"The Song of Los" by William Blake as the embodiment of the author's literary principles

Vera V. Serdechnaya

PhD in Philology, science editor in Analitika Rodis Publishing,
142400, 7 Rogozhskaya st., Noginsk, Moscow region, Russian Federation;
e-mail: rintra@yandex.ru

Abstract

The article is devoted to the commentary and translation of a small prophecy of the English Romanticist William Blake, "the Song of Los". The lyrics of Blake are extremely deep and artistic. However, for understanding the significance of the legacy of the poet, his epics are also important. These poems, which almost were not read by anyone during their lifetime, sometimes in several copies, although not all, have reached our time. And, from the time of the Pre-Raphaelites, the prophecies has been called forth a whole wave of interpretations and studies. "The Song of Los" (1795) is one of the shortest prophecies in Blake, however, difficult for the unprepared reader. By the time of the engraving of the poem, Blake already published the poems "America" and "Europe"; "the Song of Los" consists of "Africa" and "Asia". "The Song of Los" most widely and clearly demonstrates the scatter of mythological parallels of Blake's historiography. The author includes in his myth and explains the emergency of the teachings of the Old and New Testaments, Islam, ancient philosophy and mythology, Eastern wisdom and European mythology, philosophy and occultism. The poet considers history (both real and ritual) through the prism of his own mythology, that acquired its heroes by this time. In the appendix the author offers his translation of "the Song of Los" to Russian with an extensive commentary.

For citation

Keywords

William Blake, Romanticism, English Romanticism, author's myth, mythology, prophetic poems, translation, commentary.

Introduction

William Blake, the pioneer of English romanticism, is one of the least known epic poets of his time among Russian readers. Once considered among the Soviet critique as a "revolutionary romantic", he remained for the Russian reader in the apt expression of N. Fry, "a victim of anthologies" – a brilliant lyricist in the translation by S. Marshak or V. Potapova, V. Toporov or K. Balmont.

Undoubtedly, the lyrics of Blake is highly deep and artistic. However, to understand the significance of the poet's heritage, his poems are of no small importance - "a number of books embodying his philosophical system, expressed in an increasingly mysterious form", which "became known as Prophetic Books", as wrote the publisher of his collected works Sir Geoffrey Keynes. [Keynes, 1967].

These were exactly the books - engraved by the poet, the engraver's apprentice and the painter, plates, printed and hand-painted editions. Each sample, imprinted from the same plate, was unique - in color, mood. Surprisingly, these poems that weren't read by almost anyone during romanticists life, sometimes in several copies, although not all but have reached our time. And since the Pre-Raphaelites times, they have caused a wave of interpretations, commentaries and studies.

An important task that preceded the study of poems was their scientifically accurate publication, allowing to use the published texts as an object of study.

The complexity of this task was due to the specific design of books: features of the author's punctuation, graphics, versions of works. To the full extent this goal has not been reached even in Western World, with its extensive Blake world. And there are only few poems of William Blake published in Russian language.

Only "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell" was repeatedly translated - in excerpts and entirely among Blake's poems. The most comprehensive publication of domestic translated Blake world became bilingual edition in 1982 [Blake, 1982], where were presented: "The Book of Thel" in translation by S. Marshak "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell" and "Visions of the Daughters of Albion" in translation by A. Sergeev; "America", "Europe", "The French Revolution" - in translation by V. Toporov. In 2004 G. Tokareva has published her translation of the poem "Tiriel" [Blake, 2004], and two years later there was released a collection, where were published other small poems ("The First Book of Urizen", "The
Small poems by Blake make a special cycle of his work, where main themes and motives of the author's mythology are developed, fully implemented in three major epics (not translated into Russian – and, probably, are not expected to be translated soon). Each of the small poems is interesting in its own way - with its satirical pathos ("The Marriage of Heaven and Hell"), philosophical allegory ("Visions of the Daughters of Albion"), alchemical symbolism ("The Book of Thel"), revising classical subjects ("Tiriel"), periphrastical interpretation of history ("America", "Europe", "The French Revolution"). But especially interesting in terms of studying Blake's mythology are small poems, most complex with their symbols, that not coincidentally were translated last: "The First Book of Urizen", "The Book of Los", "The Song of Los" and "The Book of Ahania". They have already outlined the features of the author's syncretic myth, which subsequently grows up and becomes more complex.

One of the Blake's shortest poems, however, difficult for the unprepared reader is "The Song of Los". Written in 1795, in London Lambeth, it contains eight plates made with illuminated printing. Five copies of the poem are known. By the time of engraving the poem Blake had already published his poems "America" and "Europe"; "The Song of Los" consists of "Africa" and "Asia".

The plot of "Africa" is close to the plot of "Europe": the main content of the depicted story is the formation and distortion of the mankind image. This process is controlled by Blake's mythological characters, involuntary assistants of the tyrant-demiurge Urizen – "Race of Los & Enitharmon", by the prophets who brought people a "a Code of War", laws and religions; with a culmination in "a Philosophy of Five Senses", received by Locke and Newton from the hands of Urizen. "Asia" is a continuation of the history till Blake's days, until apocalyptic events of history contemporary to him.

Revolutionary spirit, personified in the Orc figure, for Blake has much in common with the revolutionary component of the Christ activity. In other Blake's poems Orc is not only fighting against Urizen, but also crucified on the Tree of Mystery: already in "America" he is "wreath'd round the accursed tree".

His opponent is Urizen, giving laws to nations and stretching "clouds of despair" over Europe and Jerusalem, "his ancient place". Another kind of tyranny follower are the "Kings of Asia", afraid of losing their power. Urizen "give his Laws to the Nations", but his "Books of brass, iron & gold" melt from the lights of Orc.

Historical events go out of history frames, fitting into the world conflict.

According to Mulvihill, "The history narrated in Song of Los is a history of representation, while its agents - Moses, Tristmegistus, and Mahomet among them - are heirs of Blake's arch-representer,
Vera V. Serdechnaya

Urizen." [Mulvihill, 2000, 373]. This externalization, objectivity of the historical process is an example of "Corporeal Understanding", which Blake, in the context of romantic aesthetics, contrasts imagination as a true force of spiritual and historical development.

"The Song of Los" most widely and clearly demonstrates the variation of mythological parallels of Blake's author historiography. The author includes in his myth and explains the origination of such teachings as the Old and New Testaments, Islam, ancient philosophy and mythology, Eastern wisdom and European mythology, philosophy and occultism. And although Blake protects the doctrine of semi-mystical Christianity, believes in the historicity of the Old Testament and builds his story based on biblical, recognizes the greatness of Newton ideas and shares a satirical pathos of the French enlighteners. As the poet shows, all these spiritual movements can lead to war and violence, can serve as an instrument of the spirit enslavement.

The poet considers history (both real and ritual) through the prism of his own mythology, that already has it's named heroes at the time of writing "The Song of Los". Excluding Blake's already written poems, it is difficult to decipher polysemantic figures of the author's myth and to determine the meaning of mythology inversion, as well as to determine in the poem the background of integrating religion, law and science.

Nevertheless, the poem is not "closed" for the reader, like Blake's other works: its provocative inversions, unusual comparisons, shocking descriptions are obviously aimed at dialogue, it provokes interpretation or objections; however, a worthy interlocutor for such a dialogue, probably, has not yet appeared during Blake's times. Even today, polysemantic figurativeness opens the way to a variety of interpretations, and able to lead the critic onto the opinion of "Satanism" or sadism of the author, which is a consequence of inattention to Blake's allegorical text, generally having humanistic meaning ciphered in a complicated manner. "The Song of Los" is one of the texts that does not lose its relevance as an object of literary research.

Blake not only "wrote for those who, like himself, were excited about the secrets of human spirit" [Glebovskaya, 1993, 23] – he appeals to those who, like himself, were constantly in condition of "Intellectual Battle", who were ready to unravel cultural allusions of his intertextual, polyphonic works.

However, Blake's "reading complexity" remains of current importance, even for his long-term researchers [q.v. Baulch, 2013; Behrendt, 1992; Cogan, 2015; Larrissy, 2005; Mulvihill, 2007; Suzuki, 2001; Welch, 1999; Welch, 2007]. That is why translation of Blake's poems needs annotation.

Why, despite the relatively recent translation by V. Toporov, we thought it possible to introduce a new translation of "The Song of the Los" to the reader? In our opinion, level of sometimes quite familiar translation published in 2006, together with absence of any annotation in many respects reduced the
The most important aim of our translation was to retain Blake's special figurativeness and his rhythmic. We tried to retain and comment on the main figures, important for the author's mythology. In this regard the way of writing capital letters was kept according to the original. Our comment is based "Blake Dictionary" by S. Foster Damon involving other Western sources of Blake world. The source of the text is a classical issue edited by D. Erdman [Blake, 1988]. References to it are given in the comments in square brackets: the page number follows the title of the cited work of the poet.

The published commented translation is only a timid step to the reproduction of Blake's epic world in Russian language, not as a materially "translated", that means text shifted into our native language, but as an aesthetic object, as tremendous author's thoughts and the abyss of creative imagination opening up new worlds to Blake's attentive and grateful reader.

**Vera Serdechnaya**

**ПЕСНЬ ЛОСА ОТПЕЧАТАНО УИЛЬЯМОМ БЛЕЙКОМ ЛАМБЕТ¹, 1795**

**THE SONG of LOS Lambeth¹ Printed by William Blake 1795**

**AFRIKA**

Я спою вам песнь Лоса, Вечного Пророка²;  
Он пел её под четыре арфы³ на пирах Вечности⁴;  
I will sing you a song of Los. the Eternal Prophet²;  
He sung it to four harps³ at the tables of Eternity⁴.

---

¹ The area of London on the South Bank of the Thames, known at Blake's time for its lush gardens. "Lambeth" as the place of execution is highlighted in five of Blake's prophetic poems, many other works have been started or completed here.

² Los in Blake's mythology is Poetry, the embodiment of Creative Imagination in the created world. He is a blacksmith, his beloved – Enitharmon, she is shining being the Sun of Spirit. He himself has forged the material Sun, and its name is most often interpreted as an anagram of Sol. As a poet, Los is a Prophet of Eternity who reveals eternal truths. He is a revolutionary of spirit, while his son Orc is a simple revolutionary. As a master of imagination Los is also a creator of everything that we see. He creates many misleading things (time, stars, universe), but only in order to recognize error and overcome it.

³ Four harps are continents, or parts of the world (Europe, America, Africa, Asia), where unfolds the action of author's mythological history.

⁴ Eternity, according to Blake, is the absence of changeable Time, the truth. "Error is Created. Truth Is Eternal. Error or Creation will be Burned Up, and then and not till then Truth or Eternity will appear" ["A Vision of the Last Judgement", 565, — word for word translation here and below is our V. S.]. Nothing real can have a beginning. So man has pre-existed his creation in Eden, which was only its materialization, an episode of Fall. Arts reveal and imprint the Eternal Truth. Blake understood his aim as "to open the Eternal Worlds, to open the immortal Eyes Of Man inwards into the Worlds of Thought: into Eternity Ever expanding in the Bosom of God. the Human Imagination" ["Jerusalem", 147].
In heart-formed Africa.

Urizen fades! Ariston shuddered!
And thus the Song began

Adam stood in the garden of Eden:
And Noah on the mountains of Ararat;
They saw Urizen give his Laws to the Nations
By the hands of the children of Los.

Adam trembled! Noah taunted! Pocheailed Afrikanec Adam shuddered! Noah faded! black grew the sunny
colonnial, African

When Rintrah gave Abstract Philosophy to Brama in the East:
(Night spoke to the Cloud!

Dread the Lysian's, what's spirits in smiling hypocrisy?
War

Against one another; so let them War on; slaves to the eternal Elements

---

5 Africa, according to Blake is a place of slavery, reflected in the enslavement of the Israelites by Pharaoh. Blake believes that since Africa is not mentioned in the Bible, its original name is Egypt ["The book of Urizen", 83]. Los begins his song in Africa, as it is dedicated to the enslavement of mankind by Laws and Religions.

6 Urizen is the most important figure in the mythology of Blake, one of human energies – the reason, the mind. He is also the creator of laws, a plowman, a builder, a driver of the sun-chariot. His metal is gold. His name is usually elevated to a combination of Your Reason or to the Greek υουριζειν (to separate) from which the word "horizon" comes. In a fallen status craving for power Urizen becomes Satan and demiurge. He builds the world according to the laws of Pythagorean geometry, plans the garden of Eden with its Tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Blake calls him, in particular, "Creator of men; mistaken Demon of heaven" ["Visions of the Daughters of Albion", 483]. He becomes the God of the world, the "Jealous God" (Ex. 20: 5) the Old Testament, God of restrained sensuality and the natural religion of the deists. At the Last Judgment, he collects the earth harvest. Los recognizes him God over the ecumenical error, and therefore his children – the prophets – give the nations laws and religions of Urizen.

7 Ariston, "king of beauty", according to Blake, in ancient times has built a palace for his beloved in Atlantic ["America", 55]. He shudders at the song of the enslavement of man. The image goes back to Aristotle, king of Sparta from Herodotus.

8 According to Blake, the creation of Adam was a sufficiently late episode in the history mankind fall. "Satan and Adam and the whole World was Created by the Elohim" [Jerusalem, 171], who was not Supreme. Adam embodies reason, consciousness; before Eve's creation, Adam was hermaphroditic (Blake, in particular, relied on Ovid). Blake believed that the original sin is judgment of others according to moral values ("ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil"). The fallen Adam is only the "Natural Man" by Rousseau, but "not the Soul or Imagination" [Laocoon, 273]. Adam in the concept of Blake's spiritual history leads a sequence of 27 patriarchs, epochs of the world (churches), or states of the human soul, "And where Luther ends Adam begins again in Eternal Circle" ["Jerusalem", 231].

9 For Blake, Noah is a man of imagination who survived the flood of Time and Space by building an ark of love for himself and his family. This flood was the worst disaster of all times: since then, according to Blake, there were established four seasons, people are no longer giants, their lifetime reduced. The water invasion was a rush of Matter, separating mankind from Eternity. Noah became the 10th from 27 patriarchs (q.v. ref. 8).

10 Children of Los are prophets, they give laws of Urizen to the nations.

11 Rintrah – one of the children of Los and Enitharmon embodying the righteous indignation of a prophet.

12 The religion of Brama for Blake remains an abstraction.

13 Abstraction, according to Blake, is a generalization built on material reality, and therefore it "Opposed to the Visions of Imagination" ["Jerusalem", 229].

14 According to Blake, disintegration of the unity of being into elements is the result of the fall of the world. The four Elements – the inexorable forces of matter. "These are the Gods of the Kingdoms of the Earth: in contrarious And cruel opposition: Element against Element, opposed in War, Not Mental, as the Wars of Eternity, but a Corporeal Strife" ["Milton", 130].
Noah, a man of vision, suffers from the contamination of mankind with forms of false knowledge; he is consumed by the Sea of Time and Space.

Blake considered Moses to be one of the great prophets, but didn't agree with all in his teaching. Although his books are inspired, they should be read in a symbolic sense – especially the beating of nations. Blake wrote: "God never makes one man murder another nor one nation." [Marginalia to R. Watson's "An Apology for the Bible" 614]. Blake believed that the Pentateuch was not more history, but poetry, "and inspired" [Marginalia to R. Watson's "An Apology for the Bible" 616]. Blake believed that the ten commandments, establishing a rigid moral law, is the cause of error: their author was Urizen, not the true God, Divine Humanity (Jesus). Being sent with the New Testament Jesus acted contrary to the letter of the commandments. He opposed forgiveness to punishment. Moses became the 22nd of 27 patriarchs (q.v. ref. 8). Blake here has Abram, which is the original name of the Patriarch before his change to Abraham (Gen. 17: 5).

Blake considered Socrates a great sage, but denied the universal importance of morality: "If Christianity was morality, Socrates would be the Saviour" ["Laocoon", 275].

Blake was very interested in Plato. His world of ideas is largely correlated with Blake's worldview and his allegorical poetic manner. However, he didn't like that Plato denied the truth of poetic vision, as well as the moral emphasis of Plato's teachings. "The Whole Bible is filled with Imagination and Visions from End to End and not with Moral Virtues; that is the baseness of Plato and the Greeks and all Warriors" [Marginalia to "Siris" G. Berkeley, 664]. Blake's painting "The last Judgment" shows Greeks among the rescued.

"The Song of Los" by William Blake as the embodiment of the author's literary principles
И Иисус28, муж скорбей29, услыхал её голос; он And Jesus28 heard her voice (a man of sorrows29) he получил recieved

Так начало человечество вянуть, здоровые стали The human race began to wither, for the healthy built Жить в закрытых местах, испугавшись Любви; Secluded places, fearing the joys of Love
И заражённые лишь размножались; And the disease'd only propagated:
Леута31 вызвал Антаном32 из сладких её долин So Antamon32 call'd up Leutha31 from her valleys of delight:
И Магомету буйную Библию дал33. And to Mahomet a loose Bible gave33.
На Севере, Одину34, Сота35 вручил Книгу Войны, But in the North, to Odin34, Sotha35 gave a Code of War,
Из-за Диралада36, что радость хотела его Because of Diralada36 thinking to reclaim his joy.
приручить.

То были Церкви; Больницы; Замки; Дворцы; These were the Churches: Hospitals: Castles: Palaces:
Как сети, ловушки и петли для радостей Вечности. Like nets & gins & traps to catch the joys of Eternity
И остальное — пустыня; And all the rest a desert;
Так Вечность, как грёза, за Till like a dream Eternity was obliterated & erased.
быта была и истёрта.

С ужасного дня, когда Гар и Гева бежали, Since that dread day when Har and Heva fled.
Ибо их братья и сестры жили в Войне и Страсти; Because their brethren & sisters liv'd in War & Lust;
И на бегу они сжались And as they fled they shrunk
В две узкие скорбные формы, Into two narrow doleful forms:
Ползая в теле рептилий Creeping in reptile flesh upon

proves that love is pure and is not constrained by frameworks of the body. However, Theotormon is still not able to forgive her.

Blake considered not Jesus not as the second person of the Trinity, but as the only true God, while the Father and the Holy Spirit were aspects of his image. He considered Jesus to be the embodiment of Humanity. Jesus is the Imagination, creative power at the roots of man's existence that drives him to everlasting re-creation of the Gospel (the theory of the Everlasting Gospel).

Is. 53:3: “He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and as one from whom men hide their faces; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.”

Theotormon — he is passion which after being restrained becomes jealousy. His name comes probably from theo (the God) and torah (law), either theo and tormented. He is the third son of Los. Jesus raises compassion above abstract good and evil. He learned that from the story of Oothoon, who was despised by Theotormon for betraying. Thus, the good news is the news of forgiveness.

Leutha embodies sexual attraction, bound by law and therefore understood as sin. One of its attributes is the Valley of pleasures (the female genitalia).

Antamon — the fifth of the Los sons, symbolizes the male semen, according to F. Damon. In other poems about him it is said "prince of the pearly dew", "crystal form, floating upon the bosom'd air", with "lineaments of gratified desire" ["Europe", 65-66]. It calls Leutha from her "valleys of pleasure" and gives the violent Bible (the Quran) to Mohammed due to the spread of monasticism.

The Bible for Blake was an example of true inspired Scripture: "The Hebrew Bible and the Gospel of Jesus are not Allegory but Eternal Vision or Imagination of All that Exists" ["A Vision of the Last Judgement" 554]. It is a" Poem of probable improbabilities, full of ... Imagination "[Marginalia to R. Watson's "An Apology for the Bible" 616]. Therefore, the "free","violent" Bible — the Quran — is even more free. Blake believed that Muhammad's teachings were a reaction to the Christian ideal of celibacy.

For Odin, the God of war, restrained passion (Diralada) becomes war.

Sotha — the ninth son of Los, embodies the beginning of war in the world. This war is different from the good spiritual battle of Eternity.

Diralada (Thiralatha) — erotic dream, the last stage of the suppression and exclusion of sexual desire.

Vera V. Serdechnaya
According to Blake, religions were the most important problem of mankind. He lived in an era of various doctrines collision, among which were the Anglican Church, and dissenters, and deism, and Quakers, and Methodists, and followers of Bohme and Plato. He believed in a single religion, which he evolved throughout his life. He knew the Bible very well, but he read it in a symbolic sense — the letter kills, the spirit gives life. He was familiar with Gnosticism, from where he probably borrowed the figure of demiurge Urizen, adhered to the English historians, that druidism was the original religion that became a source of pagan philosophy. He read Bhagavad Gita, the Quran, was familiar with the figure of Lilith in the rabbinic tradition. He studied deist philosophers, mystics, Paracelsus, Bohme and Swedenborg. All this was combined in his own philosophy. For Blake, God was a Poetic Genius, and man was a resemblance of God. According to Blake, the true religion is eternal, and existed long before the Coming of Jesus, who proclaimed it. This religion is opposed by the false religion of the world, whose God is Satan. Its history began with the Fall, when people who ate from the Tree of the knowledge of good and evil began to judge others. The consequence was the ten commandments, which restricted people to unified laws. Jesus came to refute the system by which he was crucified. False religion is logical, like work of Urizen. That is why Blake often used the word "religion" in a negative sense.

38 Har and his beloved Heva, the progenitors of mankind, become the serpents of materialism.

39 Enitharmon — spiritual beauty; sister, beloved and Muse of the poet Los. Damon derives her name from the Greek anarithmon (uncountable) or from (z)enith and (h)armon (y). Her emblem is the Moon, and the emotion is compassion. Enitharmon gave birth to many children. In the fallen state of world sleep, she embodies the Female World with its false religion of chastity and vengeance is a distortion of true Christianity. She — "the Eternal Female", the Great Mother, her daughter weave human bodies.

For Blake, Locke, author of the philosophy of sensualism, and Newton, author of the concept of materialistic mechanistic universe (as well as Bacon, inventor of experimentalism), were persons of the "Satanic Trinity", teachers of atheism, disbelief and materialism, or Natural Religion.

41 Blake saw in Rousseau and Voltaire the inspirers of the French Revolution, but objected to their deism and materialism. According to Blake, Voltaire successfully exposed the literal meaning of the Bible. It was Voltaire's ridicule in Candide of the Lord using compasses in the creation, that inspired Blake to his famous painting of a demiurge with compasses — "The Ancient of Days".

42 The Gods of Asia, according to Blake's poem "Milton" are "Twelve monstrous dishumaniz'd terrors, Synagogues of Satan," ["Milton", 137]. They are pagan Gods including Baal, Astaroth, Chemosh, Molech, Dagon, Rimmon, the Egyptian Trinity (Osiris, Isis, Horus), Velial, Saturn, Jupiter, and Rhea (the list is borrowed from "Paradise Lost" by Milton). They are killed by the clouds of Revolution.

"The Song of Los" by William Blake as the embodiment of the author's literary principles
The Guardian burns in his nightly tent.

**The Kings of Asia heard**

The howl rise up from Europe!

And each ran out from his Web;

From his ancient woven Den;

For the darkness of Asia was startled

At the thick-flaming, thought-creating fires of Orc.

Orka.

And the Kings of Asia stood

And cried in bitterness of soul.

Shall not the King call for Famine from the heath?

Nor the Priest, for Pestilence from the fen?

To restrain! to dismay! to thin!

The inhabitants of mountain and plain;

In the day, of full-feeding prosperity;

And the night of delicious songs.

Shall not the Councillor throw his curb

Of Poverty on the laborious?

To fix the price of labour;

To invent allegoric riches?

And the privy admonishers of men

Call for fires in the City

For heaps of smoking ruins,

In the night of prosperity & wantonness

To turn man from his path,

To restrain the child from the womb,

That the remnant may learn to obey.

That the pride of the heart may fail;

---

43 Albion is the poetic name of England. However, in Blake's mythology Albion (a combination of mythological characters of Albion, son of Neptune, and the local giant, who was killed by Brutus), the Eternal Man, the progenitor of mankind, comparable to Swedenborg's Great Man and Adam Kadmon in Kabbalah. According to Blake, since the beginning of history and until the Last Judgement he is in deep sleep, because the story is so tragic and full of errors. It was Albion who gave the reins to Urizen, reason, before going to sleep, which led to a distortion of the world's image for people. Jesus is the guardian of imagination, creativity and true vision during Albion is sleeping.

44 The tent, as a temporary protective place, symbolizes the philosophy of man.

45 Europe embodies the reality of Imagination.

46 Fire - an element, creative spirit of love. According to Blake, Jesus – "The God of Fire and Lord of Love" ['Jerusalem', 145]. The spiritual fire does not burn anything except errors.

47 In the original – *allegorical riches*. Blake perceived allegories as abstraction, close to moral statements: "Moral Virtues do not Exist; they are Allegories and dissimulations" ['A Vision of the Last Judgement', 563].
Чтобы увяло желание взора;
Чтобы нежное ухо с младенчества
Оглушилось, и ноздри – закрылись;
Чтобы смертных червей научить
Пути от ворот Могилы».

Чтобы нежное ухо с младенчества
That the delicate ear in its infancy
May be dull'd; and the nostrils clos'd up;
To teach mortal worms the path
That leads from the gates of the Grave.

Уризен слышал их плач!
And his shudd'ring waving wings
Went enormous above the red flames
Drawing clouds of despair thro' the heavens
Of Europe as he went:
And his Books of brass & gold
Melted over the land as he flew,
Heavy-waving, howlin, weeping.

И стал он над Иудеей,
And he stood over Judea:
And stay'd in his ancient place:
And stretch'd his clouds over Jerusalem;

Ведь Адам скелетом сухим
For Adam, a mouldering skeleton
Blew bleach'd on the garden of Eden;
On the mountains of Ararat.

Тут громы Уризена взревели зычно
Then the thunders of Urizen bellow'd aloud
From his woven darkness above.
Orc raging in European darkness
Arose like a pillar of fire above the Alps
Like a serpent of fiery flame!
The sullen Earth
Shrunk!

48 Vision – one of the feelings that came apart as a result of Creation from the primary being (from which man still has sense touch). После Падения зрение локализовалось и обратилось наружу – “A little narrow orb, closed up and dark, Scarcely beholding the Great Light; conversing with the Void” [“Milton”, 99].

49 The nostrils are receptacles of shared feelings, they symbolize emotions and are especially important for love. During the Fall like other feelings they became materialized and restrained: "their golden gates" became "shut, Turn’d outward, barr’d, and petrify’d against the Infinite" [“Europe”, 63].

50 The Books of Urizen contain his laws that direct life. At the Last Judgment, these books will burn in the flames of Orc. Here Blake doesn’t mention only one of the books – silver one, Book of Love; probably, it will not befall destruction.

51 One of symbolic metals for Blake is the metal of social organization. But in hands of Urizen it is metal of tyranny. Urizen’s Book of brass contains laws mankind society organization. “That Kings and Priests had copied on Earth.” [“Europa”, 64].

52 Blake usually refers gold to Urizen, born as the God of the Sun (reason). The Book of Gold is a book of science.

53 Iron is the metal with which the blacksmith Los works. But also Blake associates iron with all forms of cruelty: weapons of war, chains and traps, as well as Urizen’s Book of Iron, the Book of War.

54 According to Urizen’s laws of logic Adam, “natural man”, becomes just a skeleton.

55 Noah is opposed to Adam as a man of vision – a man of reason. According to Urizen’s laws he becomes a leper, “white”, that means expeled and despised.

56 Orc, likened to a pillar of fire, is same time likened to a serpent, which usually has negative meanings in the Bible. But the staff of Moses turned into a serpent, which becomes likeness of the Son of Man in The Gospel of John: “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up” (Jn. 3: 14). Thereby Orc at this stage becomes a figure in which Blake artistically reinterprets the sacred image of Christ.

"The Song of Los" by William Blake as the embodiment of the author's literary principles
Forth from the dead dust rattling bones to bones
And all flesh naked stands: Fathers and Friends;
Mothers & Infants; Kings & Warriors:

The Grave shrieks with delight, & shakes
Her hollow womb, & clasps the solid stem:
Her bosom swells with wild desire:
And milk & blood & glandous wine.

In rivers rush, and shout and dance,
On mountain, dale, and plain

THE SONG OF LOS IS ENDED
Urizen Wept.

References

1. Baulch D.M. (2013) "Like a pillar of fire above the Alps": William Blake and the Prospect of
the Heaven and the Hell: Selected poems and poems]. Moscow: EksmoPubl.
Orion, pp. 1-14.

Cf. the revival of bones by Isaiah: "Your dead will come back to life, your corpses will rise up! Wake up and shout
joyfully, you who live in the ground <...> earth will bring forth its dead spirits" (Isa. 26:19) and also in the Book of Ezekiel:
"So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold, a rattling; and the bones came
together, bone to its bone, <...> and the Spirit cometh into them, and they live, and stand on their feet -- a very very great
force" (Ezek. 37: 7 – 10).

Vera V. Serdechnaya
"The Song of Los" by William Blake as the embodiment of the author's literary principles


«Песнь Лоса» Уильяма Блейка как воплощение литературных принципов поэта-романтика

Сердечная Вера Владимировна

Кандидат филологических наук,
научный редактор,
Издательский дом «Аналитика Родис»,
142400, Российская Федерация, Московская область, Ногинск, ул. Рогожская, 7;
e-mail: rintra@yandex.ru

Аннотация

Статья посвящена комментарию и переводу одной из малых поэм английского романтика Уильяма Блейка – «Песнь Лоса» («Song of Los»). Лирика Блейка в высшей степени глубока и художественна. Однако для понимания всей значимости наследия поэта немаловажны и его эпосы. Эти не прочитанные почти никем при жизни романтика поэмы, порой в нескольких экземплярах, хотя и далеко не все, дошли до нашего времени. И вызвали, начиная со времен прерафаэлитов, целую волну интерпретаций, истолкований, исследований. Одна из самых коротких у Блейка, однако сложных для неподготовленного читателя поэм – «Песнь Лоса» (1795). Ко времени гравировки поэмы Блейком уже были опубликованы поэмы «Америка» и «Европа»; «Песнь Лоса» состоит из «Африки» и «Азии». «Песнь Лоса» наиболее широко и явно демонстрирует разброс мифологических параллелей авторской историографии Блейка.

"The Song of Los" by William Blake as the embodiment of the author's literary principles
Автор включает в свой миф и объясняет появление учений Ветхого и Нового Заветов, мусульманства, античной философии и мифологии, восточной мудрости и европейской мифологии, философии и оккультизма. Поэт рассматривает историю (как реальную, так и ритуальную) через призму собственной мифологии, ко времени написания «Песни Лоса» обретшей именованных героев. В приложении к статье автор предлагает свой перевод «Песни Лоса» на русский язык с обширным комментарием.

Для цитирования в научных исследованиях


Ключевые слова

Уильям Блейк, романтизм, английский романтизм, авторский миф, мифология, пророческие поэмы, перевод, комментарий.

Библиография


Vera V. Serdechnaya
"The Song of Los" by William Blake as the embodiment of the author's literary principles


