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Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky

Gates to Eternity:

Sexuality and the Self in William Blake's Prophetic Books

(diplomová práce)

Autor: Adam Petrásek (Anglická filologie)

Vedoucí práce: Mgr. David Livingstone, Ph.D.

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Prohlašuji, že jsem diplomovou práci na téma vypracoval samostatně pod odborným dohledem vedoucího práce a uvedl jsem všechny použité podklady a literaturu.

V Olomouci dne .....

Podpis .....

Děkuji Mgr. Davidu Livingstoneovi, Ph.D., za odborné vedení práce, poskytování rad a materiálových podkladů k práci.

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## 1) Introduction

In my master's thesis I would like to focus on aspects of William Blake's perception of individuality and sexuality and its oppression within society. In particular, the thesis will deal with an analysis of how his point of view developed or prevailed from those presented in his earlier works. The analysis itself shall focus on Blake's prophetic books *Milton* and *Jerusalem: The Emanation of The Great Albion*. First of all, I would like to draw attention to Blake's rendering of the psychological aspects of every individual and the ways it reacts to various kinds of repression. Moreover, I will argue that Blake did not identify the Church as the main culprit of the mournful situation within society. He expanded his vision to the important perception of self-inflicted repressive forces within the mind of every individual resulting from the chaos of the parts of being.

In the next part, I will move on to the sense perceptions and the ways they prevent people from perceiving life in its fulness, preventing them from reaching Eternity and Harmony of existence and most importantly their individuality and true self. The main part of the thesis focuses on an analysis of various states and personality traits encoded in Blake's rich mythological system. These present sexuality from various points of views ranging from the free spirit of liberated sexuality to the oppressed and rigid law of chastity that deadens life on Earth. Moreover, I will pay attention to Blake's depiction of homosexuality and how repressed homosexual feelings interfere with one's consciousness, manifesting themselves in homophobia.

I will also present some counterarguments to the opinion presented by several critics that in his late prophecies, William Blake moved from a liberated view of sexuality and gender. I shall argue that the author did not shift his thinking into the realm of misogynistic attitudes toward females. In depicting them as inferior to males, Blake just wanted to describe the state of affairs in society based on patriarchy. Also, I will present evidence that his own attitude towards the feminine realm of existence is very much positive.

Finally, the last chapter describes the harmonious time of equality between the sexes and cooperation on all levels of existence.

## 2) Milton and Jerusalem

William Blake began his work on *Milton* and *Jerusalem* in 1804. The fact that the poems are related in significant ways suggests that the time span between their respective beginnings was not too long. They deal with the similar themes, use the same symbolism and notably, *Jerusalem* is twice as long as *Milton*, having one hundred plates divided into four parts while *Milton* has fifty plates divided into two parts (Frye 356). The themes and method of the poems follow the style developed in his earlier work entitled, *Four Zoas: The torments of Love & Jealousy in The death and Judgment of Albion the Ancient Man*. Blake began writing the *Four Zoas* in 1795 and even though he never completed the poem, it enabled him to further elaborate and deepen his understanding of psychology. Moreover, his later prophecies undertook a shift in vocabulary and symbols as Schorer explains, ‘the gradual substitution of angelic for demonic figures marked the loss of the explosive vigor of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* and the incisiveness of *Songs of Experience*’ (308).

Even though the author began etching *Milton* in 1804, he continued to add new material for several years until 1810. Four copies of the poem are known. Writing of *Jerusalem* began the same year, although, he completely focused on his new project after he finished *Milton*. There are eight known copies of his largest published work. The writing process itself must have been very difficult because the original works contain many deletions as well as re-arrangements of the finished plates.

Before he began writing the prophecies, two very important events marked Blake’s life and they without a doubt significantly influences his work. One of them was meeting William Hayley who, as Damon notes, ‘is remembered today chiefly as the man who persuaded Blake to live near him at Felpham’ (176). Nevertheless, the relationship between them must have been much more important to Blake because Hayley inspired him to write the opening quarrel of *Milton* between Satan and Palamabron. The second event which occurred in Felpham as well, involved private John Scholfield, a provocateur who trespassed Blake’s garden. The drunk soldier was taken out from the garden by Blake himself after refusing to leave the premises. This insignificant event provided an important source of inspiration for the poet. He had to face the consequences and threats of the justice system because, ‘the humiliated Scholfield, seconded by his friend Private Cock [...], retaliated by accusing Blake and

his wife of treasonable utterances' (Damon 360). Nevertheless, even such unpleasant kinds of experience involving loss of liberty, Blake managed to transform into a beautiful work of art.

### 3) Personality

In his prophetic books, William Blake shifted his attention from interpersonal relations to the psychological aspects of humanity. In *Milton*, he paid attention to the self and psychology of the poet John Milton while in *Jerusalem*, through the character of Albion, he analysed the collective inner life of people in general. In order to draw a truthful picture of the human inner state, he sets on the stage various characters who represent aspects of one's psyche. Although some of these characters may have appeared in his earlier works, it is in *Milton* and *Jerusalem* where the author fully develops their temperament. In Blake's point of view, every individual's inner life is realized through the so-called Four Zoas. They are the core of every being and it is vital that they work in harmonious cooperation, otherwise the results are disastrous not only for an individual but for humanity as a whole. According to Foster S. Damon, these kernels of life were identified by Blake, 'with four fundamental aspects of man' (458). Additionally, each of them has a fundamental realm and a compass point assigned to its name, 'One to the North, named Urthona: One to the South, named Urizen: One to the East, named Luvah: One to the West, named Tharmas / They are the Four Zoa's that stood around the Throne Divine!' (M 19:16-19, E 112). Urthona's realm is the one of Imagination, Urizen represents man's Reason, Luvah the Emotions and Tharmas the Body. As stated above the Four Zoas should always be in harmony. The balanced inner life of an individual results in a healthy society and relationships among people according to Blake. Focal point of Blake's prophecies, on the other hand, is the state of error and the subsequent deterioration of people and the world.

The beginning of the decline is twice reiterated in *Milton* and the same phrase is used in *Jerusalem* as well, once can read that, 'when Luvah assumed the World of Urizen Southward / All fell towards the Center sinking downward in dire Ruin' (M 34:38, E 208). In other words, when the Emotions are used instead of Reason, all the

other aspects react and assume different position normally occupied by another Zoa. They rebel and want to usurp the power over the whole being and even though the outset was Luvah's, Blake does not present Emotions as the leading oppressor of being. Instead, the main tyrant of his works is Urizen, 'Luvah laid the foundation & Urizen finish'd it in howling / woe' (M 27:2-3, E 124). Reason desires dominion and as means of the attainment he uses his chief sense, sight, 'South stood the Nerves of the Eye' (J 98:16, E 257). The exaggerated use of sight is demonstrated by the domination the physical over the spiritual. Moreover, materialistic world view permeates human history and it is easy to understand this idea even in our day and age. This interpretation is supported by Laura Quinney who in *William Blake on Self and Soul* states that, 'the contemporary prestige of materialism made the isolation of consciousness a more acute problem because, stripped of its transcendent provenance, consciousness must struggle to make sense of its existence' (9). The isolation as Quinney describes it, is done under strict and simple conditions. Everything that does not fit a predefined category is dismissed as unreal and subsequently judged in the Urizenic dichotomy of good and bad which serves as a powerful scourge of oppression. In his *Eternity's Sunrise*, Leo Damrosch defines this rationalistic point of view as 'single vision [it] is the positivist worldview of empiricism, sometimes called Ulro by Blake, which accepts nothing as real unless it can be mathematically expressed and measured' (141). Moreover, the refusal and isolation are not enough for Reasoning part of human psyche because it prepares a severe warfare against all the other Zoas.

Even though Blake says that all the Zoas are in deadly opposition the main culprit is Urizen:

For in the depths of Albions bosom in the eastern heaven,  
 They sound the clarions strong! They chain the howling Captives!  
 They cast the lots into the helmet: they give the oath of blood in Lambeth  
 They vote the death of Luvah, & they nailed him to Albions Tree in Bath  
 (J 65:5-8, E 216)

This conflict should be taken as general, affecting all the people of the world, since Albion, the universal man represents the humanity. Moreover, the clarion sounds from the East which of course, as stated above, is the compass point belonging to Urizen. It is



a deep conflict of the self and the supremacy of Reason clears the way for the oppressive Sons of Albion who, 'have constructed an Abstract philosophy to war against the Imagination' (Damon 15). In the words of the author, their task is to drive away Jerusalem, the Emanation of Albion, the pure symbol of liberty in every individual, 'the Twelve Sons of Albion, join'd in dark assembly, / Jealous of Jerusalem's children, asham'd of her little-ones' (J 18:5-6, E 162-163). The Sons, however, do not realize that they are subordinate to their own inner struggle. As Blake puts it several times, they become what they beheld, while performing the vicious acts of oppression.

Blake goes even further and points out that the oppression, resulting from the chaos of the bewildered Zoas, must in fact be self-inflicted. Cruelty and willingness to perform hideous acts on other people always springs from the fact that one's psyche, in other words Four Zoas, are not harmonized. Thus, the mind is deceived into acting in a twisted manner, 'What seems to Be: Is: To those to whom / It seems to Be, & is productive of the most dreadful / Consequences to those to whom it seems to Be: even of / Torments, Despair' (J 32:51-54, E 179). According to Laura Quinney, 'Blake gives a deeper analysis in which the psyche works against itself. It is the very nature of interiority to precipitate out a false self, an "I" that goes on to deform the inner life' (133). To put it differently, even though it might be tempting to say that people are forced by some higher power or by the devil into wickedness, it is always people themselves who act violently. What is called Satan is nothing else than just a displacement of our own selfishness or in Blake's words the Selfhood. In Blake's mythology, Selfhood is the Ancient World of Urizen (J 58:44, E 208). The author suggests that it is the world resulting from the opposition of the Zoas. All the aspects of a man are guilty of selfhood according to Blake, 'The Four Zoa's rush around on all sides in dire ruin / Furious in pride of Selfhood the terrible Spectres of Albion' (J 58:47-48, E 208). This self-infliction of destruction is further supported because Los, the spectre of Urthona, the only one who laboured for the deliverance of Albion, sees the error of the Universal Man, in other words, error in all the people of the world, 'Thou wast the Image of God surrounded by the Four Zoa's / Three thou hast slain! I am the Fourth: thou canst not destroy me. Thou art in Error' (J 42:23-25, E 189). In Blake's point of view, emotions, one's perception of body and sexuality, and of course the reason are all dead in the materialistic world of Ulro. Only the inspiration of art is able to resist and with some difficulties stays on the right way into eternity.

The result of this inner havoc is the oppressive doctrine of Moral Law instilled over the individual by his own Reason. As stated above, Urizen is the domineering aspect of being and he usurps the power over all the other Zoas. The result is devastating for all of them, however:

In opposition deadly, and their Wheels in poisonous  
And deadly stupor turn'd against each other loud & fierce  
Entering into the Reasoning Power, Forsaking Imagination  
They became Spectres

.....  
The Spectre is the Reasoning Power in Man; & when separated  
From Imagination, and closing itself as in steel, in Ration  
Of the Things of Memory. It thence frames Laws & Moralities  
To destroy Imagination! The Divine Body, by Martydoms & Wars  
(J 74:5-8, 10-13, E229)

With this in mind, one sees that the decline of all the things of humanity is not instilled upon people by some higher power, be it God, or Satan. The evil and cruelty springs from the people themselves. For this reason, the harmony must be set up in a completely same manner, by people themselves. According to Quinney, the soul must come immediately to, 'a conviction of its greatness and an enjoyment of its creativity [...] care of the self requires undertaking a deliberate labor of self-transformation (21-23). Therefore, each individual has to focus on his or her own Minute Particulars. Everyone has to see God in herself or himself. God is not as a distant being somewhere in a void of heaven as it is described by the doctrine of the church. The inner aspect of a man and the psyche has become a slave of simplifications and generalizations. The forsaking of imagination results in creation of fixed classes which can be evaluated as good and bad. Thus, the man has become a slave of his own mistake and opposition of otherwise harmonized aspects of being. Sense played a great part in such a simplification of life. By making the senses champions of perception people sentenced themselves to the life of pain and oppression.

#### 4) Senses

Blake describes the true nature of the senses in *Jerusalem*. According to him, humans belittle themselves by closing the spiritual doors of perception and focusing solely on the material reality. In such a reality people become helpless because they are forced to regard their own self as inadequate for they are not able to discern it by the sense perceptions:

The Eye of Man, a little narrow orb, closd up & dark,  
Scarcely beholding the Great Light; conversing with the Void:  
The Ear, a little shell, in small volutions shutting out  
True Harmonies, & comprehending great, as very small:  
The Nostrils, bent down to the earth & clos'd with senseless flesh.  
That odours cannot them expand, nor joy on them exult:  
The Tongue, a little moisture fills, a little food it cloys,  
A little sound it utters, & its cries are faintly heard.

(J 49:34-41, E 198)

The senses deprive us of the great Light of Eternity, we are not able to listen to the true harmonies of life and find no joy in living. In other words, Blake points out that people of Ulro deprive themselves of the particularities of living. They are hidden under the veil of materialism. He perceives senses as the label makers of the generalization. Through them, people cannot see the true friendship of opposition and such a reality is based on simplistic dichotomies. Sons of Albion take advantage of the situation because it is them who, 'take the Two Contraries which are called qualities, with which / Every Substance is clothed, they name them Good & Evil / From them they make an Abstract, which is a Negation' (J 10:8-10, E 152-153). The author constantly reminds the reader of the delusionary aspect of the world as it is perceived by the senses. Correspondingly, the life itself becomes a confusion where people are wandering in a maze of their own design, 'It is a cavernous Earth / Of labyrinthine intricacy, twenty-seven folds of opakeness / And finishes where the lark mounts' (M 17:25-27, E 110-111). Foster S. Damon sees the cave as, 'symbol of the body in which man is confined' (75). Not only it again points to the fact that such a dire existence is self-inflicted, one can also see that

by presenting body as a type of prison, Blake shifts his perception of sexuality. In his later prophecies, the body is not the only way into Eternity. Even though it is important, the author now presents it only as an important step on a journey not the journey itself.

Sexuality is related to the realm of Beulah, a place of pleasures on which I shall focus later. In one of their lamentations, the Daughters of Beulah pay attention to the senses of a man, namely the smell. Once again, they highlight the inability of man to reach into Eternity via the inadequate sense perceptions:

Thou perceivest the Flowers put forth their precious Odours!  
And none can tell how from so small a center comes such sweets  
Forgetting that within that Center Eternity expands  
Its ever during doors, that Og & Anak fiercely guard  
(M 31:46-49, E 131)

As can be seen, Beulah's Daughters describe a new pair of characters whose task is to prevent the development of people. Og and Anak have been described by Laura Quinney as, 'the blocking agents within the self, the Og and Anak who may be keeping our own gates closed [...] guarded by Og and Anak, figures for self-created fears and self-imposed limitations [...] All deities reside in the human breast, and so do the devils' (131). Even though both of them, as Quinney says, are inside every person, their true origin is not within our breast. In fact, they infested it for they had come from the chaos in order to push away God. They represent the often irrational doubts of the self over its position within society. In Blake's point of view, there is no universal God in the sky, he or she lies in human breast, 'Seek not they heavenly father then beyond the skies / There Chaos dwells & ancient Night & Og & Anak old' (M 20:32-33, E 114). In other words, they are the false God, the evil of Satan.

According to Damrosch, Zoa's 'quarrelsome interaction is what fills the poems' (173). In *Milton*, however, Blake not only describes the destructive aspects of the sense perception, but he also describes what is called, 'the joy of essential life' (Damon 139). He uses a simple symbol of a fly, a small creature to be contrasted with physically much bigger man. The physical inadequacy of the fly, if compared to the man is juxtaposed with its spiritual greatness, which highly exceeds the spirituality of people, 'Seest thou

the winged fly, smaller than a grain of sand? / It has a heart like thee; a brain open to heaven & hell / Withinside wondrous & expansive; its gates are not clos'd' (M 20:27-29, E 114). Unlike the man's, the fly's senses are not guarded by self-imposed limitations of Reason. The creature is able to perceive the world which is not based on abstract generalizations and simple dichotomies. It knows what it means to perceive the true friendship of oppositions, or as Blake calls it, Heaven and Hell. Moreover, one can see that the symbolic meaning of the fly expands when the author describes its swift dance:

Thou seest the gorgeous clothed Flies that dance & sport in summer  
Upon the sunny brooks & meadows: every one the dance  
Knows in its intricate mazes of delight artful to weave

.....

These are the Children of Los

(M 26:2-4, 7 E 123).

Fly knows how to dance, in other words, it knows how to live in joy. In contrast to man, it lives in intricate mazes, but these are described as delightful. Moreover, by being open to Eternity, the fly is also described as a child of Los, a child of poetic inspiration. Its spiritual life, in Blake's point of view, can be perceived as a delicate work of art. This juxtaposition teases the reader because people tend to perceive fly as an inferior insect and as Quinney points out, 'here he pivots and makes a pointed, even somewhat accusatory, remark—I hope your gates are not closed—designed to render us suddenly self-conscious. Blake reminds us that he intends his comments to have a universal application: we are to recognize that this is our story, too' (131). By addressing the readers, Blake hopes his words will resonate in each of them individually. Individuality is for him one of the key steps into Eternity.

## 5) Individuality

In his prophetic books William Blake demonstrates the idea that people have lost the touch with their own true self, not to mention the fact that they have learned to oppress the individuality. Being born into a world of generalizations where peculiarity of individual voices is suffocated does not present many opportunities to rise above the oppression. For Blake, however, this was one of the burning problems, ‘If you account it Wisdom when you are angry to be silent, and / Not to shew it: I do not account that Wisdom but Folly / Every Mans Wisdom is peculiar to his own Individuality’ (M 4:6-8, E 98). Nevertheless, if one is to stand up to the oppression he or she must change the acquired perception of the world. On the other hand, individuality should not be mistaken with egocentrism because, ‘In Selfhood, we are nothing: but fade away in the mornings breath’ (J 40:13, E 187). In other words, exceptional care is required when it comes to individuality because it can be easily twisted by the manipulative selfhood. According to Quinney, ‘Blake’s essential topic is the unhappiness of the subject within its own subjectivity, or to use a more plangent idiom, the loneliness of the soul’ (Quinney 11). One of the cornerstones of individuality, if the loneliness shall be cured, is realization that God is not a distant being to be feared or else his wrath shall destroy people. For Blake, God’s dwelling place is in all the people. God is particular, not universal. For this reason, the heavenly kingdom is not a somewhere in the sky. To start the healing process of individuality Quinney suggests, ‘let us have Blake’s own [vision], in which there is neither a distant nor a punitive God and the human subject does not have to look upon itself as a poor thing abandoned to darkness’ (14). The author understood the nearness of heaven in the spatial terms. The closer to other people somebody is, the closer the kingdom of heaven, manifested by the act of forgiveness. Los is the one aspect of being, the inspiration, art, poetry that realizes the desperate situation people have driven themselves into, ‘Los grew furious raging: Why stand we here trembling around / Calling on God for help; and not ourselves in whom God dwells’ (J 38:12-13, E 184). There is no external force to make the life on earth better. Los’ exclamation highlights the fact that people must try hard and put great effort into improving the disposition of the self, thus improving the world.

Once again it is Los, who reminds the reader that God is always within our bosom no matter how dire the state people find themselves in, ‘God is within, & without! He is even in the depths of Hell!’ (J 12:15, E 155). To put it another way, Los teaches self-confidence in the face of any kind of difficulty; Liberty and Imagination is

always present. As Damrosch says, 'to arrest this chaotic suffering, and to begin the labour of reconstruction, will be the task of the Zoa of imagination (Damrosch 162). Even Jerusalem herself is reminded by Jesus that despite her awful condition she should never cease to believe:

Tho thou seest me not a season  
Even a long season & a hard journey & a howling wilderness!  
Tho Valas cloud hide thee & Luvahs fires follow thee!  
Only believe & trust in me, Lo. I am always with thee!  
(J 62:26-29, E 213).

This does not mean, however, to worship an idol. On the contrary, she should believe in her own abilities, in the possibility of forgiveness. Jesus, according to Blake, was a son of an unknown father, a symbol of forgiveness. Moreover, Damon comments that the adulterous conception of Jesus, 'was one of free love' (Damon 213). Therefore, the believe in Jesus means a belief in one's very own instincts, in liberty and most importantly in the act of forgiveness.

The desired change of the world should come from within. It will never come from an external source because people themselves are the creators of the world they reside in. 'In your own Bosom you bear your Heaven / And Earth, & all you behold, tho it appears Without it is Within / In your Imagination of which this World of Mortality is but a Shadow' (J 71:17-19, E 225). Nevertheless, people are not willing to follow their own imagination for the sake of the change, or to put it differently to let their individuality breathe freely. As stated above, the world is hidden in the materialistic cloud of Vala. In addition, the hate of Luvah follows people as naturally as their own shadow. The closed senses dismiss everything which springs from the imagination because it is invisible, unmeasurable. The reasoning power of man is simply too strong, in Blake's words, 'The idiot Reasoner laughs at the Man of Imagination / And from laughter proceeds to murder by undervaluing calumny' (M 32:6-7, E 131). The decomposition of individuality is possible thanks to the disregard of life's particularities. All the subtle nuances of one's inner life are neglected which, in turn, results in oppression among people in general. These nuances Blake calls Minute Particulars. They are the expressions of life, especially joy of life in insignificant details. Blake insisted that, 'every Minute Particular is Holy' (J 69:42, E 223). In the

world of abstraction people forget that the centre of the attention should be especially in the details. Only then the inner harmony can be established once again and help to improve the general conditions. 'Labour well the Minute Particulars, attend to the Little-ones: / And those who are in misery cannot remain so long / If we do but our duty: Labour well the teeming Earth' (J 55:51-53, E 205). The individuality and particularities of life are without a doubt connected with love and sexuality.

Blake believed that there is no place for any kind of interference from the church and its dogmatic perceptions of sexuality. By prescribing abstractions and generalizations about man's sexuality the church was able to tell people what is good or bad and consequently oppress those aspects of love and sexuality which proved to be disrupting to the desired order of the dull rounds of obedience. For him, 'Embraces are Cominglings: from the Head even to the feet; / And not a pompous High Priest entering by Secret Place' (J 69:44-45, E 223). Even though these were the eternal truths of existence, the life itself, as Blake saw it, was radically different. Individuals were deprived of the power over their lives, their own psychological development and self were in mournful conditions. It is again Los, the embodiment of poetic inspiration who perceived the catastrophic consequences of the defective development which man's aspect had to endure,

And saw every Minute Particular of Albion degraded & murdered  
But saw not by whom; they were hidden within in the minute particulars  
Of which they had possessd themselves; and there they take up  
The articulations of a mans soul, and laughing throw it down  
Into the frame, then knock out upon the plank, & souls are bak'd

(J 45:7-11, E 194)

Los cannot see who the culprit of these oppressive tendencies upon human's self is, near the end of *Jerusalem*, however, he comes to the realization that it is the Spectre, the Selfhood itself. It is the reasoning power of a person when separate from the Emanation (J 53:25, E 203). Milton identifies this part of himself as Satan (M 38:29, E 139). It is the inner error which brings destruction, 'Satan represents an even greater force for deception (and self-deception) because he is an unconscious hypocrite, concealing his hostility and greed from himself so as to be able to act on them. He is self-concern that does not recognize itself' (Quinney 136). In other words, it is again people themselves



who inflict the oppression not only upon others, however, but also upon themselves. By following the dictate of violence, the oppressor becomes a slave without realizing this terrible paradox. Blake demonstrates this paradox upon the women and female emanations.

## 6) Misogynism in Blake's Prophecies

Many of the critical analysis dealing with Blake's portrayal of women and of the Emanation, female counterpart to the male portion of a soul, tend to see Blake as either departing from the all embracing verse of freedom of his earlier works, or they present him as an openly misogynistic author with no respect for the feminine. This, however, only shows the lack of understanding on the part of the reader and reinforces the rigid thinking Blake hoped to diminish. As Lucy Cogan says, 'the problematic portrayal of women, or "emanations," in Blake's prophetic works has long been noted. In particular, the interplay of female sexuality and personal agency tends to produce negative results, resolving into a dichotomy in which womanhood is seen as either strong and destructive or weak and self-abnegating' (21). In her article entitled *Female as Metaphor in William Blake's Poetry* Susan Fox for example criticizes Blake for his bad treatment of female characters, 'Blake, who more than any other male writer of his time recognized the destructive effect of received attitudes towards women, but who was nevertheless to some extent a victim of those attitudes' (519). Brenda Webster argues, in *Milton and Jerusalem*, Blake 'suggests that the female should cease even to exist independently and become reabsorbed into the body of man where she belongs' (qtd. in Connolly 115). In both *Milton* and *Jerusalem* there appear numerous examples of strong female characters who, as majority of other characters, are under the influence of oppressive forces of erroneous Satan. Therefore, after a superficial analysis, they may seem as either strong and active or weak and passive. Moreover, Stephen P. Hopkins in his *Women's Laments in the Poetry and Prophecies of William Blake*, notes that, 'as Jerusalem progresses, women's laments become more critical as countering the extensive damage of men in history' (71). Therefore, after a close examination, one can see that the Daughters and female emanations of Blake's mythological system are just as important as males and that there are numerous lines where Blake describes female ability of great selfless acts, highly exceeding the male ones.

First of all, it is important to clarify what exactly the Emanation is. Many analyses present her as a female portion of the male which divides and with a destructive force seeks dominion. The fact that most of the emanations presented by Blake are constantly referred to by feminine pronoun she, may be misleading in asserting a generalization that this portion of the soul is only feminine. Nevertheless, in Jerusalem, there are several lines which exactly state, 'For Man cannot unite with Man but by their Emanations / Which stand both Male & Female at the Gates of each Humanity' (J 88:10, E 246). Here Blake clearly declares that the portions of the soul are divided equally into the opposite sexes. Not only this passage show that emanations are also male, it as a matter of fact clarifies Blake's usage of the word Man which is sometimes seen as problematic. It is tempting to think that eternity is granted only for males, females are absorbed and have no autonomy. This Man of eternity, however, is an androgynous being who has both the feminine and masculine aspects harmonized, 'All are Men in Eternity' (J 71:15, E 225). The idea of equality and harmony between sexes is directly presented by Blake's description of eternity. It is a realm where every little particular of the soul is embraced and no generalizations interfere:

In Great Eternity, every particular Form gives forth or Emanates  
Its own peculiar Light, & the Form is the Divine Vision  
And the Light is his Garment This is Jerusalem in every Man  
A Tent & Tabernacle of Mutual Forgiveness Male & Female Clothings.  
(J 54:1-4, E 203)

As a result, no absorption or destruction of the feminine emanation takes place there. In his mythological system, Blake called this state of total harmony of all the opposites Humanity (Damon 190).

Beneath the Eternity, there is a realm of abundant sex and joy called Beulah. It is a realm of equality and unrestricted sexuality, 'First of Beulah / On Couches soft, with mild music, tended by Flowers of Beulah / Sweet Female Forms, winged or floating in the air spontaneous' (M 34:9-11, E 134). The earthly division of sexes permeates here. Nevertheless, as a land of flowers it is a place of 'sexual pleasures' (Damon 43), and Blake does not present the sexes in contrast or dichotomy. His view is psychological, there is no being who is hundred percent male or female. Every man has a feminine

portion of his soul and every woman has her specific masculine part. This is also the reason why it is impossible to view emanations as strictly feminine. For as Jerusalem explains to 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 nurs'd into Youth & Maiden  
By the tears & smiles of Beulahs Daughters  
(J79:74-77, E236)

Furthermore, the abundance of feminine emanations in Blake's prophecies suggest a vital aspect of his work. It is very important to bear in mind his poems he describes a male dominated world and a psyche of an unbalanced individual with overactive masculine portion of the soul. Female emanations and female sexuality is without a doubt oppressed by the masculine. Consequently, it reacts to this oppression with an equally powerful reaction. This reaction is called by William Blake the Female Will. Anne K. Mellor, describes the author's treatment of the sexes as disastrous, 'females are not only represented as weak or power-hungry, they come to represent weakness (that frailty best seen in the precariously limited "emanative" state Beulah) and power-hunger ("Female Will," the corrupting lust for dominance identified with women)! Blake's theoretical commitment to androgyny in his prophetic books is thus undermined by his habitual equation of the female with the subordinate or the perversely dominant' (148). Misreading of his later prophetic books may lead to assertions that active female is the primary cause of all the evil in the world. That she is either subordinate to men and lacking a free will or she uses sexuality as a tool of oppression to gain dominion over men, thus leading them to war for her own desire of attainment. In his study, Leo Damrosch also charges Blake of taking a misogynistic point of view and presenting his prejudice against women. He talks about four different Blakes 'one is the prophet of free love and unchained desire, but only in the earliest works. The second sees the female as an "emanation" that should never have acquired separate existence at all. The third believes that female sexuality is a seductive trap, and the fourth holds that actual women—Catherine Blake not least—should be subordinate to men and devote their being to them (218). The fact that Blake describes male and female relations in

such a way does not mean he subscribes to the prejudiced ideas of misogyny. His *Milton* and *Jerusalem* show quite the contrary. Blake's goal was to describe the world and the state of mind in a constant vicious circle of oppression. It is an erroneous universe of Satan as Mark Schorer in *William Blake: The Politics of Vision* explains, 'everything that happens [is] in the universe as constructed under the necessities of Urizen, and therefore most assertions that are made in and about this universe are mistaken, or partial' (232).

In this fallen world of division, it is the male aspect or the Sons of Albion who begin the power struggle. They are the 'Spectre Sons of Albion', the oppressors of imagination and liberty. Their oppressive tool in a war for dominion, which is the result of the abstractions they create, is religion and its derivative Moral Law of chastity. They want to, 'devour the Sleeping Humanity of Albion in rage & hunger' (J 5:30, E 147). Their goal, in other words, is to destroy the equilibrium of sexes called Humanity, which the author describes as sleeping, and to dominate the world by establishing the rule of patriarchy. In this world all that belongs to the feminine realm is oppressed. This is exactly the reason why Blake pays so much attention to feminine Emanations and nearly none to male ones. Moreover, there is no place for joy or acting on one's desires, represented by feminine Emanation of man. 'All the infant Loves & Graces were lost, for the mighty Hand / Condens'd his Emanations into hard opaque substances; / And his infant thoughts & desires, into cold, dark, cliffs of death' (J 9:1-2, E 152). It is also important to mention that Blake highlights Hand as the oppressor of joys because as Damon says he is 'evidently the Head' (Damon 15). In other words, Hand represents Urizen's usurpation of all the other Zoas in Man, the false self-enthroned God, Satan.

Not only are the joys of free Emanations oppressed. The oppression has to be justified by a dogma and nothing serves better than the religious doctrine of chaste life. This way of life forbids anything that even distantly resembles any kind of pleasure in life, 'Every Emanative joy forbidden as a Crime: / And the Emanations buried alive in the earth with pomp of religion:/ Inspiration deny'd; Genius forbidden by laws of punishment (J 9:14-16, E152). The result of this cruel doctrine is a reaction of those separated Emanations which is called Female Will. It is a reaction to oppression instilled by chastity. According to *Sapphism and Chastity in Blake's Jerusalem* by Sean David Nelson, 'Blake sees the creation and continuation of chastity as a power struggle'

(83). Nevertheless, the reaction of the female cannot be taken solely as hunger for power. It is mainly a fearful reaction and according to Blake, it is fear which inevitably leads to aggression. Vala is the one who expresses her fears when she addresses Albion, ‘Where shall I hide from thy dread countenance & searching eyes’ (J 22:13, E 167). This fear is used by the church as described above and it is a source of deadly aggression which kills forgiveness, liberty and all the free expressions of desires as well. All the daughters of Albion are subdued to the Female Will and follow the sons’ instruction precisely when they bind the pure act of forgiveness, ‘O Skofield why art thou cruel? Lo Joseph [...] Bind him down sisters [...] come circumscribe this tongue of sweets & with a screw of iron / Fasten this ear into the rock! [...] Weep not so Sisters! Weep not so! Our life depends on this (J 68:1-7, E 221). By acting in a violent and oppressive way, all the women accept the erroneous state of Satan and the rules of the game designed by men. This interpretation is supported by Claire Colebrook’s article *Blake and Feminism: Romanticism and the Question of the Other* where she explains, ‘negative female figures represent not an independent or autonomous femininity but a masculine projection of female alterity—hence their connection with other ideological constructs such as Nature and Religion’ (7). With this in mind, their actions cannot be taken as a result of the feminine portion of the soul for it sprung from male oppression. ‘Blake located the doctrine of denial not in any feminine essence, but in the ideology of religion which exploited certain representations of the feminine’ (7). Pure and autonomous femininity, in Blake’s point of view, appears in the acts of liberty and selflessness. Moreover, Blake sees women of the fallen world used as puppets in this male power struggle:

I see a Feminine Form arise from the Four terrible Zoas  
 Beautiful but terrible struggling to take a form of beauty  
 Rooted in Shechem: this is Dinah, the youthful form of Erin  
 The wound I see in South Molton Street & Stratford Palace  
 (J 74:52-55, E 230)

Not only does he describe Feminine Form as a result of a havoc caused by the fight between the Four Zoas, but by referring to Dinah and Shechem, he suggests that the feminine is terribly misused by the masculine. In like manner, Jacob’s sons used their sister Dinah for the purpose of slaughtering all the men of the Hivites. The Sons of

Albion exploit their sisters in their own machinations. Moreover, this ‘tragedy of true love’ (Damon 104), is deepened even further because Blake describes Dinah as a youthful form of Erin. In Damon’s words, ‘the holiness of the body’ (128), is defiled the same way. According to Hopkins, ‘Erin is actually not an ‘Emanation’ at all in the secondary sense of the term, but a female who remains independent, possessing her own identity apart from that of a male’ (72). Even though she is independent as Hopkins suggests, she is not able to shun the destructive influence of patriarchy because she describes herself as, ‘By Laws of Chastity & Abhorrence I am witherd up’ (J 49:56, E 198).

All of Albion is affected by the misuse of the Feminine, but most importantly, it inflicts a human subconscious with effects of false morality. This proves to be the most disastrous because to describe the situation, William Blake uses nouns such as cruelty, vengeance and phrases like chained down or filled with vengeance,

A nether-world must have received the foul enormous spirit,  
Under pretence of Moral Virtue, Fill’d with Revenge and Law.  
There to eternity chain’d down, and issuing in red flames  
And curses, with his mighty arms brandish’d against the heavens  
Breathing cruelty blood & vengeance, gnashing his teeth with pain  
Torn with black storms, & ceaseless torrents of his own consuming fire:  
Within his breasts his mighty Sons chained down, & fill’d with cursings:  
And his dark Eon, that once fair crystal form divinely clear:  
Within his ribs producing serpents whose souls are flames of fire.

(J 36:34-42, E 182)

These lines suggest that every act of cruelty is bound to affect its agent as well. This is the reason why Sons of Albion are imprisoned within Albion’s breast which is a world of chastity and Moral Law. Moreover, Blake does not mention the Daughters of Albion within this passage. He does so because the Sons are responsible for all the oppression. They perpetuate the cruel circle of oppression into which the Daughters are intertwined in the position of a victim. Only Jerusalem appears, female emanation of Albion, a symbol of liberty is imprisoned within the world of moral virtue as well. She, as an ultimate female character is symbolically described as issuing phallic serpents of male

oppression. Nelson comments the position of a woman within patriarchal society is based on reaction to the male asperity, 'men set the dominant ideology, and women must react to it. History cannot synthesize these differences but instead exacerbates them' (90). In this way, Blake suggests that the circle of oppression is indeed constructed my males and females are deceived into acting in a similar way with equally disastrous results. It is Albion who is identified by Los as a creator of the Female Will, 'O Albion why didst thou a Female Will Create?' (J 56:43, E 206), and as we know, Albion is under the corruptive rule of Satan in everything he does.

Moreover, the engravings in the Plate 72 and 82 of *Jerusalem* support the interpretation of Female Will as passive continuation of male inflicted violence. The vicious circle of sexual oppression, which reads, 'Continually building. Continually Decaying because of Love and Jealousy' (J 72, E 227) is engraved in the middle of the plate 72. The bottom of the same plate depicts a snake laying upon a mirror writing, 'Women the comforters of Men become the Tormenters & Punishers.' Most importantly, however, the engraving on the plate 82 reads:

In Heaven the only Art of Living  
Is Forgetting & Forgiving  
Especially to the Female  
But if you on Earth Forgive  
You shall not find where to Live  
(J 81, E 238)

The engraving depicts Daughters of Albion who listen to these instructions from Gwendolen. As stated above, Blake did not believe in any kind of distant heaven, he saw the heavenly kingdom on Earth 'materialized' in the act of forgiveness. Therefore, the instructions in reversed writing must be false, they are the instructions of Satan and Church, designed in order to deceive Daughters of Albion. As Damon says, 'Gwendolen is a Female Will rampant' (169), she is indoctrinated with the religion of chastity and her task is to lure all the women into the state of Rahab in the Covering Cherub, which is the false dogma of the church. In this way, once again, Blake highlights the fact that the Female Will is created by men for the religious wars of power, 'Rahab Babylon appeard [...] A Female hidden in a Male, Religion hidden in War / named Moral Virtue

(J 40:17-21, E 141-142). The interpretation of Gwendolen as a passive acceptor of the rules of patriarchy is further supported by a line, ‘Gwendolen is become a Clod of Clay’ (J 56:27-28, E 206). In other words, she is pliable, she can be shaped into anything and masculine oppression formed her into a tyrant. Additionally, Blake in an even clearer and straightforward way, using Los, reiterates the idea that through Moral Virtue, church was able to manipulate women into a strife of the sexes, ‘When the Druids demanded Chastity from Women & all was lost’ (J 63:25, E 214).

As a result, the submission through sly deception is successful and the Daughters of Albion are found in acting out terrible deeds which are bound to mark them similarly as they did their counterparts the Sons. The society of Albion further deteriorates because it is deprived of any kind of privacy of love when Daughters with the knives of flint:

Cut asunder his [Albion’s] inner garments: searching with  
Their cruel fingers for his heart, & there they enter in pomp,  
In many tears; & there they erect a temple & an altar:  
They pour cold water on his brain in front  
(J 66:27-30, E 218)

It is important to highlight the pouring of the cold water on Albion’s brain. This is an act of Urizenic thought which serves the purpose of limiting the energy of sexuality and imagination. Same thing is done to Milton by Urizen himself, ‘pouring on / To Miltons brain the icy fluid from his broad cold palm’ (M 19:8-9, E 112). This is the reason why all the oppressors of Blake’s prophetic books ‘become what they beheld’. By the act of oppressing they freeze themselves from any kind of spiritual development conditioned by the liberty of sexuality and the relationships of sexes are bound to follow the vicious circle of the torments of jealousy demonstrated by desperate husband who is deprived of all the sexual delights by the Female Will he helped to create:

Then thou wast lovely, mild & gentle. Now thou art terrible  
In jealousy & unlovely in my sight, because thou has cruelly  
Cut off my loves in fury till I have no love left for thee  
.....



Therefore I shew my Jealousy & set before you Death.

(M 33:5-10, E 132)

The lovely female form is suppressed from all the regions of Humanity. Instead of true liberty, the Shadow of liberty, the Shadowy Female Vala, torments the world because the emotion of love was twisted into violent hate, 'He [Albion] conquered Luvah my Beloved [...] Luvah framd the Knife & Luvah gave / The Knife into his daughters hand' (J 80:19-23, E 236). Once again Blake subtly points to the fact that the torments of love and jealousy, in other words Female Will does not denote a liberty of choice but blind continuation of previous oppression. Vala, unlike the Daughters, expresses her contempt of males, 'Go assume Papal dignity thou Spectre, thou Male Harlot!' (J 64:16, E 215), because even though she is victimized as well, she can remember the bright days of liberty of emotion and sexuality, suggested by the author in a Sapphic scene with Jerusalem which is analysed in the chapter focusing on homosexuality. This is without a doubt the reason why in the character of Vala, a gradual development towards liberated and active feminine aspect can be seen. She is able to see that the daughters of Albion are in fact used in the wars for power. Moreover, she realizes that without a deception of the feminine aspect in every individual, patriarchal religion would not be able to gain its power, 'Set your Son before a man & he shall take you & your sons / For slaves: but set your Daughter before a man & She / Shall make him & his sons & daughters your slaves for ever!' (J 45:52-54, E 195). Near the end of *Jerusalem*, even the Daughters of Albion themselves come to the realization they are being misused, 'But here we built Babylon on Euphrates, compell'd to build / And to inhabit (J 84:8-9, E 243). Nelson summarizes the condition of the deceived Daughters and describes the situation in which, 'exploiting the role that sex can play in the dialectic of chastity, Blake's women are able to maintain control over men once they gain political power and essentially become the terror that they once beheld' (92). Nevertheless, there are several characters who show what was Blake's real opinion of women and their importance for the Liberty of every individual.

Blake puts special emphasis and highlights the overall importance of female Emanations because he sees them as vital parts of the journey towards harmonious living. Whether the Emanation is suppressed, driven away or hidden does not matter because any absence of the feminine counterpart to the male portion of the soul brings

only destruction. There are several lines in which the author openly admits that the female portion of the soul is capable of selfless deeds surpassing the ability of the male portions. In *Milton*, his male portion comes to the realization that oppression of his own Female Emanation lead to the dire situation of all of Albion. The main reason is that the poet himself is a symbol of the lasting error in the society, ‘without my Emanation? / With the daughters of memory, & not with the daughters of / inspiration / I in my selfhood am that Satan: I am the evil one’ (M 14:28-30, E 108). Milton’s emanation is called Ololon, she represents his three wives and three daughters. On the character of Ololon, Blake showed the importance of the female portion of the soul because without her ability of forgiveness and openness towards sexuality, traits that none of the male characters of his prophetic books is capable of, harmony would never come to be, ‘O how the Starry Eight rejoice’d to see Ololon descended! / And now that a wide road was open to Eternity, / By Ololons descent thro Beulah to Los & Enitharmon’ (J 35:34-36, E 135). Moreover, she shows an immense bravery because for the sake of liberty she faces ‘the Gates of the Dead’ and enters the world of sexual strife, ‘where the Contraries of Beulah War beneath Negations Banner’ (J 34:23, E 134). The most important scene, however, in which Blake highlight the importance and wisdom of the Feminine Emanation, occurs when Ololon faces Milton in the act of self-annihilation. Within their conversation the author shows that although it may be true that Milton came for the sake of self-annihilation, he still shows traits of the erroneous state of Satan, in other words patriarchy. Even though he recognizes himself the Satan, later when Ololon asks him, ‘This Natural Religion! This impossible absurdity / Is Ololon the cause of this?’ (M 40:13-14, E 141), his masculine pride prevents him from self-annihilation and admitting the mistakes of patriarchy. Blake shows that, ‘knowledge is not a cure in itself; the internal obstacles are too tenacious to be dispelled by epiphany’ (Quinney 128). Instead, Milton promotes the oppressiveness once again, ‘Obey thou the words of the Inspired Man’ (M 40:29, E 142). Unlike Ololon he is not capable of forgiveness which is necessary for passing the state of error, his point of view still follows the premises of the destructive circle of oppression, ‘the Abomination of Desolation [...] now shall wholly purge away with Fire’ (M 41:35-27, E 142-143). Ololon, on the other hand, in the wisdom of the Feminine portion of the soul reminds Milton of the equality of sexes. Additionally, while forgiving him the oppressive patriarchal conduct she goes into self-annihilation, making it the act of pure selflessness:

Is this our Feminine Portion the Six-fold Miltonic Female  
Terribly this Portion trembles before thee O awful Man  
Altho' our Human Power can sustain the severe contentions  
Of Friendship, our Sexual cannot: but flies into the Ulro

.....  
are we Contraries O Milton, Thou & I  
.....

So saying the Virgin divided Six-fold & with a shriek  
Dolorous that ran thro all Creation a Double Six-fold Wonder!

(M 41:30-33, 35, 42:3-4, E143)

Albion is also divided from his Emanation Jerusalem and according to Claire Colebrook, 'the union between the male (Albion) and his female emanation (Jerusalem) is the condition for the possibility of regaining human paradise. While such an apotheosis can be interpreted as an annihilation of the feminine it can also be read as a celebration of sexual difference' (6). Not only is it a celebration of sexuality but it without a doubt is also an act of annihilation of the masculine portion of being. By making Ololon the leader of the self-annihilation Blake presents the Feminine portion of the soul as capable to see beyond the selfish needs of the conscious self in much powerful way than the masculine one which imitates her act of annihilation. Furthermore, Ololon's courage is stressed by the fact that she willingly vegetated into Ulro, the world of the Dead (Damon 416), to show the masculine Milton what the self-annihilation truly means. Daughters of Beulah are not willing to enter the corrupted world because:

To be their inferiors or superiors we equally abhor;  
Superior, none we know: inferior none: all equal share  
Divine benevolence & joy, for the Eternal Man  
Walketh among us, calling us his Brothers & his Friends

(J 55:7-10, E 204).

The domination of the masculine aspect over feminine and its subsequent reaction is summarized in the relationships of Milton towards his Sixfold emanation,

who represents his three wives and three daughters, and in the relationship of Los and his Emanation Enitharmon. In the case of Milton, it is broadened by the relationship towards the women of his life before he died and went to heaven. He behaved in total accordance to his masculine portion of being and treated his wives accordingly. In Blake's prophetic book he epitomizes the oppressive forces which lie behind the destruction of relationships among sexes and behind the twisted understanding of love. Even in the end on the poem Milton is still not able to understand Ololon completely and treats her with despicable harshness. Damon comments that Milton's relationship towards the feminine was based on the fact that he, 'had never really understood the other sex. His honeymoon difficulties with his first wife had inspired his great tome on divorce; he loved his second wife at least to the extent of a great sonnet; his third wife was merely a housekeeper. It is well known his three daughters mistreated their great father' (Damon 307). Blake used this relationship in his poem because it summarized his concept of Female Will. Milton, the Satan himself, as stated above oppresses the feminine portion of his being,

In those three females whom his Wives, & those three whom his Daughters  
 Had represented and contain'd, that they might be resum'd  
 By giving up of Selfhood: & they distant view'd his journey  
 In their eternal spheres, now Human, tho' their Bodies remain clos'd  
 In the dark Ulro till the Judgment: also Milton knew: they and  
 Himself was Human, tho' now wandering thro' Death's Vale  
 In conflict with those Female forms, which in blood & jealousy  
 Surrounded him, dividing & uniting without end or number.  
 He saw the Cruelties of Ulro, and he wrote them down  
 In iron tablets: and his Wives & Daughters names were these  
 Rahab and Tirzah, & Milcah & Malah & Noah & Hoglah,  
 They sat rang'd round him as the rocks of Horeb round the land  
 Of Canaan: and they wrote in thunder smoke and fire  
 His dictate; and his body was the Rock Sinai; that body,  
 Which was on earth born to corruption:  
 (M 17:1-15, E 110)

Blake first describes how Milton sees his female forms surrounding him in blood and jealousy. It may seem that the feminine portion is power hungry and oppressive. Nevertheless, the cruelties of Ulro, oppressive forces and power hunger, were written down by Milton himself, by his erroneous state called Satan. In other words, the masculine portion of being is presented as the cruel power with repressive force, as the one to which the feminine portion has to react. The reaction is the Female Will, jealousy and oppression by the means of sexuality. This interpretation is further supported because the feminine portion writes the dictate of Milton. In other words, she reacts in the same oppressive forcefulness. She rebels because the patriarchal world order, in Blake's words Canaan, has been forced upon her. Moreover, what this passage uncovers as well is the motive behind Milton's journey back to Ulro. He wants to connect with his Emanation again, consequently go to the self-annihilation because he feels unhappy in his heaven, 'I have turned my back upon these Heavens builded on cruelty / my Spectre still wandering thro' them follows my Emanation' (M 32:3-4, E131). In comparison with Albion for example, who in *Jerusalem* annihilates for the greater good, or even if we compare his reason's with Ololon's who annihilates for completely selfless reasons, Milton's decision is based on selfish thinking. He does so because he is still under the influence of his selfhood which can be seen in his domineering treatment of Ololon near the end of the poem.

It is Ololon, however who speaks in a very distinct voice of love and sexuality. For her, sexuality is a notable aspect of life, much stronger than it is for Milton's Shadow, 'Mild was the voice, but more distinct than any earthly / That Milton's shadow heard (M 37:5-6, E137). Moreover, in her lamentation, Ololon gives a description of what is the essence of Milton's Selfhood. It is a religion based on twisted understanding of sexuality where sexes are in jealous opposition, 'in him beheld / The Monstrous Churches of Beulah, the Gods of Ulro dark' (M 37:16-17, E 137). Damon notes that the churches of Beulah are the evil organizations which stand behind the bloodiest wars of all (Damon 44-45). On the other hand, Milton decides to face his errors and meet Urizen, the limiter of energy and sexuality. The two meet on the shore of Arnon which, as Damon says, 'is the symbol of the female genital tract' (Damon 28). This interpretation of their meeting place further develops the idea that the error which has to be faced and corrected is the misunderstanding of one's femininity and oppressive wars between the divided sexes. Milton faces Urizen by forming a new body of the error in

order to be properly realized. The task proves to be extremely difficult because the oppressive forces he once helped to create, Rahab and Tirzah, turn back on him,

They sent forth all their sons & daughters  
In all their beauty to entice Milton back across the river,  
The Twofold form Hermaphroditic: and the Double-sexed;  
The Female-male & the Male-female, self-dividing stood  
Before him in their beauty, & in cruelties of holiness!  
Shining in darkness, glorious upon the deeps of Entuthon  
(M 19:30-35, E113)

They lure the fighting poet back to the land of patriarchal oppressions. The fact that the sons and daughters are described as hermaphroditic suggests that the sexes are not truly intertwined in the being. They just coexist separately in the conventional ways of the sexual doctrine and each of them oppresses its opposite within and outside the self. This doctrine can appear as glorious only in Entuthon because it is, 'Entuthon of Urizen' (J 88:48, E 247).

Susan Fox interprets the femininity in *Milton* in this way, 'females are either passive or pernicious. Females presented positively are passive: emanations cannot long endure the strife of Eden, Enitharmon is uncomplainingly cut off from full vision by Los, Ololon mourns by her river in Eden and only descends to Generation when she sees Milton there' (515) Her interpretation, however, fails to see that Blake wanted to depict the wisdom of the female portion of the soul. The acts she criticizes as passive in fact prove the activity of the emanations. They are not willing to undergo the hard passage to Ulro because they see the uselessness of the wars between sexes. On the contrary, their activity and importance lies in the fact that they are willing, like Ololon, to sacrifice themselves for the sake of Humanity. The malicious Daughters of Albion show no sign of free will, unlike Albion's Emanation Jerusalem, Milton's Ololon and the Daughters of Beulah. Therefore, Female Will does not describe women's free choice of violence and oppression. It is a name which denotes a passive adherence to the patriarchal dogma. This, however, was not Blake's own idea of women as Fox and Damrosch suggest. In his prophetic books, Blake in fact described women as active and necessary participants on the reconstruction of Humanity. Moreover, in my opinion, Blake's own ideas about the feminine appear elsewhere. He begins Book the First of

*Milton* with a direct invocation to the Muses, Daughters of Beulah, ‘Daughters of Beulah! Muses who inspire the Poets Song / Record the journey of immortal Milton [...] Say first! What mov’d Milton’ (M 2:1-16, E 96). According to the author, they are the direct source of his poetic vision which as Jung says is one of the modes of artistic creation, ‘works which flow more or less complete and perfect from the author’s pen [...] These works positively force themselves upon the author; his hand is seized, his pen writes things his mind contemplates with amazement’ (110). Blake admits the Daughters of Beulah guided his hand ‘descending down the Nerves of my right arm From out the Portals of my Brain’ (M 2:7, E 96). Therefore, from the point of view of Blake himself, the Daughters of Beulah are the most important part of the poem because without them, as he admits, there would be no poem at all. In terms of importance they are placed far above the male characters of the whole prophetic book.

## 7) Oppression of Sexuality

Blake describes the doctrine of sexual oppression in great detail throughout *Milton* and *Jerusalem*. In both work he presents free sexuality as non-existent and the understanding of love as completely twisted. Both prophetic books are pervaded by the simplistic abstractions of the world and dichotomies of good and evil. Needless to say, that all the acts of love and sexuality which, according to Blake, should bring people joy and happiness are regarded as wrong, and therefore shunned by society. In other words, loves becomes something completely different. What proves to be very helpful for such a state of affairs is Vala’s materialistic understanding of the universe and people themselves. In the beginning of *Jerusalem*, Albion defines the relationships among people as, ‘Phantom of the over heated brain! [...] seeking to keep my soul a victim to thy love! Which binds / Man the enemy of man into deceitful friendship: / Jerusalem is not (J 4:24-27, E146 - 147). In its twisted understanding, love is not enduring but it must be endured. It is not possible to see pure emotions of love and mutual understanding in the world of, ‘war & pryncedom’. Moreover, in his lamentation, Albion once again points to the fact that such cold and dark world is established by people themselves. It is the Phantom of the brain, Urizen who is the main cause of all the problems among the Zoas, in other words the self:

a Man dare hardly to embrace  
His own Wife, for the terrors of Chastity that they call  
By the name of Morality. their Daughters govern all  
In hidden deceit!

(J 32:45-48, E 179)

Love and expressions of sexuality are willingly suppressed by all the people in the name of fear. It is not a fear of the unknown, however, it is the fear of the punishment for following one's deep desires, 'fearing our officers more than the enemy' (J 69:36, E 217). Furthermore, Blake reinforces the idea that the understanding of love and sexuality is done in a strictly instructive manner. There is simply no place for anything that deviates from the prescribed status quo. Even though there were the times of free expression of sexuality, all of them are in denial because, 'the golden horses of Urizen [are] compell'd to the chariot of love!' (J 65:47, E217). Unrestrained sex has become an obstacle in the wars for power, all the joy is lost, and it is perceived as impure by the society. In Blakes's symbolic language, one can read that,

This is no gentle harp  
This is no warbling brook, nor shadow of a myrtle tree:  
But blood and wounds and dismal cries, and shadows of the oak:  
And hearts laid open to the light, by the broad grizzly sword:

(J 65:49-52, E 217)

In other words, sexuality is deprived of the gentle touch of love as required by a harpist. Damon suggests that the myrtle tree, 'was sacred to Venus and thus a symbol of sex' (282). Therefore, in the world where universal religion is superordinate to one's inner self the tree of sexuality is non-existent. It was exterminated by the tree of religious doctrine, the oak. Liberty and love is not only suppressed, however, the emotions are also twisted into hate. In is not affection but hostility which connects the people and binds them right from the moment they come to the world, 'for every Man born is joined / Within into One mighty Polypus, and this Polypus is Orc' (M 29:30-31, E 127). Orc is generated Luvah, which means that the love is twisted into hatred. Moreover, the Polypus is an antithesis to the Brotherhood of mutual understanding which shall arise after the error of oppressed sexuality shall be overcome. The current situation, however,



is not to be regarded as Brotherhood of understanding. It is its negation, 'He who will not comingle in Love, must be adjoined by Hate' (J 66:56, E 219).

One of the most powerful ways how to prevent people from reaching their inner spirituality and freedom is instilling the simplifying categorization according to which, those who deviate from normality can be repressed. The same applies to sexuality in all its variations and particularities. This is the reason why Jerusalem, the liberty itself, laments over the destructive abstraction Albion inflicted on her,

Why wilt thou number every little fibre of my soul  
Spreading them out before the Sun like stalks of flax to dry?  
The Infant Joy is beautiful, but its anatomy  
Horrible ghast & deadly  
(J 22:20-23, E 167)

She knows that the beauty and joy of sexuality lies in the complex interplay of particularities that cannot be analysed and simply labelled. Abstractions simply wither the passion, what remains is just an abominable chastity. This is the reason why Jerusalem cries out, 'All Love is lost!' (J 22:10, E 167). Furthermore, by the act of deciding what is good and what is inadmissible Albion places himself to the position of the judge. He simply takes the Satan's point of view for granted and fully delves into the state of error. He creates himself the evil enemies in order to extinguish the fire of desire because his loins are covered in the cold ice of Urizenic thinking,

Cold snows drifted around him: ice covered his loins around  
He sat by Tyburns brook, and underneath his heal, shot up!  
A deadly Tree, he nam'd it Moral Virtue, and the Law  
Of God who dwells in Chaos hidden from the human sight  
(J 28:13-16, E 174)

Thus, the universality of abstractions is put on a pedestal to be worshiped and strictly followed with a code of morality. The barren world of moral virtue is described several times in the prophecies. In *Jerusalem*, for example, Blake lets Los to wander through the streets of desolation which are reminiscent of *London* in his *Songs of Experience*. Los' lengthy description captures the disgust Blake felt towards the subjugation of

individuality and passion but also the disappointment over the self-inflicted oppression of the self. He sees a place devoid of any passion, all the details of life are frowned upon, in other words, life itself is deferred.

Till he came to old Stratford & thence to Stepney & the Isle  
Of Leuthas Dogs, thence thro the narrows of the Rivers side  
And saw every minute particular, the jewels of Albion, running down  
The kennels of the streets & lanes as if they were abhorrd.  
Every Universal Form, was become barren mountains of Moral  
Virtue: and every Minute Particular hardend into grains of sand:  
And all the tendernesses of the soul cast forth as filth & mire,  
Among the winding places of deep contemplation intricate  
To where the Tower of London frownd dreadful over Jerusalem:  
A building of Luvah builded in Jerusalems eastern gate to be  
His secluded Court

(J 45:15-25, E 194)

The passage describes a place where it is impossible to live a free life. It is a life of imprisonment in the twisted emotions of love turned into hatred. Moreover, Blake refers to the Isle of Leutha's Dogs, which, according to Damon, represent the passions that destroy their masters (239). Nevertheless, people are not destroyed by the passions themselves, but by the cruel sense of guilt they make them feel in the world of Albion's moral virtue. Such passion, or an act of sexuality, becomes then a sin by itself and the sinner is judged by Albion. In other words, people who strictly follow the code of morality judge the free thinkers. One's personal freedom is overshadowed by the great prison. Thus, the life itself, as mentioned above, is circumscribed of its most important parts.

The life of moral virtue deprives people mainly of the joys of youth and of the mysteries of sexuality on the verge of experience. In the world of Albion, they are something to be ashamed of for they are impure. Such a degradation of life is described in Jerusalem's lamentation.

Wherefore has thou shut me into the winter of human life  
And clos'd up the sweet regions of youth and virgin innocence:

Where we live, forgetting error, not pondering on evil:  
Among my lambs & brooks of water, among my warbling birds  
(J 20:5-8, E 165)

Blake repeatedly uses the imagery of nature, like running water and singing of the birds to describe the sensual freedom of life devoid of oppression where passion and sexuality can develop freely and take any desired direction. It refers to the sweet life of innocence where nothing has been decided yet and all the possibilities lie ahead. Unfortunately, as one can read in Jerusalem's lamentation, this is the way life used to be in the past. Now, under the rule of error, the road from innocence to experience is blocked by obscuring the blooming joys of sexuality and instilling the cold sterility of the winter of life into the minds of humanity. It is no wonder that in the time of hardship, the self tends to look back into the idealized past in order to forget the dire situation of present time. This natural reaction, however, does not bring any good as it may seem because the self is too absorbed in the memories. Therefore, one fails to realize that it is actually the present he or she has to pay attention to. Laura Quinney describes this error of the self on Urizen, 'within him the accumulation of memories has gradually consolidated his identity at the cost of self-confinement. [...] He is backward looking, trapped in the "dull round" of yesterday. Thus memory passivates; it underscores finitude and helplessness. [...] The Eternal Now expands infinitely in this moment while memory stops here, feebly reaching backward. Memory assures the empirical self of its weakness and mortality' (169-170).

Such a state of error, developing from the laws of moral virtue brings only death, according to William Blake. Even though it is vital for the self not to delve into the past excessively and focus on the present instead, the task is immensely onerous.

No individual can keep these Laws, for they are death  
To every energy of man, and forbid the springs of life;  
Albion hath entered the State Satan! Be permanent O State!  
And be thou for ever accursed!  
(J 31:11-14, E 177)

The main reason for the difficulty of developing a healthy life of love and sexuality in the present is that the spring of life is forbidden. Thus, the fear of punishment repels the spark of individuality and desire. As can be seen, Blake in his prophecies reiterated the idea of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* that the state of error is oppressive to the energies of man. In other words, it devours the desires and sexuality in people, leaving the bodily needs completely ignored. This presents a great problem to the development of man because healthy expression of sexuality is one of the key steps toward the Eternity. In addition, Blake describes the disregard of bodily needs using the masculine imagery. This, however, does not mean that the feminine perception of sexuality is spared the oppression because, as stated above, the violence on one part of the humanity metastasizes to the other immediately, creating a violent circle of oppression.

He [Los] views the Cherub at the Tree of Life, also the serpent,  
 Orc the first born coild in the south: the Dragon Urizen:  
 Tharmas the Vegetated Tongue even the Devouring Tongue:  
 A threefold region, a false brain, a false heart:  
 And false bowels: altogether composing the False Tongue  
 .....  
 But the gate of the tongue: the western gate in them is clos'd  
 Having a wall builded against it

(J 14:2-27, E 158)

Sexual doctrine of the church is described by Los as the source of the oppressions. As Damon notes, 'Blake interpreted the Tree of Life to be the phallus' (410). Therefore, the very act of sexual intercourse is erroneous, stripped of all the intimacy it is perverted into a public affair. Tharmas, the physical body becomes the Devouring Tongue which, according to Damon's analysis represents the free speech inarticulate (408). In addition, however, Los describes the western gate of Tharmas as walled up. This could be interpreted as the external force of oppression which in combination with the internal inability to express oneself represents the imprisonment of the free expression of the bodily needs in the world of chastity. Blake, in fact, mentions the inability to enter the gate of Tharmas several times in *Jerusalem*, 'Luvah slew Tharmas the Angel of the Tongue' (J 63:5, E 214), meaning that humanity is not able to reach the Eternity because of the powerful hatred. In relation to the corruption of sexuality, Blake uses the

male symbolism once again when he describes the abyss between, ‘the original spiritual and intellectual unity’ (Damon 31) and the current situation of the people. It has a strong sexual undertone which again points to the fact that the cause of the error and resulting problems of society is the power-hungry masculinity:

Cliff after cliff, & over Valleys of despair & death:  
The narrow sea between Albion & the Atlantic continent:  
Its waves of pearl became a boundless ocean bottomless,  
Of grey obscurity, filled with clouds & rocks & whirling waters  
(J 39:13-16, E 186)

In his mythology, Blake uses the pearl to symbolize love (Damon 324), by extension, with the connotations of a liquid it may also refer to the semen. Unfortunately, the image does not connect the current affairs with the original unity. Instead, it is described as bottomless obscurity referring to Blake’s opinion about the disruptive force of masculinity. Moreover, Los sees ‘Albions Twelve Sons Surround the Forty-two Gates of Erin / In terrible armour, raging against the Lamb & against Jerusalem’ (J 78:12-13, E 233-234). Los’ lines demonstrate the Sons come to destroy the holiness of the body and its urges along with its free expression.

The major weapon the Sons of Albion use to encourage war and oppression is the materialistic perception of life. By promoting it as the only possible and reasonable world view, they are able to deprive man from using imagination. Consequently, all that is connected with imagination is fading away as well:

And the Bodies in which all Animals & Vegetations, the Earth & Heaven  
Were contained in the All Glorious Imagination are withered & darkened  
The golden Gate of Havilah, and all the Garden of God  
Was caught up with the Sun  
(J 49:13-16, E 198)

Nearly all the perceptions except for the sense perceptions are regarded as impossible. In other words, they are destroyed. The same applies to the liberated self because as stated above, Blake believed that God’s place is in human bosom, in other words, the

Garden of God. Moreover, ‘the basic purity and freedom of love’ (Damon 176), is withered as well. Furthermore, the author is not using the sun here to signify the power of imagination but its opposite. It represents ‘the material sun’ (Damon 390) which produces heat and drains all the energy of imagination and love. All that is left from the strong emotions and desires is a sick concept of sin. Love and sexuality in its pure form is destroyed by chastity when Albion declares, ‘the Sun: the Moon: drivn forth by my disease / All is Eternal Death unless you can weave a chaste / Body over an unchaste Mind!’ (J 21:10-12, E 166). Blake describes the situation as a disease to reinforce the understanding of the fact that it is a state of error and that even though the situation is terrible, the good times will come.

One of the symptoms of Albion’s disease of love and sexuality is the possibility to buy them. In one of his lamentations, Los observes ‘the Sexual death living on accusations of Sin & Judgement / To freeze Love & Innocence into gold and silver of the Merchant / Without forgiveness of Sin Love is Itself Eternal Death (J 64:22-24, E 215). In his point of view, sexuality is dead, and people are left with a cheap substitute in which all the acts are judged according to the standards of morality. Tristanne Connolly describes the artificiality of sex, ‘If sex is a lesser imitation of eternal comingling, torture, a misguided imitation of sex, is an imitation of an imitation’ (Connolly 153). Furthermore, one can read that the true value of love in connection to sexuality is nothing else than forgiveness of everything the moral law judges as a sin. This kind of relations cannot be viewed as a commodity or the cheapest kind of imitation. Nevertheless, when people are taught to understand sexuality as chastity for the whole life they cannot foresee the deception. In order to demonstrate, Blake shows that from the age of innocence, people are deceived in order to be obedient to the established world view:

To perplex youth in their outgoings, & to bind to labours in Albion  
 Of day & night the myriads of eternity that they may grind  
 And polish brass & iron hour after hour laborious task!  
 Kept ignorant of its use, that they might spend the days of wisdom  
 In sorrowful drudgery  
 .....  
 blind to all the simple rules of life

(J 65:22-28, E 216)

As an illustration, the author describes here the tactics of the oppressors who want to keep people ignorant of the joys and fulfilment of desires in order to enslave them. They perplex the youth on the verge of experience who in return, without realizing it, deprive themselves of all the particularities of eternity. More precisely, they deprive themselves of the possibility to reach the eternity via various forms of love and sexuality. Instead, their full attention is directed towards the dull rounds by attending to the metals of tyranny and destruction (Damon 58). The free spirit of the youth is blind to all the joys of life and this curse follows them for the rest of their life or as Blake puts it, the days of wisdom. Consequently, the result is the life in the false ideal of chastity. 'The immortal Imagination' (Damon 270) is refused to be cultivated and the havoc leads to the wars for power among the sexes. In effect, the once oppressed feminine aspect becomes the oppressor who denies the free expression of sex:

I have mockd those who refused cruelty & I have admired  
The cruel Warrior. I have refused to give love to Merlin the piteous.  
He brings to me the Images of his Love & I reject in chastity  
And turn them out into the streets for Harlots to be food  
To the stern Warrior. I am become perfect in beauty over my Warrior  
For Men are caught by Love: Woman is caught by Pride  
That Love may only be obtaind in the passages of Death

(J 81:1-7, E 238)

Under the Satan's rule of chastity, the opposites are not cooperating and the ideal of androgynous comingling of the feminine and the masculine portions of the soul is rejected. Furthermore, the rule of chastity not only forces males to search a sexual relief with Harlots as the quotations says, it also leads to abominable acts of sexual abuse upon the females, the feminine portions of the soul and finally upon the liberty itself. Blake's depiction of sexual violence culminates in his portrayal of rape. The author describes two scenes in which the embodiment liberty, Jerusalem is violated and in the second one, it is Vala.

In the case of Jerusalem, however, Blake does not focus on the act of rape itself. Instead, he pays attention to the situation which arises after the act. 'She sat at the Mills, her hair unbound her feet naked / Cut with the flints: her tears run down, her reason grows like / The Wheel of Hand (J60:41-43, E 210). Abandoned naked at the Mill, 'the basis of dogmatism' (Damon 273), the liberty is badly injured and left to the further deterioration of her own guilty mind. Thus, the false holiness of the satanic state defeats the freedom of love and sexuality. In like manner, Blake returns to the results of the sordid treatment of Jerusalem several plates later,

Naked Jerusalem lay before the Gates upon Mount Zion  
The Hill of Giants, all her foundations levelled with the dust!  
Her Twelve Gates thrown down: her children carried into captivity  
Herself in chains: this from within was seen in a dismal night  
Outside, unknown before in Beulah, & the twelve gates were fill'd  
With blood; from Japan eastward to the Giants causway, west  
In Erins Continent: and Jerusalem wept upon Euphrates banks  
Disorganizd; an evanescent shade, scarce seen or heard among  
Her childrens Druid Temples dropping with blood wanderd weeping!  
(J 78:21-29, E 234)

By the act of forced sexual violence the free and unrestricted sexuality ceases to exist. All over the world the holiness of the body is violated. Hobson interprets the rape scenes as, 'the most common sexual betrayal in the cautionary literature of the period, the rape or seduction and abandonment of an unsuspecting girl is made the central situation of *Vision of the Daughters of Albion*' (29). Even though it is not a central theme in *Jerusalem*, it is very important. The reason is that the one who was raped is the liberty herself. Blake symbolically points to the fact that the basic freedom of all the people in the world was violated in the most cruel and despicable manner. This reinforces the image of the slavery which, on the other hand, is not resisted by any of the inhabitants of Albion. Therefore, Jerusalem observes, 'Albion! his hills & his valleys no more / Receive the feet of Jerusalem: they have cast me quite away: / And Albion is himself shrunk to a narrow rock in the midst of the sea!' (J 79:15-17, E 234). The situation is similar to the one after Oothoon was raped in the *Vision of the Daughters of Albion*. Correspondingly, Jerusalem is here rejected as well but it is much



worse because she is rejected by Albion, by all the humanity in other words. The error of progress has now infected liberty as well, ‘My fires are corrupt!’ (J 79:56, E 235), she declares. According to Hobson the rape scenes present ‘an exposure of the socially, as well as sexually, destructive outcome of male sexual coercion’ (Hobson 176). Moreover, the rape of Vala, reinforces another theme of Blake’s prophetic books which is the male oppression of their feminine portions which leads to the oppression and subsequent labelling of homosexuality as a sin. The sexual assault upon Vala has a noticeable homosexual undertone because it follows a sapphic scene in which Vala and Jerusalem give free expression to their innermost desires. Nevertheless, Blake describes the situation as it was perceived by Albion.

He found Jerusalem upon the River of his City soft repos’d  
 In the arms of Vala, assimilating in one with Vala  
 The Lilly of Havilah: and they sang soft thro’ Lambeths vales,  
 In a sweet moony night & silence that they had created  
 With a blue sky spread over with wings and a mild moon,  
 Dividing & uniting into many female forms  
 .....  
 But when they saw Albion fall’n upon mild Lambeths vale:  
 Astonish’d! Terrified! They hover’d over his Giant Limbs  
 (J 19-20: 40-2, E 164-165)

Their sapphic encounter is permeated by the fulfilment of sexual desires as the symbolism of Lilly of Havilah suggests. It is highlighted by the fact that the scene is full of moony light of love. Nevertheless, when the two lovers realize they are seen by Albion, shame immediately seizes them. As Connolly suggests, ‘in a less homophobic culture than Blake’s or our own, would long have been recognized as a deeply lyrical evocation of sexual love’ (Connolly 31). This is the reason why sensuality is taken over by fear. Therefore, they did not wish to be publicly displayed. Jerusalem, however, is not as full of fear as Vala because she tries to soothe her lover by the motto of liberty, ‘What is Sin but a little / Error & fault that is soon forgiven’ (J 20:23-24, E 165). She suggests that the act of forgiveness should follow, and Albion shall forgive them they followed their innermost desires similarly as Josef forgave Mary her adultery (Damon 233). Nevertheless, the situation is not as clear as it may seem because the reader finds

out that it is only Jerusalem who offered her love in the most pure and honest way. For Vala, this encounter was just a way to avenge her being raped by Albion, ‘When Albion rent thy beautiful net of gold and silver twine; / Thou hadst woven it with art, thou hadst caught me in the bands / Of love [...] Albion lov’d thee! He rent thy Veil! (J 20:30-35, E 165). She did not search for a new experience of love and sexuality of the feminine. The kind of love Vala has caught Jerusalem into was not free because as stated above, Vala, unlike Jerusalem, is a character who by her actions blindly follows the ways of oppressive masculine portion of the soul. Making love to Jerusalem out of spite made her into an obedient wife who follows the ideas of her husband, Albion. Her love is therefore false and destructive, ‘Generating Love: a pretence of love to destroy love’ (J 17:26, E 161). All this makes Albion confused and he decides to hide Jerusalem in Jealousy. The cause of his confusion is described by Hopkins as follows, ‘Independence of two women make him the oppressor “Albion’s fall” is seen by the two women to be a result of his witnessing their love making on the river [...] Blake’s Albion witnesses the power of a love he can neither inspire nor control in his beloved, and the jealousy and shame overwhelm him’ (68). Furthermore, the hiding, because Jerusalem is the Emanation of Albion, could be interpreted as inability to understand one’s own sexuality in terms of latent homosexual feelings. The result is ‘Sexual Reasoning Hermaphroditic’ (J 29:28, E 175), which means that the divided masculinity and femininity in Albion is not harmonized.

The interpretation of covert homosexual feelings in Albion is further reinforced by his own memory of the time he gave free expression to his sexuality.

We reared mighty Stones: we danced naked around them:  
 Thinking to bring Love into light of day, to Jerusalems shame:  
 Displaying our Giant limbs to all the winds of heaven! Sudden  
 Shame siezd us, we could not look on one-another for abhorrence: the Blue  
 Of our immortal Veins & all their Hosts fled from our Limbs,  
 And wanderd distant in a dismal Night clouded & dark:  
 The Sun fled from the Britons forebead: the Moon from his mighty loins:  
 (J 24:4-10, E 169)

He used to be as playful and free spirited as his Emanation. Shame, however, finally drove away all the liberty of sexuality. According to Connolly, Albion was, 'led to open "Love"'. Like Vala and Jerusalem's later thoughts, this memory is suffused with guilt: the giants' attempted love' (Connolly 31). The guilt of the homosexual encounter is hidden in Albion's memory as a constant reminder of the oppression he has to inflict on others. Consequently, the sun of imagination and moon of love are not beaming over the earth.

## 8) View of Homosexuality

In the following chapter I will focus on the oppression of homosexuality as it is depicted in *Milton* and *Jerusalem*. As can be seen in the above analysis, in his prophetic books, Blake focused not only on heterosexuality but on the homosexuality as well. This marks a shift in Blake's perception of sexuality because, 'references to homosexuality evince Blake's interest in the topic and his integration of it into his overall view of human liberation' (Hobson 3). In *Milton*, for example, he tried to analyse how the oppression of homosexuality rises into a universal doctrine. He uses the character of error, Satan, who oppresses his inner homosexual desires towards Palamabron. Thus, he creates the oppressive doctrine of the church and marks homosexuality as a sin because it diverts from the normality of the erroneous moral law. Satan's covert affection towards Palamabron is represented by 'the arrows of desire'. Upon seeing Palamabron, 'Satan fainted beneath the artillery' (M 5:2, E 98) of his emotions. At the end of the plate, Blake repeats that 'Satan fainted beneath the arrows of Elynittria' (M 5:43, E, 99) who is the feminine portion of Palamabron. According to Damon, 'she represents the tolerant wife' (Damon 120). In addition, she represents the feminine portion of the soul in harmony with the masculine one because she leads Leutha, the sexuality marked as sin into the Palamabron's bed. (M13:38, E 107). In other words, Palamabron is not suppressing his homosexual feelings and perceives sexuality as free of all the oppressions. Moreover, Leutha symbolizes the covert homosexual desires people in the state of error tend to suppress:

her moth-like elegance shone over the Assembly  
At length standing upon the golden floor of Palamabron  
She spake: I am the Author of this Sin! by my suggestion

My Parent power Satan has committed this transgression.

loved Palamabron & I sought to approach his Tent

(M 11:33-37, E 105)

She is the Satan' guilt over his own homosexuality. Moreover, it is important to realize that the guilt is collective because Blake's character Satan is an embodiment of error in all the people, '[he] represents collective entities that destroy and degrade the human body' (Hobson 82). This degradation of free sexuality creates an oppressive force of the doctrine of morality and the church because Leutha exclaims, 'O wherefore doth a Dragon-form forth issue from my limbs' (M 12:2, E 105). The reason why the guilt of homosexuality creates an oppressive force is simple. According to Blake, the more is an idea suppressed into the subconscious of a mind the more powerful is its subsequent explosion.

I hid Myself

In Satans inmost Place of his nervous fine wrought Brain:

For Elynittria met Satan with all her singing women.

.....

Wild with prophetic fury his former life became like a dream

Cloth'd in the Serpents folds, in selfish holiness demanding purity

Being Most impure, self-condemn'd to eternal tears, he drove

Me from his inmost Brain & the doors clos'd with thunders sound

(M 12:40-48, E 106)

When Satan is confronted with open homosexuality, his subconscious tears the suppressed desires away from his brain and he decides to live according to the moral law which leave no place for homosexual feelings. In other words, he becomes increasingly masculine and oppresses the feminine portions of the souls because Leutha did the exact opposite, 'I stupified the masculine perceptions / And kept only the feminine awake' (M 12:5-6, E 105). This interpretation is further supported by Hobson's observation that, 'the construction of both English masculinity and the English state depended on the repression of homosexuality; this repression produces distortion and aggression in the individual and the state' (Hobson 79).

Blake describes the situation similarly in *Jerusalem* as well. Here he discloses the nature of the oppressive doctrine of the Church. He describes it as ‘the Dragon Forms / The Female hid within a Male: [...] the Abominations of Desolation/ Religion hid in War: a Dragon red, & hidden Harlot’ (J 75:17-20, E 231). Again, the author points to the fact that the femininity of males is constantly suppressed. Subsequently it is turned into war and destruction. Moreover, this passage also suggests that rather than facing homosexual feeling males tend to suppress them deep into the subconscious which in turn, as a dragon of religious belief, devours the liberty of sexuality and imagination. Furthermore, Blake chose to depict the oppression of one’s homosexual feeling on Hand one of the Sons of Albion.

Hand slept on Skiddaws top: drawn by the love of beautiful  
 Cambel: his bright beaming Counterpart, divided from him  
 And her delusive light beamd fierce above the Mountain,  
 Soft: invisible: drinking his sighs in sweet intoxication:  
 Drawing out fibre by fibre: returning to Albions Tree  
 At night: and in the morning to Skiddaw; she sent him over  
 Mountainous Wales into the Loom of Cathedron fibre by fibre:  
 He ran in tender nerves across Europe to Jerusalems Shade,  
 To weave Jerusalem a Body repugnant to the Lamb.

(J 80:57-65, E 237)

Hand’s feminine portion of the soul is divided from him. In other words, the author suggests that the homosexual feelings are suppressed far away from Hand’s consciousness. Nevertheless, he is still attracted to the beautiful Cambel because the feeling buried deeply in the subconsciousness comes back to the surface with an equally oppressive force which, as Damon points out, wants to enslave Hand (Damon 66). Consequently, he is forced to spread the morality over Europe and destroy the liberty of sexuality, or as in his case homosexuality. As Christopher Hobson argues, the references to homosexuality ‘offer a critique of the moral-sexual foundations of the system by attacking Moral Law, criticizing guilt over sexuality and homosexuality, and showing repression of homosexuality as one cornerstone of Satan’s rule’ (80). The repugnant body of Jerusalem therefore represents the self-imposed homophobia. In

other words, Hand's oppressive force turns against himself and he 'becomes what he beholds'.

What Blake presents as the most important aspects of life is that one has to be honest to the self. It is not possible to cure Albion of his disease until he himself understands what exactly the error is he has succumbed to. This is also the reason why Blake depicts the failed attempt of Oxford to present homosexuality in an honest and non-biased way to Albion. 'Oxford take thou these leaves of the Tree of Life: with eloquence / That thy immortal tongue inspires; present them to Albion: / Perhaps he may receive them, offered from thy loved hands' (J 40:30-32, E 188). Blake again uses the Tree of Life as a symbol of phallus and the immortal tongue suggests the unrestricted possibility to express one's inner desires. Moreover, as Damon points out, Blake associated Oxford and 'the universities with secret loves, perhaps having student amours in mind' (Damon 314). Nevertheless, the attempt is failed because Albion did not realize the liberty of sexuality by himself, it was presented to him, 'Oxford, immortal Bard! with eloquence / Divine, he wept over Albion: speaking the words of God / In mild perswasion: bringing leaves of the Tree of Life' (J 41:7-9, E 188). The attempt fails because the remedy for the disease is a complete change in the ways society perceives love and sexuality. In *Jerusalem*, however, Blake stresses the importance of being open about sexuality. He insists that society shall not judge the peculiarities of people's desires. If people perceive sexuality without prejudice, there is nothing left to be ashamed of.

If Perceptive Organs vary: Objects of Perception seem to vary:  
If the Perceptive Organs close: their Objects seem to close also:  
Consider this O mortal Man! O worm of sixty winters said Los  
Consider Sexual Organization & hide thee in the dust  
(J 30:55-58, E 177)

Los directly addresses the illusionary oppressor of sexuality with a recommendation to ponder on the impossibility of the free expression of sexuality. In the world Blake chooses to describe it is truly impossible not to feel guilty and ashamed about one's desires and the needs the body itself presents, 'In Erins Land toward the north, joint

after joint & burning' (J 39:26, E 187). Moreover, he also addresses the readers and kindly asks them to search for harmony in themselves.

Man is adjoind to Man by his Emanative portion:  
Who is Jerusalem in every individual Man: and her  
Shadow is Vala, builded by the Reasoning power in Man  
O search & see: turn your eyes inward: open O thou World  
Of Love & Harmony in Man: expand thy ever lovely Gates  
(J 39:38-42, E 187)

In addition, this passage also stresses the development of Blakes perception of sexuality. He does not perceive sex as a single gate into Eternity. As stated above, it presents a crucial step on the journey toward Eternity. Without freedom of sexuality in all its variations man is doomed to Eternal Death.

## 9) Liberty and Joy

In their pure form liberty and joy appear either in the memories of the characters or in the proclamations of better days. In this chapter I would like to pay attention to the ways Blake depicted the joy of liberated sexuality and harmonious life within society and within the self. Many of these lamentations are rendered either as a retrospection or as a prophecy of better future. 'The poem takes us to the verge of apocalypse and stops there, unwilling to cross the border into Utopia' (Quinney 152). Nevertheless, by omitting the present time, Blake reinforces the idea that the world people live in is created mainly by themselves. It is the world of liberty which is reinforced by the free expressions of love and sexuality. Such a world is created by the use the of imagination and mainly by forgiveness of the trespasses. One of the basic joys of life is without a doubt its creation according to Blake:

The soft hands of Antamon draw the indelible line:  
Form immortal with golden pen; such as the Spectre admiring  
Puts on the sweet form; then smiles Antamon bright thro his windows

The Daughters of beauty look up from their Loom & prepare.

The integument soft for its clothing with joy & delight.

(M 28:16-20, E 126)

The conception is described as a harmonious cooperation of the feminine and the masculine. The passage itself radiates with words of joy and happiness. There is no violence or oppression between the sexes and Antamon, 'the male seed' (Damon 24) tenderly touches the new soul whose body subsequently begins to be created in the daughter's loom. According to Laura Quinney, 'unhappiness is very often expressed in dualism, either of mind-body or of subject-object; both imply that subjectivity is anomalous in a material world and that each subject is isolated from others' (Quinney 11). This is the reason why the dualism of the mind and the body is not present in the passage. The sexes are both intertwined in the beauty of anticipation. The creation of new life is a joy, therefore there is no reason why the life itself should be full of oppression and abominations. Blake uses the imagery of male seed again when he described the mutual understanding of the sexes in Eden, where they come in unity. 'There is in Eden a sweet River, of mild & liquid pearl, / Namd Ololon' (M 21:15-16, E 115). This line stresses the nonexistence of hostility between masculinity and femininity. They both form a river of liquid pear, suggesting male seed, which is named after the female emanation Ololon. The undertone of liberated sexuality is reinforced when the symbol of forgiveness, 'Jesus the Saviour appeared coming in the Clouds of Ololon!' (M 21:60, E 116). Blake repeats this line ten plates later and adds the description of the nature coming back to life in the spring.

Awake the Sun from his sweet reverie upon the Mountain:

The Nightingale again assays his song, & thro the day,

And thro the night warbles luxuriant; every Bird of Song

Attending his loud harmony with admiration & love

.....

the White-thorn lovely May

Opens her many lovely eyes: listening the Rose still sleeps

None dare to wake her. soon she bursts her crimson curtained bed

And comes forth in the majesty of beauty; every Flower:



The Pink, the Jessamine, the Wall-flower, the Carnation  
The Jonquil, the mild Lilly opes her heavens! every Tree,  
And Flower & Herb soon fill the air with an innumerable Dance  
Yet all in order sweet & lovely, Men are sick with Love!

(M 31:41-62, E 131)

This lamentation of Beulah, on the other hand focuses on the beauty of nature which creates a suggestive atmosphere of love. The birds sing their songs in harmony and the flowers are beginning to bloom. In like manner, Blake celebrates the unrestricted passage into the age of experience suggested by the crimson curtained bed. The various flowers he names represent the mysteries and variations of the first sexual experience. Additionally, the final exclamation of Beulah points to the shift in Blake's ideas about sexuality. Sex by itself is not a gate into eternity as Quinney suggests, 'no matter how perfect the loveliness of nature, it cannot satisfy transcendental desire' (144). Nevertheless, it is vital not to perceive sexuality and the needs of the body as something inferior. On the contrary, through art and poetry, Los works on the task of spreading the belief in the holiness of the body. 'Till the spaces of Erin were perfected in the furnace (J 9:34, E 152). Sexuality is in other words put on a pedestal and it is the task of the poet to help it according to the author.

Moreover, the connection between love, sexuality, liberty and art is presented as the only possible remedy for the disease of Albion. Their fusion is the only possibility of better life, 'the Twenty-eight bright / Lark. Met the Female Ololon descending into my garden' (J 36:9-10, E 136). In *Milton*, the free expression of sexuality meets with the lark, 'the new idea which comes as inspiration in the dawn' (Damon 234). The idea of intertwining the two aspects of life is further developed in *Jerusalem*, where Blake in detail describes the city of art Golgonooza (Damon 162).

The stones are pity, and the bricks, well wrought affections:  
Enameld with love & kindness, & the tiles engraven gold  
Labour of merciful hands: the beams & rafters are forgiveness:  
The mortar & cement of the work, tears of honesty: the nails,  
And the screws & iron braces, are well wrought blandishments,  
And well contrived words, firm fixing, never forgotten,

Always comforting the remembrance: the floors, humility,  
The cielings, devotion: the hearths, thanksgiving:  
Prepare the furniture O Lambeth in thy pitying looms!  
The curtains, woven tears & sighs, wrought into lovely forms  
For comfort

(J 12:30-40, E 155)

One can see that Golgonooza is in correspondence to Jerusalem. They are both created out of forgiveness and liberty. In his description of the city of art, Blake explicitly connects the oppressed freedom of sexuality with its remedy, art. James Bogan in his article *Blake's City of Golgonooza in Jerusalem: Metaphor and Mandala* observes the similarities between the shape of Golgonooza and mandala. 'Los's work in Jerusalem is to help cure Albion's dread disease, and the mandala is a specific for the disintegration that has beset Albion. Los makes the mandala-city of Golgonooza as an attempt at healing' (92). Nevertheless, in Milton, the gates of Golgonooza are described as, 'here is the Seat / Of Satan in its Webs; for in the brain and heart and loins / Gates open behind Satans Seat to the City of Golgonooza' (M 20:37-39, E 114). Correspondingly, as Connolly notes, 'the frontispiece of Jerusalem, Blake's final prophecy, suggests that the reader should enter the book. It depicts a figure entering a Gothic door with darkness behind, carrying a light-giving globe. The figure looks around, as though entering with some trepidation. That this is a spiritual journey is suggested by the soul-like sphere, and its introduction of light into darkness. Ironically, though, it is usually the book that enlightens: here, it seems, the pilgrim must carry his own enlightenment, or be lost' (21). In other words, the situation of Blake's reader, or the one who perceives Los' art, is similar to the one when Oxford attempted to help Albion; he had to realize his own error in order to be redeemed. Similarly, people who want to enter Golgonooza and be liberated with the healing power of art have to pass the state of error first.

In addition, Blake's prophecies also stress the fact that the pleasures of the body and the body itself should not be the source of shame. 'And every Human Vegetated Form in its inward recesses / Is a house of pleasantness & a garden of delight Built by the / Sons & Daughters of Los in Bowlahoola & in Cathedron' (J 73:20-52, E 229). According to Damon, 'all the natural effects have a spiritual cause: the motive power of Bowlahoola is none other than the creative imagination' (57). In other words, the way

people think about their own bodies and its sexual urges inevitably leave its mark upon the physical body.

## 10) Conclusion

In his prophetic books *Milton* and *Jerusalem*, William Blake focused on the various kinds of oppression imposed on the individual and society. Similarly to his previous works, he recognized the culprit in organized religion. Nevertheless, his vision developed in an important aspect which made him incorporate the psychological traits as a leading cause of the mournful state of the world. He moved away from depicting the particular occasions of interpersonal oppression and concrete images of suffering to paint the picture of the individual's inner life. Impersonal organizations, such as the Church, are substituted for an idea of self-inflicted oppression. To put it simply, it is people themselves who make other people suffer. Behind the anonymous power the organizations impose there are only other persons, not any invisible force or an oppressive deity.

In *Milton* the author focuses on the oppressive forces within the historical figure of John Milton and how these forces put obstacles on the journey to Eternity. In *Jerusalem*, on the other hand, Blake pays attention to the state of all the people embodied in the character of Albion. In order to paint a complex psychological picture, the author sets on stage various characters who represent different portions of the psyche. The most important are the four portions of an individual, the Four Zoas. For the best, they should work towards harmony and peacefully cooperate in every individual. Nevertheless, Blake primarily focuses on the state of their deadly opposition and warfare. In his understanding, the Four Zoas are all connected and react to one another. Corresponding to his previous works, he makes Urizen the most authoritative of all the Zoas. He is the usurper of power who destroys the most desired equilibrium.

Moreover, Blake connects the Zoas with the senses. In the case of Reason, the one in connection with it is sight. The two promote a materialistic worldview which strips life of its transcendent portion, making it very difficult for other aspects of humanity to make sense of existence because they are mostly elusive, and they cannot be measured. In other words, the particularities of life are disregarded and as a result, generalizations create the golden rules of life. They enslave people, by prescribing to them what is good and what is bad. Nevertheless, in Blake's point of view there is no slaveowner because those who most vehemently promote the generalizations and rules

are without realizing it enslaved by them as well. To put it differently, everyone is in a subordinate position to the system of abstract thinking.

Furthermore, people's true self, the harmonized Four Zoas, is regarded as inadequate because under the dominion of Reason only the materialistic world is perceived as real. The elusive world of imagination and desire or the non-material emotions are treated as non-existent. Spiritual doors of perception are simply closed. The author called this rigid perception of the world, Ulro. In essence, such a world is delusionary because it does not provide people with a whole picture of existence. The circumscribed vision causes people to be lost in a maze of confusion. According to Blake, individuals keep the doors of perception guarded by their self-created fears and limitations. These are in his mythology embodied by the devils Og and Anak. In a like manner, the author realizes that even though people are born into a world of generalizations, their self is paradoxically lonelier, and the little nuances of life are neglected. As a result, all the joy of life, including sexuality, is lost.

Blake did not deviate from his praise of free expression of sexuality. Identically to his earlier works, he still believed in the unshakeable privacy of sexuality. Even though in the world of Ulro it is stripped of all the intimacy, being perverted into a public affair. Several times he uses the masculine imagery in connection with the perversion of sexuality and its subsequent awful situation. Contrastingly, he used the natural imagery to describe the free and unrestricted expressions of love and sexuality. Also, the open attitudes toward sexuality are seen as wrong, bodily needs are completely ignored and shunned by society in the name of fear of punishment.

Nevertheless, the author's understanding of sexuality shifts in a different manner. He does not present it as an ultimate way to Eternity. It is one of the important steps on a journey of spiritual freedom. He sees sexuality as a bad imitation of the pure act and describes the situation as a kind of disease to reinforce the idea that the state of error might be overcome. Consequently, the emotion of love is twisted into destructive hate. People are not connected by affection anymore, instead hostility connects them into a mighty Polypus. It creates a state of normality and allows repression of anything that slightly deviates. In other words, the Minute Particulars of sexuality are lost and labelled as sin by the strict code of morality. Those who dare to let their inner desires

breathe freely are judged by Albion himself, in other words, by the patriarchal order within society.

Furthermore, the fear of punishment kills the spark of desire and withers the energy in every individual. According to Blake, this is the burning error of the world because unhealthy attitude towards sexuality prevents the spiritual development of man. To demonstrate, Blake uses the scenes of rape which reinforce the idea that freedom of love and sexuality is completely defeated by the errors of society.

In order to further elaborate on sexuality, the author extends the theme by the description of homosexuality. Blake integrated the topic to present a wide picture of possible liberation in society. He focuses on the fact that the repressed feeling itself might be the cause of the homophobia. To demonstrate, the independence of homosexual encounter in the scene where Jerusalem embraces Vala, causes the outburst of suppressed homosexual feelings, manifesting in a destructive persecution in Albion.

Some of the critics suggest that Blake's attitude toward female characters and women in general is openly misogynistic. They reproach him for supposedly problematic description of sexuality and agency relation, meaning that in the visions, the feminine is reduced to the active – destructive and passive – weak dichotomy. Nevertheless, the opposite holds true. In his mythological system, the feminine is just as important as the masculine and most importantly the feminine is presented as wiser and much more selfless than the masculine portion of a being. Also, it is not true that in eternity the feminine portion is absorbed into the masculine, thus losing the autonomy. There are several lines in his prophetic books where Blake clearly states that the androgynous man of eternity consists of the feminine as well as masculine portion. He called this idea of inner harmony Humanity.

Moreover, some critics assume Blake held the negative treatment of women as his own attitude because he presented it in his own work as inferior to the masculine. Nevertheless, it is false assumption to regard the world Blake describes as if his own ideas were the same. The world he describes is created by the mistaken Urizen. Blake's own ideas were the exact opposite. He perceived femininity as an important herald of opening the gates of perception into eternity. In addition, it is the feminine realm of Beulah that inspires him to write. He identifies it as a direct source of his work that leads his hand while writing down the eternal dictate.

In contrast to his previous poetry, he shifts his view of sexes into a psychological realm, realizing that nobody is completely female or male. With this in mind, it is important to realize that the abundance of female Emanation in his work is caused by his wish to depict the oppressive world of patriarchy and male dominated psyche. As an illustration, males have the pivotal role of putting the vicious circle of oppression into motion because the moral law of chastity is created by the Sons of Albion. Every joy and desire of the feminine Emanation is subsequently labelled as a sin and any kind of pleasure is forbidden by religious dogma.

The domination causes the reaction of the oppressed feminine portion which is equally destructive and domineering as the masculine one. Blake calls it The Female Will, meaning that it forbids joys of sexuality to males. It is an aggression sprung out of the fear of punishment. It does not denote a free choice but a forced continuation of previously established order. In other words, it comes to represent a subjugation of free women into the blind followers of patriarchal order. They are deceived into becoming a projection of masculine cruelty. Therefore, the relationship of sexes is based on jealousy. In other words, women take the scourge and do evil in return. Consequently, males become prisoners of the chastity and moral law as well; victims of their own crime. Furthermore, Blake supplies his verse with the engravings which depict the vicious circle of oppression and deception of the Daughters of Albion.

Under those circumstances, the destructive does not denote active, as some of the critics suggest, but passive. Blake describes as active those female characters who rebel against the established order, who refuse to take part in the world of violence and break free from the vicious circle of oppression. Only when they decide to stop and follow the embracive politics of sexual harmony, the world becomes a better place and the Satanic rule of error can be surpassed. In *Milton*, it is the character called Ololon who represents this sort of ability of the feminine. Her openness towards sexuality and ability to forgive are the main cause of the upcoming Humanity. She does not continue the circle of jealousy when confronted with the error of Milton. Instead she forgives him and shows him the way by annihilating herself. In this way Blake depicts the wisdom of the feminine portion of the being who sees beyond evil. More precisely, she sees beyond the unconscious hypocrite, selfhood, who is not able to see beyond his mistaken attitudes and his oppressive behaviour.

According to Blake, Satan or error is a displacement of one's selfishness. Therefore, it is important to take care of one's individuality with special attention because it may easily become the destructive selfhood. Nevertheless, no external force is there to help. Thus, in order to make the situation better, the change must come from within. Blake may be putting great value on imaginative Zoa, art and poetry but it is a force to push people into action of praising liberty of all kinds not to mention the act of forgiveness. He also stresses the importance of individuality by showing the necessity of understanding what is the nature of the error by each particular individual.

Blake does not describe the utopia in his prophetic books. His task was not to write down a manual of behaviour but to push people into realization that there are alternative ways of understanding the perceived reality. One of the first steps is to perceive the strain between sexes as simply non-existent. Feminine and masculine are intertwined in every individual. For this reason, their connection should be celebrated by the acts of forgiveness and love which include the liberty of sexuality, human energies and imagination. The Harmony within the individual and society must be brought into existence by people themselves, by a deliberate labour of every individual in society. Moreover, according to Blake's prophetic books, everybody needs to realize the difference between God as a distant being in the chaos of the sky and God within human breast. One is false God, vengeful oppressive force, the embodiment of self-imposed limitations and the other is simply the healthy self-confidence, the most important aspect of harmonious life. Another key point is the necessity for the self to focus on the present because now is the time life might be changed. Looking into the future or dwelling in the memories too much is counterproductive to the spiritual development of the self who reassures itself of its weakness instead of his imaginative greatness. Most importantly, however, the body should not be source of shame for it is a vital step towards opening the spiritual gates of Eternity.



## 11) Resumé

Ve svých prorockých knihách *Milton a Jerusalem* se autor William Blake zabývá různými druhy útisku pocíťovaného jak jedincem tak celou společností. Podobně jako ve svých dřívějších dílech spatřoval viníka tohoto zla ve společnosti v organizovaném náboženství. Nicméně oproti starším básním, se jeho pohled rozvinul do té míry, že jako hlavní příčinu uvádí psychologický stav jedince. Od zobrazování interpersonálního útlaku a konkrétního líčení násilí se přesunul do napjatého vnitřního světa jedince. Anonymní seskupení nahradila myšlenka útlaku vycházejícího z člověka samotného.

V básni *Milton* se autor zaměřil na psychologii jedince, zosobněného historickou postavou básníka Johna Milтона. Naopak v *Jerusalem* je pod jeho drobnohledem stav celé společnosti. Aby se mu podařilo věrně vykreslit složité pochody v mysli člověka, představuje Blake několik nových postav, které reprezentují různé části osobnosti. Tyto části se jmenují Urthona, Urizen, Luvah a Tharmas. Všechny dohromady by měli v úzké spolupráci usilovat o nastolení harmonie a psychické pohody. Nicméně autorův hlavní záměr je popsat stav jejich smrtelného zápasu, ze kterého vychází Urizen, představující rozum, jako nejautortářštější část osobnosti. Urizen je podle Blake propojen se smyslem zraku a společně člověka nutí k materiálnímu vnímání světa. Zároveň také potlačují vše co nelze přesně změřit či definovat.

Představitost a emoce v jejich světě nemají místo a proto je pro člověka nemožné dojít k harmonii celé osobnosti. Lidé tedy nejsou schopni vnímat celou skutečnost, nabízí se jim pouze omezený výsek. Podle Blakea se však lidé celostnímu poznání brání sami svým vlastním strachem a limity. Výsledkem je naprostá ztráta radosti ze života, která samozřejmě zahurnuje také radost ze sexuality.

Blake ve svém pozdějším díle považuje sexualitu stále za velmi důležitou. Jeho pohled se však změnil v tom, že ji nepokládá za jediný způsob jak dosáhnout Věčnosti. Stává se pouze důležitým krokem k duchovní svobodě. Svět, který v prorockých knihách popisuje, je světem pokřiveného vnímání nejen sexuality, ale také lásky, která transformována v nenávist propojuje všechny lidi. Toto propojení vytváří stav normality a vše co se od něj jen maličko odchyluje je označeno za hřích a náležitě potrestáno. Tato situace je podle autora nejpalčivějším problémem světa, protože nezdravý pohled na sexualitu brání duchovnímu vývoji člověka. K zobrazení úplného zotročení lásky a

sexuality využívá scén znásilnění. Dále také rozšiřuje svou vizi a téma homosexuality. Zejména pak o následky potlačování homosexuálních pocitů, které následně vybuchují v odporné homofobní postoje.

Podle některých kritiků se také změnil Blakeův pohled na ženství a ženy, označují jej za otevřeně misogynního autora a vyčítají mu problematické vykreslení ženských postav jako buďto aktivní a negativí nebo pasivní a slabé. Avšak opak je pravdou, v jeho mytologii je femininita nejen stejně důležitá jako maskulinita, je také vykreslována jako moudřejší a ochotna obětovat sebe sama pro dobro veškerenstva. Jako mylný se ukazuje také názor, že Blakeovy osobní postoje k ženství jsou totožné s těmi, jak je prezentuje ve svých prorockých knihách. Nemůže tomu tak být, protože v nich popisuje patriarchální svět stvořený utlačovatelem Urizenem. Naprotitomu Blake sám považoval femininitu za posla harmonie. Sám se také přiznává k tomu, že je pohým zapisovatelem diktátu ženské části bytí jménem Beulah.

V jeho dílo jsou to mužské postavy, které uvedou do chodu nekonečný kruh útlaku a násilí díky svým zákonům morality a cudnosti. Jejich dominantní chování vyprovokuje ženy odvetné reakci; odmítnutí poskytnout mužům radosti sexuality. Jejich vůle však pramení ze strachu, není ukázkou svobody, ale slepým následováním pravidel patriarchátu. Ženy se tak stávají pouhou figurkou mužů. Je tedy jasné, že za těchto okolností negativní neznámá aktivní, jak naznačují někteří kritici, nýbrž pasivní. V Blakeově díle jsou aktivní ty ženské postavy, které se vzeprou zavedenému pořádku a odmítají se nadále podílet na světě plném násilí.

Jeden z prvních kroků ke zlepšení stavu světa je podle autora pochopení, že v každý člověk má svou ženskou a mužskou stránku a tyto jsou dokonale propojeny. Napětí mezi pohlavími je tedy zbytečné a lidé by se měli soustředit na pozitivní stránku bytí, tedy lásku, sexualitu, své touhy a fatazie. Dále je důležité uvědomění si toho, že bůh není vzdálená bytost obývající nebe, nýbrž že bůh je v každém člověku jako jeho vlastní a zdravé sebevědomí. S tím souvisí nutnost vnímání přítomnosti, protože jen v ní je člověk schopen svůj život aktivně přetvářet k lepšímu. Nejdůležitější je však myšlenka, že tělo není zdrojem studu a naopak představuje velmi důležitý krok k nastolení celkové harmonie.

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## Anotace

Tato diplomová práce se zabývá pohledem Williama Blakea na aspekty Já a sexuality. První část představuje prorocké knihy *Milton* a *Jerusalem* v kontextu autorových dřívějších prací. Následuje samotná analýza, která se nejprve zaměřuje na systém jakým autor chápal a popisoval osobnost. Další část práce představuje pohled na omezenost smyslového vnímání a jeho vliv na individualitu člověka. Hlavní část diplomové práce vyvrací údajný mysoginismus Blakeových prorockých knih, popisuje útlak volného projevu sexuality a také vliv potlačované homosexuality na harmonii osobnosti. Závěrečná kapitola nastiňuje autorovo pojetí utopického světa svobody a volnosti. Hlavním cílem práce je zmapovat způsob, jakým se Blake ve svých posledních dílech odchýlil ve vnímání sexuality jak ji prezentoval ve svých dřívějších básních.

**Autor:** Adam Petrásek

**Fakulta:** Filozofická fakulta Univerzity Palackého v Olomouci

**Katedra:** Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky

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## Annotation

This master's thesis explores William Blake's perception of sexuality and the Self. The initial chapter introduces his prophetic books *Milton* and *Jerusalem* in the context of his earlier works. The following parts present the analysis of Blake's understanding of the Self with respect to the sense perceptions and the view of the world they offer. Next chapter focuses on the importance of individuality. The major part of the thesis disproves the supposed misogyny in Blake's prophetic books and analyses his description of oppressed sexuality. Following part draws attention to his understanding of suppressed homosexuality as a root of violence and oppression in society. The aim of this master's thesis is to present the way William Blake's perception of sexuality developed into his late prophetic books.

**Author:** Adam Petrášek

**Faculty:** Faculty of Arts, Palacký University Olomouc

**Department:** Department of English and American Studies

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