UDC 821.111

Blake & Orthodoxy. Part 2: Fourfold & Trinitarian Personality

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Abstract

This paper continues the dialogue between William Blake's work and Orthodox thought that I started in this journal last year. I must refer readers to that previous paper for a more general grasp of the terms of this dialogue; this current paper provides a much more in-depth enquiry of a particular issue. The theme of this paper is the *ecstatic* nature of personality and the understanding of human personhood as Trinitarian, in the image of the Trinity. In what follows, I place Blake's exploration of personhood in relation, chiefly, to the model developed by Christos Yannaras in *Person and Eros*.

The approach of this paper, as of the previous one, is philosophical rather than literary historical. With apologies to readers and scholars desiring a more historically anchored exploration of Blake, I hope that my elucidation of Blake's contribution to the philosophical and theological understanding of personhood justifies the approach I am taking.

In brief, my dialogic approach to Blake's resonances with Orthodox thought is grounded, not in historical, but in philosophical and theological connections. There is nothing to suggest that Blake had any exposure to Orthodox thought during his life; the closest we get, I believe, to any links of influence is Blake's and Berdyaev's shared fascination with Boehme and related mystical writers. Moreover, the Orthodox thinkers most like in temperament and purpose to Blake lived after Blake's death. Blake's affinities with Orthodoxy comes about, instead, through his particular critiques of the philosophical and religious traditions of Western Christendom.

Keywords

Blake, Orthodoxy, Berdyaev, Yannaras, sobornost, Trinity, Christianity, art, poetry.

Introduction

As Robert Ryan notes, the 'difficult mission that Blake undertook was to combat the deformed Christianity that had become the national religion of England' [Ryan, 2003, 154]; and he did this by re-imagining the Christian narrative and message in creatively new ways, untarnished by terms inherited from Enlightenment and Deist thought, and unfettered by the socially stagnant and morally stifling attitudes of his time. The dissenting currents of Blake's day may, initially, have inspired and informed his project – as did his engagement with Swedenborg – but Blake's insights and the positions he developed went far beyond those of his contemporaries in theological discernment. I hold, as did Gardner as early as 1929, and other commentators since, that Blake – in the course of deepening and developing his beliefs throughout his works, and through his visionary reading of the Bible as well as his engagement with Dante and other Christian artists – came gradually to adopt more theologically orthodox understandings of the central tenets and mysteries of the Christian faith; especially as regards creation, grace, and deification, transcending his earlier gnostic influences – though, as I have sought to show, the guiding themes of Blake's work are present already in the earliest work.

Above all, it is as a critic of the Western traditions, especially as developed through the likes of Newton, Bacon and Locke, that Blake finds common ground with Orthodoxy – and indeed formulates theological positions that both echoes the Patristic tradition and, significantly, anticipates the key 20th Century Orthodox contributions of Berdyaev, Yannaras and others. I should emphasise, therefore, that my approach is very much dialogic in intention; I believe that Blake's original insights may contribute to Orthodox understandings as much as the Orthodox tradition may throw light on the work of Blake. Perhaps nowhere is the affinity as pronounced, and the dialogue as fruitful, as on the issue of the nature of personhood.

I should also note here, at the outset, that a thorough engagement with

the issue of gender, the roles of men and women, in Blake, falls outside the purview of this paper. However, I hope and believe that the ecstatic model of personhood that I am offering will be helpful and illuminating for gender-studies approaches to Blake, and that the Trinitarian model of personhood provides a corrective to gender polarisation. I will seek to show, with particular reference to the very valuable work of Helen Bruder, how much of Blake's original attitude to gender on the social level is grounded already in his ontological understanding of what it means to be a person in the image and likeness of God.[1]

The ek-static, relational person

Yannaras begins his tremendous account of the person by emphasising that "By the word *prosôpon* ('person') we define a referential reality." The person, thus, "is defined as reference and relation [and cannot be interpreted] simply as individuality outside the field of relation" [Yannaras, 2007, 5].

Though we say that one is a person, we really shouldn't speak of a person in the singular at all; for to be a person is to be a person among others, in a personal relation to others, to the world, or to God. "The person *is* only as dynamic reference, only as 'opposite-something', only as unique, dissimilar and unrepeatable relation" [Ibid, 18]. To always be relational is to be always outward-reaching (towards persons, the world, God); that is, to be *ek-static*, to stand outside one's self in energies tending to dialogue, communion and mutual transfiguration, for "ecstasy (*ek-stasis*) mean[s] the dynamic self-transcendence of natural individuality" [Ibid, 27].

Vitally, this is central to what it means to be in the image and likeness of God. As Yannaras writes, "the human person becomes an 'image' and disclosure of God precisely in its self-offering" [Ibid, 41]; the divine likeness in us is not primarily rational but *kenotic*, self-emptying, and erotic, seeking communion with another.

This is a Trinitarian image and likeness, for as Trinity God is always a relation; in the words of David Bentley Hart, "a *perichoresis* of love, a dynamic coinherence of the three divine persons, whose life is eternally one of shared regard, delight, fellowship, feasting, and

1 The interest of this paper – as, I believe, the interest of Blake – is primarily in the human, not the male or female in isolation or the conflict between the two; in what follows, therefore, my use of 'man' for humankind is not to be taken as prioritising the masculine over the feminine.

joy" [Hart, 2003, 155]. This means that any simple equation of the divine image with our rationality or our reasoning faculties, as is common in Western thought, is mournfully deficient; for we are persons in the image of the Trinity, and it is likeness to – and participation in – the Trinitarian relations that should be manifested in our persons[2].

This understanding of the person as "a term a relation [and] a fact of ekstasis" [Yannaras, 2007, 19-20], writes Yannaras, is in stark contrast to the idea of the person primarily as a thinking subject and autonomous individual, as enshrined in Western philosophical and theological thought. Yannaras sets out the difference between the Orthodox and the Western approaches as follows:

On the one side, life is based on truth as *relation* and as existential experience; truth is actualized as life's social dynamics and life is justified as the identification of being true with being in communion. On the other side, truth is identified with intellectual definitions; it is objectified and subordinated to usefulness [and as such] it comes to be translated into technological hype, into the tormenting and alienation of humanity [Ibid, 23].

I quote this passage at length because I think Blake very clearly follows – and is most fruitfully read in the light of – the relational understanding; indeed, he musters his creative energies in a life-long mental fight against precisely the opposite approach.

From the *Songs of Innocence & Experience* to *Jerusalem*, Blake presents us with an understanding of human personality and personhood as dynamic, embodied in a material world and a world of others, while always responsive to a divine source and image of fulfilment.

The tensions between such poems as "The Divine Image' and "The Human Abstract", for example, set up two poles of iconicity and opacity, and as such they anticipate the conflicts, acted out in the fate of Albion in the later Prophetic Books, between a life responsive to the Divine Vision and Similitude, on the one hand, and a life ensnared by Selfhood and the Spectre, on the other.

It is clear, already from the early works, that to be a person – to be in the divine image and likeness – essentially entails being open to loving and imaginative relations with one's fellow men,

2 It is significant that, as Yannaras notes, nature of the *person* (*prosôpon*) was first explored by the early Christian writers, notably Gregory of Nyssa, as part of attempts to clarify the nature of the Triune God, especially the relation between God's 'essence' and his three 'hypostases'.

and indeed entails a creatively responsible engagement with the shared material world, as well as always directing one's dispositions towards the possibility of communion with God.

While Blake himself does not speak of the Trinity or a Trinitarian personality, but what he calls a 'fourfold' vision of man and the world, we may read this in terms of a Trinitarian model. The image of God in man, for Blake, is 'fourfold', and it entails that our real nature is, as on Yannaras' model, ecstatic, dynamic and communal[3].

Blake, of course, is not a theologian, but an artist and poet; he is, however, someone with a profound vision of God, and his work does, I believe, witness to a communal and relational understanding of God. Blake's work can certainly sustain a Trinitarian reading, and very fruitfully feed into a Trinitarian conception of personhood, as I hope this paper may go some way towards showing.

Importantly, when I claim that Blake's work is exemplary for an understanding of the Trinitarian (and 'fourfold') nature of personhood, it isn't simply the case of Blake telling or showing us what a person is and should be like; more significantly, it is the kind of person he asks his readers to be – the powers he invites us to exercise, the relationship he asks us to enter, as creatures of Imagination, in the very act of reading. Blake's work does not only invite a Trinitarian-fourfold interpretation, but indeed a Trinitarian-fourfold *experience*. We are asked to follow Milton and Albion and cast self aside, to step outside the circle of our customary perceptions and conceptions, in an imaginative and *ek-static* engagement with the energies of the work – for Blake's art and poetry aim to disclose and rekindle the divine image, not only in Albion, but in us too.

Childhood and the poetics of *metanoia*

We may begin, where Blake may be seen to begin, by considering the meaning of childhood, and the significance of Blake's engagement with this early stage of the human person. That our personalities are formed early seems true of Blake himself, who saw angels as a child, and it is reflected in his treatment of young people in the *Songs* and Prophetic Books

3 Blake's use of 'fourfold', in addition to containing a critique of the three-dimensional thinking of the materialists, of the Newtonian universe, also resonates with "the Four-fold Gospel" (p.345) and, not coincidentally, with the fourfold structure of his Jerusalem, which indeed seeks to manifest Jesus, the Imagination, the great Humanity Divine.

alike; where the personal dignity and divine potentials of children are always emphasised. Childhood is the part of our lives when we are perhaps most open and receptive to what Orthodox call the Trinitarian glory. It is the time when we most fully take the world and its relations as given, and do not think of ourselves as autonomous selves, and it is also the time of our first stirrings of transcendent longing, our first leaps for the beyond

It is crucial to our personality, as adults, that we engage in a dialogue with the child in ourselves. Blake's dialogue with childhood, in the *Songs*, also allows him to reveal – and us to discern – some centrally significant truths about the nature of personhood and, indeed, of God.

Blake gives an image of our innate reciprocity with God in "The Divine Image", seeing our life as utterly dialogic with the freely given love of God:

For Mercy Pity Peace and Love,
Is God our Father dear:
And Mercy Pity Peace and Love
In Man his child and care
[Blake, 2000, 60].

The poem suggest that, as we are in God's image, we have already within ourselves what is requisite for communion with Him, and we are also responsive to the same image in our fellow men. While these intuitions are not reserved for childhood, they are intuitions that belong to an Innocent perspective.

It is vital that we are able to draw on these resources of childhood in later life. We shouldn't think that childhood is 'better' than spiritual maturity (tempered, tried and transformed by experience), but we should see that such maturity is yet more difficult to achieve if we lack the reservoir of spiritual intuitions and intimations that childhood gives[4].

As D. G. Gillham observes: "What is important is that we have known the perfection of Innocence, and though we can no more induce a state of perfection in ourselves than we can return to childhood, we are provided, by this knowledge, with a measure of the success of our more deliberate activities" [Gillham, 1966, 6][5].

We ought to be cautious to speak of any perfection attained in childhood, but it is true that even the intimations

4 Hence Blake's trenchant critique of a materialistic society intent on turning even innocents into instruments of industry, in one way or another; if not by turning children into labourers, then by turning them into consumers; a prescient critique all too relevant to the contemporary world.

5 Gillham's' book has stood the test of time as a reading exemplary for its patience, sensitivity and precision, and it should be commended for its absence of any ulterior motives or agenda, though I personally find that it underestimates Blake's Christian commitment.

and momentary experiences of innocence provide our adult deliberations with a gold standard of value. Adults should see in the child one of the clearest manifestations of the divine image and likeness, and one of the clearest invitations to love: thus Christ enjoins us to see and act, and Blake manifests in his work a real commitment to revealing and receiving the divinity of the child.

He who learns to love children may also learn to grow more attentive to the divine image in himself, as well as in other adults; and he may be inspired to see the child as a model of imitation – as does Alyosha in *The Brothers Karamazov*. Christ, we mustn't forget, invites us to become like children.

Childhood, therefore, is not something to outgrow and then remember, but rather something to perpetually re-assimilate into our personality and our sense of personhood. This is yet another aspect of our dialogic and dynamic personality; and it is one that speaks of our need to be, as it were, perpetually reborn. Significantly, it is part of spiritual maturity to realise our relation to God the *Father*; and even the oldest and most venerable of believers never cease to be the children of God.

Blake returns us to childhood in particularly powerful ways in the *Songs of Innocence*, for example in the "The Little Boy lost" and "The Little Boy found", where we are forced to contemplate the difference in perceptions and conceptions between our adult minds and the soul of the child, and in which we are asked – significantly – to supplant our observer's reasoning with the child's direct and immersed intuitions.

In Yannaras' terms, these poems confront us with two different kinds or modes of knowledge, one objectifying and one relational; and we are asked, for a full appreciation of the poems and their meanings, to adopt the latter approach. It takes a cognitive leap to be able to put ourselves in the child's position, and insofar as we manage this imaginative identification we are rewarded with a real 'injection' – not simply recollection – of innocence; a way of seeing the world in its givenness, unclouded by obfuscation, rationalisations or utility calculations.

On a first view, we are prone to misconceive the poems of *Innocence* because we see them only with the adult's mind, mired in Experience. As in repentance, *metanoia*, we are required by these poems to undergo a change of seeing, even indeed a change of heart. Thus we, too, are 'lost' as we begin reading about the 'little boy'; but the poems, when successful, achieve the miraculous in returning us to

the world with new eyes, able to see God, not as an abstract entity, but as a caring and ever-present Father. Blake's art may help us therefore – may show us how, and provide us with opportunities – to 'become as a little child'; not by reverting to childhood, but by reorienting our perceptions and dispositions to achieve a real responsiveness, and a real *relation*, to God.

"On Another's Sorrow", which closes the *Songs of Innocence*, gives a most poignant and profound image of God's closeness to us, and of all things existing under divine care. The poem does not only illustrate empathy and sympathy, the taking of another's suffering into and onto oneself, and weeping tears of and for another, but also shows, crucially, the infinite compassion at the heart of the Incarnation; thereby alerting us to the transformative power of sharing another's sorrow, of opening our hearts and laying down our selves for another, allowing for a mutual regeneration:

He doth give his joy to all,
He becomes an infant small,
He becomes a man of woe
He does feel the sorrow too
[Blake, 2000, 69].

Beneath the simplicity of the poetic forms, this discloses a profound theological truth about the meaning of God's assumption of human nature.

Helen Bruder makes a significant observation regarding the image of God that permeates the *Songs of Innocence*: 'At the spiritual heart of Innocence is a feminized, pastoral Christianity whose greatest value is empathic love'; and the image of 'a deity who expresses strength (adult/masculine) through weakness (infant/feminine) deepens the discussion considerably' [Bruder, 2006, 138-39]. This is, I maintain, perfectly in keeping with orthodox understandings of a God of *kenotic* love and a God of incarnation, whose power is inseparable from the self-transcending adoption of our suffering state and from the self-offering care for his creatures. Blake's contribution here may also be seen to anticipate the conceptions of R.S. Thomas, both in methods and insights affirming the *apophatic* theological tradition that permeates Orthodox thought.

The kind of *kenotic*, self-emptying, care shown in "On Another's Sorrow" is such that we may come to know in our relations with children, more easily and obviously than with adult men or women, but which we are called upon to exercise in life as a whole; thereby – by our experience of becoming vulnerable with, and behalf of, another – coming to know something of God's self-emptying love for his creatures. It is in the expe-

rience of sympathy and mutuality, so Blake's work testifies, that we reveal and realise the divine image in others and in ourselves; and so each act of self-annihilating love for another is iconic, and may grant us an epiphany of the *ek-static* and *kenotic* love of God. This is a core meaning of the parable of the Good Samaritan, and it is one that permeates Blake's work, from the *Songs* through to the experience of Albion in *Jerusalem*.

One strength of Blake's work is that we have to exercise some of this imaginative and self-denying sympathy in the very reading of the poems.

The songs of Innocence are not sentimental or platitudinous, but both invite and reward a simplicity of attitude that, for the adult ensconced in the world of experience, demands a radical change of perspective. The challenge of the these songs is not unlike the challenge posed by Orthodox icons, with their two-dimensional presentation, to one habituated to the naturalistic perspectives of western painting; and just like the icon requires a shift from 'natural' to 'spiritual' modes of apprehension, so Blake's work – emphatically, but not solely, the Innocent songs – ask that we cast aside the trappings of our fallen perceptions and reclaim (a measure of) the clarity of innocence and, above all, that we experience the work in the spiritual Imagination.

We are essentially imaginative beings; our personality belongs at heart, and in its fullness, to the life of the Imagination: "The Imagination is not a State: it is the Human Existence itself" [Blake, 2000, 280], writes Blake. We may say, in the vein of Yannaras, that the Imagination is our 'mode of being', and the manifestation of the image and energies of God in us.

To see another person in and with the Imagination is to see him or her as a being called to grow in the likeness of God, destined for *theosis*. To reach out to such a person *erotically* is to realise them as persons capable of communion and mutual transfiguration; to reach out to them in self-denying compassion, *kenotically*, is to relate to them as infinitely precious and worthy of infinite care.

Thus when the Innocent poems best achieve the innocent mode of expression, perception and being – as in "Spring" and "A Dream", for example – they show us, as Gillham observes, "the responsiveness of all creatures to each other, and the quickening of their [unique personality] by being part of a greater whole" [Gillham, 1966, 206]. The condition of such quickening, such flourishing of personality, is of course mutual love.

Love, crucially, is both the subject and the 'aim' of the *Songs of Innocence and Experience*, the ultimate meaning of which is perhaps best encapsulated in two lines from "The Little Black Boy":

> And we are put on Earth a little space,
> That we may learn to bear the beams of love
> [Blake, 2000, 51]

This is ultimately what our earthly, *ek-static* and inter-personal life is about.

The spectral self

According to Yannaras, "The 'modern age' [in the shadow of Western philosophy] is characterised by humanity's imprisonment in complete subjectivity and at the same time by its effort to obtain absolute objectivity, centred, in both cases, on the individual" [Yannaras, 2007, 10]. This is an apt philosophical diagnosis of the condition in which – and *against* which – both Blake and his characters labour; and it provides a way of understanding Albion's imprisonment, which is both a physical fact as well as a mental state of an erroneous view of the world.

When Albion falls, he falls through the rejection of the divine image in himself, and of the communal nature of his personality; through envy of the mutual delights of a life lived as part of a greater body and form. He falls into Selfhood, through (and into) self-enclosure, self-justification and self-righteousness; which is the negation of a communal and *ek-static* personality.

The spectral self, so called, is isolated, resentful, and pathologically creates a false idea of the own person and of others, as well as a false image of the world and of God. Though Blake may perfect his study of destructive self-isolation in his later works, he presents powerful, critical and cautionary images of the self as a monad, alienated from real dialogue and communion, already in several of the *Songs of Experience*; where, crucially, the spectral aspect is to be found not only in the content of the poems but in the attitudes of the speakers – something too easily and too often overlooked by readers of Blake.

Gillham wisely cautions against identifying Blake himself too closely with any of the speakers, and their states, of either the Innocent or Experienced songs. Thus, for example, "In 'London' Blake does not express his despair of the human condition, but depicts a condition of despair, not necessarily his own" [Gillham, 1966, 5].

"London" is a poem which gives us the disturbed mutterings and accusations of as isolated centre of consciousness. It is the mind of one who feels entirely at odds with the world; one who resents, judges and berates, perhaps with some reason, but without at the same time being capable of much empathy with those he identifies as the victims of a pervasive social malice. It is symptomatic of this speaker's state that even the sufferings of others – the "Marks of weakness, marks of woe" [Blake, 2000, 88] – which ought to elicit pity and sympathy as well as righteous indignation, is reduced to fuel for an abstract indictment of the world.

A similar lack of empathy is evident in the speakers of "The Garden of Love" and "Holy Thursday". Thus, in the former poem, we see a man who denounces external factors and institutions – "Priests in black gowns" [Ibid, 86] – for a change wrought, most likely, within himself, and who seeks to ascribe a state of innocence to "joys & desires" [Ibid] which are, most likely, not so very innocent at all. The experienced speaker of "Holy Thursday", meanwhile, is so busy condemning the "cold and usurious hand" of the rich that he seems to take his eyes off – and so to withhold his own hand, as well as remove his heart from – the situation at hand and the persons involved. Thus he appears to feel no pity, where pity is called for, content instead to denounce others for their supposed hypocrisy.

Thus, as Gillham rightly notes, one of the most devastating implications of "London" is that "the city has rendered [its inhabitants, the poem's speaker among them] unfit to love" [Gillham, 1966, 14]. The cure for such a condition, in Blake as in Orthodoxy, is the cultivation of mutual love; between persons in society, as well as between man and God.

In all these cases, as so often in Blake, we are presented with a distorted self or personality perceiving and creating the world in its own image and, moreover, failing to take responsibility for the false world which he self-righteously denounces. The speakers of Experience project a criticism onto the outside world (wrongly conceived of as independent of their autonomous selves, as an imposition upon them) that ought also to be applied inwards; and thus they deflect the responsibility for their own condition and also, crucially, for their own growth and development as persons. These speakers lack the self-reflection, which comes with openness to the perspectives of others, to realise that they are victims of the

same "mind-forg'd manacles" [Blake, 2000, 88] they condemn in others.

It is true that the formation of a personality must, to some extent, take the form of opposition against such abstracting and depersonalisation tendencies in the world as are evinced in "London" and other of the poems of Experience. It is also true that the speakers of these poems – in stark contrast to Los's regenerative labours in his struggle against the Spectre, for the regeneration of Albion – fail to realise that task. What they lack is the outward-reaching – the *ecstatic* and *kenotic* – impulses that enable genuine interaction and transformation.

What we may learn from these cases is that a defective or undeveloped personality is not only the product of his condition, but indeed helps to perpetuate that condition; for any real and right change entails the annihilation of self, and the own selfhood is all that such a figure knows, as he has isolated himself from others. This diagnosis also shows why, for Blake, the materialist and proto-Marxist explanation of man as essentially conditioned by social factors is not only false but abhorrent, for the way it ignores or explains away the spiritual vitality and potential of the person.

Made in the image of the Trinity, we are as humans essentially *social* beings; not in the sense of being socially conditioned and determined by outside forces, as materialist thought would have it, but in the sense of being dialogic and communal beings, whose potential is only realised in a life lived with and for others. Blake, throughout his work, illustrates the implications of both the above understandings, and illuminates the difference between them.

There is, in Orthodox thought, a crucial distinction made between the *person* and the 'individual'. While the person always refers to a spiritual reality, the individual is really a biological or mechanical category, denoting one token of a type, or one part among many that constitute a whole.

As explained by Metropolitan Anthony, "According to Marxist ideology, the individual is an interchangeable being; in contrast, the person is unique and irreplaceable: this is a profound difference which exists within and without the Church" [Bloom, 1971, 63]. He goes on to explain that while "an individual is the last term of fragmentation of mankind […] the person is altogether different"; for the person is whole, unique, and in an "unparalleled relationship" with God. "Thus we see clearly that the collective, which deals with individuals, and the Church, which is composed of members who are

unique, irreplaceable and inimitable, are profoundly different realities" [Ibid, 64].

This understanding also has implications for the understanding of gender in Blake. The mutually ecstatic nature of personhood precludes a notion of self-sufficient and self-assertive individuality, whether make or female, and completely undercuts the traditionally masculine notion of the monistic, rational subject. As Helen Bruder and others have observed, Blake presents gender as in crucial respects socially constructed; Bruder emphasises 'Blake's own battle with essentialist notions of sexual difference' [Bruder, 2006, 135]. This chimes well with the understanding of personhood as prior to, more fundamental than, the roles accorded to men and women, and the meanings ascribed to 'masculine' and 'feminine'. Consequently, any striving for masculine or feminine self-realisation will be a mistaken pursuit; as Albion and Jerusalem illustrate, the flourishing of personhood entails the mutually transformative communion of male and female elements. Any assertion of male over female, or vice versa, would result in a fractured personality and lead to the imprisonment (actual and conceptual) of a monistic, spectral Selfhood.

Blake emphatically, tirelessly, zealously, seeks to manifest the uniqueness and dignity of each person; and he moreover gives a profound illustration of our *communal* (not 'collective') character in the figure of Albion. The state of Experience is one of the isolated individual; a de-personalising state of self-contraction and opacity which is to be overcome, ultimately, in the expansive vision of a common humanity and – crucially – a common divinity in the 'Great Humanity Divine' of Jesus.

Several of the *Songs of Innocence* provide vital corrections to the experienced state, and gives us beings capable of delight and forgetfulness, of communal games and intercourse, of free mutual dependencies, partaking of a world much wider and richer than that contained in their own skulls. Exemplary in this respect are "The Echoing Green", "Nurse's Song", and "The Shepherd". These are poems which also give us intimations of the divine life, the mutuality and *perichoresis* of the Three Persons, of which we are called to be partakers by energy, imagination and grace.

What these poems point to is the essential reality of *self-annihilation* at the heart of what it means to be a person.

Forgiveness and self-annihilation

The call for self-annihilation, which reverberates through all of Blake's

work, most explicitly in *Milton* and *Jerusalem*, is also a call to become a fully flourish person in the Trinitarian image, the 'fourfold' image of God.

Self-annihilation is a prerequisite for regeneration; it is something each man must voluntarily do, but it also characterises the very nature – the very dynamic at the heart of – our personhood, where such a *kenotic* movement is always enacted. Blake knows – as his Milton comes to know – that personality is the opposite of an isolated self; and so for the fruition of our personhood we must continually put off self, perpetually break out of ourselves in *ecstatic* affirmation of divine goods and in love of others – such, indeed, is our true mode of existence:

> Such are the Laws of Eternity that each shall mutually
> Annihilate himself for others good […] & put off
> In Self annihilation all that is not of God alone
> [Blake, 2000, 287].

Thus Milton – in what may be seen as a poetic corollary of the philosophical-theological articulations of Yannaras – accepts for himself the universal calling of each man:

> I come in Self-annihilation & the grandeur of Inspiration
> To cast off Rational Demonstration by Faith in the Saviour
> [Ibid, 292].

Self-annihilation is the way of redemption and regeneration: for we accomplish this casting off of self in and through Jesus, in and through whom we are raised to new life. This is the invitation and the promise given to Albion:

> "And the Divine voice came from the Furnaces as multitudes without Number: the voices of the innumerable multitudes of Eternity
> And the appearance of a Man was seen in the Furnaces:
> Saying […] In Me all Eternity
> Must pass thro' condemnation and awake beyond the Grave" [Ibid, 323].

Orthodoxy would say that our personality is formed and developed by constantly living the prayer, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me", from the fiftieth Psalm. Repentance is also at the heart of Blake's understanding of personality and personal flourishing; both in its aspect of self-annihilation, as we have seen, and in the aspect of forgiveness.

"The Spirit of Jesus is continual forgiveness of Sin" [Ibid, 300], writes Blake at the very beginning of *Jerusalem*; and so repentance, and the creative transformation of our sinful or destruc-

tive dispositions, should be the perpetual work of all men – not in self-condemnation or the accusation of others, nor in self-righteousness, but in grateful joy at God's mercy, in the recognition of the gift of our divine potentials, and in energetic labours for God's glory. This is what it means to be, and to grow as, a person in the fullest sense.

A core meaning of repentance is to reinvent and reorient our relations to others, to the world, and to God, in thought and will, desire and action. This is something, as we have seen, that we may gather from – and, importantly, exercise in the reading of – the *Songs of Innocence*. The rediscovery of innocence – which is a prerequisite for the life of Imagination – is only possible, not through rejection of the world, but by the regeneration of our own modes of engaging with the world and with others – imaginatively and compassionately.

It is crucial that for Blake forgiveness is not a moral act or attitude so much as an imaginative one; for forgiveness is the exercise of the imagination, which is the divine image and energy in us, and it entails responding to that image and energy in others, seeing all in the light and likeness of Christ. Forgiveness, we may say, is *ecstatic*, *kenotic* and creatively regenerative.

Forgiveness becomes the central theme of Blake's mature work, and the means whereby Albion may be delivered from his state of Eternal Death. Thus the daughters of Beulah close the second chapter of *Jerusalem* with the invocation, "Come then O Lamb of God and take away the remembrance of Sin" [Ibid, 347]. At the same time, Blake's own version of a kind of 'moral-imaginative imperative' becomes: "Distinguish between the Man. & his present Sate" [Ibid, 349]; that is, distinguish the person, in whom the divine image is engraved, from the falsehood and sinfulness that he may fall into, and do not condemn the man with his actions. Thus, and only thus, may Albion rise from his old state into new life.

"Christian life," writes John McGuckin, "is a matter of endlessly repeated efforts for the ideal, and a willingness to admit error and aim for a higher standard under the aegis of a Lord whose compassion is great" [McGuckin, 2011, 423]. Albion can therefore be seen as an exemplar of the Christian life, not because he is perfect, but because he desires to improve and be made new in the divine likeness.

The unified person

While we can only be persons with other persons, it is true at the same time

that each unique person contains a multitude of faculties and dispositions, which are sometimes in conflict or disharmony. Albion, when we meet him, is divided and struggling for wholeness. *Jerusalem* is a story of a fractured personality, of Albion divided from Jerusalem, and of the struggle to reunite into a 'fourfold' person, home to the divine vision.

The person is, from the beginning, a unity, and it is also as a unified, composite, and organic whole – not just in any part or aspect of our being – that we are in the image of God; as Yannaras writes, "it is the human *person*, which is in the image and 'glory' (i.e. 'disclosure') of a personal God" [Yannaras, 2007, 45]. This is why the Orthodox pray for God to purify every aspect of the person, heart and soul, senses, mind and body; so that we may, as an integrated whole, apprehend and commune with the personal Triune God. Albion's struggle for re-unification is therefore entirely synonymous with his approach to, and growth in, the divine likeness.

The image on plate 76 of *Jerusalem*, showing Albion before the crucified and gloriously radiant Christ, is an icon of how the energies of our personhood should be directed towards the divine likeness, how our personality may flourish only through openness to the divine light, through personal – *ecstatic* and *kenotic* – dialogue and communion.

The early plates of *Milton* recount an episode of strife, confusion and sundering among the fellow-workers and sons of Los; which shows the difficulty, in a fallen world, of sustaining sobornost, brotherhood and communion, and which also typifies the fractured personality.

The episode has echoes of several Old Testament stories, notably that of Cain and Abel. Thus, while Rintrah "Flam'd above all the plowed furrows. angry red and furious" [Blake, 2000, 252], Satan murdered Tulloh in the fields; and so the family of Los is divided, torn with grief and resentment. So begins also the conflict between reconciliation and retribution which is so central to Blake, and which for him reflects the difference between Christianity and the false philosophies of the modern West; between grace and the moral law, freedom and necessity; distinctions which are also absolutely central in the thinking of Yannaras and Berdyaev, as in the fiction of Dostoevsky. These are also divisions between two understandings of the person; between the communal and ecstatic personality of the divine likeness, and the individual rational self.

The answer to the division of the personality, and the false conception of

an autonomous self, is its re-integration according to the model of the divine *perichoresis* and mutuality. Thus, in a wonderful mirroring, a redemptive inversion or reversal, of the division of the four Zoas – the four aspects of Albion – we see how:

"all the Family Divine collected as Four Suns
In the Four points of heaven East. West & North & South
Enlarging and enlarging till their Disks approached each other:
And when they touch'd closed together Southward in one Sun
[…] and as One Man. who weeps over his brother
[…] One Man even Jesus" [Ibid, 267].

So the restoration of the person is only accomplished in the imaginative identification with – the creative commitment to grow in the likeness of – Jesus Christ.

It is central to Orthodox understandings that we retain the divine image even after our fall; something which is eloquently and succinctly affirmed also by Blake:

"The Divine Vision still was seen
Still was the Human Form. Divine
Weeping in weak & mortal clay
O Jesus still the Form was thine"
[Ibid, 324]

Crucially, the divine image remains, not only in, but also *with* us; for it is an active power and a personal presence, as this wonderful passage from plate 38 of *Jerusalem* testifies:

We see Albion,
Turning from Universal love petrific as he went.
His cold against the warmth of Eden rag'd with loud
Thunders of deadly war (the fever of the human soul)
Fires and cloud of rolling smoke: but mild the Saviour follow'd him
Displaying the Eternal Vision: the Divine Similitude:
In loves and tears of brothers. sisters. sons. fathers. and friends
Which if Man ceases to behold. he ceases to exist" [Ibid, 335].

We can see here how the divine is always a communal image in us, essentially an image of brotherly, familial and neighbourly love. The divine image in us is always *relational*; we neither possess nor realise this image in isolation, but only in mutuality with others. Crucially, we are also invited to see God as a community; for though Jesus is 'one man', he is also a family, a council, and thus reveals the *perichoresis* and *sobornost* of the Trinitarian relations.

Moreover, we see how the divine image, vision and voice in us, is not static and self-contained but is always *ek-static* and *kenotic*, self-emptying and self-offering. Thus we see London speaking on behalf of the "Divine Family":

"I give myself for thee […]
For Albions sake. and for Jerusalem thy Emanation
I give myself. and these my brethren
give themselves for Albion" [Ibid, 335].

We should emphasise that God – under the names of Jesus, the Divine Vision, the Divine Family – is always *personal* in Blake's work. There is not a trace in Blake of the abstract and objectified philosopher's god; what we encounter is always a God of revelation and *relation*.

Yannaras defends such an approach to and apprehension of God, in contrast to the impersonal implications of the metaphysical assumptions of the Western churches. Thus he notes critically how "there is no reference in the *Summa Theologiae* to the personal God of existential relation: there God is the object of rational enquiry, an abstract intellectual certainty" far from the experience of the Orthodox [Yannaras, 2007, 56].

Also God is only really personal because he is Three Persons. It is often when we forget God's Trinitarian nature that we also forget his personality, and begin to speak in abstract terms of a philosophers' god instead of the terms of relation proper to the God of love and faith. A great risk with non-Trinitarian approaches to personality, therefore, is that the divine image is seen as a particular faculty belonging to each monad self; this is the tradition that Yannaras writes so powerfully against.

Eros

Central to Yannaras' model of personhood is the concept of *eros*, understood as every person's animating desire for self-transcending communion with others. This desire defines us, its energy is constitutive of us, as ecstatic beings. Yannaras explains that "the *eros* of the Greek Church Fathers [is] the loving impetus and movement of exodus from individualized existence in the realm of objects, for the sake of the actualisation of relation in the highest sense" [Ibid, 20]. That *eros* figures in our personality on a most fundamental level should be indisputable – so Yannaras argues exhaustively, and so Blake's work thoroughly illustrates.

Importantly, there are two main aspects of our erotic energies; namely, our *epektasis*[6], our yearning movement

6 The concept of *epektasis* is found in Gregory of Nyssa, an author also

towards the transcendent glories of God, and our *sexual* desires for another embodied person. These aspects of *eros* are not, however, entirely distinct. According to John McGuckin, "Orthodoxy understands sexuality to be a God-given power that develops and deepens human communion by spiritual and physical love" [McGuckin, 2011, 426]. The same understanding is evident in Blake.

Berdyaev holds that "man is a sexual being" and that in "man's sexuality we perceive the metaphysical roots of his being' [Berdyaev, 2009, 180-181]. What is manifested in sex, and what happens in and due to sex, has implications for the whole orientation of our lives.

What we love and how we love are perhaps the two most elemental questions at the heart of our personhood; our lived response to these questions define the kind of person we are, and how far we approach or embody the divine likeness. Blake is preoccupied with these questions, and his explorations of human nature should be read in the light of this overriding concern.

Eros in Blake is, fundamentally, energy, exuberance and delight. It constitutes a real force for spiritual acts and works of regeneration; while, at the same time, it is a power that can easily be corrupted. His message is that *eros*, in whatever form, should be cultivated so as to allow us to affirm the most crucial truths of all:

> "I am in you and you in me. mutual
> in love divine" [Blake, 2000, 301].

A significant aspect of Blake's treatment of personality in *Milton* and *Jerusalem* is the understanding that "The Sexual is Threefold: the Human is Fourfold" [Blake, 2000, 249]; by which he means that our sexuality does not exhaust either our nature or our erotic yearning; that humanity does not belong to the world of generation and the cycle of reproduction alone, but that we belong to regeneration and free creation in the divine image.

We must be careful to observe Blake's distinction between the 'sexual' and the 'human'. This is a distinction, I believe, between the individual and the personal. It is the latter, the nature of personhood, that is the interest of this paper.

important to Yannaras, and used to great effect by David Bentley Hart; Hart credits Gregory with "advancing, against the static hierarchies of conventional metaphysics, a genuinely dynamic ontology, and with a new conception of what constitutes the relation between the divine archetype and its created image" (p.188); a relation understood in terms of our *epektasis*, our ceaseless reaching out – at the very heart of our being, in our constituting energies and desires – towards the infinite beauty of God.

The personal should also, I suggest, form the basis of gender-studies approaches to Blake; we should pursue the discussion of what it is like to be an individual of a particular sex, on a sociological level, in the light of what it means to be a person. Whatever the occasional problems of Blake's sexual politics, he has consistently profound things to say about the nature of personhood, valid for women and men as mutually formed in the divine image and likeness. Bruder is right, therefore, to note that the sexual garment 'threatens to obscure the divine human beneath' [Bruder, 2006, 157].

Berdyaev is right that "the religious meaning of sexual love, of the erotic, lies in the fact that it is the source of an upward movement of personality, the creative upsurge" [Berdyaev, 2009, 221]; and it is also an outward-reaching movement, towards others. As McGuckin observes, sexuality "is a very powerful drive, and can easily propel the human experience into addictive and unhappy behaviours as it can lead it into the transcendent fulfilment of love" [McGuckin , 2011, 421]. A way to tell good erotic desires from bad ones, therefore, is to see whether they tend in the direction of self-transcendence or if they chain us to the world of necessity.

Our erotic nature's potential for perversion is richly explored by Blake. At heart of Albion's fall lie acts and attitudes of jealousy and infidelity of many kinds – and these are fundamentally disruptive of personality and inter-personal dialogue. We see how lust has overcome love; and how, instead of seeking a mutual consummation of two personalities, desire has leas to the assertion of one self over another.

An inventory of thwarted, perverted, mistaken or vainly self-seeking sexual desires may also be found in such *Songs of Experience* as "My Pretty Rose Tree", "The Lily", "A Poison Tree" and "The Garden of Love". Another poem, not included by Blake himself in any publication, beginning "I saw a chapel all of gold…", gives a powerfully disturbing account of erotic desire turned bad. The central parts of the poem reads:

I saw a serpent rise between
The white pillars of the door,
And he forc'd & forc'd & forc'd,
Down the golden hinges tore.
And along the pavement sweet,
Set with pearls & rubies bright,
All his slimy length he drew,
Till upon the altar white
Vomiting his poison out
On the bread & on the wine
[Blake, 1976, 124].

By showing destructive, possessive and desecrating desires, the poem

also illustrates – by inversion, by what's missing the poem – the potentially sacred nature, not only of the sexual person, but of the sexual act. The disgust and violence exhibited in this poem should be seen as the very negation of those attitudes that allow for a mutually flourishing erotic relation.

The root of this desecration, it seems in the poem, is the prohibitions placed on our erotic energies – and though it is partly true that guilt and resentment may arise from restrictions, this is also how it must be seen from the perspective of Experience. It is clear that such a person as is evoked here has ceased to be able to conceive of erotic love in 'innocent' terms, as the mutually enriching and transformative coming together of two persons created in the Trinitarian image.

Magnus Ankarsjö also notes the prevalence of the key word 'mutuality' in *Jerusalem* and *The Four Zoas*; and he makes the important observation that 'the prerequisite of Blake's gender utopia is a creative activity of both sexes' [Ankarsjö, 2004, 160]. Ankarsjö argues that Blake's vision 'eliminates or, rather, transcends, *all* corrupt forms of sexuality' [Ibid, 30], male and female, in a utopian state of male-female togetherness. This is an interpretation that chimes true, I believe, with the consummation of Jerusalem, and which affirms the necessity of mutual transformation for the flourishing of personhood.

Crucially, Albion's 'physical' fall also goes hand in hand in hand with his adoption of false philosophies, by a moralistic instead of an 'imaginative' approach to sexual desire and erotic love. This results in "the imputation of Sin" [Blake, 2000, 322], in feelings of guilt and shame and in acts and attitudes of accusation, resentment and vengeance; tendencies which can only be overcome by forgiveness and by the redemption of sexual energy for spiritual and loving fruition.

Blake, importantly, never ceases to affirm the potential for erotic desire to release good, divine, energies that tend towards real communion. He makes it clear that the antidote to the alienation and de-personalisation resulting from 'mere sex', from the selfish exercise of lustful motives, is to 'make love' in the fullest sense of the word, in a wholehearted commitment (sexual or not) to union with another (or, in familial or communal terms, in brotherhood or *sobornost*, with several others).

Blake shows us the positive vulnerability inherent in the erotic; the opening and laying aside of self inherent

in any erotic relation, to a human lover or to God. He envisions nakedness – and he paints it – as a mutual disclosure of personhood. As the face reveals the soul, so in the art of Blake the naked body is revelatory of our spiritual form. Coming together with another person is thus a spiritual, not just a physical, act and experience.

As Berdyaev writes, in a lyrical moment, "holy is the ecstasy of love which melts the lovers into one" [Berdyaev, 2009, 217]. We find such a state illustrated in the final plates of *Jerusalem*. Blake would also whole-heartedly agree with Berdyaev's claims that "Personality, unique and unrepeatable, is confirmed in love" [Ibid, 213] and that "Love is the way to revealing the secret of the person, to a comprehension of the person in the depth of his being" [Ibid, 214].

We may identify such comprehension – inseparable from real communion – with a state of imaginative innocence. Gillham writes that "Sympathy, unaffected admiration, self-forgetfulness and delight are the characteristics of sexual love or it is not love at all, and these are the qualities of Innocence" [Gillham, 1966, 163]. Innocence, thus, is not simply synonymous with virginity; rather, healthy sexual love also entails a state of mutual innocence, for it is a state of delightful communion. For examples of the innocent delight of the erotic encounter, we may look to "The Blossom" and "Cradle Song"; while for a darker (though not necessarily negative) counterpoint we may turn to "The Sick Rose".

Also Helen Bruder notes that the state of Innocence 'is not marked by an absence of sexual activity'[Bruder, 2006, 137] but is rather full of playfully erotic intercourse. Bruder further notes, perceptively, that 'what are absent are fixed and stereotypical gender roles'; indeed, she writes, 'it is striking that Blake resists even mentioning the biological sex of his children, much less conferring significance upon it' [Ibid, 138]. What we get instead, I believe, is a dynamic image of ek-static personhood, realised in mutual delight. Sexual difference, this all suggests, is a consequence and constitutive condition of Experience, which is also the state of isolated Selfhood.

As Gillham points out, the possible sublimity of sex "results only from mutual enjoyment, and Innocence is always a condition of absorbed participation" [Gillham, 1966, 165]. We may learn, even from the songs of maternal love and infant delight – which we will look at below – something of the ideal of sexual love; the transcendence of self and selfish gratification in the mutually

transformative act of giving oneself for, and in, the passionate and joyous energies of another.

This understanding is enshrined, importantly, in the Orthodox concept of chastity, which does not mean the complete abstinence from sexual love but which rather aims to cultivate the conditions under which a sexual union may also be a real spiritual communion between persons. Matrimony, therefore, should not simply be seen as a concession to the fallen state of Experience, but indeed as a way of reclaiming and attaining a state of Innocence.

Human sexuality, as McGuckin comments, has the two positive aspects of "communion and creativity", and so "is understood by Orthodoxy to be God-blessed when it is within the context of deep mutual love open to the transmission of new life" [McGuckin, 2011, 420]. Thus the Trinitarian nature of married love is partly manifested in the openness of the wife and husband to the possibility of new life in the child; which entails the parents' extending unconditional love to, and their acceptance of responsibility for, a third person.

It is a profound truth of erotic love, in its sexual aspect, that it is open to the possibility of children, and thus to new forms and relations of selfless love and mutual delight; as illustrated, for example, in Blake's "Infant Joy":

Sweet joy I call thee;
Thou dost smile,
I sing the while,
Sweet joy befall thee
[Blake, 2000, 67].

From this poem Blake draws out the implications of the Incarnation; and he goes on to show, in "A Cradle Song", how the infant person is iconic of Christ and how the mother's love is iconic of the Father's care – for us, called to be children of God, as well as for his only-begotten son – and indeed of the Son's love is adopting our human nature to become an 'infant small' for us:

Sweet babe in thy face,
Holy image I can trace.
Sweet babe, once like thee.
Thy maker lay and wept for me
[Ibid, 58].

Thus we may see how God partakes in our joy and how, for the sake of this love, he becomes as we are, so that we – in whom his image in manifested, and his likeness may be realised – may become as he is.

Gillham's comments are very fitting. According to the innocent poem, he observes, humans are not "self-enclosed individual[s, but are] quickened by their association with others, and the poem

presents us with a complex of connexions" – between mother and child, between man and God; and he concludes that "It is only if he can respond to God […] in the virtues of delight which make him reach out beyond himself, that man can know God" [Gillham, 1966, 186-187], which is entirely in keeping with the Orthodox understanding as presented by Yannaras and others.

God gives himself and goes out of himself in erotic ecstasy; in his energies, as Yannaras writes, "He actualises 'outside' his nature the ineffable power of personal relation, communion and participation" [Yannaras, 2007, 67]. We are called to follow this example. We may understand marriage and the conception of children in this light as well; as a gift of new life outside of ourselves, yet embraced within, and participating in the energies of, the all-encompassing ecstasy of God's gift of himself.

Significantly, what we see in the *Songs* – as, in a different form, in the case of Albion and Jerusalem – is not only an image of mutual delight, but of mutual personal energies, of being together, of a communal mode of being. We may glean from this, not only a vision of the ideal of human relationships, but also something of the mutual life of the Three Persons.

We may say that the erotic relation is deepest or fullest when it is more than inter-personal between two people. We may understand the parent's love for children in this way, but – importantly – may also see this Trinitarian reality of love also in other relationships between two people; namely, when Love itself (more properly, *Himself*) is recognised as making a claim upon both lovers, and when these therefore direct their desires and commitments beyond the closed circle of the twosome, to render this relation both responsive and answerable to the God of love.

Metropolitan Anthony helps us understand this nature of love in terms of sacrifice; of offering our mutual love as a gift also to God, and thereby making it sacred. This also entails not being possessive of the love, not claiming it as mine or ours; in other words, it entails an "act of self-annihilation [which] is essential to Love" [Bloom, 1971, 76][7].

In Albion's case, his erotic nature is fulfilled through an act of self-annihilation, which not only re-unites him with

7 Metropolitan Anthony's etymological comment is crucial here: While "the word sacrifice [in English] always means losing something […] in Latin, in Greek, in Hebrew, in Slavonic, in all the ancient languages, sacrifice […] means to make something sacred, make something holy and not to lose it" [Bloom, 1971, 75].

Jerusalem, but which also allows him to communicate and commune with Jesus in the 'visionary forms dramatic' of eternity.

Conclusion: Visionary forms dramatic

Blake's engagement with human and divine personality reaches its fulfilment in his depiction of the fulfilment of Albion's personhood in *Jerusalem*. The nature of this fulfilment has much in common with Orthodox understandings. In particular, Blake's vision of imaginative dialogue and communion is very suited to Yannaras' metaphysics; especially if, in the following quote, we may understand by 'Emanation' the manifested energies and imaginative life of each person[8]:

> When in Eternity Man converses with Man they enter
> Into each others Bosom (which are Universes of delight)
> In mutual interchange. and first their Emanations meet […]
> For Man cannot unite with Man but by their Emanations [Blake, 2000, 385].

So we commune with our fellow man, and so too – in Orthodox theology – we commune with God; through his *energies* and his imaginative and creative manifestations, while his 'essence' remains unknowable and inaccessible to us. According to Blake (in the voice of Los), "the Holy Ghost in Man" is "his Genius" [Ibid, 388]; which we may understand as the unique centre or fountain of inspiration and creative energies in each man. Yannaras would condone this way of understanding the divinely dynamic life of each person, as opposed to the static centre of the autonomous self. On Yannaras' Orthodox model, each person is not just animated by God, but is indeed energised *with* the energies of God; something which the Western theological approach (which does not accept the essence-energies distinction in God) cannot allow, but which I believe we find in Blake.

The ultimate implications of the ecstatic, erotic and dialogic understanding of personality can be seen most clearly on the invaluable plate 96 of *Jerusalem*; where

> Jesus appeared standing by Albion as the Good Shepherd
> […] & Albion saw his Form
> A Man. & they conversed with as Man with Man. in Ages of Eternity [Ibid, 393].

8 I don't think it is necessary to see the emanations as the female companions and complements to the male *zoas*; on my suggested reading, informed by Yannaras, all persons – women no less than men – may be said to have emanations.

This shows God's personal address to us, and our personal response to him, at the very heart of our being and personhood. Importantly, a dialogic love entails mutual *kenotic* sacrifice; for Jesus tells Albion:

unless I die thou canst not live
But if I die I shall arise again & thou with me
This is Friendship & Brotherhood without it Man is Not [Ibid].

Hence the implications for our personhood of the Incarnation, Passion and Resurrection of Christ; more fully articulated as Jesus speaks again, truly revealing God as a self-emptying God of love:

Wouldest thou love one who never died
For thee or ever die for one who had not died for thee
And if God dieth not for Man & giveth himself
Eternally for Man Man could not exist. For Man is Love:
As God is Love: every kindness to another is a little Death
In the Divine Image nor can Man exist but by Brotherhood [Ibid].

This speech means the redemption of the person of Albion: for his Self was lost in the contemplation of faith
And wonder at the Divine Mercy [Ibid];

and so Albion is inspired to act, by throwing "himself into the Furnaces of affliction," whereby Albion's whole personality is transfigured:

the Furnaces became
Fountains of Living Waters flowing from the Humanity Divine
And all the Cities of Albion rose from their Slumbers [Ibid].

Thus the fulfilment of Albion's personality is realised as he stands

before Jesus in the Clouds
Of Heaven Fourfold among the Visions of God in Eternity [Ibid].

As visual counterparts of the articulations of this plate, we have plates 99 and 100; the former showing the loving consummation of Albion's reunion with Jerusalem, and the latter giving us three creative and dignified figures which may be taken to illustrate fourfold man conversing in 'visionary forms dramatic', a crucial image given to us in the words of plate 98:

And they conversed together in Visionary forms dramatic […]
according to the wonders Divine
Of Human Imagination [Ibid].

As such Blake envisions our inspired and enraptured communion in eternity: an infinite creative life of imagination and mutual delight; and in such terms Orthodox theology envi-

sions the Trinitarian relations. As such our true life, the genuine realisation of communal and ecstatic personality is iconic of, and partakes of, the life of the Trinity.

Thus, in conclusion, we may see Blake's work as profoundly illuminating, and contributing to, the Orthodox conception of personhood; and we may speak with some justification of the mutual expressions of Blakean and Orthodox imaginations as giving us a model of 'fourfold' Trinitarian personality.

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Блейк и православие.
Часть 2: четырехмерная и троичная личность

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Аннотация

Эта статья продолжает работу по сопоставлению творчества Уильяма Блейка и православной мысли, начатую в данном журнале в прошлом году. Я должен посоветовать читателям обратиться к предыдущей статье для более общего понимания условий этого диалога. Темой настоящей работы явилось *экстатическое* понимание личности и видение человеческой личности как троичной, по образу Троицы. Я помещаю исследование Блейком вопроса индивидуальности, главным образом, в контекст модели, разработанной Христосом Яннарасом в работе «Личность и Эрос».

Методология данной статьи, как и предыдущей, характеризует ее скорее как философское, а не литературно-историческое исследование. Заранее прошу прощения у читателей и ученых, более желающих видеть историческое исследование Блейка, и надеюсь, что вклад в исследование блейковской концепции личности в контексте философии и теологии может оправдать мой подход.

Мое стремление найти резонанс между мыслями Блейка и мыслью православия основано не на исторических связях, но лишь на философско-теологических. Нет причин предполагать, что Блейк когда-либо попадал под влияние православия; наиболее близкой связью может считаться привлекательность Беме и близких к нему мистиков для Блейка и Бердяева. Православные мыслители, по темпераменту и целям близкие к Блейку, жили значительно позже него. Связь Блейка и православного мировоззрения обусловлена прежде всего общностью критики философских и религиозных традиций западного христианского мира.

Ключевые слова

Блейк, православие, Бердяев, Яннарас, соборность, Троица, христианство, искусство, поэзия.