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Who Made the Tyger?

THAT grand incantation of rhetorical questions that makes up the substance of Blake's most famous poem may have seemed to us, as children, to require no answer. Coleridge's observation that poetry gives most pleasure when only generally and not perfectly understood seems to be true of those questions that stir in us the sense of a living mystery, and while seeming to make some grand affirmation about it, in fact makes none for readers who approach the poem with an open mind. Everyday monotheism seems to demand, as the answer to the final question,

Did he who made the Lamb, make thee?

the answer "Yes," but leaves us then in extreme doubt about the moral character of that God which must, one is bound to conclude, be very different from the all-righteous all-wise all-loving, "good" god of Christianity.

Perhaps we may simplify our question by answering—or asking—another: who made the Lamb?—Lamb, it is to be noticed, spelt with a capital, which signifies that Blake uses the word in its symbolic sense, and includes in his meaning the Lamb of God, as well as the lamb of the meadows, companion of the child of the *Songs of Innocence*. The lamb is a symbol of the principle in nature that willingly dies in order that others may live, the act that Blake in later poems calls "self-annihilation"; while the tiger is the beast that sustains its own life at the expense of its fellow-creatures, symbol of the opposite principle, that of selfhood. Other references to tigers in Blake make it clear that this, and not

enthusiasm for a king of the jungle,* is the sense in which Blake uses the word. In *The Four Zoas*, a song of triumph in praise of the natural creation he declares that "the Human Form is no more," and expands this statement in the line "The Tyger fierce laughs at the Human form." The tigers and lions created by Urizen are called "dishumanised men," and belong to his world of separate entities, of whose creatures Blake writes, "beyond the bounds of their own self their senses cannot penetrate." The tiger is, for Blake, a symbol of competitive, predacious selfhood. The lamb belongs to the selfless world of innocence—Eden; the tiger to the selfish world of experience. Did the same god create both worlds?

So naïve is the poet's answer to the question asked in "The Lamb"—"Little Lamb, who made thee?"—that, but for the self-forgetful purity of speech and thought, the poem might seem to have been written by a devout simpleton.

Little Lamb, I'll tell thee,

Little Lamb, I'll tell thee:

He is called by thy name,

For He calls himself a Lamb,

* Nevertheless the grandeur of the poem does suggest some such emotion of admiration for the tiger, and I have wondered what tiger had aroused in Blake that dark enthusiasm. Could he have seen Stubbs' *Tiger*, exhibited at the Society of Artists of Great Britain in the year 1769, when the poet was twelve years old? Or, in 1776, *Tigers at Play* by the same artist? The fire of the eyes in Stubbs' magnificent painting that struck Landseer might well have left a lasting impression on a boy, himself an artist to be.

*He is meek, and he is mild;
He became a little child.
I a child, and thou a lamb,
We are called by his name.*

*Little Lamb, God bless thee!
Little Lamb, God bless thee!*

Setting aside any hasty impulse to reject the poem as sentimentally childish in its affirmation that Jesus made the lamb, let it be noted that Blake is making a specific theological statement: that the Lamb and the child are made by God the Son who became incarnate as Jesus, by the second person of the Trinity.

Now *The Tyger* was plainly not written by a devout simpleton, for it asks the deepest of all questions—what is the origin of evil. “What! Shall we receive Good at the hand of God and shall we not also receive Evil?” This great theme of the Book of Job preoccupied Blake from the beginning of his life to the end; and already when he wrote *The Tyger* he had the answer to his question: There is an evil creative principle at work in the universe, and this Being is the creator of the natural world. Blake said this, in so many words, to Wordsworth’s friend, Crabb Robinson, who reports the conversation in his diary:

The eloquent descriptions of Nature in Wordsworth’s poems were conclusive proofs of atheism, for whoever believes in Nature says B. disbelieves in God—for Nature is the work of the Devil. On my obtaining from him the declaration that the Bible was the word of God, I referred to the commencement of *Genesis*—“In the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth.” But I gained nothing by this for I was triumphantly told that this God was not Jehovah, but the Elohim, and the doctrine of the Gnostics repeated with sufficient consistency to silence one so unlearned as myself.

So Crabb Robinson concludes with the self-assurance of the man who knows, at least, the answer to so simple a question as “who created the world.”

To Blake the question appeared less simple. Nevertheless Crabb-Robinson has not misrepresented him, for in *Jerusalem* Blake writes that “in the chaotic state of sleep” into which Albion, the universal man, is fallen, “Satan and Adam and the whole world was created by the Elohim”; and, still more explicitly, he elsewhere wrote, “Thinking as I do that the

Creator of this world is a very cruel Being, and being a worshipper of Christ, I cannot help saying, the Son ‘Oh how unlike the Father!’ First God Almighty comes with a thump on the head, and then Jesus Christ comes with a balm to heal it.”

WHAT was the source of Blake’s belief that the world was created by the Elohim (a plural form, it should be noted), “a very cruel Being”? What could he have known of Gnosticism to arouse in him so strong an assent? Such fragments as have been discovered of the 2nd and 3rd century Gnostics were not available to Blake. The Book of the Great Logos was, indeed, brought back to England by James Bruce * during Blake’s lifetime, but remained unpublished. The little that was known of the Gnostics was contained in the few facts reported of them by their enemies and detractors on the side of ecclesiastical orthodoxy; and Blake’s knowledge of their beliefs could only have reached him at second hand—more exactly, at third hand—through the writings of Lardner, and Mosheim’s *Ecclesiastical History*, † published in English translation in the year 1765. Mosheim’s account is tendentious, well seasoned with invective against the degeneracy, superstition, and folly of the Gnostics; but he does give a fair and coherent account of their principal beliefs. Chief of these—and common to all schools of Gnosticism—is the affirmation that the creator of this world was a being different from the supreme God; this view was held in common by oriental and Egyptian Gnostics, and by the early Jewish Cabbalists—Cabbalism is often called Jewish Gnosticism. According to the latter, the God of the Old Testament is this lesser divinity, and his dominion over the human race is to be destroyed by the Messiah. Those Gnostics who adopted Christianity believed that Christ, son of the supreme God, came to end the power of the inferior deity. Yet the creator has his origin in the supreme God; he descended from

* 1730–94. Traveller and explorer of the sources of the Nile. He also brought back the Ethiopian text of the *Book of Enoch*.

† Professor Denis Saurat suggests this source.

the pleroma (the eternal world of the supreme God)

either by a fortuitous impulse, or in consequence of a divine commission, reduced to order this unseemly mass [matter], adorned it with a rich variety of gifts, created man, and inferior animals of different kinds to store it with inhabitants, and corrected its malignity by mixing with it a certain portion of light, and also of a matter celestial and divine. This creator of the world is distinguished from the supreme deity by the name of demiurge. His character is a compound of shining qualities, and insupportable arrogance; and his excessive lust of empire effaces his talents and his virtues. He claims dominion over the new world he has formed, as his sovereign right; and, excluding totally the supreme deity from all concernment in it, he demands from mankind, for himself and his associates, divine honours. . . . The imperious demiurge exerts his power in opposition to the merciful purpose of the supreme being, resists the influence of those solemn invitations by which he exhorts mankind to return to him, and labours to efface the knowledge of God in the minds of intelligent beings . . . [Mosheim].

This striking characterisation of the demiurge may very well be a source of Blake's "prince of Light," Urizen, who "descends," for no specified reason, from his place in eternity, in order to create a temporal world, his "horrible chaos of futurity." Mosheim makes it clear, moreover, that this demiurge was identified by Jewish Gnostics of the second century A.D., with the God of the Old Testament, the Creator of the Book of Genesis. Cerinthus, a Jew converted to Christian Gnosticism, for example, taught that

the creator of this world [whom he considered also as the sovereign and lawgiver of the Jewish people], was a being endowed with the greatest virtues, and derived his birth from the Supreme God; that this being fell, by degrees, from his native virtue, and his primitive dignity; that the Supreme God, in consequence of this, determined to destroy his empire, and sent upon earth, for this purpose, one of the ever-happy and glorious æons, whose name was Christ.

In such statements, Mosheim is perfectly just to the beliefs of the Gnostics; and if we suppose that Blake read him with a predisposition to agree with the Gnostics—to read white where Mosheim wrote black, which, after all, was a habit of the poet—it is I suppose conceivable that he might have reconstructed for himself a working framework of 2nd

century Gnostic thought. But whence came such a predisposition? Why did Blake read Mosheim at all? I believe that he already knew something of Gnosticism from a source more living, more imaginatively inspiring than the erudite pedantry of Mosheim; and turned to the *Ecclesiastical History* only to find out all he could about a view of the world that he already shared.

CABBALISM had never ceased to exert a profound and fertilising influence on European thought, through the alchemical tradition. The view that the Creation was the work of a demiurge was so usual among alchemists as to be virtually an official doctrine. Paracelsus, for instance, whose works Blake himself says that he had read with profound admiration, writes of the "mortal God" who is the author of evil:

So the things created are divided into *eternall* and *mortall*; the reason whereof is, because there was another creator of the mysteries, besides the chiefest and most high. For the most high [Creator] ought to be the judge and corrector of all the creatures, who should know how much was bestowed on them, whereby they might do either good or evil, though they had it not [immediately] from him. Moreover, the creatures are always egged on and provoked rather to evill, compelled thereto by the fates, stars, and by the infernal one; which by no means could have bin, if they had proceeded out of the most high himself, that we should be forced into those properties of good and evill, but should in all things have had free will, without any such violent instigation; yet nevertheless the creature hath not so much wisdom as to know good or evill, to understand the eternall or the mortall. . . . And the reason is plain, for such creatures as we are, whose Masters teach us no perfect good, but are rather seasoned by the mortall God who had some power in the *great mystery*, yet are they ordained by the Eternall for judgment both to themselves and us.

Another source known to Blake differs from all others, for it is a genuine Gnostic text of great antiquity, *The Divine Pymander*, attributed to Hermes himself, the half-legendary master of the Alchemists. G. R. S. Meade, in his three-volume work on Thrice Greatest Hermes, states it as his view that *The Divine Pymander* is a pre-Christian work, and non-Jewish, stemming, in fact, from the still living tradition of the Egyptian mystery religion. As religious literature, it is worthy of comparison with the

finest books of the Hebrew Old Testament, or with those of any other religious tradition. During the 17th century, this book went through many editions on the Continent; and Dr. Everard's English translation is a very fine one. Berkeley quotes the *Pymander* at some length, as a recognised authority, in his *Siris*. This may be where Blake first learned of the book; his marginalia to *Siris* were written many years later, but this is no proof that he had not read, or at least dipped into, *Siris* much earlier and it is certain that he had read other works of Berkeley before 1793; but the *Pymander* was, most likely, widely read during the 18th century among platonists and esotericists. This book may have been the original source of Blake's enthusiasm for Gnosticism; beyond question, it was the inspiration and source of *The Tyger*.

IN an eloquent hymn, Thrice Greatest Hermes, supposed king and priest of Egypt, asks the great question, Who was the creator of man and of the world? and is answered by the Pymander, his divine instructor, or daimon:

But whence, quoth I, or whereof are the Elements of Nature made?

Pymander: Of the Will and Council of God; which, taking the Word, and beholding the beautiful World (in the archetype thereof) initiated it, and so made this World, by the principles and vital Seeds or Soul-like productions of itself.

For the *Mind* being God, Male and Female, Life and Light, brought forth this Word; another *Minde*, the *Workman*, which being God of the Fire, and the Spirit, fashioned and formed seven other Governors, which in their circle, contain the Sensible World, whose Government or Disposition is called Fate or Destiny. The Seven Governors are the planetary spirits that govern this world; and the workman, *Minde*, together with the Word, containing the Circles, and whirling them about, turned round as a wheel his own workmanships, and suffered them to be turned from an indefinite beginning to an undeterminable end, for they always begin where they end.

Mosheim also mentions the Gnostic belief that there are "seven angelic architects" engaged on the creation and government of the sub-lunary world. The Cabbala likewise has this

septenary, the seven lower Sefiroth of the Tree of God; and even in Christian mythology, the Holy Spirit is a sevenfold creative power. Together with the seven, the "workman mind" makes eight in all; in Cabbalism, the eighth is the Elohim Ruach, the God of the Old Testament, third of the higher Sefiroth under whose government the seven lower potencies operate in the created world. Blake also has his ogdoad—the Four Zoas and their four feminine emanations—with Urizen as the creator of the fallen world, the God of the Old Testament.

The Divine Pymander describes the creation of man by this second "Workman mind," the God of the Fire, and of the Spirit, that emanates from the Mind of God:

And if thou wilt see and behold this workman, even by mortal things that are upon the earth, and in the deep, consider, O Son, how man is made and framed in the womb. . . . Who circumscribed and marked out his eyes? Who bored his nostrils and ears? Who opened his mouth, who stretched out and tied together his sinews? Who channelled the veins? Who hardened and made strong the bones? Who clothed the flesh with skin? Who divided the fingers and the joynts? Who flattened and made broad the soles of the feet? Who digged the pores? Who stretched out the spleen? Who made the heart like a Pyramis?

To me it seems beyond doubt that this passage inspired *The Tyger*. Compare the very phrases—"the fire of thine eyes"—who better than the god of fire himself "dare seize the fire?" Compare: ". . . what art Could twist the sinews of thy heart," with "who stretched out and tied together his sinews?" The veins, the bones, the entrails, and, finally, "who flattened and made broad the soles of the feet," so imaginatively transmuted by Blake into the "dread feet" of the Tyger. If Blake had seen a living tiger, the flat, broad, powerful paws must have struck him; they are particularly striking in the Stubbs painting, supposing that to be his source. In the first draft of the poem, he had written, "what dread hand made thy dread feet," then, confusing hands and feet, he makes a quadruped, and in the line "what dread hand and what dread feet" leaves us in doubt whether either, or both, belong to the maker, or the made. Finally, the series of

questions asked by the *Pymander* is taken over as the rhetorical pattern of *The Tyger*.

A later poem, "To Tirzah," refers still, I think, to the same passage—the succession of "nostrils, eyes and ears" strongly suggests it:

*Thou, Mother of my Mortal part,
With cruelty didst mould my Heart,
And with false self-deceiving fears
Didst bind my Nostrils, Eyes & Ears:
Didst close my Tongue in senseless clay,
And me to Mortal Life betray.*

In this poem Blake makes clear the point left in doubt in *The Tyger* that he regards the incarnation of man as an evil.

THE "workman mind," then, that made the tiger, is the demiurge of the Gnostics, the presiding-spirit of destiny, who revolves on his wheel without beginning or end the mutable creatures of nature, subject to fate. "Whatsoever is in Heaven is alterable," writes Hermes, "All upon Earth is alterable. . . . That which is immortal is not mortal. That which is mortal, is not immortal. . . . That which is mortal, cometh not into a body immortal, but that which is immortal cometh into that which is mortal." The *Tyger* is a wonder and terror of mortal creation, the work of the being called by Paracelsus, the "mortal god."

It is not only in this unmistakable textual parallel that the Workman Mind of *The Divine Pymander* seems to me to correspond exactly with Blake's conception of the creator of this world; but also in the grandeur and ambiguity of the character of the demiurge himself. Is he good or is he evil, this mighty workman? Is he working the will of the supreme God, or his own only? Thrice Greatest Hermes leaves us in the same state of sublime doubt as does Blake's poem. The "workman mind" is not the supreme God, but neither is he in any way like the Christian devil; there is the grandeur of intelligence in his works, and his creation is, in some sense, by the permission of the Eternal, and, according to Hermes, his work of creation accomplished, he at last returns to the *Pleroma* whence he emanated. There is not, in *The Divine Pymander*, the uncompromising dualism of good and evil found in Christianity; rather, as in the Judaic mystical thought of the Cab-

bala, evil as well as good has its origin in the *deus absconditus*.^{*} The Devil of the Book of Job is God's servant and son; and among the Ten Sefiroth of the Tree of God, there are potencies of evil as well as of good. So, in Blake's own Prophetic Books, the fallen demiurge returns, the Circle of Destiny fulfilled, to his place within the eternal Divine Humanity. The creator of the *Tyger* is not the Christian God, but neither is he the Christian devil.

In the Prophetic Books, the character of Urizen is developed rather from Cabbalistic sources than from Gnostic—he is Elohim Ruach, the God of the Old Testament. But "Elohim" is a plural, and all the four Zoas are "of the Elohim," as Blake states explicitly of Los, and implicitly of Luvah, and are all creators of the temporal world, in some aspect. Supremacy in this creative process is contested between Urizen, the fallen mind, and Los, the Prophet of Eternity, the visionary faculty. Urizen's creation is, on the whole, responsible for the fall from the eternal into the temporal world; while Los labours to create and to destroy the forms of life, toiling to bring about a return to the eternal world, to realise, in time and space, the birth of the Supreme God as Jesus, the Divine Humanity. I find in the character of Los some characteristics of the "workman mind" of the *Pymander*. Demiurge means "workman," as Blake probably knew; and it is Los, not Urizen, who fulfils that role in Blake's myth. Los, above all a workman, and, moreover, a metal worker, is a toiler at the "furnaces," a god of fire, for ever fashioning and forming with hammer and bellows, like the Greek Hephæstos, who, according to another tradition, is identified with the Gnostic demiurge. Those famous furnaces at which he labours are seven in number, and certainly correspond to the planetary spirits at the command of the demiurge, and to the seven lower Sefiroth of the Cabbalistic Tree. In one

^{*} Whitehead in his *Science and the Modern World* points out the absurdity of the Christian habit of paying God what he calls "metaphysical compliments." He has been conceived as the foundation of the metaphysical situation with its ultimate activity. If this conception be adhered to, there can be no alternative except to discern in Him the origin of all "evil as well as of all good."

passage Blake even tells us that Los' furnaces were given over to him by Urizen, who is elsewhere described as the chief of the Elohim. This seems to me a clue not to be overlooked. As in ancient mythologies where two deities of assimilated tribes contest with one another for supremacy, or unite their functions and their names, so Los and Urizen, both creators, reveal in their attributes their disparate origins. Urizen is drawn from cabbalistic characterisations of the Elohim, especially from *The Mosaical Philosophy* of Robert Fludd; Los is based on the parallel figure of the Gnostic demiurge, as characterised in *The Divine Pymander*.

WE know, then, that the Lamb was made by the son of God, the second person of the Trinity; and that the Tiger was made by the demiurge, the third person of the (Gnostic and Cabbalistic) trinity. Lamb and Tiger inhabit different worlds, and are the work of different creators. The lamb, we are told, feeds "by the stream and o'er the mead," "making all the vales rejoice." The tiger is a denizen of "the forests of the night." Never, to the best of my belief, is the word "forest" used by Blake in any context in which it does not refer to the natural, "fallen" world. There are no "forests of eternity" as there are fields of eternity. Forests are the endlessly multiplied vegetation of the mortal life of nature. Vala, the Goddess Nature, is described as roaming "in forests of eternal death, shrieking in hollow trees." We read of "forests of affliction," where lions and tigers roam; and the old blind tyrant Tiriël is led by his daughter "to the covert of a wood where beasts resort . . . but from her cries the tygers fled. All night they wandered through the wood"—the same combination of imagery, darkness, forests, and beasts of prey, as in *The Tyger*. These forests of nature are in fact only an endless multiplication of one tree, called by Blake "the Tree of Mystery." It is a tree explicitly associated with Urizen, the demiurge, for it grows by his "rock of the law," springing up from under his heel. It is the Mosaical Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. As Urizen sits writing in his "books of iron" the laws of good and

evil that prevail in his fallen world, so the tree grows

*Till the horrid plant bending its boughs
Grew to roots when it felt the earth,
And again sprung to many a tree.
Amaz'd started Urizen when
He beheld himself compassed round
And high roofed over with trees.*

The stems stood thick, making a "dismal shade," and

*The Tree still grows over the Void,
Enrooting itself all around,
An endless labyrinth of woe! **

To this "accursed Tree," Urizen nailed the corpse of his first-born, slain by himself—a plain allusion to the crucifixion of Christ on the Tree, which, in esoteric Christian tradition, is always identified with the tree of Eden whose fruits occasioned man's fall:

*Men say that Paradise and Calvary,
Christ's Cross and Adam's Tree grew in one place*

—so Donne refers to that tradition. Sometimes Blake calls the tree an oak, and the forests are the oak-groves of the Druids, priests, like Urizen himself, of the religion of nature-worship that Blake condemns in all its forms, including that given it by Wordsworth.

The expression "tree of mystery" originates, I am inclined to believe, in a work by Paracelsus that deeply influenced Blake, and whose thought underlies the prophetic book *Vala (The Four Zoas)*. In the *Philosophia Athenienses*,

* The Book of Ahania. The tree grows more entangled the more Urizen writes his books. I see here a possible reference to Berkeley, for whom the Tree of Knowledge is explicitly associated with the "delusion of words." The passage occurs in the *Principles of Human Knowledge*: "We need only draw the curtain of words, to behold the forest tree of knowledge, whose fruit is excellent and within the reach of any hand. Unless we take care to clear the first principles of knowledge from the embarrass and delusion of words, we may make infinite reasonings upon them to no purpose: we only draw consequences from consequences, and be never the wiser. The further we go, we shall only lose ourselves the more irrecoverably, and be the deeper entangled in difficulties and mistakes." This seems to me the clue to the curious statement in Blake's myth, that the mangrove-thicket of the Tree of Mystery grows as a consequence of Urizen's writings.

Paracelsus' theme is the mystery of nature. In this eloquent and magnificent work, Paracelsus draws a picture of the whole process of nature, from first to last, issuing from nothing, and returning to nothing. Paracelsus' favourite image for the natural creation is smoke—"Briefly whatsoever hath a body is nothing but curdled smoke, wherein a particular predestination lieth hid . . . for all bodies shall pass away and vanish into nothing but smoke, they shall all end in a fume. That is the end of all things corporeal both living and dead." Nature is like a great forest that will at the end consume away to nothing:

And as all the things of the creatures are wiped away, minished and do perish with the mystery, as a forest which the fire burneth into a little heap of ashes, out of which ashes but a little glass is made and that glass is brought into a small beryll, which beryll vanisheth into wind: in like manner we also shall be consumed, still passing from one thing into another, till there be nothing of us left. Such is the beginning, such is the end of the creatures. If the Cypress tree can spring out of a little grain, surely it may be brought into as small a quantity as that little kernel was at first.

When everything is "reduced to its nature, or first principle, to wit, into *nothing*; then," writes Paracelsus, "there is nothing within the sky but is endless and eternal." Such is that Tree of Mystery, nature; it vanishes like smoke; even as it grows and decays, it is only "curdled smoke." Therefore it is that Blake writes that, in this natural mystery, lions and tigers "roam in the redounding smoke, in forests of affliction." The forests themselves are "the redounding smoke" of Paracelsus' splendid image of the mutability of nature. Vala, goddess of nature, is at times described as a cloud of smoke; and in *Jerusalem*, Blake tells how on the day of the Last Judgement, the Tree of Mystery is consumed in flames. In his description of his painting of *The Vision of the Last Judgement*, he writes of "the eternal Consummation of Vegetable Life and Death with its Lusts. The wreathed Torches in their hands represents the Eternal Fire which is the fire of Generation or Vegetation, it is an Eternal Consummation."

The immediate association of the tree of natural creation with the demiurge comes,

however, neither from Hermes Trismegistus nor from Paracelsus, but from Jewish Cabalism. In an otherwise inexplicable passage, Blake states of the Tree of Mystery that its roots are "brandish'd in the heavens," its fruits in earth beneath. This symbol of the inverted tree is familiar to any student of the Cabbala. The meaning of the symbol is that created nature has its roots in the Supreme God, and its branches and fruits on the lower earth—the roots of nature thus being "above" or higher in the divine hierarchy than what we perceive on earth.

BEFORE leaving *The Tyger*, one last question remains unanswered. What is the meaning of the lines

*When the stars threw down their spears
And water'd heaven with their tears,
Did he smile his work to see?*

To Blake these lines must have seemed unambiguously clear, and so they are to any student of alchemy. The tiger grew on earth because the stars rained down their influences—threw down beams of light like "spears," and "watered heaven" with those waters above the firmament that fertilise all growth in the elemental earth below. I believe I can point to the very text upon which the verse is based that may have caught Blake's attention for the same reason as it caught mine—because it is quoted twice by Robert Fludd in his *Mosaical Philosophy*, and once by Thomas Vaughan in *Lumen de Lumine*, both books well known to Blake. The quotation is from Reuchlin's *de Arte Cabbalistica* and is translated by Vaughan as follows: "There is not an herb here below but he hath a star in heaven above; the star strikes him with her beams, and says to him: Grow." So the Tiger could not grow on the earth below the firmament until the starry influences, called into operation above the firmament by the Elohim, struck him with their beams and bade him "grow." There is a reference to the same process in *Europe*, when the Goddess Nature (Vala), speaking of the stars, says

*. . . I seize their burning power
And bring forth howling terrors, all devouring fiery
kings.*

—tigers, in fact. The stars weep because the Elohim has ordained the creation of such a world as this “below.”

The Elohim operates his will upon earth by way of the stars. Fludd specifically states that the influences descend to earth, by way of the stars, “above the firmament”: “The beams and brightness of the eternall influence do descend, first, to the starry region of the temporal world, and afterwards are showered down into the elementary spheres, and penetrate even into the bowels of the earth, and the dark abyss, to operate the will of that radical

essence which sent them forth.” This belief in the influence of the “stars” and the Seven Planetary Spirits remains in popular astrology current to this day.

Blake, therefore, when he wrote *The Tyger*, was already working within a whole body of knowledge—alchemical, Cabbalistic, and Gnostic had already formed, when he wrote *The Tyger*, a considered philosophy of the nature of the creation and its author, and the answer to the question that forms the dramatic climax of the poem is, beyond all possible doubt, No.

George Aldis

Portrait of D. H. Lawrence

H^B sits and carves his male and female:

Adam straight as a pine

Hard as steel

Smelling of the rich red earth the warm

Wet sun the salt slaked brine;

Eve rounded as the rainbow and soft as a storm

Of feathers from heel

To hair sweet as eglantine

And silky smooth as a billowing sail.

He sees them lost in a soulless world

Of hump-backed housetops

Blocking out the sun

And sooty smoke smutting the air with gnomes

And goblin-shapes and bathing beaches polluting the drops

Of creamy surf like meringues with tin-cans and bones

And bits of bun—

Shattering their innocence in stops

And starts with lips in hatred curled.

He strips them of their serpent fig-leaves,

And lifts them above the show

And sham to where

Green grasses shoot, and the bells of the blue

Tinkle in rhythm with man and woman woe—

Released, soldering their sun-hot, dew—

Oily bodies in a flare

Of soul oneness: the flow

Of “tenderness” between the eternal Adams and Eves.