BLAKE’S \textit{Milton}:
FOOTSTEPS OF CHAOS AND ORDER

A thesis presented

By

Heather Erin Brist

To

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In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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In the field of

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ABSTRACT

William Blake’s *Milton* is written through a tripartite relationship consisting of himself, as a character; John Milton, resurrected from the dead; and Los, a cosmological creation of Blake’s. This thesis will argue that Blake writes from three interdependent perspectives which are unified by his desire to express his own “Poetic Genius” through establishing shifting points of view using the metaphor of the foot. The first perspective derives from his time and experiences spent at Felpham, Blake’s home during the early writing stages of *Milton*. The second perspective stems from John Milton’s characterizations of his life and beliefs as expressed through his epic poem *Paradise Lost*. The third perspective is found within the cosmology Blake creates around the character Los in *Milton*. These perspectives are unified through the connection of Milton falling from heaven and entering Blake’s left tarsus, a bone found in the foot. In order for this connection, and subsequent events to occur, Blake, Milton, and Los must obtain strength in chaos from one another through a tripartite unity, resulting in each perspective gaining individual autonomy and eventual order, enabling them to separate from one another and move forward toward a vocational readiness for what Blake calls The Last Judgment.
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract 3

Acknowledgements 4

Table of Contents 5

Chapter I: Introduction: Blake’s *Milton* 7

Chapter II: The Importance of Time and Space 13

Chapter III: Symbolism of the Foot 26

Chapter IV: Blake’s Tripartite Unity and Illuminations 31

Chapter V: Conclusion 39

Bibliography 41

Appendix 45
One must still have chaos in oneself to be able to give birth to a dancing star.
–Friedrich Nietzsche
I. Introduction: Blake’s *Milton*

The conceptualization of William Blake’s *Milton* published in 1811, cannot be reduced to any one incident in Blake’s life; it is the result of a culmination of life events enabling him to produce this first epic poem. From a young age Blake experienced visions of a celestial presence. The earliest records of Blake’s spiritual encounters are documented from the memory of his wife, Catherine¹. She recollects, “the first time you saw God was when You were four years old. And he put his head to the window and set you ascreaming.”² Then, when he was eight or ten, Sauntering along [on Peckham Rye, by Dulwich Hill], the boy looks up and sees a tree filled with angels, bright angelic wings bespangling every bough like stars. Returned home he relates the incident, and only through his mother’s intercession escapes a thrashing from his honest father, for telling a lie. Another time, one summer morn, he sees the haymakers at work, and amid them angelic figures walking.³

The parallel of this memory can be seen within the writing of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*: “A fool sees not the same tree that a wise man sees.”⁴ The voices heard along with the visions and dreams experienced are always penetrating his writing and engravings. These early accounts show that Blake’s perspective on London was not solely shaped by the city’s turmoil through war and death, nor was it about a “dirty city of the historian’s imagination, but a city filled with

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¹ At the time of their marriage, in 1782, Catherine Boucher was illiterate and signed their wedding certificate with an X. However, she did not stay illiterate long. Blake not only taught Catherine how to read and write; he also trained her as an engraver in order to aid him in some, if not all, of his illuminations after their union. Without question, Catherine transforms into Blake’s equal and is observed by Frederick Tatham as the “admirer of his genius [and] the companion of his Solitude” (533). Blake recognizes her importance specifically in *Milton* by depicting her as his sole revitalizing strength. See: G. E. Bentley, Jr. *Blake Records* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), 533.
² Bentley, 542-3.
angels and prophets. He saw a biblical city.”  

He was a rare child with a nervous disposition, an uncommon imagination, and someone who “could never be taught.”  

Frederick Tatham, Blake’s first biographer and also a close family friend, explains that Blake “despised restraints & rules, so much that his Father dare not send him to School. Like the Arabian Horse, he is said to have so hated a blow that his Father thought it most prudent to withhold from him the liability of receiving punishment.”  

However, education was not completely lost on Blake. In his youth, he spent his time drawing nature and writing simple lyrics and verses and then displaying them around the house. The skills in these items did not go unnoticed by his parents, and, so, in support of his creativity, at the age of ten, they enrolled him in Henry Pars Drawing School, a major school for promising young artists in London.  

This opportunity propelled Blake’s aesthetic education toward a rare “mechanical taste.”  

The exposure to historic engravers such as Rubens, Raphael, Michelangelo, Martin Hemskerck, Albert Dürer, Julio Romano, and more aided Blake in defining and perfecting his craft toward art and sculpture, while poets like Spenser and Milton allowed him to explore his visions and dreams through literary verse.  

One of the most significant early works completed by Blake during his apprentice years was his original engraving of *Joseph of Arimathea*.  

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6 Ackroyd, 23.  
7 Bentley, 510. Blake’s reflection on the schooling of his youth shows a more direct approach than Tatham’s description: “Thank God I never was sent to school/ To be Flogd into following the Style of a Fool” See: Ackroyd, 23.  
8 Ackroyd, 36.  
9 Bentley, 422.  
10 Ackroyd, 38, 40.  
11 See Appendix: Figure 1.
canonical Gospels, was the man responsible for Jesus’s burial after his crucifixion.\(^{12}\) He is said to have fled from Judaea to England carrying the Holy Grail with the blood of Jesus Christ inside. Upon Blake’s re-engraving of *Joseph of Arimathea*, he re-wrote the inscription that accompanied his initial work with a more descriptive version. It reads,

> JOSEPH of Arimathea among The Rocks of Albion
> Engraved by W Blake 1773 from an old Italian Drawing
> This is One of the Gothic Artists who Built the Cathedrals in what we call the Dark Ages
> Wandering about in sheep skins & goat skins of whom the World was not worthy
> such were the Christians
> in all Ages
> Michael Angelo Pinxit.\(^{13}\)

It is no surprise that Blake develops such admiration in Joseph: a *wandering* preacher and a man who promotes the value of art and the experiences of Christ.\(^{14}\) Furthermore, Blake will also refer to the figure of Joseph in the preface of his first epic poem, as well as place emphasis on Joseph’s naked feet paralleling his own depiction of feet in the engravings he creates for *Milton* almost 30 years later.\(^{15}\) This image illustrates his “youthful aspirations and ideal—the prophet, the Gothic artist, the heroic proportions out of Michelangelo, the vistas of remote antiquity, and, somewhere brooding within them, the figure of Blake himself.”\(^{16}\)

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\(^{13}\) See Appendix: Figure 1.

\(^{14}\) The term “wandering” usually refers to someone traveling on foot.

\(^{15}\) See Appendix: Figure 1. Even though this work is Blake’s first original engraving, his attention to detail and technique are seen in his use of the ‘classical foot’ motif, meaning that the second toe is more prominent than the big toe. At the age of sixteen, Blake was still developing the skills learned throughout his earlier training; however, he was applying the lessons taught in an appropriate manner. See Ackroyd, 49. Also, refer to Figures 2, 4, and 5, in the appendix. These illuminations express Blake’s use of feet specifically in *Milton*. Although his poetry may be read without the illuminations accompanying it he wrote them as a pairing. Therefore, his poetry is to be visualized as well as read.

\(^{16}\) Ackroyd, 50.
in Blake’s youth, we see how he began to marry the task of art and his experiences with the spiritual in order to ultimately produce his first epic, *Milton*.

Blake develops *Milton* within a multilayered world incorporating consciousness and myth consistently formed within changing perspectives and poetic structure. The purpose of this poem is not found in a linear construction but in the needs and desires of Blake’s personal completion of obtaining a “Poetical Character.” Blake declares in *All Religions are One* that “the Poetic Genius is the true Man. And that the body or outward form of Man is derived from the Poetic Genius.”17 He is endorsing the idea of eternal becomingness, supporting that every man, to use Blake’s terminology, has “Poetic Genius” available to him according to his honesty.18 However, it is also emphasizes that not just a selected poetic priesthood can claim only they have access to God but that all have the chance to discover their “Poetic Genius.” Therefore, Blake’s focus on the historical John Milton is an attempt to reclaim and redeem the “most radical and imaginative” portions of Milton’s character.19 He rejects Milton’s opinions of “religious convention and ‘moral virtue’” seeing them as no help to him or to Milton’s work as a poet.20 In order for Blake to continue in his poetical vocation, a transaction of correction must occur between Blake’s conceptions of the historical Milton and the Milton he constructs within the poem *Milton*. Once again, multiple avenues are available with which to dissect Blake’s intentions.

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17 Blake, ‘All Religions are One’, 1.
18 The reference to the word ‘honesty’ comes from Blake’s belief that “Every honest man is a Prophet” and therefore, has the ability to become true in accordance to his “Poetic Genius” which encompasses the mind and all the arts and sciences of culture. See: S. Foster Damon, *A Blake Dictionary: The Ideas and Symbols of William Blake* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1988), 335.
20 Bloom, 909.
For example, Cato Marks focuses on how Blake forges a new political aesthetic using left-and-right symbolism in *Milton*, depicting “in both illustrations and writing, of the titular poet (Milton) united with Blake’s left foot enacts the recovery of Milton’s republican iconoclasm.”  

Susan Fox writes about Blake’s feet from a septenarii metrical feet perspective to discuss the message of spiritual salvation. And Marsha Keith Schuchard discusses foot symbolism in relation to Blake’s sexual path toward spiritual vision. Although these examples discuss the foot, the representation focuses on the political, metrical, and sexual perspectives. Even well known writers such as Northrop Frye, Harold Bloom, and David Erdman all contribute to Blake’s symbolism of the foot. However, the concentration of their arguments does not connect the tarsus of the foot as the sole cause of chaos and order between Blake, Milton, and Los.

Thus, for the purpose of this paper, I will focus on the symbolism created through the image of the foot and the terminology associated with it to build Blake’s tripartite relationship. I will argue that through the involvement of feet a relationship forms between the visual and the physical, creating a reformed Trinity or tripartite relationship consisting of Blake, Milton, and Los. In order for this relationship to occur within the poem, each must derive strength from the other eventually gaining an individual identity to separate and move forward toward a vocational readiness, what Blake calls The Last Judgment.

Although this discussion will focus on Blake’s use of the foot, I will also incorporate how and why the movement of the poem is written through a non-linear conception of time and space. The importance of understanding this element is to visualize Blake’s relationship with chaos,

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allowing every detail to happen all at once while also understanding each event at one time, like a dream sequence. Chaos is comprehended through Blake’s foot metaphor, as well as discovering a path to order. As Milton progresses, Blake builds several dualities, pitting one element against the other; the typical use in the context of right and left is right and wrong, which indicates the left. For instance: chaos v. order, good v. evil, Blake v. Hayley, Blake v. Milton, art v. science, Biblical v. historical, etc.. Among these dualities are also parallels like Satan and Hayley or Palamabron and Blake. Furthermore, there are the tripartite relationships: Satan/Palamabron/Rintrah, the three classes of men consisting of The Elect/The Redeemed/The Reprobate, and, of course, Milton/Blake/Los. Although Blake enables countless possibilities for future discussions, I will continue my focus on the tripartite interest of Milton/Blake/Los, the symbolism of the foot, and a look into the illuminations created for Milton.

24 This refers to Blake’s relationship with his employer at Felpham (1800-1803), William Hayley.
II: The Importance of Time and Space

As mentioned above, *Milton* is written with a non-linear poetic structure in relation to time and space. The form of the poem does not respect time and space as constructed around a clock, calendar, or map. We enter into the world of the poet, into a place Blake defines as a "moment."25 Harold Bloom describes Blake’s perspective by maintaining "The poet’s work conquers the Eternity that teases us out of thought, for imaginative time triumphs over clock time by denying its categories."26 By teasing out thought, Blake constructs a world of ‘eternity’27 where the constrictions of time are not bound by the weariness of a clock. In *Milton*, and other late works, he uses the phrase “the sea of time and space,”28 “a kind of morass that traps our individuated selves in the finitude of existence.”29 Blake works between the finite and the infinite while contrasting with the fixed and definite forms of time existing outside his idea of the eternal. He writes, in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, “the hours of folly are measured by the clock, but of wisdom, no clock can measure.”30 By paralleling that quote to another proverb written in the same poem, “Improvement makes strait roads, but the crooked roads without Improvement, are roads of Genius.”31 We see Blake formulating an argument of “folly against

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27 Blake seems to be considering life as it extends beyond the years lived on earth. ‘Eternity,’ therefore, becomes an alternative to the conventional modes of time.
“wisdom” and “improvement against genius” as a concern for the “logic of progress and development” as modes of modernization continue to occur.\textsuperscript{32} In a world that highly values time, this explanation may seem lost when speaking to a twenty-first century audience. For example, we must remember that Blake created \textit{Milton} in the early decade of the 1800s when the concepts of time (clock time, national time, and world time) were still struggling toward what we now call Coordinated Universal Time or Greenwich Mean Time, GMT.\textsuperscript{33} A universal time is not officially organized until the late 1880s, almost seventy years after Blake writes \textit{Milton}. Saree Makdisi describes three conceptions of time in what he calls “notions.” The first notion is linear time, a specification focused on a journey or an event. Typically, epic poetry follows an arc form to which time and the order of events matter to the plot.\textsuperscript{34} The events in \textit{Milton} most definitely matter; it is the way Blake writes the events that we must be reminded of the non-linear conception intended for the poem. The poem is not a direct telling of events but rather, a revealing, as if in a dream sequence state of mind. Hence, Blake’s constant layering of characters and symbolism. The second notion of time is diurnal or the concept of cyclical repetition. For example, the seasons are dictated by the sun’s clock, as well as when planting and harvest activities need to be performed. The notion of diurnal time focuses on the sun’s rotation and the 24-hour monotonous repetition of natural and ecological cycles. In relation to \textit{Milton}, diurnal time does not apply for Blake writes \textit{Milton} through the lens of a moment. This “moment” in eternity transcends the mind’s presuppositions of time because in a moment wisdom is discovered where as “the hours of folly are measured by the clock.” Lastly,
the third notion of time described by Makdisi is an amalgamation of the two mentioned above, called life-time. This is the interacting, the contradicting, and the colliding of time from birth to death.\textsuperscript{35} Throughout Blake’s lifetime of works, he consistently experiments with these notions of time challenging the boundaries of “Past, Present, & Future.”\textsuperscript{36} Makdisi’s writes:

> Just as the imposition of linearity was essential to time and work-discipline, or for that matter, certain reading practices associated with certain kinds of texts, the lack of linearity, indeed the resistance to linearity, is absolutely vital to the experience of reading Blake’s works. The struggle to resist the logic of clock time and the time of “Improvement,” in other words, is built into the way the works function, not only into the anti-industrial logic and method by which they were produced, and is certainly not limited to a representational critique of linear time and progress in the works themselves.\textsuperscript{37}

Therefore, when reading Milton, or any of his other works for that matter, it is essential to remember Blake is not a chronological writer, nor does he write within in one notion of time, but rather all notions at once.

Blake’s view of the “Past, Present, & Future” translates into what Northrop Frye calls an “eternal present.” He writes, “if all times are one, all spaces are one too: if all time is an eternal present, all space is an infinite presence.”\textsuperscript{38} Thus, Milton serves as an example of Blake’s use of space and his engagement within the eternal present.\textsuperscript{39} Immanuel Kant argues that “time is not

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{35} Makdisi, 96.
\item \textsuperscript{36} This refers to the opening stanza of the Introduction to the Songs of Experience when Blake expresses the views of the poet, “Hear the voice of the Bard!/Who Present, Past, & Future sees” ll. 1-2.
\item \textsuperscript{37} Makdisi, 101-102.
\item \textsuperscript{39} Blake, Milton, cited within the text below. The use of “space” in this sentence refers to the meaning of multiple locations introduced throughout the poem that defy the affects of time and space. For example, Blake begins book 1 in heaven with a pacing Milton (2.16); he moves from the city of London (pl. 6) to the “Mills of Satan” (8.5); he incorporates the places where he has lived: Lambeth Vale (6.14) and Felpham Vale (36.23); he introduces his own cosmological world called Golgonooza (3.39) while talking of Jerusalem (6.18), “from Ireland/ To Mexico &
an empirical concept that is somehow drawn from experience. For simultaneity or succession would not themselves come into perception if the representation of time did not ground them a priori. Only under its presuppositions can one represent that several things exist at one and the same time (simultaneously) or in different times (successively)."40 His argument, therefore, verifies Blake’s use of a multiple faceted perspective—simultaneously and successively. Milton does not move through what is considered a linear conception of time and space. He is only granted as much space as the poet’s view allows, which is through the guise of, once again, the eternal present. Kant further explains the state of time by arguing, “Time is nothing other than the form of inner sense, i.e., of the intuition of our self and our inner state. For time cannot be a determination of outer appearances; it belongs neither to a shape or a position, etc. but on the contrary determines the relation of representations in our inner state.”41 By the end of Milton, Blake reemerges as if waking from a dream: “A moment, and my soul returned into its mortal state.”42 The entirety of the poem is then transformed into a representation of Blake’s inner state.43

Peru west, & east to China & Japan (6.22-23); he even transcends time and space while penetrating the physical elements of human flesh by having Milton descend into his foot (15.49-50) and then having Los descend into both of them (22.5).


41 Kant, 31.

42 Blake, Milton, 42.26.

43 Italics added. This not only refers to the ‘inner state’ from Kant’s quote but also refers to the confrontational relationship Blake experienced throughout his life with institutionalized religion. He strongly believed in the “interest of True Religion and Science” (724) and opposed the errors found in orthodox Christianity enough that he supported resistance to the institution. The phrase inner state refers to Blake’s mystic resemblance of a person possessing an ‘inner light’ or a ‘Christ within’. He found it his duty to always work toward the “interest” for he was “not ashamed afraid or averse to tell You what Ought to be Told” (724) because he believed he was “under the direction of Messengers from Heaven Daily & Nightly”. See: Blake’s Letters, number
Although time is denied its categories within *Milton*, it distinguishes a vantage point from which Blake writes. Having defined the importance of Blake’s view of time and space as an eternal present, I will now focus on three interweaving instances that serve a specific significance in understanding the construction of time and space within the poem. First, Blake incorporates the historical memory of his three years living at Felpham and the quarrel that occurs with his employer, William Hayley. This quarrel is not a literal one but the representation of a difference of opinion about what constitutes good poetry and good art. Second, Blake also presents Los as a symbol of Time and the result of “creative life.”\(^4\) The divine world is the world of Los, as well as an equivalent to his representation of time. Lastly, Blake conceptualizes time by defining its length as “(A moment equals a pulsation of the artery) […] Every Time less than a pulsation of the artery/ Is equal in its period and value to six thousand years.”\(^5\) This, once again, reinforces the idea that time is simultaneously and successively.

It is difficult to define Blake’s *Milton* in a well-organized fashion. His poetry continuously overlaps ideas of time, history, politics, personal accounts, biblical representations, etc. Therefore, I will discuss these instances in their relation to each other and avoid plotting them out on a chronological timeline.

Blake writes *Milton* for multiple reasons; yet, the discipline required of him actually to sit and write out this first epic fell on a more personal level. As mentioned above, Blake’s quarrel with Hayley was a difference of opinion in establishing what is good poetry and good art. However, this quarrel is a dispute that gradually grows, and Blake’s resentment toward Hayley is


\(^{44}\) Esterhammer, 244.

revealed throughout his letters to friends, as well as his eventual writing of *Milton*.

Blake’s three years in Felpham (1800-1803) were productive in education and in business. His hopes in Felpham were high. Upon arriving in Felpham, Blake writes that Hayley received him with “his usual brotherly affection,” and that he experienced an immediate connection with his surroundings. On September 23, 1800, exactly two days after his arrival, he writes a letter to Thomas Butts communicating his reaction to Felpham: “Meat is cheaper than in London, but the sweet air & the voices of the winds, trees & birds, & ordours of the happy ground, makes it a dwelling for immortals.” Blake found comfort in knowing his celestial visions and dreams moved with him from London and were “more distinctly heard, & their forms more distinctly seen” while living amongst the gardens and ocean of Felpham. Turret House, the name of Hayley’s home, was built no more than 200 yards away from Blake’s cottage. One advantage to living in such close proximity was Blake’s ability to access Hayley’s

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46 Ultimately, Blake’s move from London to Felpham was to escape ‘the terrible desart of London’ (216). London, toward the end of 1800, became a city of riots over the price of staple commodities such as bread and corn. Three days before Blake and his wife Catherine traveled to Felpham, the Corn-market was stormed after some handbills were pasted on the Monument declaring ‘Bread will be Sixpence the Quartern If the People will Assemble at the Corn Market on Monday’ (217). On Tuesday, after the riots in the market, some bakers’ shops were attacked by mob. The ‘Starved fellow Creatures’ then began forming plans to further the fight against ‘the blood thirsty Soldiers’. The next day the Blake’s departed from London to travel seventy miles to Felpham, approximately taking seventeen hours to complete. Blake reviewed the journey as ‘very pleasant….No grumbling, All was Cheerfulness & Good Humour’ (217). See: Peter Ackroyd, *Blake: A Biography* (New York: Alfred a Knopf, 1996), 216-217.

47 Blake believed his vocation to be that of a ‘poetic genius’ and never a man set out to profit from his work. Hence, his choice to learn the trade of engraving served as a means of staying out of poverty. However, he occasionally tried to make money out of conventional publishing by experimenting with ‘relief etching and with illuminated books’ (230). Albeit, after working with Hayley on his publication methods, Blake admits ‘I should never have known the nature of Publication unless I had known H. & and his connexions & his method of managing’ (230). See: Peter Ackroyd, *Blake: A Biography* (New York: Alfred a Knopf, 1996), 230.


49 Keynes, 52-53.

voluminous personal library, whenever he desired, for the use of study and commissioned works. For instance, Hayley “immediately began showering [Blake] with commissions,”\textsuperscript{51} while at the same time, unbeknownst to him, calling him “my secretary.”\textsuperscript{52} Even though Hayley thought of Blake as “[his] secretary” and Blake thought “Mr. Hayley act[ed] like a Prince,”\textsuperscript{53} much was learned from this partnership. With the use of the Turret House library, Hayley began teaching Blake how genuinely to thirst after knowledge.\textsuperscript{54} For example, Blake was a natural when it came to learning languages and Hayley encouraged this talent while also enhancing Blake’s knowledge of Biblical and classical writings.

[Hayley] began to teach Blake the Greek and Latin languages. They poured over the Bible in Greek, and closely followed a translation of the Iliad with the original—biblical Greek is easier to follow than that of Homer but, in any case, Blake made enough progress to be described by his self-appointed tutor as a ‘Grecian’. […] Blake has translated parts of Ajax by Sophocles […] and made notes of the same dramatist’s Philoctetes.\textsuperscript{55}

In a letter sent from Felpham, Blake explains to his brother, “I go on Merrily with my Greek & Latin; am very sorry that I did not begin to learn languages early in life as I find it very Easy; am now learning my Hebrew…I read Greek as fluently as an Oxford scholar & the Testament is my chief master.”\textsuperscript{56} The bond between these two shared was truly genuine and yet, after three years

\textsuperscript{51} Ackroyd, 220.
\textsuperscript{52} Ackroyd, 220.
\textsuperscript{53} This letter was written to Thomas Butts in May of 1801, only having lived in Felpham a little over six months. See: Keynes, 62.
\textsuperscript{54} Written in third-person, Hayley references in his biography that “the chief occupation and delight of Hayley seems to have consisted in zealous and constant endeavors to serve his friends, while they lived, and to celebrate their talents and virtues after their decease.” M. Bishop, Blake’s Hayley: The Life, Works, and Friendship of William Hayley (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1951), 291.
\textsuperscript{56} Keynes, 83.
in Felpham, Blake still felt “imposed upon.”  

Hayley continued to ask Blake “to do work of a trivial nature simply for the sake of money” while he “neglected or ignored” Blake’s “real genius.”  

When Hayley recommended Blake to his friends he called him an “engraver” or a “journeyman artist.”  

He classified Blake as the “‘dear’, ‘amiable’, ‘good-hearted’ and ‘indefatigable’ worker whose original poetry and painting were delightful adornments to what should remain a workmanlike career.”  

These opinions did not escape Blake’s attention, for he knew of himself as a “great artist and visionary who was systematically being ignored or marginalised” and because of this Blake began contemplating moving back to London.

Before leaving Felpham Blake attempts to gain Hayley’s approval by showing him potions of his own writing, some of which he had written while he still lived in Lambeth.  

However, Blake is not pleased by Hayley’s review and reflects, “I take care to say little to Mr. H., since he is as much averse to my poetry as he is to a Chapter in the Bible.”  

This shows that Blake did not believe Hayley possessed the spiritual capacity to understand him as an individual or the work he created. The resentment and anger resulted in the decision to leave Felpham, and, in the summer of 1803, he writes to Thomas Butts,

I hope that all our three years’ trouble Ends in Good Luck at last & shall be forgot by my affections & only remembered by my Understanding; to be a Memento in time to come & to speak to future generations by a Sublime Allegory, which is now perfectly completed into a Grand Poem. […] I am determin’d to be no longer Pester’d with his Genteel Ignorance & Polite Disapprobation. I know myself both Poet & Painter, & it is not his affected Contempt that can move me to any thing but a more assiduous pursuit of both Arts. Indeed, by my late Firmness I have brought down his affected Loftiness, & he

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57 Keynes, 82.  
58 Ackroyd, 233.  
59 Ackroyd, 234.  
60 Ackroyd, 234.  
61 Ackroyd, 234.  
62 The work written in Lambeth was the first 36 pages of Vala.  
63 Keynes, 88.
begins to think I have some Genius: as if Genius & Assurance were the same thing! but his imbecile attempts to depress Me only deserve laughter.  

It is during his years at Felpham and with these emotions that Blake begins to write lines and passages of verse on scraps of paper, ultimately planning out his first epic. Although Blake believed Hayley did not see him for the true poet he was, Blake saw Hayley. He absorbed all the knowledge Hayley offered while observing his employers own work.

Hayley’s reputation held more importance as a biographer and theorist than as a poet. It is no coincidence that Blake’s first epic is about Milton, for Hayley had written the life of Milton, in which “he had reasserted the English epic tradition and placed it within the context of Milton’s political radicalism.” Blake was exposed to Milton during his apprenticeship years as a youth; however, under Hayley’s employment he could not escape the distinctive presence Milton had in his life. For example, Blake and Hayley spoke of creating an engraved edition of “Cowper’s translations of Milton’s Latin and Italian poetry”; Blake also painted Milton’s portrait for Hayley’s personal library; he illustrated *Comus* with a sequence of watercolours; and he frequently mentioned Milton in his letters. Hayley also managed to complete *An Essay on Epic Poetry* during Blake’s years at Felpham, discussing the importance of the epic tradition in England and urging young writers “to adopt it as the true standard of poetic excellence.” Each event was leading Blake closer to the creation of *Milton*: the employment in Felpham, the knowledge in publishing, the education lessons, the quarrel with Hayley, and the exposure to Milton. He collected every memory and experience from Felpham and channeled it into a *Milton*

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64 Keynes, 88-89.
65 Ackroyd, 236.
66 Many projects that Hayley and Blake discussed never came to fruition. See: Ackroyd, 236.
67 Ackroyd, 236.
68 Ackroyd, 236.
as an embodiment his own eternal present.

Blake’s Hayley corresponds to none other than the Satan figure in *Milton*, hence recognizing Hayley as the negative voice taking him away from his spiritual vocation as a true Poetic Genius.

If you account it Wisdom when you are angry to be silent, and Not to shew it: I do not account that Wisdom but Folly. Every Mans Wisdom is peculiar to his own Individuality O Satan my youngest born, art thou not Prince of the Starry Hosts And of the Wheels of Heaven, to turn the Mills day & night? Art thou not Newtons Pantocrator weaving the Woof of Locke To Mortals thy Mills seem every thing & the Harrow of Shaddai A scheme of Human conduct invisible & incomprehensible Get to thy Labors at the Mills & leave me to my wrath.\(^{69}\)

Harold Bloom examines these lines by paralleling Blake and Hayley’s historical dispute with Satan’s genealogy. As Los speaks,

Satan introduces the difficult theme of the quarrel between Satan and Palamabron, which on the biographical level would appear to have been a falling out at Felpham between the Elect Hayley-Satan and the Redeemed (or rather, redeemable) Blake-Palamabron. […] The ‘Harrow of Shaddai’, of the Almighty, belongs to Palamabron-Blake and has been usurped by Satan-Hayley, the false artist, with his ‘Deist’ belief in ‘a scheme of Human conduct invisible & incomprehensible.’\(^{70}\)

As Bloom describes, this quarrel of Blake’s past becomes part of his present as he writes these characters into realization. *Milton* reflects a transformation of poetic voice transforms into a proclamation of “the voice of the Bard!/Who Present, Past, & Future sees.”\(^{71}\) This is a discovery or a rediscovery of the “Poetic Genius” that lives in all.

In continuing on with the importance of time and space, Blake’s motif of the eternal

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\(^{69}\) Blake, *Milton*, 4.6-14.


\(^{71}\) Blake, *Songs of Experience*, ll.1-2.
present is seen in his use of Los as a symbol of Time and the result of “creative life.” The divine world is the world of Los, “the spirit of art and prophecy, the power working in man to create the human form of the world.” We learn that “Los is by mortals nam’d Time.”

Northrop Frye describes this the duality of Time:

[Los] is also time, a mental category which we may perceive in either of two ways. In the natural vision time continually falls away from a beginning, and in this vision everything seems to be lost and to disappear in time. In the imaginative vision time continually moves forward to an end or final cause, and in this vision everything is preserved, until time becomes timeless.

Time/Los, the spirit of art and prophecy, becomes timeless because of his position; he is able to see into the eternal present like the voice of the Bard. Blake illustrates his image as described by the mortals who name him time: “they depict him bald & aged who is in eternal youth/ All powerful and his locks flourish like the brows of morning/ He is the spirit of Prophecy the ever apparent Elias/ Time is the mercy of Eternity; without Times swiftness/ Which is the swiftest of all things: all were eternal torment.” Los is a symbol of recovery, a prevention from eternal torment, and the vision in which everything is preserved, ultimately creating timelessness. However, even though Los is given the alternative name of Time, Blake also plays with the meaning of the word time. For example, Time or Thyme becomes a running pun throughout the second half of the poem, literally ‘running.’ “The Wild Thyme is Los’s messenger to Eden” (italics added). The construction of Blake’s use of Thyme transverses over three elements of space: the physical (in the form of a messenger), the herbal (in the form of a flower), and the

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72 Esterhammer, 244.  
73 Esterhammer, 258.  
74 Blake, Milton, 24.68.  
75 Esterhammer, 258.  
76 Blake, Milton, 24.69-70, 72-73.  
77 Blake, Milton, 35.54.
spatial (in the form of Thyme pronounced as Time while alluding to the dimensions of time).

The last concept of time to I want to discuss is Blake’s idea of the “Moment.” In order to understand this concept we must, once again, resist the urge to define time as linear or chronological. The instances when the term “moment” is used it is also accompanied by the term “eternal” or used when associating with the phrase “Six Thousand Years.” Throughout the poem Blake rarely uses parentheses; however, he specifically uses them to define the term “moment.” The definition stands out so much that it reads almost as an interruption of the text:

But others of the Sons of Los build Moments & Minutes & Hours
And Days & Months & Years & Ages & Periods; wondrous buildings
And every Moment has a Couch of gold for soft repose,
(A moment equals a pulsation of the artery) (Italics added)
And between every two Moments stands a Daughter of Beulah.

The Sons of Los are building these moments within the fallen man's conception of time: minutes, hours, days and nights, months, years, ages, periods and yet, it is all happening inside a ‘moment.’ Furthermore, Blake reaffirms his parenthetical break a few lines later with “Every Time less than a pulsation of the artery/ Is equal in its period & value to Six Thousand Years.” Every moment will eventually equal itself in the eternal present. He reminds his audience the only time that truly matters is the period in which “the Poets work is Done.” The act of a poet’s art is a birthing of creativity and “all the Great/ Events of Time start forth and are concievd in such a period/ Within a Moment: a Pulsation of the Artery.” Blake’s in-depth explanation of time further supports Frye’s idea of the “eternal present” and Kant’s relationship of “inner sense” and “inner state,” the poet who sees, ultimately, owns all forms of time—“Past, Present, and

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78 Blake is challenging the typical dynamics of time construction. See: Blake, Milton, 22.15-25.
81 Blake, Milton, 29.1.
82 Blake, Milton, 29.1-3.
As explained above, the importance of time and space as Blake imagines it is essential to understanding the structure of the poem. By working through Blake’s historical quarrel with Hayley, defining “eternal present” through the writings of Frye and Kant, and deconstructing the concepts of Los as Time and the term “Moment,” we have a well-built foundation that will aid in uncovering the meaning behind the walking foot that traverses space and the metrical foot that traverses time. Milton, Blake, and Los are given motive, authority, and purpose through the function of the foot or feet. All three of these perspectives are connected and unified through the relationship of Blake’s left tarsus, a bone found in the foot. The term tarsus, coincidently, also refers to ligaments found in the upper and lower part of the eye—a tarsus of vision. The image of the tarsus becomes a key factor in the progression of the poem. Each perspective, Blake, Milton, or Los, must derive strength from the other resulting in individual autonomy enabling separation and the ability to move forward from chaos to order and toward the ultimate goal of what Blake calls The Last Judgment.
III. Symbolism of the Foot

Milton’s decent from heaven and the interaction he has with Blake materializes internally and externally. Los’s eventual integration into this pair transpires from environmental chaos. However, before Milton is redeemed, before Blake receives the strength to continue on in his poetic vocation, and, before Los is able to complete his creation of the city of art, Golgonooza, all three must suffer, struggle, and sacrifice for one another. For example, Los submits to a topsy-turvy world of chaos the moment he takes “off his left sandal placing it on his head/ [becoming a] Symbol of solemn mourning.”83 Los portrays a “confusion of head and foot indicat[ing] a disruption of order.”84 Notice that this is also the same side (the left) through which Milton enters into Blake upon his decent: “And on my left foot on the tarsus, entered there” which then is reinforced by chaos: “But from my left foot a black cloud redounding spread over Europe.”85 Conventionally, the left side or the left foot is a site of “sinister connotations”86 while the right is seen as the holy side of God.87 Milton, Blake, and Los all form a portion of the Tripartite that takes creates chaos (left) and eventually a reordering the topsy-turvy world (right).

The unification and acceptance of Milton and Blake is also understood through the explanation of a sandal. Upon Blake’s “left foot,/ As a bright sandal formd immortal of precious stones & gold:/ I stooped down & bound it on to walk forward thro’ Eternity.”88 The left foot is also the same one Milton enters through the tarsus. In the act of stooping down to bind the

83 Blake, Milton, 8.11-12
84 Cato Marks, 63.
85 Blake, Milton, 15.49-50; See Appendix: Figure 3 and 5. Milton descends into Blake’s left tarsus.
86 Marks, 63.
87 Several scripture verses allude to Jesus standing or sitting at the right hand of God. See: Acts 2:33, 7:55-56; Isaiah 45:1; Mark 16:19; Hebrews 10:12; 1 Peter 3:22.
sandal, Blake accepts the unification or the walk forward through Eternity. Los’s experience with his sandal is the result of losing his vision. He therefore enters into the chaos of a topsy-turvy world by placing his sandal on his head. For Blake and Milton the experience becomes a correction of artistic blindness through the action of binding the sandal to its correct place. Previously in the poem Blake writes “I form’d the Serpent/ Of precious stones & gold turn’d poisons on the sultry wastes” but since Blake and Milton’s unity the poison is left out and artistic purpose renewed. This becomes a transparent representation of Romans 16:20 “And the God of Peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.” Similarly, Luke 1:79 speaks about giving “light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.” Milton’s union with Blake not only damns darkness but it extricates poison from the jeweled sandal in order to correct artistic vision.

This union does not come with ease, for as Milton descends he must also struggle with Urizen. The struggle between Milton and Urizen is a fusion of Blake’s multi-layered representation. Hayley is to Satan as Satan is to Urizen as well as Milton is to Blake, although the struggle is specifically stated between Milton and Urizen the multi-layered intention of Blake cannot be denied. Therefore, Blake is again incorporating his dispute with Hayley while living at Felpham. He equally alludes to Genesis 32:24-32 where Jacob wrestles with the Angel of God to obtain God’s blessing. Milton is not obtaining a blessing from Urizen, he is fighting for his chance at redeeming his errors made in writing Paradise Lost.

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89 Another place a tarsus is located are in the eyelids. Los losses his visions so he resorts to venting out his frustration on the image of his sandal.
90 Blake, Milton, 12.29-30.
91 Satan was also the embodiment of a snake in the Garden of Eden.
92 See Appendix: Figure 4.
On the shores of Arnon Urizen captures Milton by immobilizing his footsteps and feet in “marble beds.” Milton laboured with his journey, & his feet bled sore:/ Upon the clay now chang’d to marble.” Milton still has the use of his hands and retaliates back upon Urizen’s feet. Instead of marble

Milton took of the red clay of Succoth, moulding it with care
Between his palms: and filling up the furrows of many years
Beginnings at the feet of Urizen, and on the bones
Creating new flesh on the Demon cold, and building him,
As with new clay a Human form in the Valley of Beth Peor. 

The biblical indication of this scene is found in the book of Isaiah connecting God to the role of the potter and the people to the role of the clay waiting to do the work of His hands. However, the image of Milton molding clay onto Urizen’s forming body becomes a tainted image because Urizen is irredeemable. He ends up weeping as he gains a human form. Since he is irredeemable he fears his discovery as a fake. The Marriage of Heaven and Hell reflects Milton’s use of the red clay, “And on the bleached bones/ Red clay brought forth/ Till the villain left the paths of ease/ To walk in perilous paths”. This becomes a reflection of the Elect against the Reprobate. According to Blake, the Elect work in the pathway to Faith where as the Reprobate (a reflection of Milton) have the chance to correct their errors.

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93 Blake, Milton, 19.2.
94 Blake, Milton, 19.4-5.
95 Blake, Milton, 19.10-14.
96 Isaiah 64:8.
97 The point would seem to be that at least since the time of Isaiah, who among other things prefigured the coming of Jesus, red clay has been associated with the prophesying of a redemptive return.
99 The three classes of Men are identified as The Elect, The Redeem’d, and The Reprobate (Milton, 7.36-38). The Elect is the Spectrous class with an identification associated with Satan/Hayley. This class believes they have the competence to “control the spiritual labours of the visionary” (173). The Redeem’d, “live in doubts and fears, perpetually tormented by the
The union of Milton and Blake occurs through the tarsus as experience of simultaneous fusion and struggle. Blake symbolizes the Redeemed while Milton symbolizes the Reprobate and is in need of redemption. In the poem *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* Blake blatantly lays out errors he found completely unacceptable in Milton’s *Paradise Lost*.100 In the section titled “The voice of the Devil” Blake traces a “split in Milton between the moral philosopher or theologian and the poet.”101 Blake believes Milton is “restrain[ing] desire”102 and repressing his cultural Poetic Genius allowing reason to replace the position of desire. Blake also implies that Milton’s error is unknowingly conceived: “The reason Milton wrote in fetters when he wrote of Angels/ & God, and at liberty when of Devils & Hell, is because he was a true/ Poet and of the Devils party without knowing it.”103 Blake believes in Milton’s poetic dedication and desires to gain from his talent, however, he also sees Milton’s struggle with moral virtue, a division within his soul. Therefore, Blake’s solution is to write and awakening Milton giving him the chance to correct his error and reunite with the “true Poet.”

Milton was perhaps the single most important influence on Blake’s poetry through style, themes, and ideas. In a way their lives had paralleled interests such as “revolutionary politics and 

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100 Blake specifically found Books seven and eight to be John Milton’s most problematic. The original defect Blake discovered was that “Milton […], had put himself on the side of the angels, the repressive forces, when in reality he was “of the Devils party without knowing it,” (*MHH* 6) the party of the revolutionary prolific” (343-344). The second error for Blake needed to rescue Milton from was “the Puritan morality” (345). See: Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, 6. Also, Mark Schorer, *William Blake: The Politics of Vision* (New York: Henry Hold and Co., 1946), 343-345.

101 Bloom, 897.

102 Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, pl. 5.

Protestantism” as well at the works they created. Blake wrote *Milton* not only because he found errors within *Paradise Lost* but also because of a more personal reason: “I saw Milton in Imagination And he told me to beware of being misled by his Paradise Lost. In particular he wished me to shew the falsehood of his doctrine that the pleasures of sex arose from the fall. The fall could not produce any pleasure.” Milton visited Blake and gave him the instructions to correct the errors he created by writing *Paradise Lost* and Blake did exactly that.

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104 Schorer, 343.

105 For example, A number of Blake’s works have a generic responsibility to a number of Milton’s works: *Song of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience* are counterparts of “L’Allegro” and “Il Penserose.” *The Book of Thel* is a kind of rewriting of *Comus* (a beautiful inversion, really, when one considers their opposing attitudes towards chastity). *The Doctrine and Discipline* was a source of the *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* and *Paradise Lost* caused Milton.” See: Schorer, 343.


107 Blake, throughout his life, was either praised or highly scrutinized for his honestly about his dreams and visions. Angels and visions of God were not the only visions he saw; he enjoyed “constant intercourse with the world of spirits—He receiv[ed] visits from Shakespeare Milton Dante Voltaire […] when he writes—it is for the spirits only” (Brentley, 29). In an obituary written for the 1827 *Literary Chronicle* his skill was belittled: his “eccentricities were still more remarkable than their professional abilities” (167); as well as a controversial opinion of his visions: “for the singularity of his opinions, and for his pretended knowledge of the world of spirits” (167); “that he believed to have seen and conversed with those whom he pretended acquaintance” (167). These examples, especially the last one with its embedded italics, show how the public viewed him. He was a visionary and at the same time, a pretender. See: G. E. Bentley, Jr. *William Blake: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge, 1975), 167.
IV. Blake’s Tripartite Unity and Illuminations

*Milton*

Preface:

The poem begins in the preface with Blake indicating his personal opinions about the ways of men. The first citing of feet or an allusion to them is stated in a lyrical hymn’s first line: “And did those feet in ancient time/ Walk upon Englands mountains green.” These lines, even without a question mark, are posing a question. Where have our feet, “those feet,” anyone’s feet taken them throughout “ancient time”? Or are these feet ever seen walking? Specifically, are these feet signifying the present of Jesus? Blake recalls Isaiah 52:7 “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings that publisheth peace” for Zion or, in accordance with *Milton, Jerusalem.* The next two lines read: “And was the holy Lamb of God,/ On Englands pleasant pastures seen!” If Jesus walked in these pastures, was his presence completely unseen? The fact that Blake is asking, through this hymn, indicates that no one has seen the importance of these feet or if someone has, it would be the feet from the apocryphal story of Joseph of Arimathea and Mary travelling to England after the crucifixion. However, even the people creating “stolen and perverted writings” (Homer and Ovid, Plato and Cicero) have ignored their own imaginations of inspiration and resulted to reason, ultimately, the downfall of the “Class of Men whose delight is in Destroying,” resulting in a blindness. The “Class of Men” point to the idea of multiples, groups, and/or a body of members reflecting the

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109 Similar lines are also repeated in Nahum 1:15. Jerusalem meaning peace.
110 Blake, Milton, 1.3-4.
111 As mentioned in the introduction, “Joseph of Arimathea” was Blake’s first original engraving. See Appendix: Figure 1.
112 Blake, Milton, 1. Preface.
biblical verse: “And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.” Blake is reiterating the idea of Jesus through the movement of feet and that a body of Christ moves in accordance with one another.

However, a rejection of inspiration results in a separation from the body of Christ and the full potential of imaginative thinking implementing chaos. All hope is not lost. The future holds onto the idea of building a New Jerusalem, “Till we have built Jerusalem,” a new bride, or the female emanation. This foreshadows Milton’s chance at redemption. In order for chaos to fail, the male and female will requires a spiritual connection. A re-created power of oneness that Blake ultimately initiates between the redeemed Milton and his emanation Ololon—the feminine will which he lacks and which he rejected while living.

**Book I:**

Milton opens Book 1 in a state of unhappiness trapped in an eternal heaven. Although his death occurred in 1674, Blake shows Milton in a state of torment for last “One hundred years,” meaning he left earth incomplete and now must act on his unrest in order to find peace. His unrest is detectable in the movements of his feet: “what mov’d Milton, who walkd about in Eternity/ One hundred years, pondering the intricate mazes of Providence/ Unhappy tho in heav’n.” His movement is the act of pacing back and forth. Without a destination and with no purposeful intent Milton, without the help of Blake, may end up pacing or walking around in Eternity for another one hundred years. He senses a distress within the cosmos at the sound of

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113 1 Corinthians 12:26-27
114 Blake, *Milton*, 1.15
115 Blake, *Milton*, 2.17
116 Blake, *Milton*, 2.16-18
the “Bards prophetic song!”117 This awakening is once again the realization of his long suffering. Milton’s “Sixfold Emanation [is] scatter’d thro’ the deep/ In torment!”118 Bloom suggests the sixfold emanation refers to “Milton’s three wives and three daughter or even to Milton’s literary works, or to the English society he sought to create.”119 Whichever it may be, reconnecting with his emanation becomes a necessity in enabling him to reshaping in his poetic voice. He needs guidance in correcting his wrongs. Blake sees the historical Milton as a man who rejected the female will and is willing to become a part of the process in aiding him in correcting this error. In Book 2 the female will is Ololon, Milton’s female emanation, “Behold Milton descended to Redeem the Female Shade.”120 She becomes the destination to his journey.

The process begins upon Milton’s decision to descend and enter Blake’s left foot. Charles Singleton argues, “after the Fall the feet came to symbolize a struggle between a person’s intellect and will: the right foot represented the intellect and reason, the left foot earthly desire and will. While the right foot tried to ascend to the heavens, the left foot limped behind.”121 In Milton’s case, he is already in heaven unable to access his intellect or female will, implying that to enter into Blake’s right foot would be impossible since he must descend instead of ascend. Blake is bound to earth and since he cannot ascend the decision is left up to Milton. Blake remembers, “And on my left foot falling on the tarsus, entered there.”122

117 Blake, Milton, 2.22
118 Blake, Milton, 2.19-20
119 Bloom, 910.
120 Blake, Milton, 33.11
121 Freccero, 36.
122 Blake, Milton, 15.49
In this section, I will discuss this passage in conjunction with Blake’s illumination on plate 15. The portion of the image I will discuss is the small but powerful picture of Blake with his arms thrown back while Milton, the star, connects with his left foot. Here Blake describes this connection: “Then first I saw him in the Zenith as a falling star,/ Descending perpendicular, swift as the swallow or swift;/ And on my left foot on the tarsus, entered there.”

The language mixes the scientific and the enthusiastic. “Zenith,” “perpendicular,” “swift,” and “tarsus” all seem quite scientific in their specificity, indicating the height from which the star that is representing Milton fell and the angle of its descent. The passage also indicates its velocity and the part of the foot with which it collided. Blake is looking up as the star enters his foot, tarsus raised, an anatomical connection between the eyelid and the foot. John Aitken denotes the use of the tarsus is to “raise the upper eye-lid.” The idea of anatomy and the foot signifies an interesting detail that Blake subtly places within his poem. Seven bones construct the tarsus: calcaneus, talus, cuboid, navicular, and three cuneiform bones. Before Milton descends, he is joined by seven angels, seven being the biblical foundation of God’s word, this union makes him the eighth part: “With him the Spirits of the Seven Angels of the Presence/ Entering; they gave him still perceptions of his Sleeping Body;/ Which now arose and walk’d with them in Eden, as an Eighth/ Image Divine tho’ darken’d; and tho walking as one walks/ in sleep.” Therefore, Milton enters Blake as an eighth entity. Milton becomes a surplus to the function of Blake’s human condition and exactly what he needs in order to rediscover his poetic vocation.

123 See Appendix: Figure 3.
125 Marks, 61.
126 Aitken, 76.
127 Swierżewski
128 Blake, *Milton*, 15.3-7
Later in the poem, Blake reflects on the occurrence relating his left foot to visual understanding and an epiphany: “But Milton entering my foot I saw in the nether/ Regions of the Imagination also all men on Earth,/ And all in Heaven, saw in the nether regions of the Imagination.”\textsuperscript{129} Thus, “in Milton the tarsus is raised, and Blake and Milton’s vision is corrected.”\textsuperscript{130} The unification enables them both to walk together and see as the other sees with a correction in path and in sight. Blake introduces his mortal world and the idea of mortal beings, “And all this Vegetable World appeared on my left foot” indicating an even deeper unification. The Vegetable world constitutes “Cultivated land” where a seed must partially die in order to find growth once again.\textsuperscript{131} The appearance of this world on Blake’s left foot illustrates that a part of Milton and a part of Blake dies in order for them both to be unified together creating a space for “imaginative commerce which Blake calls Allamanda.”\textsuperscript{132}

In a full-page engraving,\textsuperscript{133} Blake visually represents the struggle between Milton and Urizen. On the plate is inscribed: “To Annihilate the Self (positioning of the right foot) hood of Deceit and False Forgiveness.”\textsuperscript{134} Cato Marks dissects the meaning of Milton’s foot placement within this plate. First, Milton is seen overpowering Urizen to the point that “the two tablets of stone, which seem to symbolize the Ten Commandments, slip from his grasp.”\textsuperscript{135} Second, our eyes are drawn to Milton’s feet. The left foot is forward holding his stance while the right foot is propelled backward literally smashing or crushing the word “selfhood” signifying the “the

\textsuperscript{129} Blake, \textit{Milton}, 21.4-6.
\textsuperscript{130} Marks, 62.
\textsuperscript{131} Blake, \textit{Milton}, 27.42.
\textsuperscript{132} Esterhammer, 258.
\textsuperscript{133} See Appendix: Figure 4.
\textsuperscript{134} Erdman, 807.
\textsuperscript{135} Marks, 67.
destruction of his Mosaic God in *Paradise Lost.*”\(^{136}\) This also parallels the title page\(^ {137}\) where Blake positions a man’s right hand splitting the name of MIL/TON with the inscription “To Justify the Ways of God to Men.” Both plates are using the right appendage, foot and hand, to make marked symbols of correctness. Plate 16\(^ {138}\), also shows Milton’s triumph over his errors and the strength it takes him to resist Urizen’s attempt at freezing his mental faculties: “Urizen stoop’d down/ And took up water from the river Jordan: pouring on/ To Milton’s brain the icy fluid from his broad cold palm.”\(^ {139}\) Urizen disables Milton’s ability to think and at the same time baptizes him in the same waters John the Baptist uses to baptize Christ (Matthew 3:13; Mark 1:9; Luke 3:21, 4:1). The holy water of the Jordan acts in favor of Milton and gives him strength to “resist Urizen's baptism in the water of materiality and instead gives him human form.”\(^ {140}\) “Silent Milton stood before/ The darkened Urizen; as the sculptor silent stands before/ His forming image; he walks round it patient laboring.”\(^ {141}\) Urizen, even in human form, is still Urizen and now no longer a threat to Milton’s path to becoming redeemed.

During the struggle between Milton and Urizen and Milton’s descent into Blake’s tarsus, Los is dealing with his own sufferings. Los’s world is divided due to the conflict between his two sons, Palamabron and Satan, a replication of the conflict happening between Blake and William Hayley. The loss of control forces Los into a state of mourning, and eventually, he ends up placing his sandal on his head\(^ {142}\) indicating the disruption of order. The Tripartite union between Milton, Blake, and Los occurs in the act of righting Los’s displaced sandal. The topsy-turvy

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\(^{136}\) Marks, 67.

\(^{137}\) See Appendix: Figure 1.

\(^{138}\) See Appendix: Figure 4.

\(^{139}\) Blake, *Milton*, 19.7-9

\(^{140}\) Damrosch, 330.

\(^{141}\) Blake, *Milton*, 20.7-9

\(^{142}\) Blake, *Milton*, 8.11-12
world Los is in begins to change when Blake cries out in fear and is heard indistinctly by
Los.\textsuperscript{143} The poem shifts quickly from Los’s perspective to Blake’s:

\begin{quote}
I bound my sandals
On; to walk forward thro’ Eternity, Los descended to me:
And Los behind me stood; a terrible flaming Sun\textsuperscript{144}: just close
Behind my back; I turned round in terror, and behold.
Los stood in that fierce glowing fire; and he also stoop’d down
And bound my sandals on in Udan-Adan; trembling stood
[…] Los had enterd into my soul.\textsuperscript{145}
\end{quote}

This moment shows the importance of Blake’s imagery through feet, where Los claims chaos
with only the left sandal he now aids Blake (and Milton in the tarsus) in binding both sandals,
left and right, while simultaneously restoring order. With this union Blake, Milton, and Los are
given a revitalized purpose. Their thoughts are one and reflect upon the future: “I am that
Shadowy Prophet who Six Thousand Years ago/ Fell from my station in the Eternal Bosom. Six
Thousand Years/ Are finished. I return.”\textsuperscript{146} Blake is now ready to resume his poetical vocation,
Milton can fully find redemption in Ololon, and Los will move toward creating his city of art,
Golgonooza.

**Book II:**

In Book 2 of *Milton* Los and Blake have a second encounter or a reinforcement of their
first connection. Blake seems to be remembering this event instead of experiencing it in present
time, “For when Los joined with me he took me in his firy whirlwind” and “set me down in
Felphams Vale and prepared a beautiful/ Cottage for me that in three years I might write all these

\textsuperscript{143} Blake, *Milton*, 22.4
\textsuperscript{144} The use of sun serves a dual purpose. Sun and son: Los is a creation of Blake’s hence son.
\textsuperscript{145} Blake, *Milton*, 22.4-13
\textsuperscript{146} Blake, *Milton*, 22.15-17
Visions/ to display Natures cruel holiness: the deceits of Natural Religion.” Los is the authority in supporting the union between Milton, Blake, and himself in this moment. The Tripartite is meant to occur in the Garden—a place resembling the Garden of Eden. This will be the rewriting of the chaotic fall pertaining to biblical perspectives. For example, the meeting of Adam and Eve is now set between Milton and Ololon. Even though the two descend from heaven at the same time Ololon reaches Blake’s garden first, Milton following shortly after.

The completion of Milton’s redemption is exhibited through the appearance of Blake’s wife. Blake is returned to an enlightened state of renewal, shocked by into reality: “Terror struck in the Vale I stood at that immortal sound/ My bones trembled. I fell outstretched upon the path/ A moment, and my soul returnd into its mortal state [Blake]/ to Resurrection and Judgment in the Vegetable Body [the mortal world]/ And my sweet Shadow of Delight [Wife, Catherine] stood trembling by my side.” Blake reinforces Milton’s union with Ololon by allowing his wife Catherine the last standing position in the poem for even Blake fell, no longer able to use his feet. Blake’s reuniting with his wife confirms that the Tripartite he creates between himself, Milton, and Los can now continue forward pursuing their vocation of discovering “Poetic Genius” and not fear the coming of the Last Judgment.

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147 Blake, Milton, 36.23-25
148 Ololon descends into the garden at Felpham, Blake, Milton, 36.10. Milton descends into the garden, 27.13. See Appendix: Figure 6.
149 Blake, Milton, 42.24-28.
V. Conclusion

In writing Milton, William Blake creates an entire new world within worlds in which to comprehend his own reality. As discussed in Milton, Blake never writes about just one character or one event; Milton transverses time and space in order for redemption to occur for himself, Milton, and Los. During his time spent at Felpham, Blake finds his “Poetic Genius” challenged. In reference to Milton, he writes,

[T]he manner in which I have routed out the nest of villains will be seen in a Poem concerning my Three years’ Herculean labours at Felpham, which I will soon Publish. Secret Calumny & open Professions of Friendship are common enough all the world over, but have never been so good an occasion of Poetic Imagery. When a Base Man means to be your Enemy, he always begins with being your Friend.\(^{150}\)

This “Base Man” refers to none other than William Hayley. Hayley starts out as a friend and is unable, from Blake’s vantage point, to see him as anything more than an assistant or a secretary. Rather than continuing on in a position as a devalued poet and artist, Blake ultimately decides to move away from Felpham to reignite his yearning of writing poetry and creating art. The result of this decision is Blake’s first epic poem Milton

_ Milton is a journey. Although Blake uses the elements of history, religion, science, and nature to write this poem, he ultimately utilizes the metaphor of the foot to walk us through to the end—in order “To go forth to the Great Harvest & Vintage of the Nations.”\(^{151}\) His clever usage of the foot illustrates the power of a tripartite union. First, this unification enables Blake to move past his quarrel with Hayley toward his poetical vocation. Second, Milton’s star descends into


\(^{151}\)Blake, Milton, 43.1. In other words, this is to partake of bread and wine or Holy Communion. This also references to book of Revelations and the last days or also referred to as the Judgment Days.
Blake’s tarsus for the correction of errors found within *Paradise Lost*. Lastly, Blake and Milton as well as Los must complete the tripartite union through the binding of a sandal in order to discover an end to chaos in a topsy-turvy world. Blake incorporates himself, resurrects Milton, and creates Los because within three there is One and through the tarsus of the foot all are able to see “Past, Present, and Future” using their renewed tarsus of the eyes. Therefore, “All Animals [and Humans] upon Earth, are prepard in all their strength” to obtain the independent need to stand strong for the coming of The Last Judgment.

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152 An allusion to the Christian Trinity: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.  
Bibliography


ProQuest. Web.


Appendix

Left: The Author & Printer W Blake 1804
Bottom: To Justify the Ways of God to Men
Milton striving with Urizen
Bottom: to Annihilate the Self-/hood of Deceit & False Forgiveness
Bottom: Blake’s Cottage at Felpham