Marlow's closing rationalization ("too dark altogether") into his own, more uncompromising, however half-formed, response to the heart of the tale. The reprise of imagery in the passing over of "too dark" into "immense darkness" thus serves less as concurrence than as a rectifying echo of Marlow's vestigial and escapist idealism. The story's framing voice will not accede even briefly to an ethical standard by which any tragic truth is too appalling to own up to, for that truth's darkest threat lies precisely in such backing off. Stewart may or may not like Marlow, but the tale trusts, at the end, only its frame narrator (after all, its own persona), who does not patronize us the way Marlow patronizes the girl—and who therefore conveys Marlow's whole truth (including its final calculated evasion) more fully and unguardedly than Marlow can be counted on to transmit Kurtz's revelation.

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Expressive Theory and Blake's Audience

To the Editor:

In "Romantic Expressive Theory and Blake's Idea of the Audience" (*PMLA*, 95 [1980], 784–801), Morris Eaves says that the relationship between the artist and the audience is one of "lover to beloved, a deep, sympathetic communion that requires sexual, religious, or sometimes, for Blake, chemical metaphors to describe it" (p. 791). I agree with Eaves's understanding of this relationship, although he is not the first to point it out (see Roger R. Easson's "William Blake and His Reader in *Jerusalem*," in *Blake's Sublime Allegory*, ed. Stuart Curran and Joseph A. Wittreich, Jr. [Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1973]). Unfortunately, Eaves neglects those metaphors that most clearly delineate the relationship and connect it to other major views held by Blake.

The metaphor that Blake uses to imply ideal relationships in the broadest possible sense, and, in particular, between the artist and the audience, is the system that destroys systems. Blake's ideas about audience are deeply connected to the understanding of reading-seeing and imagination that this metaphor implies. The metaphor's important feature is its dynamic and open-ended quality, which reading-seeing and imagination also possess but which the metaphor of identity, emphasized by Eaves, does not express clearly enough. Los—Blake's artistic self—opposes, therefore, closed systems (any aesthetic theories, cognitive modes, or world views that tyrannize imagination), and so he proclaims: "I

must Create a System, or be enslav'd by another Mans" (*Jerusalem* 10.20). With the greatest regard for his audience's freedom and independence, Los goes on to strive "with Systems to deliver Individuals from those Systems" (*J* 11.5). And with the help of God, his furnaces give "a body to Falshood [false system making] that it may be cast off for ever" by those who perceive (and read) imaginatively (*J* 12.13).

The system that Los creates resembles the system of knowing and understanding in Eternity and generates other metaphors for Blake's concept of audience and its role. Because Los's system is similar to the multiple and diverse perspectives of Eternity comprised in the "Human Imagination," it demands of his audience an openness to all points of view—the "multitudes without / Number! the voices of the innumerable multitudes of Eternity," who "abolish Systems" (*J* 31.3–4, 18). The quaternity of perspectives, "the Four Faces of Humanity fronting the Four Cardinal Points / Of Heaven" described at the end of *Jerusalem* (98.26–27), symbolizes among other things the openness to multiple points of view that Blake's ideal reader should strive to attain.

Los's system is free from a chaos of points of view, for he knows that his audience can experience a reality more certain than transient states and perspectives. That reality, which gives coherence to Los's system, is the Divine Body of Human Imagination. Thus, Los dedicates himself confidently to his work: "I rest not from my great task! / . . . to open the immortal Eyes / Of Man inwards into the Worlds of Thought: into Eternity / Ever expanding [open-endedly] in the Bosom of God. the Human Imagination" (*J* 5.17–20).

Los's system coheres also through the reciprocal energies and activities of artists and their audiences—through the interchange and conflict of artists' and audiences' contrary points of view. Los compares the interchange to emanation, a going forth and participating in the perspectives and knowledge of the other (person, text, etc.). Eaves comes close to recognizing this metaphor when he says that "acts of imagination . . . must be mutual" (p. 793). Los, however, clearly articulates the metaphor while at work on his system:

When in Eternity Man converses with Man they enter
Into each others Bosom (which are Universes of delight)
In mutual interchange. and first their Emanations meet
Surrounded by their Children. if they embrace &
    comingle
The Human Four-fold Forms mingle also in thunders of
    Intellect.   (*J* 88.3–7)

Blake himself suggests the process of emanation in his advice to viewers of "A Vision of the Last Judgment": "If the Spectator could Enter into these Images in his Imagination . . . then would he arise from his Grave . . ." (Erdman ed., p. 550).

In mutual emanation "thunders of Intellect" rebound and contrary perspectives conflict. This conflict destroys systems, for discovery through the "war" of contraries has within it the seeds of its own refutation. Eaves hints also at this aspect of the relationship between artists and their audiences when he says that lovers "will not fail to entertain, teach, inspire, and even debate each other" (p. 791). As Blake says in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, "Opposition is true Friendship" (Pl. 20; see also *J* 91.16–17). Blake's metaphor of conflict indicates that when readers engage a complex text (system) they must use all their imaginative powers.

Mutual emanation requires of readers something else, which Eaves vaguely calls love but which is more precisely "self-annihilation," a going out of the self, an abandoning of the systems of thought, feeling, and action the self has habituated. Thus, when Albion tries to destroy the emanations of England's cathedral cities (her spiritual but misguided forces), Los reveals to him that "the accursed things were his own affections, / And his own beloveds" (*J* 42.3–4). Blake himself declares that "Man . . . requires a New Selfhood continually & must continually be changed into his direct Contrary" (*J* 52). The poet calls his reader to awaken from the grave of himself to possibilities other than the mere projection of his own identity.

Finally, Eaves is mistaken when he says that the relationship of the artist manipulating the audience does not apply to Blake (p. 794). Too much emphasis on Blake's love and sincerity makes us ignore his capacity for rhetorical maneuvering. But he was quite capable of manipulating his readers, for he understood that sometimes "deep dissimulation is the only defence an honest man has left" (*J* 49.23). Hence, as I have already noted, Los gives "a body to Falshood [including his own system, which only resembles Eternity] that it may be cast off for ever."

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Mr. Eaves replies:

Our purposes differ, but that difference can't account for the differences between Dennis Welch and me over Blake's idea of the audience—after a moment of first-paragraph harmony fades to lamentation over connections I "unfortunately . . . ne-

glect[ed]." The argument becomes archaeological: who dug here first? whose hole is deepest? whose stratum is fundamental?

As to the first question, I can't demonstrate here that my essay has few points of contact with Roger Easson's. But I can prompt patient readers, who can read and decide for themselves, with a bit of indirect advance confirmation. The member of the *PMLA* Advisory Committee who read my essay also coedited the volume that contains Easson's essay. If he felt that he had heard all this before, he didn't let on.

As to the second question, I have been as interested in Blake's metaphors of "system" as anyone. They belong in a negative complex that includes "doubt," "demonstration," "experiment," "machine," "harmony," and "intermeasurability" (see nn. 10 and 21 of my essay). In proposing that Los's remark about systems involves the "metaphor that Blake uses to imply ideal relationships in the broadest possible sense," Welch's archaeology mistakes a subsurface layer for bottom. First, Los is not the irrefutable voice of Blake's ideas about art but a character who learns as he goes. And Los measures system *against* identity to arrive at an opposition, not between "closed" and "open" systems, as Welch claims, but between *freedom in my own system* and *slavery in "another Mans."* Los's personal system will lack the very qualities that make real systems worth having—intermeasurability assuring both translatability and teachability and, especially, freedom *from* individuality. To a real systemizer, "my own system" is the kind that only mad scientists, and romantic artists, create. Look again at Los's task: not striving to create systems to oppose systems, "Striving with Systems to deliver *Individuals* from those Systems." As Blake might say, Israel delivered from Egypt is individual identity delivered from intermeasurable systems.

We are now back where we started: at the artistic problem created by such antisystems. The problem is communicability, one of the qualities that make a good system efficient. Delivered from systems, individual artists express personal art. My proposal is that personal art can be communicated only in personal terms. Personal relations thus become the model for the artistic relation between artist and audience. Such works cannot be systems or performances; such artists cannot be virtuoso performers with skills learned from the culture. The metaphors of these artists are not figures of speech but atoms of identity in which artist and audience may meet each other.

With his quotations from Blake about images that become bosoms to dwell in, Welch acknowl-