton, Tate Gallery, London*

V77a) *Blake, 1825-27, Dante, plate 96, Paradise XXV: Saints Peter, James, and John the Evangelist with Dante and Beatrice, British Museum, London*

As Plotinus said: "Cut away everything." And Christ: "If thy right hand offend against thee, cut it off."

In conceiving Newton as sterile Urizen seated by the vegetative polyp under the Sea of Time and Space to compass the abstract ratio of the five senses, Blake turned from the art of irradiated Space. The synthesis most of the 19th century aspired to became for him a delusion. "The natural world must be consumed" — one of Blake's convictions which Crabb Robinson (as if he had never heard of the Bible) called "unintelligible."

- a78) *Blake, 1825-27, Dante, plate 1, Inferno I: Dante, Virgil, Beasts, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne*
- V678) *Blake, 1825-27, Dante, plate 9, Inferno v: Minos and the Lustful, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne*
- 78) *Blake, 1825-27, Dante, plate 35, Inferno XIX: The Simoniac Pope, Tate Gallery, London (video: upper detail only)*

Blake's universe was more perilous. As he had written Butts in 1802:

Temptations are on the right hand & left; behind, the sea of time and space roars & follows swiftly; he who keeps not right onward is lost, & if our footsteps slide in clay how can we do otherwise than fear and tremble.

That Ulro was ever present — not the orthodox Hell of a punitive Nobodaddy he reclaimed from Dante the last two years of his life.

Who knows, if Mozart had lived, he might have paralleled that realm. As for Beethoven, only in the *Grosse Fuge* did he pierce radiant nature to the fission of such a flaming core.

Music: Beethoven, 1825, *Grosse Fuge*, fierce theme in coda, Columbia M5L-277 (with softer succession to slide 79)

- 79) *Blake, 1825-27, Dante, plate 77, Purgatory ix: Lucia Carries Dante in his Sleep, Fogg Museum, Harvard; + V detail*

Gleaming through Purgatory, Blake sees Beulah:

a soft Moony Universe, feminine, lovely,
Pure, mild & Gentle, given in mercy to those who sleep...

(Four Zoas I)

80) *Blake, 1825-27, Dante, plate 90, Paradise xiv: Dante Adores the Flaming Christ, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; first, video details, below and above*

In Paradise, the fire image of Christ becomes for Blake the ecstatic sacrifice in every moment of simultaneous vision:

Soon all around the Heavens burnt with flaming fires,
And Urizen and Luvah and Tharmas and Urthona arose into
Albion's Bosom. Then Albion stood before Jesus in the Clouds
Of Heaven, Fourfold among the Visions of God in Eternity.

80+1) *Blake, c. 1795, Glad Day, color print, British Museum, London*

Shakespeare:

Night candles are burnt out, and Jocund Day
Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops.

Blake:

For... Rivers & Mountains
Are also Men; every thing is Human, mighty! sublime!
In every bosom a Universe expands, as wings
Let down at will around, and call'd the Universal Tent.

(Jerusalem 38)

Christian history telescoped to that eternal coming:

And suddenly there was with the angels a multitude of the heavenly
host praising God and saying:

Arise and drink your bliss, for every thing that lives is holy!