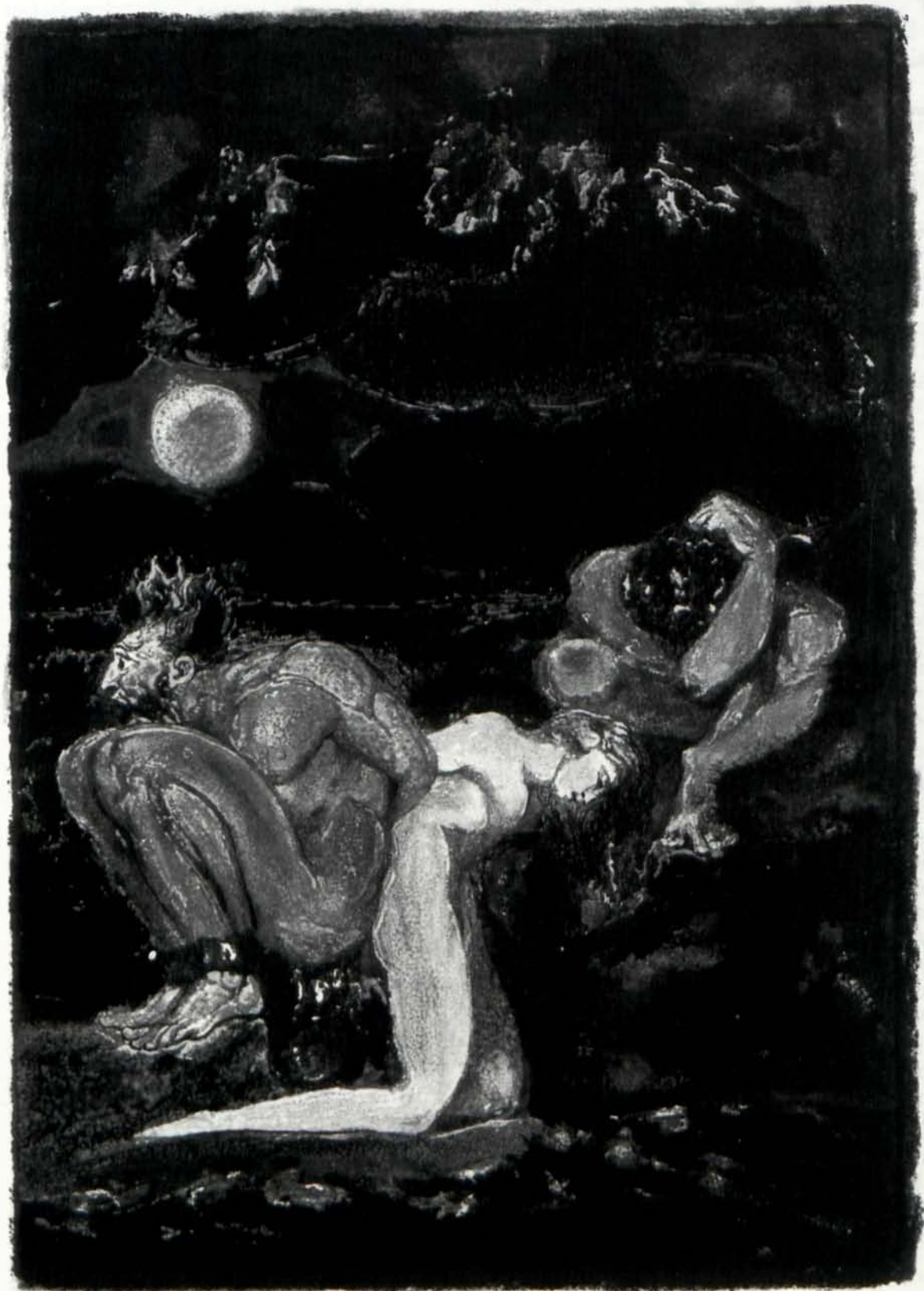


Blake

AN ILLUSTRATED QUARTERLY
VOLUME 23 NUMBER 2 FALL 1989



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The Myth of Commissioned Illuminated Books: George Romney, Isaac D'Israeli, and "ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTY designs . . . of Blake's"

BY JOSEPH VISCOMI

I

On 24 July 1835, Isaac D'Israeli, author of the multi-volumed *Curiosities of Literature* (1791–1834), wrote T. F. Dibdin, the bibliographer, about his "ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTY designs . . . of Blake's" (*Reminiscences* 788; Bentley, *Blake Records* 243, hereafter cited as *BR*). D'Israeli's collection consisted of *The Book of Thel* copy A, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* copy D, *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* copy F, *America a Prophecy* copy A, *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* copy A, *Europe a Prophecy* copy A, *The Book of Urizen* copy B, and one separate plate, either "A Dream of Thiralatha" copy B, "The Accusers" copy H, or "Joseph Arimathea Preaching" copy H (Bentley, *Blake Books* 157, hereafter cited as *BB*; all references to plate numbers follow the order established in Bentley's bibliography). The seven books made D'Israeli's illuminated book collection one of the most comprehensive of its day—and one of the most impressive, for they are all large folio copies printed on one side of the leaf. As we shall see, they share other bibliographical details that suggest they were printed at the same time, possibly in early 1795, which in turn suggests the possibility of their being commissioned as a set. None has a history before 1835, which means that theoretically each could have been purchased either directly from Blake, as Keynes and Bindman ascertain (*Census xviii*; *Blake as Artist* 96), or from other collectors. The ideas, however, that D'Israeli visited "Blake as early as 1794 [date of the paper used in these volumes], and bought a wide selection of Illuminated Books," and even that he was "a member of the Joseph Johnson circle" in the early 1790s (Bindman, *Blake as Artist* 96), are based on nothing more substantial than his having been a contemporary of Blake's and having owned illuminated books. Even Keynes found the association between Blake and D'Israeli "curious, for [D'Israeli] made no reference to Blake in his writings

. . ." (*Census xviii*). One purpose of this essay is to question the assumption that D'Israeli was an early Blake patron and collector, and to suggest that he probably purchased all his books late and most of them from the collection of George Romney, whom a recent discovery shows to have been both a collector and a patron. Another and more significant purpose is to suggest that Romney purchased his books from stock, instead of specifically commissioning them, and that what was true of Romney was true of nearly all owners of illuminated books, which is to say that Romney's and D'Israeli's copies, and copies of illuminated books in general, were *not*, as is generally assumed, produced "one by one" (Grant 281) and "on demand" (Essick, "Materials" 857), "as [Blake] got commissions" (Davids and Petrillo 154), or "with a particular customer in mind" (Erdman, *Poetry and Prose* 786).

At first sight, the relation between Romney and Blake is marked by a lack of documents similar to that marking the relation between Blake and D'Israeli; there are no letters, diary entries, and, until now, no known works by either artist in the collection of the other. The absence of a documented biographical connection, of course, does not preclude aesthetic influence, and may simply be because Romney stopped keeping his diary in 1795, and because from 1795 to the summer of 1799, when Romney left London mentally debilitated, there are only five Blake letters extant (three to Cumberland, two to Trusler), and no letter from the 1780s. Indeed, circumstantial evidence and aesthetic similarities suggest very strongly that they met, probably in the early 1780s through their mutual friend John Flaxman, who was ever "anxious to recommend [Blake] and his productions to the patrons of the Arts . . ." (Bentley, *BR* 26, Smith).¹ Some of these productions Flaxman apparently showed "Mr/: Romney," who thought Blake's "historical drawings rank with those of MI/: Angelo" (*BR* 27–28).

Flaxman also "recommended more than one friend to take copies" of illuminated books (Gilchrist 1: 124). Of Flaxman's friends, though, only "a Mr. Thomas," who purchased *Songs* copy Q for 10 pounds around 1805, has been identified conclusively.² To this list of friends, however, we can now add Romney, for a previously unexamined auction catalogue from 1834 reveals that he had purchased at least four illuminated books (or five distinct volumes), all of which were described as folio.

The books were *Visions of the Daughters of Albion*, *The Book of Urizen*, *America a Prophecy*, and "Blake's two volumes," which, as I will show, were probably *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience*. They were auctioned in 1834, two years after the death of his only son, Rev. John Romney, but would have had to have been produced by 1799, the date of Romney's departure from London. Romney's owning a set of illuminated books proves that his admiration was both genuine and not limited to the early drawings or to the 1780s, and that Flaxman, assuming he played agent, merits his reputation for being committed to Blake. More significant than Romney's owning illuminated books, however, are the illuminated books he owned, for if I have correctly identified the copies, then his collection alters the history of other collections, specifically D'Israeli's, and also reveals how tenuous and speculative our reasoning is when determining early provenance and identifying contemporary patrons. More important still is the meaning of the visual and technical coherence of these copies and the overt differences of each copy from nearly all those of its kind produced before or after. The existence of a uniform set of various titles raises important questions about how illuminated books were produced and why.

II

William Hayley met Romney in Earham, Sussex, in 1777; he remained a close life-long friend and wrote the first biography, *The Life of . . . Romney* (1809). He employed Blake in 1803–04 to locate the painter's works, many of which Blake examined in October of 1803 at Saunders', Romney's frame maker, "who has now in his possession all Mr. Romney's pictures that remained after the sale at Hampstead" (Keynes, *Blake, Complete Writings* 831; hereafter cited as K). Held in 1801, a year before the painter's death, the "Hampstead sale" was an auction of Romney's furniture and large collection of antique busts.³ It was not until 1805 and 1807 that Romney's extensive private art collection and his paintings and drawings were auctioned. On 22 and 23 May 1805, the "Intire and Genuine collection of Prints, Books of Prints, and Drawings of George Romney, Esq., Historical and Portrait Painter, deceased," was auctioned by "Mr. T. Philipe, at his Rooms, Warwick Street, Golden

Square, adjoining the Chapel" (YCBA Sales Cat. 649). This collection consisted of thousands of prints and drawings of the Italian, Dutch, Flemish, French, and other schools, but contained no original works of Romney's.⁴ Two years later, on 27 April 1807, at Christie's, Romney's own paintings and drawings were auctioned, but sold for ridiculously low prices, with the best of them being bought in by John Romney.⁵

No Blake work was listed in either sale, but probably four illuminated books (or five separate volumes) were sold at Christie's on 9–10 May 1834, when the "Collection of Pictures, Reserved after the Death of that Celebrated and elegant Painter Romney" were again put up for auction.⁶ This auction consisted of the original works bought back in 1807 (listed as lots 72–92 of the second day of the 1834 sale), and works from Romney's library and art collection, which sold the first day of the 1834 sale and included "fine Heads by Rembrandt, Vandyke and Dobson; a pair of spirited sketches by Rubens, copies from Titian . . . the works of Montfaucon, Picart, The Galleries of Dusseldorf and Crozat, and other Books of Prints and Works of Art" (YCBA Sales Cat. 96). The art collection and library, which in addition to Picart, Montfaucon, and Crozat included the most important reference works of the day, such as Basan, Mengs, Webb, Shee, Strutt, Pilkington, Boydell, Richardson, Caylus, and DePiles, had been shipped in two parts to Whitestock Hall, the family home in Kendal, Westmoreland, in 1799, when John Romney came to retrieve his father, and then in 1803, when Saunders packed up Romney's works and "sent a great part of them to the North" (K 832). The illuminated books, it appears, were among the works "reserved" after the painter's death and kept in the family library at Kendal, and probably not among the purchases of John Romney. Blake's dealings with the son were on Hayley's behalf and apparently through the mail.⁷

The illuminated books sold as lot 79, "Blake's *Visions of the Daughters of Albion—Coloured*"; lot 83, "Blake's *America*, and Blake's *Urizen—coloured*"; and lot 86x, "Blake's two volumes." *Visions* sold for 11 shillings to "Evans," probably the dealer R. H. Evans; *America* and *Urizen* sold for £1.4, also to Evans; and the "two volumes" sold for 18 shillings to Tiffin, possibly Walter E. Tiffin, "An Old-Established Printseller."⁸ Lot 86x was handwritten in the same brown ink as the prices, suggesting, perhaps, that the two volumes were overlooked during cataloging. Like lots 79 and 83, lot 86x was listed among the "Folio" books, which is probably an accurate description of size, since the books could also have been listed as octavo or quarto, the other book categories. Folio, of course, indicates a printing format, but was here used in its general sense of a book with page height of 30 cm or more. "Folio" does not help us to identify the specific copies of *Visions* or *America*, since all copies of these

books (as well as of *Europe*) were folio and were so listed in both Blake's 1793 prospectus (K 207-08) and his 1818 list to Dawson Turner (K 867). But it may help us to identify the copy of *Urizen*, which Blake had listed (along with *Thel*, *Marriage*, and *Milton*) as quarto.

There are eight copies of *Urizen*, counting copy E, which is untraced, and copy J, which was recently rediscovered by Detlef Dörrbecker (Dörrbecker 60n1). Of these, only two copies (A and G) have known histories that preclude their consideration. Copy G was printed in 1815, after Romney's death (1802), and copy A was probably "acquired by the 1st Baron Dimsdale (1712-1800)" and stayed in his family till 1956 (BB 180). These two copies are also precluded by size, as are all but one of the other copies, for they are all less than 30 cm in height and probably would have been described by a cataloger as quarto. Only copy B, the copy owned by D'Israeli, is folio: 37.4 x 27.1 cm. This copy is different from copies A, C-F, and J, in another important respect. Though it is recorded as being color printed in brown and green inks like other copies of *Urizen* (BB 168), it is neither color printed nor in brown ink. Except for plate 2, which was printed in green, the ink is light black; its brownish tint in the text is due primarily to the thin ink layer on off-white paper (see n. 12), something a magnifying glass and a comparison with the illustrations (particularly the solid relief areas) clearly reveal. It appears color printed at first glance because the black color on impressions is opaque and a few impressions have colors that are thick and slightly reticulated. But the colors were not printed from the shallows, as they were in the other copies of *Urizen*, and the opaque colors that appear to have been printed from the relief areas were actually applied to the impressions, the technique used to produce deep blacks in *America* copy A and many other copies of illuminated books (Viscomi, "Recreating Blake" 10-11n16).⁹ The differences in size and printing style suggest that *Urizen* copy B was printed apart from and, as will be argued in part IV, after copies A, C-F, and J.

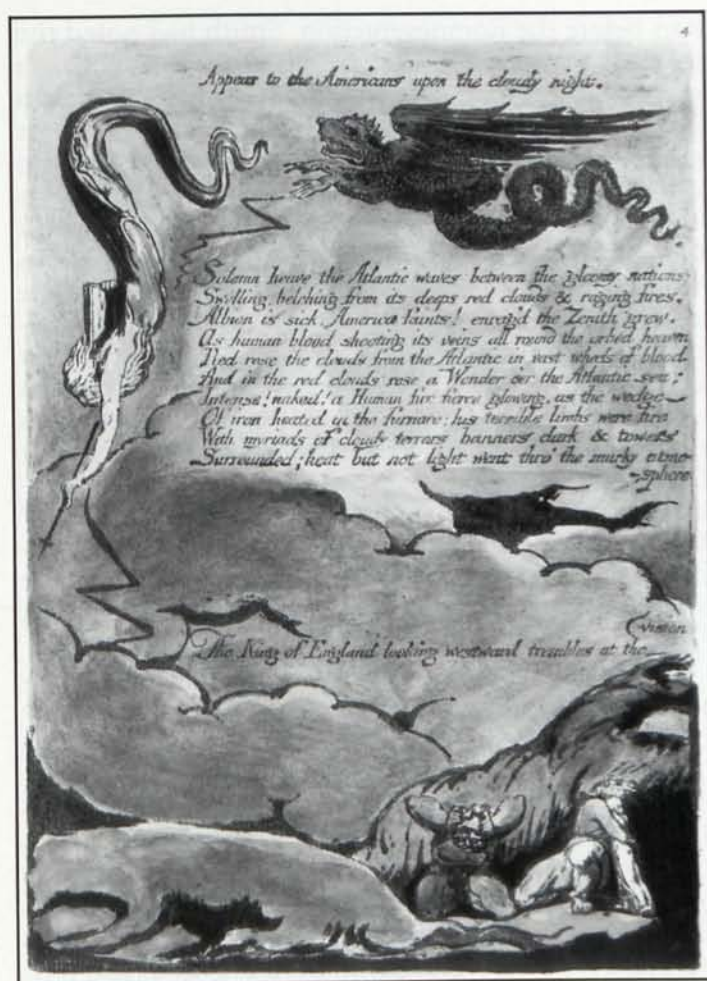
The copy of *Urizen* in the Romney auction was sold with a copy of *America*. No other collector at this time is known to have owned both *Urizen* and *America*—no collector other than D'Israeli, whose *America* copy A was one of four colored copies, a format which fits the rudimentary description of lot 83: "Blake's *America*, and Blake's *Urizen*—coloured." The other three colored copies are copies K, M, and O.¹⁰ Copy O cannot be considered since it was printed for Linnell in 1819. To my eye the rich palette of copy M suggests a date of production later than its Hayes & Wise 1799 watermark. But even if copy M were produced in 1799, it is unlikely to have been Romney's copy, since by then he was by all accounts not much interested in art or anything else, having suffered a second stroke and "his increasing weakness of body,



1. (in n. 12): *America a Prophecy* copy B, plate 6
Courtesy of the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York. PML 63938

and mind, afford[ing] only a gloomy prospect for the residue of his life" (Hayley, in Chamberlain 223).

Of the remaining two copies, A and K, it seems more likely that Romney would have purchased—or had produced specially for him—the former, since copy K seems certainly to have been printed in 1793-94 along with copies C-I, L, and R, which, like copy K, were printed in the same style using the same materials: undated E & P paper of similar size, printed on both sides of the leaf, in the same greenish- and bluish-black inks.¹¹ Copy K's recto-verso printing dates it no later than 1794, when Blake appears to have stopped printing in this style and began printing on rectos only (see part IV). *America* copy A, on the other hand, was produced in the later printing style, the same as *Urizen* copy B, and both were printed on the same size paper (approximately 38 x 27 cm) and, most significantly, in the same light black ink.¹² Copy A is also different in a way that may suggest a spe-



2. *America a Prophecy* copy A, plate 6
 Courtesy of the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York. PML 16134

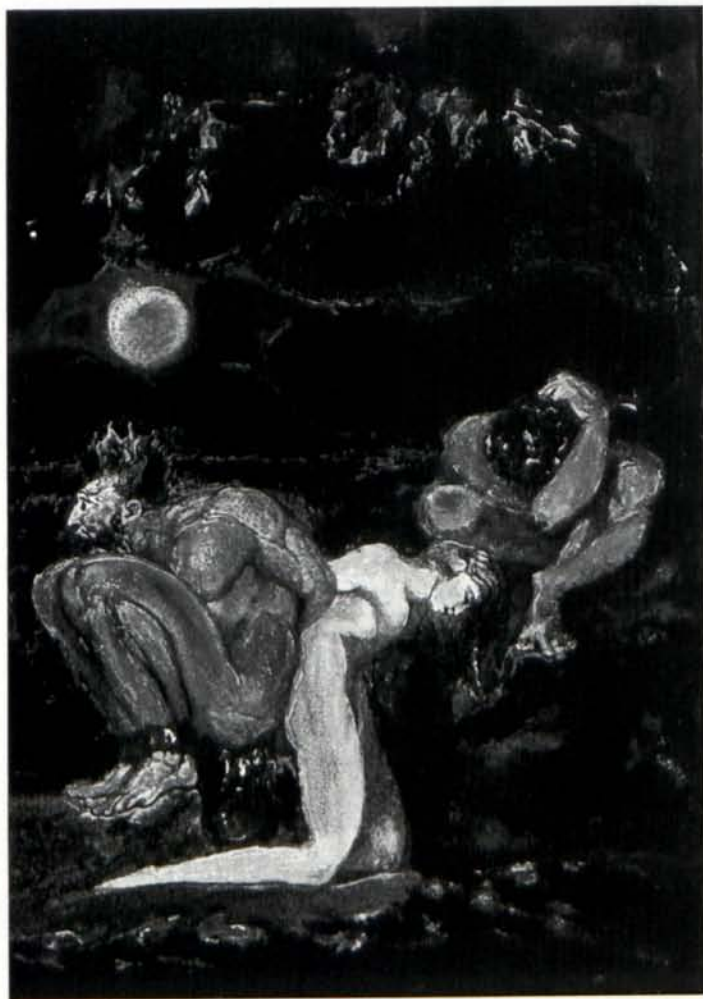
cial production: it is the only copy of *America* produced (besides copy O for Linnell in 1821) with the last four lines of plate 4 unmasked.¹³

The later printing style and paper size were also used for D'Israeli's copies of *Thel* (F), *Visions* (F), *Marriage* (D), *Songs* (A), and *Europe* (A).¹⁴ The sharing of such specific stylistic features as size, inks, and format—particularly since *America* was usually monochrome, *Thel*, *Marriage*, and *Urizen* were always quarto, and *Songs*, with rare exceptions (copies R, V, and W), was always octavo—suggests that these copies were printed around the same time as a coherent set. With the exception of *Visions* and *Thel*, whose plate numbers were etched in relief and are part of the design, these volumes were numbered in pen by Blake, whereas early copies of *Songs*, *America*, and *Marriage* were not, and this too suggests a coherent set. That one of the books from this

set (*Urizen* copy B) appears to have been owned by Romney suggests that the copy of *America* with which it sold was copy A rather than the earlier and very differently formatted copy K, which was probably one of the copies of *America* that Blake advertised in the 1793 prospectus as constituting the “numerous great works now in hand” (K 208).¹⁵ Like *Urizen* copy B, *America* copy A appears to have been printed after the book's initial printing run (C–I, K–L, and R), and to match the style of other books rather than other copies of *America*.

Thus, it seems reasonable to propose that lot 79, “Blake's Visions of the Daughters of Albion—coloured,” may have been copy F, the copy acquired by D'Israeli by 1835. All 18 known copies of *Visions*, counting untraced copy Q and the Munich copy recently rediscovered by Detlef Dörrbecker (Dörrbecker 61n8), were printed folio and hand colored. It appears that possibly 15 of these were printed by 1800 and that the early provenance of 10, including copy F, is unknown. But of these 10 copies, only F, G, and the Munich copy were printed on one side of the leaf, the format of *Urizen* copy B and *America* copy A. The other seven were printed recto-verso, like the early copies of *America*, on either undated Whatman paper in light brown or yellow ink, or undated E & P paper in green ink. Like *Urizen* copy B and *America* copy A, and the other books in D'Israeli's 1835 collection, *Visions* copy G was painted in water colors; it was also printed in the light brownish-black ink of *America* copies A and B and *Urizen* copy B, whereas *Visions* copy F and the Munich copy were color printed. But while the early history of *Visions* copy G is not clear, the later history is; it belonged to D'Israeli's friend Dibdin and was trimmed and bound with *Thel* copy J, possibly around 1816, the date of the third flyleaf (BB 128), though probably not by Dibdin.¹⁶ While this may seem to suggest the possibility of *Visions* copy G as Romney's copy and Dibdin as its purchaser, the fact that it was professionally bound with *Thel* probably long before 1834 makes that very unlikely, since lot 79 clearly sold as one item; it is also unlikely since, as will become clear, Dibdin appears not to have acquired it or *Thel* till after 1836.

The Munich copy of *Visions* is recorded as having entered the Royal collection by “1840/41” along with a copy of *The Song of Los* (Dörrbecker 61n8), and thus was not purchased directly from the 1834 auction. It cannot be ruled out, though, because there could have been an intermediate owner, one who also owned a copy of *The Song of Los*. It does, however, seem less likely than copy F, which the following section reveals was probably not in D'Israeli's collection in 1824, when the collection was first described, but entered it as part of a set of books (including copies of *America* and *Urizen*) by 1835. *Visions* copy F is beautifully color printed, which may explain

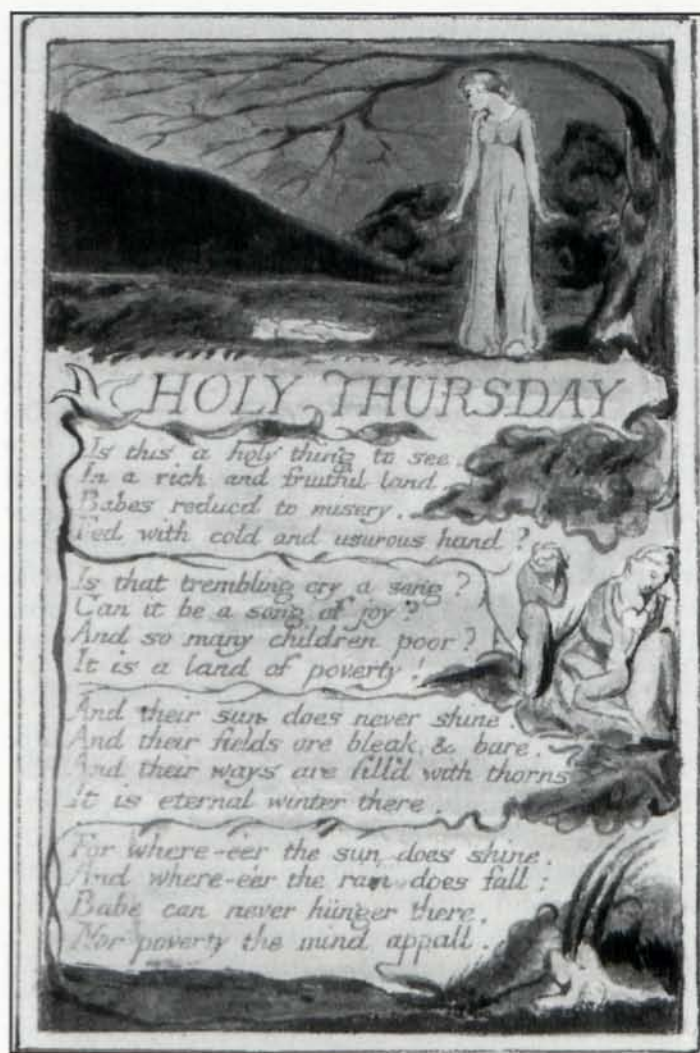
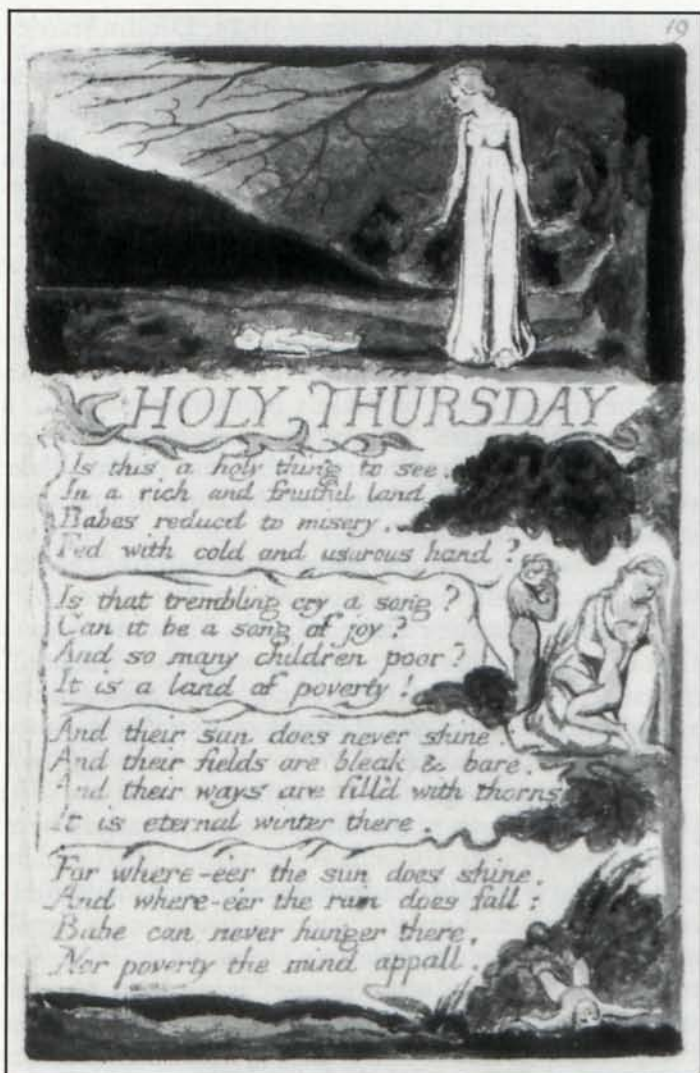


3. *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* copy F, frontispiece
 Courtesy of the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York. PML 63138

why lot 79 sold for 11 shillings. At one shilling per plate, this volume cost a good deal more than the other books: 25 shillings for 46 impressions of *America* and *Urizen*, and 18 shillings for "two volumes" that may represent 50 impressions. The higher price per impression may reflect more competition than the other volumes (*Visions* was the first of the books sold), which in turn may reflect a particularly splendid copy. Of all the copies of *Visions* produced in the 1790s, and of all the illuminated books in the auction (assuming we've correctly identified the copies), the color-printed *Visions* copy F, especially with its stunning frontispiece, is far and away the most painterly and materially substantial (illus. 3). A few

years before the Romney auction, Smith had noted the same about works printed in this technique: "Blake's coloured plates have more effect than others where gum has been used," for "they are coloured . . . with a degree of splendour and force, as almost to resemble sketches in oil colours" (BR 473, 472). Smith based his assertions "upon those beautiful specimens [the *Large* and *Small Book of Designs*] . . . coloured purposely for . . . Ozias Humphry" (BR 473). Smith's opinion, that the opaque colors characteristic of color printing are more "beautiful" than the transparent tints characteristic of watercolor drawings, which he equates with their binder, gum arabic, reflects the then fashionable taste for water colors in "imitation of the effect of oil painting . . . the explicit desirability of [which was] the bellwether of a new consciousness of the changing potential of watercolor art" (Cohn 11).¹⁷ Given the circumstantial evidence regarding D'Israeli's ownership of lot 83 and the higher price per print of lot 79, it seems probable that Romney's *Visions* was copy F, the copy later owned by D'Israeli.

D'Israeli's collection deserves a closer look. In addition to *Urizen* copy B, *America* copy A, and *Visions* copy F, it included *Songs* copy A, *Europe* copy A, *Thel* copy F, and *Marriage* copy D, all folio. Could any two, or combination, of the last four account for lot 86x, "Blake's two volumes"? At first glance, it seems unlikely that the two unidentified volumes could refer to *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, not only because *Songs* is a combined work with a unifying titlepage, but also because nearly all copies are octavo. But *Songs* copies A, R, V, and possibly W before trimming, were, in fact, printed on folio leaves, and the first two of these copies were printed during Romney's lifetime. Both copies A and R were printed on "I TAYLOR 1794" paper, the former approximately 38 x 27 cm, and the latter 30 x 22 cm (which may represent trimming by Linnell's binder), and were initially made up of *Innocence* and *Experience* plates stabbed as two separate but complementary volumes. Both copies lack plate 1, the combined titlepage.¹⁸ Copy R, though, remained in Blake's possession until it was purchased in 1819 by Linnell. It seems fairly certain, then, that if the "two volumes" were *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience*, they were the volumes that now constitute *Songs* copy A, which is folio, initially bound and numbered as two volumes, and has no combined titlepage to suggest otherwise. That the largest number of impressions sold for the least money may be explained by the size of the images, which are only one quarter the size of the 18 *America* plates and one half the size of the 28



4. *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* copy A, "Holy Thursday" from *Experience*, courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum

5. (in n. 18): *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* copy R, "Holy Thursday" from *Experience*, reproduced by permission of the Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

Urizen plates, which together sold for a mere six shillings more. And, as mentioned, unlike *Visions* copy F, the images of *Songs* copy A, *Urizen* copy B, and *America* copy A were not color printed. They look more like water color drawings than paintings.

Perhaps *Songs* were designated so briefly ("Blake's two volumes") because Blake's name alone suggested *Innocence* and *Experience*, his best known works, particularly to an audience familiar with Smith's *Nollekens and*

His Times (1828) or Cunningham's *Lives* (1830). In 1830, a monochrome copy of *Songs* (copy BB) sold simply as "Blake's Phantasies," realizing two shillings more than lot 86x (*Census* 66). Or, more likely, the auction description may be brief simply because the people in the hall would see and hear what the volumes were when the auctioneer held them up.¹⁹ In any event, the idea that Romney owned *Songs* copy A challenges Keynes' assertion that it was acquired by D'Israeli directly from

Blake (*Census* 56). Bentley is more circumspect, stating that *Songs* copy A was "Probably acquired" by D'Israeli, but certainly "Sold by [D'Israeli's] son the Earl of Beaconsfield at Sotheby's, 20 March 1882" (BB 412).

Though right to question the idea of a direct purchase from Blake, Bentley appears also to question the purchase itself, which seems unnecessary since without the 50 impressions of *Songs* copy A (nearly a third of his collection), D'Israeli could not have referred in 1835 to his "ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTY DESIGNS . . . of Blake's." To make up this sum, D'Israeli had to have owned either a 50-plate copy of *Songs* (as opposed to the usual 54-plate copy) or *Milton*, and he (or his son) is known to have owned the former but not the latter.²⁰ The question, then, is not whether D'Israeli acquired *Songs* copy A, but from whom and when. The evidence here suggests that he purchased it from (W. E.?) Tiffin, who purchased it at the Romney auction in 9 May 1834, and not from Blake. He acquired it, in other words, from a dealer a year or less before he described his own collection on 24 July 1835.

That "Blake's two volumes" were *Songs* copy A, as initially bound, and not a compilation of the other three D'Israeli books, *Thel* copy F, *Europe* copy A, and *Marriage* copy D, is supported by two facts. First, these three works have different stab holes (BB 55-56), which means that they were never bound in two. Could any two of the above have constituted "two volumes"? Probably not any two, since *Marriage* copy D, was stabbed six times, a style Blake used only one other time, for *Thel* copy O and *Milton* copy D, which were stabbed together for Mrs. Vine between 1815, the date of the paper used in both books, and 1827 (BB 118). *Marriage* copy D, in other words, may have remained in the studio in sheets long after it was produced, as did many other illuminated books (see n. 26), and bound only when sold. Were *Thel* copy F and *Europe* copy A the "two volumes"? This too is unlikely for it would mean that the "Blakean portefeuille" that D'Israeli had already formed as early as 1824 would have consisted only of *Songs* and *Marriage*, which for reasons discussed below is very unlikely. This portfolio, whose size and contents are not known, is generally assumed to have contained the 160 designs of 1835 (BR 289n1). I think this is mistaken; the evidence regarding *Urizen* copy B and *America* copy A already suggests that the earlier portfolio was much smaller. Given Dibdin's description of the 1824 portfolio, I suspect that it consisted of only three illuminated books: *Thel*, *Europe*, and *Marriage*.

In *The Library Companion*, 1824, Dibdin states:

My friend Mr. D'Israeli possesses the largest collection of any individual of the very extraordinary drawings of Mr. Blake; and he loves his classical friends to disport with them, beneath the lighted Argand lamp of his drawing room, while soft music is heard upon the several corridors and recesses of his enchanted staircase. Meanwhile the visitor turns over the contents of the Blakean portefeuille. Angels, Devils, Giants, Dwarfs, Saints, Sinners, Senators, and Chimney Sweeps, cut equally conspicuous figures. . . . (734n; BR 289)

Though referred to as "drawings," the works are no doubt hand-colored prints, the term "drawing" revealing the transparency of Blake's innovative medium, a point made by Smith. "The plates . . . were then printed in any tint that he wished, to enable him or Mrs. Blake to colour the marginal figures up by hand in imitation of drawings" (BR 460).²¹

D'Israeli biographer James Ogden thinks the setting too imaginative, and says Dibdin "had apparently not actually seen the collection" (44). The description's list of contraries, though, suggests otherwise. "Angels," "Devils," and "Giants" are accurate descriptions of the verbal and visual imagery of both *Europe a Prophecy*, especially plate 8, and *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. "Giant" could also refer to "A Dream of Thiralatha" (B) (aka *America* pl. d), in which a giant sleeps under a bent tree. "Dwarfs" may also refer to *Europe*, where on plate 15 a woman is caught in a spiderweb, to the small inter-linear figures of *Marriage*, or, more likely, to the small and elf-like figures populating *The Book of Thel*. The reference to "Saints" and "Sinners" is puzzling, though it could conceivably be to the pilgrim equipped like Bunyan's Christian and the waiting assassin of *Europe* plate 4, or perhaps to "Joseph of Arimathea Preaching," where the prophet chastises the flock, or simply to good and evil figures in general, a variation of angels and devils. "Senators," which then referred to either a "counsellor, statesman; a leader in State or Church" (OED), describes well *Europe* plate 14, where a bat-winged papal figure lords it over the "Kings and Priests" on Earth who had "copied . . . his brazen Book" (*Europe* pl. 14). "Chimney Sweeps," which admittedly calls to mind *Songs*, may have been generated by its opposite, "Senators," and meant to refer to nothing more than the powerless underclass, as pictured in *Europe* plates 9 and 10: in the former a mother mourns the death of a child in front of a huge chimney.²²

The works described seem to be *Europe*, *Thel*, and *Marriage*, and perhaps a separate plate, copies of which

D'Israeli owned by 1835. Speculative as this is, it is probable that the "Blakean portefeuille" contained multiple titles, but not a copy of *Songs*, which Dibdin would have recognized and presumably expounded upon in more detail since he owned a copy of *Innocence*. The 1824 portfolio, then, may have contained 54 designs. Had D'Israeli purchased his copies of *Urizen* (B), *America* (A), *Visions* (F), and *Songs* (A) from the Romney sale (through the print dealers Evans and Tiffin), he would have added 106 plates to the collection for a total of 160 plates.

III

With 54 plates, D'Israeli's "Blakean portefeuille" was certainly not "the largest collection of any individual of the very extraordinary drawings of Mr. Blake" — nor would it have been had it contained all "160 designs." In 1824, Thomas Edwards, the brother of publisher Richard Edwards, owned the 537 large drawings of *Night Thoughts*, which he had offered for sale in 1821 for £300, and again in 1826 and 1828 for £50 (BB 646). Butts' collection contained more illuminated prints and water color drawings than any other collector or patron (as opposed to publisher). Flaxman's, with *Songs* copy O, *Innocence* copy D, and 116 designs for Gray's *Poems*, was larger, as were Linnell's and Cumberland's illuminated book collections.²³ It was "curious" not only for D'Israeli not to have mentioned Blake in any of his writings (or for Blake, or any of Blake's friends, not to have mentioned D'Israeli as a patron), but also for Dibdin not to have mentioned Linnell, Cumberland, Butts, Humphry, Edwards, Thomas, or Hanrott, Blake's major patrons and collectors at that time, in either his *Library Companion* (1824) or *Reminiscences* (1836). Dibdin's comments regarding the size of D'Israeli's collection of 1824 are clearly those of a man with very limited knowledge of Blake's friends and collectors, and, as will become evident, of the size and diversity of Blake's canon. This is not surprising; according to the *DNB*, Dibdin's reader "will find a great deal of gossip about books and printers, about book collectors and sales by auction; but for accurate information of any kind he will seek in vain."²⁴

Dibdin may have compared D'Israeli's collection to his own, which by the time of his death (1847) consisted of *Thel* copy J, *Visions* copy G, and unknown copies of *Night Thoughts* and *Innocence*. The 43-plate *Night Thoughts*, which was one of Dibdin's favorite books, was

acquired by 1836, but not necessarily before 1824. Dibdin's copy of *Innocence* was acquired by 1816, the year that Blake paid him a visit. Though the specific copy is unknown, I suspect that it was an early one, because it appears to have been purchased secondhand: "I told Mr. Blake that our common friend, Mr. Masquerier, had induced me to purchase his 'Songs of Innocence,' and that I had no disposition to 'repent my bargain'" (*Reminiscences* 2: 787; BR 243).²⁵ Dibdin telling Blake that he owned an illuminated book suggests that he did not purchase the book directly from Blake. But even if he had, and the "bargain" was the good price given to him by Blake, that too suggests an early copy, one that Blake did not specially print for Dibdin but was "in hand."²⁶ That it was an early copy, like G, J, or L, means it was printed octavo on both sides of the leaves, that is, 28 to 31 plates on 15 to 17 leaves. As mentioned, Dibdin's copies of *Thel* and *Visions* were bound together, possibly around 1816, but not necessarily for Dibdin; they could have been purchased after 1824, or even after 1836 (see n. 16). Indeed, if D'Israeli's collection was large relative to Dibdin's, then it is likely that Dibdin's copies of *Thel* and *Visions* were not yet in his collection in 1824, since they would have increased the size of his collection to 47 or 50 designs on 34 or 36 octavo, quarto, and folio leaves — too many to exaggerate the size of his friend's collection as the "largest." On the other hand, a portfolio consisting of *Marriage* copy D, *Thel* copy F, *Europe* copy A, and a separate plate, that is, 54 variously sized and colored images printed on one side of large folio leaves, would not only have appeared to consist of drawings instead of either prints or book pages, but, relative to Dibdin's *Innocence*, would also have appeared particularly extensive and beautiful.

Eleven years later, in 1835, Dibdin requested the loan of the portfolio because he intended to include Blake in a projected chapter on the fine arts in his *Reminiscences*. D'Israeli's "reply," however, "not only staggered me, but induced me to abandon nearly my whole intention in regard to Blake" (BR 243). Dibdin was "staggered" by the sheer number of designs in D'Israeli's collection, which he (or D'Israeli) emphasized by printing it in small capitals: "ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTY."²⁷ He was, no doubt, induced to abandon his intention by the unexpectedly large number of works to be examined, and by D'Israeli's warning that "it was quite . . . impossible, if you had them, to convey a very precise idea of such an infinite variety of these wonder-

ous deliriums of [Blake's] fine and wild creative imagination" (243–44). Clearly, Blake's canon was larger and more diverse than Dibdin realized, than his own collection at this time would have led him to believe, and D'Israeli's collection had grown substantially since the last time they spoke — and certainly since the last time he had seen it. D'Israeli says as much, telling Dibdin in the same letter that there were "unimaginable chimeras, such as you have never viewed . . ." (BR 244). I suggest that D'Israeli's collection grew by 106 prints, or four volumes: *Urizen* copy B, *Visions* copy F, *America* copy A, and the two volumes D'Israeli was eventually to bind as one, *Songs* copy A. These are the books, and appear to be the copies, first owned by Romney.

D'Israeli's interest in the illuminated books appears to have been primarily pictorial rather than literary. His bias reveals itself not only in his description, which carefully attends to the visual images and drawing and coloring styles, but also in his comment about the poetry: "the verses . . . are often remarkable for their sweetness and their depth of feeling" (BR 244). He seems to have read nothing other than the *Songs* — lending further credence to Gilchrist's belief that Blake's poems were "to the multitude . . . unintelligible" (Gilchrist 1: 303). What is not clear is the relation D'Israeli had with Blake. Ogden, echoing Keynes and Bindman, expresses the general consensus that "apart from Blake's few close friends, D'Israeli seems to have been the earliest customer for the illuminated books" (43) and "one of the first to discern his Genius" (207).

Admittedly, collecting Blake's illuminated books seems especially appropriate for a man of letters who wrote the very popular *Curiosities of Literature* (1791–1834) and whose most original work was *An Essay on the Literary Character* (1795), a discourse on original genius. But there is no documentary evidence I know of to prove that D'Israeli knew Blake personally, or was responsible for the commission, or even had purchased illuminated books in the mid 1790s, when the books in his collection were produced. Though in 1799 he was a member of the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce, through which he met James Barry, D'Israeli and Blake moved in very different circles. Through Murray, his publisher, D'Israeli met many of the "leading contemporary men of letters" (Ogden 1), including Scott, Byron, and Southey, but "there is not enough evidence to connect him closely with any of the

group that met at Joseph Johnson's bookshop" (Ogden 43). The only reasons to suggest he may have known Johnson are his friendship with Godwin in the 1820s and, again, his collection of Blakes, for it would have been at Johnson's "that he would be most likely to get to know the work of Blake, if not the artist himself" (Ogden 43). But Tyson's biography of Johnson does not mention D'Israeli at all. And, had D'Israeli frequented the shop, he would probably have seen book illustrations, not illuminated books. It does, indeed, appear that the sole evidence for supposing that D'Israeli knew Blake is that he owned Blakes.²⁸

Given the absence of hard evidence to the contrary, it seems reasonable to suppose that D'Israeli may have purchased his illuminated books late and possibly through others. As mentioned, his copy of *Marriage* (D) was produced early but was stabbed by Blake in a peculiar style (six stab holes) that he used only one other time, and that after 1815. Like many other illuminated books, including Dibdin's copy of *Innocence*, *Marriage* copy D appears to have been produced early but sold late. That Dibdin came to own illuminated books, purchased possibly from dealers or collectors and not from Blake, but certainly purchased many years after they were produced, that *Songs* copy D was sold at auction in 1813 (BB 413), that Rivington and Cochran offered *Songs* copy U in 1824 (BB 654), that Hanrott bought *Songs* copy P from an auction in 1826 (BB 419), and that Francis Douce, D'Israeli's closest friend, purchased *Marriage* copy B from Dyer in 1821, all suggest that illuminated books were beginning to change hands late in Blake's life without his involvement.²⁹ Blake selling early books late, and other people selling Blakes during his lifetime, reinforce the possibility that D'Israeli acquired his 1824 "Blakean portefeuille" without having met Blake personally, or at least not early.

Dibdin's 1824 reference to D'Israeli's collection as the largest cannot be taken seriously, nor should the idea that D'Israeli was an early purchaser and patron. D'Israeli was, along with Cumberland, Humphry, and Butts, a major Blake collector, but like Hanrott, Linnell, and Vine, he appears to have begun collecting Blake late. D'Israeli may have learned of Blake through Dibdin or Francis Douce, friends who owned illuminated books by 1821, or Prince Hoare, a friend who knew Blake well. Or, he may have learned of Romney's specific copies of Blake's books through his friendship with the dramatist

Richard Cumberland, who was also a close friend of Romney's. However he learned of Blake, by 1835 D'Israeli's collection of illuminated books, while not the largest, was one of the most comprehensive, coherent, and impressive "of any individual." It appears, though, to have been formed in large part by a previously unrecognized Blake collector who was also a patron, George Romney.

IV

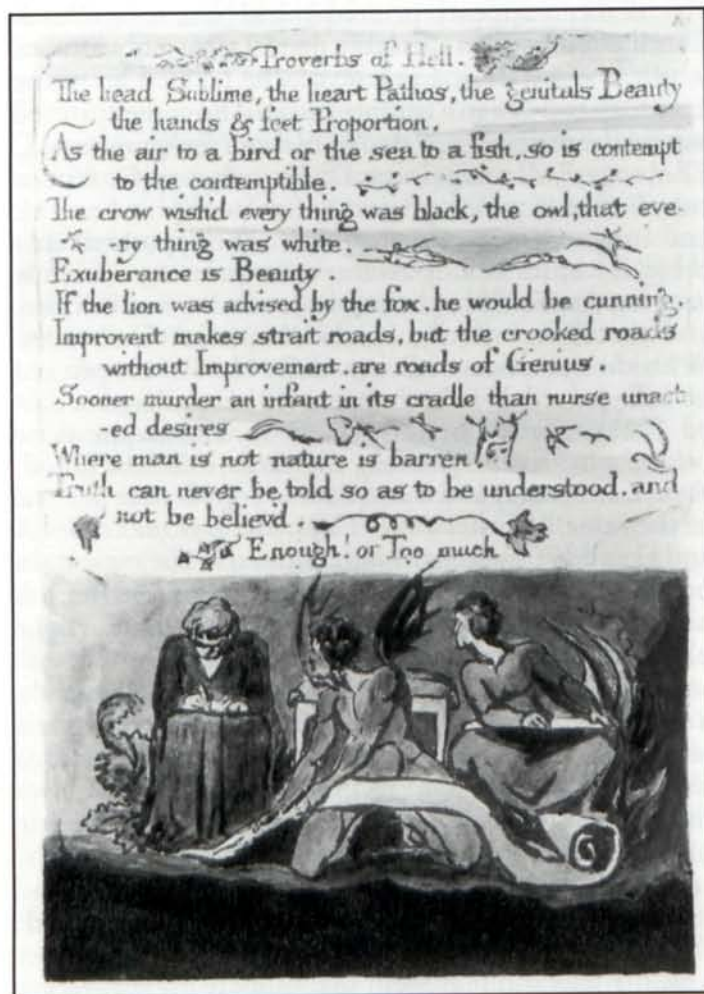
Did Romney form his collection the same way, purchasing a group of books, or one book at a time? More important, were the works he purchased commissioned by him or purchased from stock? These questions can be answered only by answering another: when were the books produced?

Romney's and D'Israeli's books constitute a set not merely by ownership but by sharing stylistic features rare or unique for most of the books. As noted, the usually monochrome *America* is colored; the usually octavo *Songs* is folio and in two volumes; the normally color-printed quarto *Urizen* is folio and not printed in colors; the usually quarto *Thel* and *Marriage* are folio and printed in two colors, and the usually color-printed *Europe* is not color printed. To this list of books can be added *Visions* copy G, which is, as noted, closer stylistically and materially to these large paper copies than is color-printed *Visions* copy F, the copy that appears to have sold as lot 79 in the Romney auction of 1834. *Visions* copy G was printed without borders on one side of the sheet and, like Romney's and D'Israeli's copies, was numbered in ink. It was also printed in a brownish-black ink similar to the one used in *America* copy A and *Urizen* copy B, and exactly that of *Europe* copy H, a monochrome copy which appears to have been printed along with *Europe* copy A, D'Israeli's copy, as monochrome copy B of *America* was printed with *America* copy A, and *Songs* copy R appears to have been printed with *Songs* copy A.³⁰ *All Religions are One* copy A and *There is No Natural Religion* copy L also appear to have been produced during this printing session. They are the only copies of these books printed on folio-size leaves, which given their one or so inch images strongly indicates that they were intended to match other copies of illuminated books. Several other features also support the idea that they were intended to be part of the set: they have the same ink as one another, the same printing style and paper as the other large paper copies, and the rudimentary color printing of *Thel* copy F and *Marriage* copy D.³¹

Blake, it appears, printed at least one copy of each illuminated book in this large paper, recto-only format, which is to say, during one session he printed his entire canon up to 1795 in a uniform style. The copies printed were *All Religions* copy A, *No Natural Religion* copy L, *Thel* copy F, *Marriage* copy D, *Visions* copy G, *Urizen* copy B, *America* copies A and B, *Europe* copies A and H, and *Songs* copies A and possibly R. The hypothesis that these 11 copies belong to the same printing session is suggested not only by their stylistic similarities, but also, and more importantly, by their material similarities. With the exception of *Europe* copy H, all were printed on I. Taylor or J. Whatman paper (either undated or dated 1794) approximately 37 x 26 cm, and in the same colors, which were possibly the same inks. As noted, *America* copies A and B and *Urizen* copy B were printed in the same light brownish-black ink; *Europe* copies A and H and *Visions* copy G were printed in the same light brownish-black ink, possibly a lighter hue of the ink used in the copies of *America* and *Urizen*. A similar light black ink was used in illustrations of *Marriage* copy D and *Thel* copy F, making both books, technically speaking, color printed, since their texts were printed in green and yellow-ochre, respectively.³² The green of *Marriage* copy D varies from light to bluish to viridian lake, but the greener hue is very similar, if not the same, as the hue used in *Songs* copy A (*Experience*), *All Religions* copy A, and *No Natural Religion* copy L.

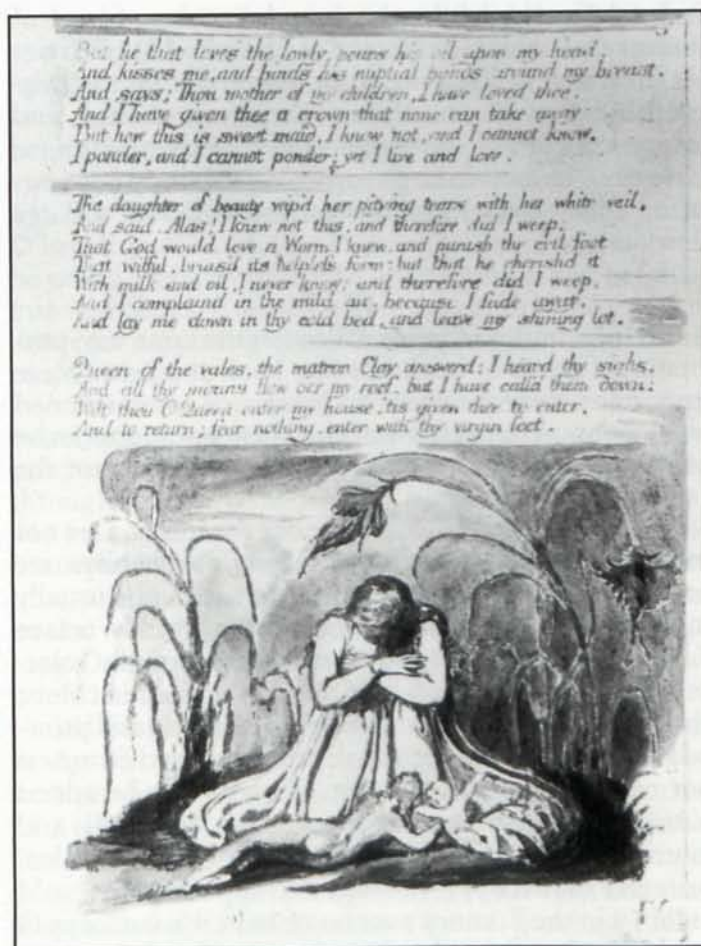
Light black, brown, and various greens, along with the yellow-ochre of *Thel* copy F, make for four distinct printing inks and may seem to invalidate my suggestion that the shared materials and stylistic features are signs of the same printing session. But Blake had used more inks than this in *Marriage* copy B, which was printed in yellow-ochre, olive-green, sage-green, dark grayish-brown, and reddish-brown (the last color used consistently for facing pages, which indicates that the 27 plates were printed at the same time), and, of course, he had prepared as many colors and inks for the copies of books that he color printed from both the shallows and relief areas, like *Visions* copy F, or *Urizen* copies A and C, or *Marriage* copies E and F. In short, different inks (like different papers), especially among copies of the same book, do not mean different printing sessions.

Two other reasons to suppose that the books were produced together as a coherent set are the shared palettes and coloring styles. *Marriage* copy D and *Thel* copy F share a feature not present in any copy of either book printed before them: the top and/or bottom of



6. *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* copy D, plate 10
Courtesy of the Lessing J. Rosenwald Collection, Library of Congress, Washington D.C.

most of the designs were streaked or washed, which effectively called attention to the rectangular shape of the image; that is, the design was framed by the bands of colors (illus. 6, 7). A similar framing device was used in *Visions* copy G, where the right margin in plates 4, 7 (illus. 8), and 10 was painted in with flowers.³³ Most of the *Marriage* plates (and *Thel* plate 7) were also streaked between paragraphs or at line breaks in pink, yellow, or blue; the words themselves were not streaked or washed

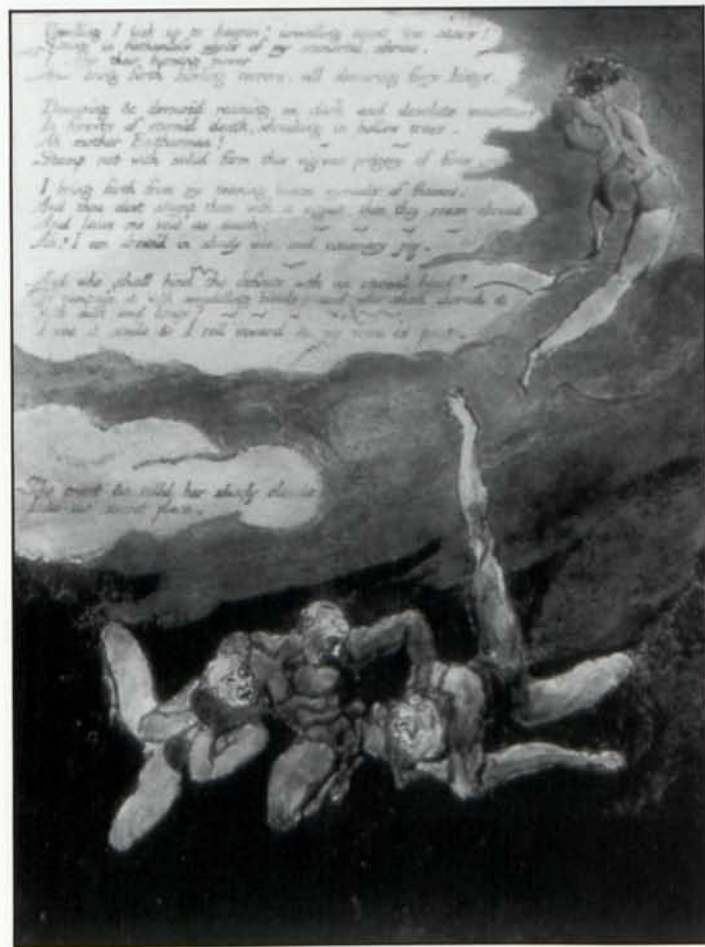


7. *The Book of Thel* copy F, plate 7
Courtesy of the Lessing J. Rosenwald Collection, Library of Congress, Washington D.C.

over. *Marriage* copy D, *Thel* copy F, and *Songs* copy A (illus. 4) are closer to one another in coloring than to others of their kind. Instead of a simple palette and colors laid on in thin, single, flat transparent washes, as in plate 7 of *Thel* copy H (illus. 9), the palette is more extensive and the coloring more translucent, even opaque and chalky in places, with the figures delicately modeled. The coloring of *Thel* copy F, for example, particularly in plates 1, 6, and 7, is more complicated than all other copies of *Thel* except copies N and O, the last two copies produced (c. 1815–27). In plate 7 (illus. 7), *Thel* and the



10. *America a Prophecy* copy A, plate 7
Courtesy of the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York. PML 63134

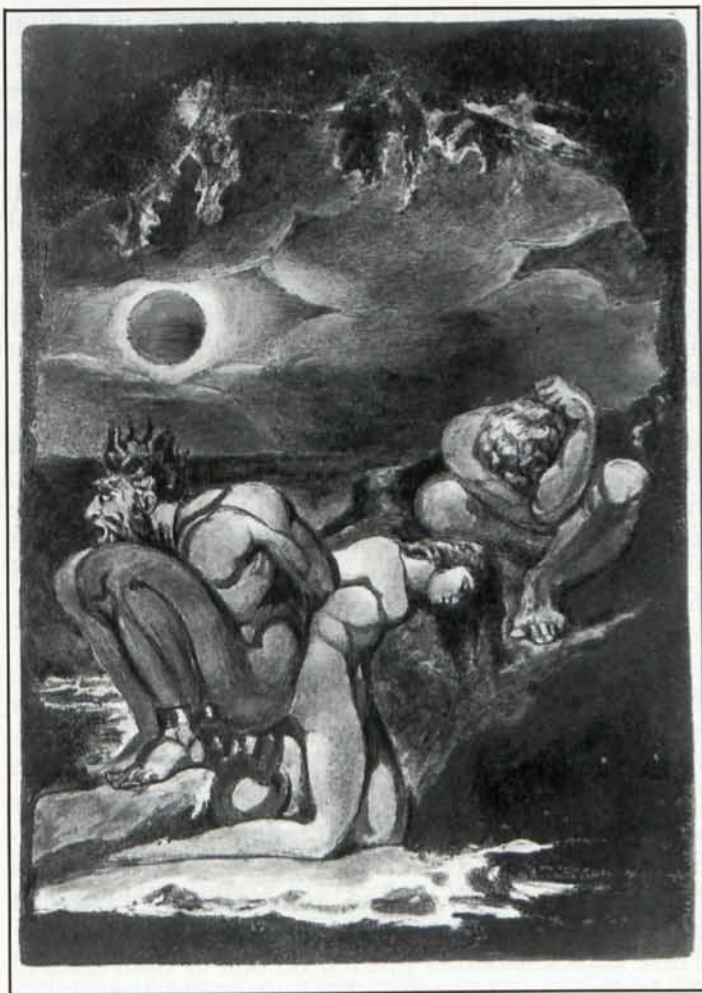


11. *Europe a Prophecy* copy A, plate 5
Courtesy of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon, Upperville, VA.

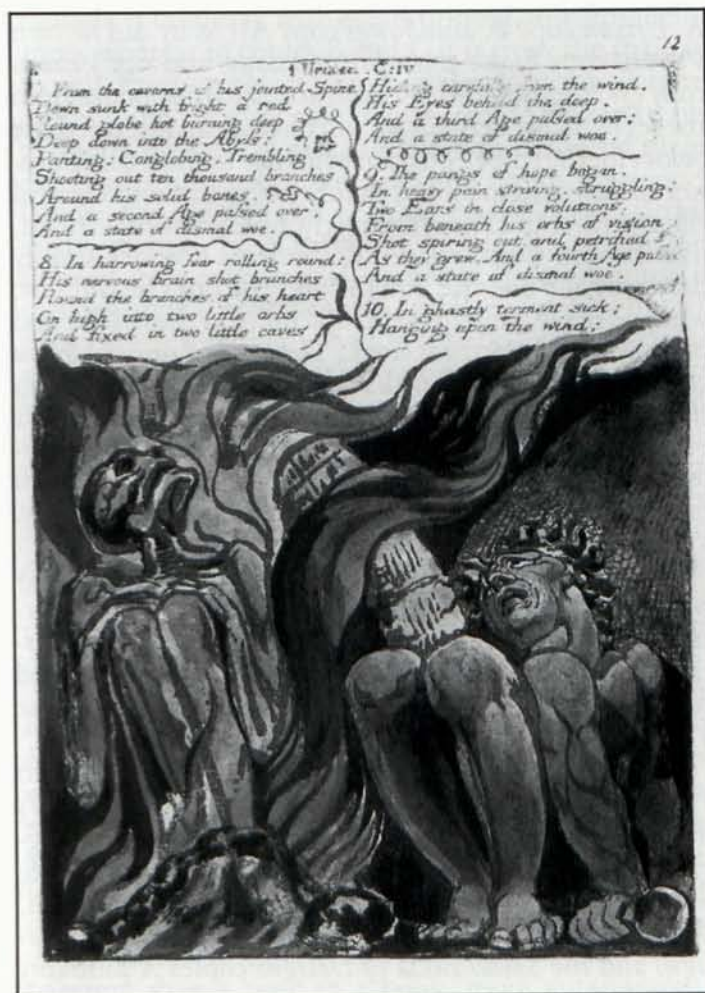
blue, a green that varies from yellow to olive in its modeling, and an opaquish-pink. More important, the manner in which the colors were applied is also similar: broad washes with many smaller washes laid over to deepen the colors, as opposed to single, even tints.³⁵ This technique is also used in *Visions* copy G, extensively in plates 1 (illus. 12), 2–3. The palette of *Urizen* copy B, though lighter, is similar to these other copies, even containing the deep pink-red and blue of *America* copy A and *Europe* copy A. The flames in *Urizen* plate 11 (illus. 13), for example, are very like the flames in *America* plate 7 (illus. 10), with the same yellows, reds, and blacks; but more important, the flames are depicted in the same manner, again in multiple overlaid colors, in contrast

with the earlier method of depicting flames in one or two flat colors, as in *Marriage* copies A–C, for example.³⁶ While *Urizen* copy B is closer stylistically to *Europe* copy A than to *America* copy A, its figures, especially the 10 full-plate illustrations, appear to have been painted more carefully than the larger works.

Such uniformity in printing and coloring styles is characteristic of copies of the same title, like early copies of *America* (C–I, K, L, and R), *Thel* (A–E, H–M, and R), *Visions* (A–E, H–M), *Innocence* (A–G, K–M), *Innocence of Songs* (B–E), and *Song of Los* (A–E). The similarity among early copies of the same title has been much commented upon — indirectly. Editors and critics have long noted the variants in colors among impres-



12. *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* copy G, plate 1
By permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University, bequest
of Amy Lowell



13. *The Book of Urizen* copy B, plate 11
Courtesy of the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York. PML 63139

sions of the same plate (a green instead of a pink dress, a blue instead of a purple sky, etc.); what they fail to recognize and address, though, is how variants imply repeatable patterns, or similarity, and that the differences are in the *placement* of colors and not in the number or choice of colors, nor in the technique of applying them. Repetition of such specific stylistic features and techniques is a sign of edition printing and coloring. Here we need only to recognize that similarity or repetition *across* titles suggests that the books were intentionally produced as a *set*, and not simply as large paper copies printed along with other copies of the title, or printed according to a new model for the books, since too many of the qualities, like ink color and printing format, are

unique.³⁷ The very existence of these copies, approached from a practical and commercial perspective, raises the question of motivation: why reprint *Thel* and *Marriage* folio size, or *Visions* on one side of the sheet, if not to match other large paper copies, since there appear to have been copies of all of them "in hand" between 1795–99? The obvious answer, that Blake produced them by commission and "with a particular customer in mind" (Erdman, *Poetry and Prose* 786), becomes less convincing when we raise the questions such an answer demands. If all 11 large paper copies were produced at the same time, and the seven copies Romney and D'Israeli owned were colored as a coherent set within a set, why then did Romney own only three (*America* copy

A, *Urizen* copy B, and *Songs* copy A)? Why did he own *Visions* copy F, the color-printed copy, and not *Visions* copy G? And how did D'Israeli acquire three books from the set by 1824? Perhaps we will discover an intermediate owner for the three books, or evidence to show that Romney did own them all but that he or his son sold three of them, either to D'Israeli directly, or to a mutual friend, like Richard Cumberland. Or perhaps Romney simply preferred the ones he bought over the ones he did not, which is to say, perhaps he had a choice in the matter and bought the works from stock. The set was undeniably a *special* production, but that does not necessarily mean that it was motivated by a commission (or even that it evolved out of the commission of one or more of its copies); it may have been motivated by Blake's desire to make either impressive gifts for friends, or, more likely, a deluxe set of his illuminated canon up to that time.

Whether these books were commissioned or merely purchased from stock can be determined only by ascertaining their dates of production. Those can be ascertained only by establishing through the historical and technical records a chronology of production in the 1790s.

Romney's books must have been produced between 1794 and 1799, the date of the paper and of Romney's departure from London. Circumstantial evidence suggests the even narrower parameters of 1794 and 1796, when two close friends purchased illuminated books. Ozias Humphry commissioned the *Large Book of Designs* and the *Small Book of Designs* copies A probably in 1796, the date inscribed on a plate in the *Small Book of Designs* copy B, which consists of impressions from the same printing sessions as those in copies A (BB 356n1).³⁸ Humphry owned *Songs* copy H, *Europe* copy D, and *America* copy H, probably before the 1796 commission, since none of the plates in either *Book* duplicated what he already owned—despite the obvious suitability of *America* and *Europe* designs for such a project.

Flaxman also purchased illuminated books before 1796. Within a few months of his return from Italy in the fall of 1794, he moved to No. 6, Buckingham Street, Fitzroy Square, which made him Romney's neighbor (Chamberlain 196), and purchased one and possibly two illuminated books. "Early in 1795 Flaxman 'Pd for. . . Blakes Book. . . 10[s]6'" (BR 569), which was probably for *Innocence* copy D, but conceivably for *Experience* of *Songs* copy O as well, since in the prospectus of just 15 or so months earlier the price for the two volumes was 10s. (K 209) and the latter work appears to have come with a combined titleplate (BB 397).³⁹ I understand

"early in 1795" to mean the first month or two of the year and, as will become clear, conclude that *The Song of Los*, *Book of Ahania*, and *Book of Los*, all dated 1795, were produced at that time as well, *before* Flaxman's copy of *Experience*. But even if Flaxman's *Experience* was produced as late as 1796 or 1797 instead of "early 1795," and the 10s.6d. payment was charitable for one volume, or included a deposit for work to be done, this copy of *Experience* can still be used as an end date, since it was printed in a style distinctly different from his *Innocence* and from Romney's books, as well as from books that were color printed—including those in 1795.

Like Humphry's illuminated books, Flaxman's *Innocence* and *Experience* are too similar in printing and coloring styles to other copies of *Innocence* and *Songs* to have been specially produced by commission; they were all probably purchased from the "numerous great works . . . in hand" (K 208). *Innocence* was printed on *both sides* of undated octavo-size paper in yellow-ochre ink, as were copies C, E, F, and G. Flaxman's copy of *Experience* is nearly identical in printing to *Songs* copies I, J, K, L, M, N, *Innocence* copies N and R, and *Experience* of *Songs* copy S; all were printed on *one side* of unmarked paper, printed in dark brown ink, and, most telling, printed with *plate borders*.⁴⁰ Plate borders were wiped in all recto-verso copies of illuminated books, including Flaxman's *Innocence*. They were also wiped in books color printed and in Romney's and D'Israeli's books, all of which were printed on one side of the leaf. These copies, whether printed on one or both sides of the leaf, were given more individual attention than copies where the borders were left intact. Conversely, plates not wiped of their borders were easier to ink and faster to print, making the book easier to produce.

The copies of *Songs* and *Innocence* with which Flaxman's copy of *Experience* appears to have been printed are dated 1800–1814 (BB 382); they are assumed to have been produced one at a time because the *coloring* is different from copy to copy and some copies were left uncolored (*Songs* copies K, M, and *Innocence* of *Songs* copy O). But a comparative examination of these copies (particularly of the inking accidentals shared by impressions from the same plate) reveals that they were *printed* at the same time, in a limited edition. Such an examination also shows that the coloring is not really very different, that the coloring of Flaxman's *Experience* "strikingly complements *Innocence* copy N" (BB 419), as well as *Songs* copies I and L. These copies have similar palettes and their texts were similarly streaked in multiple colors (pink, yellow, and blue), instead of washed

solidly in one or two colors. Such similarity is not accidental nor the result of one copy being used as the model for others produced years later; it is the inevitable result of copies being produced at the same time and with the same materials.⁴¹ Printing the plate borders made it necessary to color the impressions more extensively, since text and illustration were now framed and would have looked unfinished if the washes did not meet the border/frame. This is why washing and streaking the text became common practice in books printed after 1795. Conversely, washed texts in copies without borders like Romney's *America* copy A, or the streaking in *The* copy F, *Marriage* copy D, and *Visions* copy G, may have preceded and prompted the printing of the borders.

It appears that Blake had decided to color most of these copies of *Songs* as part of the initial production process, as was his usual practice, but kept a few copies back to color on order. How many of these uncolored impressions were later colored is not known, but the decision to print plate borders and leave some impressions uncolored or to color them upon need increased the potential for variation among copies initially printed at the same time. It was also the most cost-effective way to produce illuminated books, being a compromise position between "produc[ing] . . . works" without "subscription" and producing by commission (K 208).⁴²

The straightforward printing method represented by Flaxman's copy of *Experience* (one ink, full plate, no wiping) became standard practice, succeeding the most expensive and laborious method, color printing. Color printing required multiple colors as well as special inking tools, and the resulting impressions usually required extensive recoloring and outlining. Without confirmed sales, the technique may have cost Blake more in time and materials than he could afford. Or, he might have abandoned it, if not for financial reasons, because in 1795 the creation myth expressed in the last four illuminated books had run its course, and his time, energy, and coloring technique were taken up by new, completely pictorial projects, like the 12 large monotypes, creating paintings by color printing earlier engravings, like *Albion Rose*, and starting the *Night Thoughts* designs (Butlin, *Paintings and Drawings* 1: 178).

Color printing itself initiated printing on one side of the leaf, which replaced recto-verso printing, despite the four recto-verso color-printed copies of *Europe* copies D–G. These four copies, which were apparently printed together along with single-sided copies B and C, appear to have been intentionally printed to match recto-verso copies of *America*.⁴³ The color printing,

though, is minimal, with colors printed only from relief areas, whereas in copies B and C it is from the shallows as well. Printing colors from both levels of the plate requires more pressure and creates a more elaborate and painterly image—as well as a more pronounced plate-mark, which in turn eliminates the use of the verso.⁴⁴ Unlike *Experience*, and perhaps even *Europe*, *Urizen* seems to have been executed specifically to be color printed. Not only were all copies of *Urizen* printed in this new style—except copy B and late copy G—but the plates were exceedingly shallow (Essick, *Printmaker* 92), and thus most suitable for printing colors from both levels. For these reasons, I suspect that copies A, C–F, and J were printed first and before copy B. They were probably produced in 1794, the year the plates were executed, after *Europe* and *Experience* and possibly after a few copies of earlier books reprinted in the new technique, including *Visions* copies F and R and *Marriage* copies E and F. The following year Blake wrote and color-printed copies of *The Song of Los*, *Book of Los*, and *Book of Ahania*, all on one side of the leaf.

There is also an aesthetic reason for abandoning recto-verso printing. The increased labor required by color printing, both in the painting of the plates and subsequent coloring and outlining of the impressions, many of which would have otherwise looked like blots and blurs, resulted in more detailed and complicated images. Finishing of this kind, combined with the absence of a competitive facing page, creates an image that demands to be viewed and experienced more like a painting than a page in a book, more autonomously than as part of something larger than itself. The new printing format and coloring style reflect a new idea of the book and reader, or rather reading experience. Because the experience of an illuminated poem as physical *book* is as much an integral part of its meaning as the combination of word and picture, changes in the physical form alter how the poem is read and thus its meaning.

There are only 17 extant impressions pulled from the small intaglio plates that make up *The Book of Los* and *Book of Ahania*; in terms of labor, these etchings and color-printed frontispieces and titlepages represent about a slow day's worth of printing. The 48 or so color-printed impressions pulled from the eight *Songs of Los* plates were printed in an edition, that is, the impressions were printed per plate and not per book.⁴⁵ All six (eight-page) copies could have easily been produced in two or at most three days. This may strike the non-printmaker as a herculean effort, but in fact the work involved, par-

ticularly for a professional printmaker with a printing "devil" (Mrs. Blake) handling the paper and press, was modest. Once the studio was set up for printing, the press prepared, inks and colors made, paper cut and dampened, the actual printing of the plates could not have taken very long. In fact, Blake would not have had much time to play with the plates, since in color printing some of his colors were water soluble and would have dried on the plate had he dawdled.⁴⁶

What Blake said of drawing was true of color printing: "That is not a line which doubts & Hesitates in the Midst of its Course" (K 603). This was even more true of executing the designs, which essentially was drawing, which is to say, the designs were not labored but drawn freehand, the materials of pen, brush, and varnish making such an autographic process possible—and necessary. Any hesitation would clog the pen with varnish and prevent a uniform script. Such writing and drawing must have felt spontaneous, or, as Blake says in *Europe*, "dictated." The time spent executing and printing illuminated plates was, in other words, far less than is often imagined. In fact, the most time-consuming aspect of production was biting the plates in acid and preparing the studio and materials. With that done, it would have been inefficient to print or paint only one impression per plate—or one copy of a book.⁴⁷

Given that the work involved in executing and printing *The Song of Los*, *Book of Ahania*, and *Book of Los* was minimal, and that Blake's known outside commitments in 1795 were the fewest in years, it is not unreasonable to suppose that these three books, which mark the end of color-printed illuminated books, were all executed and printed before Flaxman's copy of *Experience*—were executed, in other words, in "early 1795."⁴⁸ Romney's and D'Israeli's books, I believe, were produced together and part of a larger set (or project) in the same one- or two-month period, after *The Book of Ahania* and *Book of Los* and before the new edition of *Experience*. The bibliographical evidence suggests that Blake did not print in the ordinary manner while also color printing. Even the *Experience* plates of *Songs* copies B–E were lightly color printed, whereas *Urizen* copy B and *Europe* copies A and H were not. The use of a second ink to create shade, as in *Thel* copy F and *Marriage* copy D, appears to be a holdover from color printing and not an anticipation. Wiped borders, characteristic of books produced before and during color printing, but

abandoned with the edition of *Songs* that Flaxman's *Experience* belongs to, were another holdover. On the other hand, the subtle streaking that frames texts in *Thel* copy F, *Marriage* copy D, and *Visions* copy G appears to anticipate the more overt and stylized use of streaking and borders as frames characteristic of the copies of *Songs* in that edition.

I am assuming, in other words, that practice was consistent and mutually exclusive, which may appear an odd thing to assume about an artist as innovative as Blake, yet it is merely to admit the causal relation between printing style (ink, inking, printing format) and production—that the former is the natural result of practice, involves the repetition of form and/or materials characteristic of printing sessions and/or editions, as well as of artistic interests of the moment, by which I mean at most a few weeks' work in the studio, and not the many years that are generally thought to constitute the historical period for these early productions. Indeed, my other assumption, which is, like the first, based on my experience as a printmaker, is that the uninterrupted work involved in printing 160 plates not requiring à la poupée coloring, incised lines to be filled with ink, or surfaces to be inked and then wiped clean, was about 7 to 10 days.⁴⁹

I also think that production of this set of books followed *The Book of Los* and *Book of Ahania* closely because, together with a copy of *Song of Los* (assuming one had been recently printed), they not so coincidentally represent Blake's entire published canon in relief etching up to this time. With color printing, the creation myth as then formulated, and relief etching all having run their course with or before *The Book of Ahania* and *Book of Los*, it is not difficult to imagine Blake wanting to consolidate his own best works. He would have done so, forming a deluxe set of large paper copies of his illuminated books, by reprinting the plates of *All Religions* (A), *No Natural Religion* (L), *Thel* (F), *Marriage* (D), *Visions* (G), *America* (A), *Songs* (A), *Europe* (A), and *Urizen* (B) in the same format, with the same inks, and on the same size paper.⁵⁰ This appears to have been the first time he printed across titles, that is, various titles in the same printing session, but not the last.⁵¹

An early 1795 date of production for the entire set of books means that *America* copies A and B are not 1800 and 1799, *Thel* copy F is not c. 1806, *Europe* copies A and H are not 1805 and 1800, *Marriage* copy D is not

1794 and before color-printed copies E and F, *Songs* copy A is not 1789–1800, and *Visions* copy G is not 1796–1800 (BB 87, 118, 146, 288, 382, 465). The 1795 date also implies that washed texts and page numbers do not automatically signify post-1800 production, that coloring was rarely separated from printing, and that illuminated books were color printed before the monoprints and *Books of Designs*. That the *Books* were color printed c. 1796 does not mean that color printing had remained Blake's standard printing technique through 1795 and 1796; it suggests, rather, that Blake used an earlier and special technique that was warranted (and financially guaranteed) by commission, a technique that may have been especially requested, since Humphry owned two color-printed works (*Europe* copy D and *Songs* copy H). They were probably color printed because they were conceived in the manner of the color-printed monotypes, i.e., as a portfolio of miniature paintings and not books (see n. 38).

The new documentary evidence regarding Romney's ownership of illuminated books may simply support a long-held assumption, that Romney knew and patronized Blake. But it overturns the assumption that D'Israeli was an early patron and collector. Equally important, this new evidence reveals how tenuous our assumptions are regarding patronage and the earliest modes by which illuminated books were produced and disseminated. The idea that Blake "didn't print editions; he printed only one copy at a time, as he got commissions" (Davids and Petrillo 154) is based on the idea that each illuminated book is unique and hence must have been produced as such. The individual letters given to copies of books to indicate the chronology of production express this assumption. Yet, the shared stylistic features and materials among copies of the same title prove just the opposite, that the books were produced in limited editions and, hence, that production could not have been motivated by commission. Unique coloring is no more synonymous with individual print production than purchase is synonymous with patronage or ownership with commission. Indeed, even Flaxman's copies of *Experience* and *Innocence*, the latter of which was reported to have been "coloured by Blake for Flaxman," were, like nearly all illuminated books except a few late copies, merely purchased from those "in hand."⁵²

The illuminated books belonging to Romney and D'Israeli, which at first appear certainly to have been commissioned, presumably by Romney, if for no other reasons than their being different from others of their

kind and like one another, were produced in the same printing sessions and also purchased from stock. If, on the other hand, they were "printed only one . . . at a time, as [Blake] got commissions," then the history of and motivation for the copies stylistically matching Romney's volumes but not in his collection are puzzling, as is the inclusion of *Visions* copy F, since it was printed before the others. That more books were produced than purchased suggests that they were not produced to meet a single commission; that *Visions* copy G was purchased by someone other than Romney suggests the same and that it either was sold before Romney examined Blake's stock or simply did not appeal to him as much as *Visions* copy F. In either case, it appears that Romney purchased not what he specifically commissioned but what Blake had already produced. This reading of the evidence is further supported if, as is likely, Flaxman played agent. For if Flaxman showed Romney his own illuminated books and "recommended . . . [his] friend to take copies," then Romney would have purchased his books after Flaxman purchased his, that is, after "early 1795," and thus from a set already produced.

When illuminated books such as these, which because of the similarities among themselves and their differences from other copies appear so obviously to have been commissioned, can be shown to have been produced for other reasons, then the assumption that production was "on demand" (Essick, "Materials" 857) and "with a particular customer in mind" (Erdman, *Poetry and Prose* 786), is undermined: copies closely resembling one another in materials, printing, format, and coloring, like most copies of *Thel*, *Innocence*, *Visions*, *America*, *Europe*, and *Song of Los*, are even less likely to have been produced by commission. The less likely commission becomes, the more likely it becomes that illuminated books were printed in small editions.

Romney probably purchased his four books directly from Blake at one time, before any other "friend" came by; D'Israeli or, more likely, an unknown intermediary collector, may have done the same with *Marriage* copy D, *Europe* copy A, and *Thel* copy F. In both cases, books were purchased from a deluxe—or display—set, a set that helped to comprise and to sell the "numerous great works now in hand" which Blake offered to friends, patrons, and collectors "at a fair price" (K 208).

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¹The eye tells us what documentary evidence does not, that Blake must have seen Romney's paintings and pen and wash drawings in the 1780s, probably before he invented illuminated printing, since motifs in his earliest relief etchings appear to echo specific Romney designs. The Urizenic figure in the clouds in *All Religions are One* plate 4, for example, is thought generally to have been influenced by the pen and wash drawing, "The Spirit of God Floating over Chaos," though it is more likely indebted to a lost painting entitled "Providence Brooding over Chaos," which was renamed "Jupiter Pluvius" by Romney's son and described as representing "a venerable old man borne upon the clouds. He fronted the spectator, and had his arms outspread; his hair was parted on his forehead, and his beard flowing" (*Memoirs* 98-99). The drawing, on the other hand, is of a beardless youth or female and appears to have been the source for the female figure floating over the corpse in *Marriage* plate 14. Because of John Romney's description, the drawing has often been confused with the painting (see Hagstrum 202). For Blake to have borrowed in these ways meant meeting the man himself, for these were paintings and drawings in Romney's private collection.

²Gilchrist 1: 124. Charles Augustus Tulk, who owned *Songs* copy J, was also a close friend of the Flaxmans; see *BR* 241-42. Flaxman practiced what he preached, commissioning Blake in 1797 to illustrate Gray's *Poems*, apparently as a birthday present for his wife, Nancy (Bindman, *Blake as Artist* 113), and presumably encouraged the publishers to commission Blake to engrave his designs for "A Letter to the Committee for Raising the Naval Pillar" (1799), Homer's *Iliad* (1805), Hesiod's *Works, Days, and Theogony* (1817), and his article on "Sculpture" in Ree's *Cyclopaedia* (1820). He also purchased *Innocence* copy D and *Songs* copy O.

³Mr. Read, a friend of Romney's and of Romney's earliest patron, Mr. Braithwaite, promised to show Blake a "Catalogue of [the] Hampstead sale" (K 836), though no paintings or drawings by Romney (or Blake) were then auctioned. It was "A Catalogue of the Capital Collection of Casts from the Antique: among which are the Apollo of Belvidere; Castor and Pollux, and the Laocoon; A Very Fine Skeleton; Various Basso Relievs, Busts, and Fragments, Being the entire Collection of that celebrated Artist, George Romney, Esq. At his late Residence, Holybush Hill, Hampstead. Also, His Genuine household Furniture and other effects, which will be sold by Auction by Mr. Christie on the Premises, On Monday, May the 18th, 1801, at twelve O'clock." Some of the pictures which were auctioned six years later were then on view: "A Select Part of the finest Works of Mr. Romney, may in the mean Time be Viewed (with Tickets) on the Premises, where the same may be treated for by Private Contract" (Yale Center for British Art, Sales Catalogues 96).

⁴Lot 121 of the first day lists "38 Varied [drawings]," which could conceivably have included a few of Blake's drawings. Nearly all the prints and drawings in this sale were after or by masters, like Poussin, Titian, Rosa, Romano. Romney's collection of art books, prints, plaster casts, paintings, and drawings must have been of enormous educational value to young artists like Blake and Flaxman. The instructional value was greatly increased by Romney's drawings after Raphael and Michelangelo, whose works in the Vatican, including all the Sibyls and Prophets in the Sistine Chapel, he studied closely and copied, having erected scaffolding for the purpose (Chamberlain 71).

⁵The works were bought in for "£406.19s.6d.," while the total amount realized by the works "actually sold was £307.1s., which when commissions and duty had been deducted, was reduced to £250.16s." (Chamberlain 233). The copy of the lower half of Raphael's "Transfiguration," for example, which Romney painted in oil to size and for which he was once offered £100, realized £6 (Chamberlain 231).

⁶Auction catalogue of Messrs. Christie, Manson, and Christie, Friday and Saturday, 9-10 May 1834.

⁷A book with a Blake engraving that was published after the painter's death was listed in the catalogue: lot 9 "Hoare on the Arts," which may have been his *Academic Correspondence . . . on the Present Cultivation of the Arts of Painting*, 1804, or his *Inquiry into the Requisite Cultivation and Present State of the Arts of Design*, 1806, both of which contain frontispieces engraved by Blake. The son continued to add to the library, but did not necessarily purchase this or any other work from Blake.

⁸Auction catalogue of Messrs. Christie, Manson, and Christie, Friday and Saturday, 9-10 May 1834. There are two copies of the catalogue in the Yale Center for British Art, one without prices, the other with prices and a handwritten "86x" added but with no owners cited (Sales cat. 96). The buyers are listed in Christie's master copy in London, a reproduction of which G. E. Bentley, Jr. generously checked for me. The "Large Collection of Engravings & Drawings" of Walter E. Tiffin, "An Old-Established Printseller, Relinquishing the General Business . . ." sold at Sotheby's, 29 Feb.-9 Mar. 1860, and contained three water colors from Blake's *The Story of Joseph* series, c. 1784-85 (lot 1826). See Butlin *Paintings and Drawings* 1: 59 (nos. 155-57). This printseller's retirement from the business in 1860 indicates he would have been in the business of attending auctions in the 1830s.

⁹Some impressions in *Urizen* copy B appear color printed because the black ink was gone over on the paper, possibly while wet, in green (pls. 18, 20, 23), grey, and black washes to produce a mottled effect. Part of Los's right knee in plate 7, for example, appears color printed, but the capillary formation of the ink on the relief area that forms the knee is the same in the part not color printed as in that color printed. The difference was created by the latter being washed over in grey and black opaque paint. This is even more apparent in plate 8, where the blue opaque paint appears to be from the plate, but was actually applied to the impression over the black ink (a relief plateau), as a close look with a magnifying glass reveals: the blue does not always hold the relief line or area. Plate 19 also looks color printed, but the deep red color is painted over the ink on the impression; the relief area out of which the figures were hollowed was heavily inked, but that ink is black and was applied generously and not delicately because the area's lack of detail made it easy and quick to ink.

¹⁰*America* copies K and A are thought to have been "coloured some time after they were printed" (*BB* 91n3), probably "after 1805" (*BB* 91) because a few of the texts were washed. The date of this stylistic feature is based on *Songs* copy E (which was purchased by Butts in 1806) having washed texts while those of *Innocence* copy P (which was given away by Malkin in 1805) remained unwashed (Bentley, *William Blake's Writings* 1: liv). One of these two copies was in Romney's collection, however, which shows that washed texts cannot be trusted as an absolute marker for dating. The few poems ("Infant Joy" for example) with washed texts in *Innocence* copies I and J, c. 1789-94, support this conclusion, as do the impressions in *Experience* of *Songs* copy O (c. 1795) whose texts are streaked. Indeed either washed texts occurred much earlier than we think, which seems likely on aesthetic and technical grounds, or, as Bentley implies, coloring and printing were stages regularly separated during the production of a book: *Europe* copy G "was color-printed about 1795, but the text was water-colored about 1805" (*Europe* 5n10); *Innocence* copies K and L "seem to have been printed early but coloured late" (*BB* 382n2). The idea that printing and coloring were often separated is very curious, given the assumptions that illuminated books in general were commissioned and that *America* copy A in particular was supposedly purchased by D'Israeli in the 1790s.

America copy R is listed in *BB* as an untraced colored copy printed on one side of the leaf (89). It was recently auctioned at Christie's, November 1987, and is essentially a monochrome copy, recto-verso, in blue ink. It was, according to Robert Essick and Thomas V. Lange, who examined the copy, the model for Muir's uncolored facsimile. See Essick, "Resurrection." The coloring of *America* copy K seems to have been loosely modeled on copy A, particularly in the way the text of some plates are colored as part of the illustration, though generally its palette is more restricted and its washes are thinner and flatter (see n. 34). *America* copy Q, printed posthumously in black and presumably colored for Walter T. Spencer in 1913 (*BB* 105), was unquestionably colored in imitation of *America* copy A, apparently when that copy was in the Pierpont Morgan Library (*BB* 100). A comparison of any two impressions from copies A and Q reveals that the latter's colors, their placement, and the manner in which they were applied, were dictated by the former. Spencer was likewise responsible for the coloring of *Europe* copy L, which was also printed posthumously in black ink (*BB* 160).

¹¹Like most illuminated prints, those making up *America* copies F and L do not have watermarks. Of the 100 leaves used to print the 10 copies of *America* (C-I, K-L, and R), only 15 leaves are watermarked. The absence of a watermark in a leaf of fine paper like this probably indicates that it was cut from a larger watermarked sheet. On the other hand, the absence of a watermark on any sheet of wove paper may be due to the thickness of the paper or to the mark's being at the edge of the sheet and not the middle of one-half; in the latter case, the mark may have been trimmed or hidden in the binding (Balston 160). The sheets used for *America* were probably either double crown (approximately 72 x 51 cm) or imperial (approximately 72 x 55 cm). Such sheets could be cut into quarters for folio books, like *America*, or into eights for quarto books, like *Marriage*, or into sixteenths for octavo books, like *Songs*. Blake's choices were no more exact than small, medium, or large, for the exact size of the leaf was determined less by plate size (technically *Songs* could have been quarto) than by the sheet it was cut out of, that is, by such practicalities as using efficiently raw materials whose sizes were fixed. From one quire (25 sheets) of imperial paper, Blake could print exactly 10 recto-verso copies of *America* (18 plates on 10 sheets), or 23 recto-verso copies of *Innocence*. When, on the other hand, an octavo or quarto was reprinted as folio, it was assuredly for aesthetic reasons, following the general rule of thumb that the larger the size the more valuable—or prestigious—the artifact.

¹²The inks of *America* copies A and B are listed as brownish-black and dark brown (*BB* 88). They are, however, the same light black ink as *Urizen* copy B, whose brownish tint was caused by the thinness of the ink layer, the warm tone of the off-white paper, a mixture of brown and black pigments, and the yellowing effect of linseed oil. All three copies are in the Pierpont Morgan Library, which allows for this kind of comparison. The ink's true color, though, is also apparent when the ink is examined under a glass or in a solid area that printed heavily, such as the dragon, lower right corner, and space between the clouds in plate 6 (illus. 1). The ink will tend to look black under a glass because the ink particles are seen in isolation, counteracting the "color-addition" effect that is perceived by viewing the overall image with its off-white support and underlying brown hue in thinner areas. Various hues from a black ink are characteristic of intaglio plates, where the deeper lines print darkest and the shallow lines print light grey; in aquatint, the range of one ink can be so great that multiple inks appear to be used. Blue pigments are often used in combination with black to counteract the brown hue of natural black pigments.

That the ink in *America* copies A and B is the same ink, and not just the same color, is proven by their shared accidentals, a feature of production that cannot be duplicated except by sequential pulls. In plate 3, for example, the blemish next to the word "Dark" of line 11 is the same in copies A and B, though darker in A; the same is true of the blemish at the end of the tendril from the letter "A" in line 16, and the traces of ink in the shallows of the lower tree trunks and inside of the border. The repetition of ink traces is a sign that the dabber overinked or touched an area that was supposed to remain white and that the plate with the residue of ink was reinked and printed again, producing a second impression having the same accidentals regardless whether the second inking was more carefully done, since the pressure and paper were the same in both pulls. The sequentiality of copies A and B is even clearer in plate 5, where the bottom border is half wiped in the same manner (and with the same gesture) in both copies, and the same wove pattern of the paper or backing blanket—a very distinctive mark—is present, as it is in the left bottom corner of plate 6 (illus. 1 and 2), and in the lower left and right corner of the flames in plate 12. For the checkerboard effect to be repeated in two impressions from the same plate means that a combination of variables (the paper's texture and dampness, ink, and pressure) was repeated, and that indicates sequentiality. This effect does not show up in the recto-verso copies, or in proofs, or in canceled plates a and b. It does, however, show up in *America* plate c, which was also printed in a black ink (with plate 15 on its verso printed in brown). Whereas plates a and b are variants of plates that were used (plates 5 and 6), plate c is a new text, most likely to have been inserted between plates 10 and 11. Unlike the other two canceled plates, it has lines added and deleted in pencil, which indicates that Blake would have had to execute another plate. Apparently he chose not to. It is possible that plate c was not "eliminated in [the] revisions" of *America* (Erdman, *Illuminated Blake* 394), but was a new idea executed around 1795 and printed along with copies A and B. Its sharing ink color and texture suggests that it may at the very least have been printed at that time.

¹³*America* copy B is listed in *BB* as having plate 4 masked (87), but plate 4 in copy B, along with plate 9, are fakes; see my "Forgery or Facsimile? An Examination of *America* plates 4 and 9," copy B, *Blake* 16 (1983): 219–23. I suspect that copy B's original plate 4 was like copy A's, because, as the shared ink, paper, and inking accidentals show, copies A and B were printed together (See n. 12).

¹⁴The paper used in all these books is J. Whatman 1794 or I. Taylor. *America* copy A is now 32.0 x 23.3 cm, apparently cut down from approximately 38 x 27 cm, along with plates 1–2, 4–6 of D'Israeli's copy of *Europe* copy A, his *Song of Los* copy B, plate 1 of his *Visions* copy F, and the three separate plates, "A Dream of Thiralatha" copy B, "The Accusers" copy H, and "Joseph of Arimathea Preaching" copy F. These books and plates, which were bound "somewhat irregularly" by 1856 (*BB* 474n1), were probably trimmed after 1835, when *Song of Los* and two of the separate plates came into D'Israeli's collection (*BB* 156n). (The leaves of the other five copies of *Song of Los* are a quarter of royal crown paper, which was approximately 36 x 26 cm) *Urizen* copy B and *America* copy A may have sold as one lot because they were stabbed together, but this is impossible to tell since *America* copy A has no stab holes, perhaps because it was trimmed.

¹⁵Bentley dates *America* copies C, D, and H c. 1796 because they have only one serpent tail in plate 13, reduced from three (*BB* 87). An alteration of this kind, though, is technically very minor, requiring at most a few hours' work with a scraper. The evidence is not firm enough to warrant dating these copies two and three years later than the other recto-verso copies with which they have more in common, stylistically and materially.

The frontispiece of *America* copy K sold anonymously in 1904 "with property evidently once in the D'Israeli Collection" (BB 103). This suggests the possibility that *America* copy K was the copy that sold with *Urizen* copy B, but that its plates 2-18 were sold off and replaced by *America* copy A. The early provenances of plate 1 and plates 2-18 of *America* copy K are not known, but if D'Israeli's and his son's arithmetic can be trusted, then plate 1 probably entered the collection after 1862, when Lord Beaconsfield described having "170 Drawings etc By W. Blake" (BB 156n). The 10 plates added to the collection since 1835, when it was described as having 160 designs, can be accounted for by the eight plates of *Song of Los* copy B and two separate plates that were bound "somewhat irregularly" with *America* copy A and a few other designs by 1856 (see n. 14). Had *America* copy A replaced *America* copy K, it would have been before or while copy A was bound with the other plates, and that would put the extra plate 1 in the collection by 1862 for a total of 171 designs.

¹⁶Both *Thel* copy J and *Visions* copy G were produced early (BB 118, 465n4); when and from whom Dibdin acquired them is not known. They are assumed to have been purchased directly from Blake because (using the same logic applied to D'Israeli) Dibdin was a contemporary and owned them sometime after 1816. They could have been purchased, though, after 1824, or even after 1836, since they were "not catalogued with Dibdin's library, sold by Evans, 26 June, 1817" (Census 23n), or mentioned in his *Library Companion* (1824) or *Reminiscences* (1836), the latter mentioning *Songs* and *Night Thoughts* (BR 243). It is possible, then, that, as D'Israeli purchased books from Romney's collection, so Dibdin purchased his bound volume of *Thel* and *Visions* from another collector and later than we imagine.

Thel copy J differs from other copies by having its two offending lines (19-20) in plate 8 deleted. These were scraped off the paper, which makes the deletion impossible to verify as Blake's since it occurred after the plate was inked and printed. Thus possibly either Dibdin or the person from whom he acquired it had erased the lines. The kind of deletion that is verifiable, other than masking, was the wiping off of ink, which could only occur after inking and before printing. Copy I, though, has scrolls painted over these two lines, which appear to be in Blake's hand.

¹⁷Smith knew that Blake "preferred mixing his colours with carpenter's glue, to gum, on account of the latter cracking in the sun, and becoming humid in moist weather" (BR 472). But he must have also known that the opacity of size-color or "body-color" was not due to the binder but to an inert pigment, like precipitated chalk, mixed with the colors, which gave them bulk and hiding power. Even with glue binders Blake was able to produce transparent stains. Giving water colors body was one of the ways watercolorists attempted to legitimize their medium as *painting* and to compete with oil painters. See Cohn for a discussion of this and other techniques that English water color artists used "to establish their medium's credentials as high art — against painters in oils, who would admit them into the Royal Academy only in 1812 and then segregated them into a separate gallery" (11-16).

¹⁸*Songs* copy R has plate 1 but it is unnumbered and seems to have been inserted late, perhaps with the copy's impression of "Tyger," which is watermarked 1808, whereas other sheets are I. Taylor 1794 (Bindman, *Fitzwilliam Catalogue* 12). Both plate 1 and "Tyger" were printed in black ink, whereas the *Innocence* plates were printed in a dull brown and the *Experience* plates were printed in a dull green (or greyish-green) — the same two inks used in copy A. Copy R also has plates 50-52, which are missing in copy A, but

these too may have been inserted or added late, in that they are the last three plates of *Experience*, and thus could have been easily added without upsetting the initial pencil numbering. Plate 52 was printed in a blackish-green and plates 50 and 51 were printed in green. The three frame lines and some of the rich colors in copy R appear certainly to have been added late, perhaps in preparation to sell the copy to Linnell. Recoloring an illuminated book would not have been unprecedented; Blake recolored *Songs* copy E in 1806 for Butts, though its impressions were initially lightly washed c. 1789 and 1794.

What *America* copy B was to *America* copy A, *Songs* copy R may have been to *Songs* copy A, that is, the second set of impressions pulled from the plates, and not produced between 1802-08 as Keynes has suggested (Census 55). The matching inks (as well as coloring) is particularly noticeable in "Holy Thursday" of *Experience*, where a "monk" (i.e., an accidental ink blot) mars the word "rain" in line 14 (illus. 4 and 5). Copy R is slightly smaller than copy A, probably because it was trimmed by Linnell's binder to match his other volumes.

¹⁹This possibility was suggested to me by G. E. Bentley, Jr.

²⁰Because *Songs* copy A was numbered in ink by Blake, 1-26 and 1-20, with the frontispieces and titlepages of both sets unnumbered, it is unlikely that its 50 pages were the result of later extractions, though, as mentioned (see n. 18), the three missing *Experience* plates, 50-52, are the last three plates of *Experience* of *Songs* copy R — a grouping found in no other copy.

²¹Linnell described *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* copy R as a "Book of Designs" (BR 585). Coleridge, in a letter to Tulk, Feb. 1818, referred to *Songs* as "Drawings" (BR 252). Dibdin (or an assistant who mistook Blake's first name) also lists in a separately published *Index to the . . . Reminiscences* D'Israeli's "letter respecting his collection of drawings by the late T. Blake" (20). They were still being called drawings by D'Israeli's son, Lord Beaconsfield, who told W. M. Rossetti in 1862 that he had "170 Drawings etc By W. Blake" (BB 156n). *The Large and Small Books of Designs* copies A were described similarly, selling as "original drawings" in 1846 (BB 356-57). Even uncolored prints, prints not thought of as facsimiles or drawings, were often referred to as drawings. Edward Dayes, for example, states that "drawing . . . possess[es] a divine virtue in its creative power . . . as it preserves the images of distant objects, and the likeness of those we love. Without risking our lives on the boisterous ocean, we may enjoy at home, in a small book, representations of the finest productions of nature and art . . ." (252-53). Drawing as representation refers to "the exact imitation of all the forms and manners which present themselves to our sight" (253), and thus re-presentations in books, which are technically prints, are also "drawings."

If, on the other hand, we assume that the works in the portfolio were real drawings, a possibility suggested to me by G. E. Bentley, Jr., then we must also assume that this collection was sold by 1835 and replaced by a new collection focused entirely on Blake's books, since the "one hundred and sixty designs" can be accounted for in full by illuminated books. It is more reasonable to assume that D'Israeli had a rudimentary collection by 1824 which he later enlarged.

²²According to the *OED*, "chimney" referred not only to a flue but also to "a fireplace or a hearth," as well as to a "chimney piece," the mantle over the fireplace. The former sense is pictured in *Europe* plate 9; the latter sense mentioned in plate 12: "Over the doors Thou shalt not: & over the chimneys Fear is written."

²³In addition to *The Book of Job* and other drawings, Linnell owned *Innocence* copy I, *America* copy O, *Europe* copy K, *Marriage* copy H, *Songs* copy R, *Jerusalem* copy C, and *On Homer's Poetry* copies B and C (250 designs on 224 leaves), and had three copies of *For the Sexes*. In 1824, Cumberland's illuminated book collection probably consisted of *America* copy F, *Visions* copy B, *Europe* copy C, *Song of Los* copy D, *Thel* copy A, *Songs* copy F, and *For Children* copy C (115 designs on 102 leaves), and possibly *Marriage* copy A and *Urizen* copy F, since they were once bound with *Thel* copy A (*Census* 21). Bentley, though, believes they were bound by Beckford, who owned them by 1835, since they were not listed in the 1835 Cumberland auction catalogue. Lot 61 of that catalogue was "Blake's Book of Job. Book of Thel, etc. coloured; and Gates of Paradise," and sold for £3.13s.6d. (BB 657). The "etc.," though, is inconclusive; if only these three works sold, the price was high, especially compared to lot 60, which consisted of copies of *America*, *Visions*, *Europe*, and *Song of Los* bound together, and *The Grave*, and sold for £3.18s. Keynes's attribution of *Marriage* copy A and *Urizen* copy F to Cumberland should not be easily ruled out.

In 1835, Butts bought *America*, *Visions*, *Europe*, and *Los* from the Cumberland auction and added them to the illuminated books he already owned: *Songs* copy E, *Thel* copy E, *Ghost of Abel* copy A, *Jerusalem* copy I (posthumous), *Milton* copy A or B, *On Homer's Poetry* (?A), which by any counting made his the largest collection of illuminated books and prints at that time. It is interesting that Butts, who was a major collector of water colors and drawings and had purchased a few books, acquired most of his illuminated books from another collector and not directly from Blake.

²⁴The DNB also quotes the even harsher critique of Alexander Dyce: Dibdin was "an ignorant pretender, without the learning of a schoolboy, who published a quantity of books swarming with errors. . . ." Even a defender of Dibdin's like William Alexander Jackson was forced to admit that "the person who turns to Dibdin for information finds a . . . baffling kind of error—and sometimes it entails considerable search to ascertain whether or not Dibdin is confused or careless, or whether he really had seen such a book as he describes" (*Records*).

²⁵Masquerier was a respected painter 20 years Blake's junior. He was also a friend of Crabb Robinson's, who speaks of him as having no feel for or appreciation of Blake (BR 331, 336, 549).

²⁶Blake sold many books late in life that were printed early, that is, sold them from stock. Examples of this practice include *Innocence* copy I, which remained in the studio till Linnell purchased it (Essick, *Huntington Catalogue* 146); *Songs* copy J to Tulk; *Songs* copy R to Linnell; *Songs* copy E, which contained impressions from *Innocence* copy J, to Butts; *Innocence* of *Songs* copy O to Flaxman; *Marriage* copy H to Linnell; and *America* copy D to Crabb Robinson.

Dibdin may have owned *Innocence* copy S (BB 410), but this is sheer speculation, apparently based on copy S being watermarked 1808 and thus appearing to be the copy printed closest in date to Blake and Dibdin's 1816 interview (BR 242–43). But as Bentley also points out, Dibdin's copy could have been G, J, L, N, O, Q, or T; in short, any of those whose early nineteenth-century history is unknown (BB 410).

²⁷I have not seen the original letter, and I suspect Ogden did not either. Though Ogden, observing that "Dibdin's text of the letter is patently corrupt," "emended its obvious errors," such as "every" for "very," a semicolon for a period, and "teribil via" for "terribilita," he leaves "one hundred sixty" in small capitals (44n). This makes it unclear if the emphasis is in the original or in the transcript (which he uses), the former expressing the excitement of news, the latter expressing Dibdin's own initial response. In either event, however, it seems clear that Dibdin was "staggered" by the size of a collection

he thought he knew. Again, it appears that Dibdin acquired *Visions* copy G with *Thel* copy J, with which it was bound, not from the 1834 auction but from an unknown collector after writing the *Reminiscences* (1836), for how with these two books in a collection consisting of *Innocence* and *Night Thoughts* could he record having been staggered by the size and diversity of Blake's canon? If anything, it seems that his interest in Blake was reawakened by D'Israeli's enlarged portfolio.

²⁸Their paths may have crossed very early, though without either of them being aware of it, and before the invention of illuminated books. D'Israeli had contributed "Letter from Nonsense with some account of himself and family," and "Farther account of the family of Nonsense," to Holcroft's *Wit's Magazine* for April (145–47) and May (177–79) 1784, which also contained plates engraved by Blake.

²⁹Bentley has not identified Dyer, other than to suggest "(George?) Dyer," by which he probably means the poet (1755–1841) (BB 289, 298). Perhaps "Dyer" was the "honest, worthy, painstaking bookseller, the brother of the late Rev. Mr. Dwyer," whom Dibdin mentions in *Reminiscences* (1: 194), or, as Essick has suggested, Charles George Dyer, a London printseller (*Separate Plates* 30).

³⁰The similarity between *Europe* copies A and H has been noted by Bentley: "Copy A, which is much like H, may have been printed early, but it seems to have been colored later, for both the designs and the text are colored, a practice Blake apparently began about 1805" (*Europe* 5). Bentley's date for coloring is based on his theory that washed texts were characteristic of post-1805 coloring (see n. 10). Bindman, though, believes its coloring belongs "to the mid-1790s" (*Art and Times* 106), which is technically more likely than its printing and coloring having been separated by years. *Europe* copy H is on smaller leaves than *Europe* copy A and is not listed in *Blake Books* (142) as trimmed, but "the leaves were disbound, trimmed, and individually mounted, probably on the instructions of E. W. Hooper for the 1891 Boston exhibition" (*Europe* 14). Initially, the paper for the two copies may have been the same size, though in copy H it was undated E & P, the kind used in many of the recto-verso folio copies of *America* and *Visions* which appear to have been printed c. 1793–94, and in *Marriage* copy F, which was color printed c. 1794–95. The paper, in other words, appears to have been from earlier stock than that used in *Europe* copy A and the other large paper copies. The brownish-black ink of *Europe* copy H is the same as in *Visions* copy G and appears to be the same used in *Europe* copy A, which is not an olive brown (BB 142), but a brownish-black. *Europe* copy H may have been left monochrome to match *America* copy B, as *Europe* copy A appears to have been colored to match *America* copy A.

The proposal that at least a second set of impressions were printed from the plates is in keeping with standard printing practice. With materials made and equipment set up, it would have been extremely inefficient not to have done so (see n. 41). It is possible, then, that untraced *Visions* copy Q, which was printed on one side of the leaf, may have been printed along with *Visions* copy G, that is, the second set of *Visions* impressions pulled in this printing session.

³¹In all four copies, relief lines and areas were brushed over with a second ink, black in *Marriage* and *Thel*, and brown in *All Religions* and *No Natural Religion*. The second ink was used to create shading and texture, which is most apparent in the treatment of bark on the trees of *Marriage* plate 2, *Thel* plate 1, and *No Natural Religion* plates b10 and a5 of copies L and C, and the frontispiece of *All Religions* (see n. 32).

These copies of *All Religions* and *No Natural Religion* were printed on I. Taylor paper, the former dated 1794 and the size of the

leaves used in the D'Israeli copies, the latter undated and trimmed to approximately 30 x 22 cm as part of a volume of miscellaneous Blake prints (BB 337-39). The leaf size, the four frame lines given each image (which may have been added late, as were those in *Songs* copy R), the absence of other copies, and its being kept in the studio until it was acquired by Linnell, suggest that *All Religions are One* copy A, the only complete copy extant, had a special importance to Blake. The same appears true of *No Natural Religion* copy L, which is on large leaves, with each image given four or more frame lines and finished in pen and ink. It is also the only complete copy of series b, and appears certainly to have been printed with 12 other green impressions now in copies C, D, and L2. All the other impressions of *No Natural Religion*, series a and b, were printed in brown, yellow-ochre, or olive, though most are listed simply as "brown" and on octavo-size leaves (BB 80-81). Their "general uniformity suggests that they were printed at the same time" (BB 82), while their distinct differences from the green impressions suggests that they were printed in a different session.

³²*Marriage* copy D is said to be in green and brown inks (BB 287n4); the brown is actually black, which is the same hue, and possibly the same ink, as that used in *TheL* copy F. In *Marriage* it was brushed over the green and used to create shadows in plates 1-5, 10-11, 14-16, 20, 21, 24, and in *TheL* it was brushed over the yellow-ochre in plates 1, 6-8. This brownish-black reticulates like an ink, and not like a tempera color. (The very dark and solid black that often passes for color printing is an opaque tempera that was applied to the impression.) It is possibly the black ink used to print *America* copies A and B and *Urizen* copy B. In any event, the color printing in *TheL* copy F and *Marriage* copy D is rudimentary, coming from the relief areas and not the shallows, as it did in *Visions* copy F and most other works color printed on one side of the leaf.

³³In plate 7 (illus. 8), a tree and bush stem out of a green cliff; their purpose is decorative as well as cosmetic, since they are actually covering ink blemishes. The last line and bottom of plate 7 was given a thin pink wash, which complements the bright orange in the sky, and moves the eye to a green wash at the left of the text that is the same color as the cliff at the right. The effect of these washes and additions is to frame or call attention to the design as an imposed shape, that is, as different from the paper.

³⁴*America* copy A's distinct and heavy coloring forces one to ask whether it was painted for (or by) another painter, especially since it was printed in a black ink like the uncolored copies. A comparison of copies A and K, the two colored copies, though, reveals that copy K was colored in loose imitation of copy A (especially apparent in plates 5, 6, 7, and 10, where the texts are washed and treated as part of the same painting surface as the illustrations), which suggests that copy A was not only colored by Blake but that the two may have been colored at the same time, despite copy K's having most likely been printed earlier (probably in 1793 with copies C-I, L, and R). Plate 14, for example, is colored like copy A, though here the text is not washed: the tomb is yellow, the tree is green and grey, and the ground is green. In copy A, each of these colors is deepened with another thin layer of the same color or a grey; in copy K they remain flat and thin. In general, copy K was not colored as well, or not as consistently well, as copy A, and to my eye appears more likely the hand of Mrs. Blake, which I believe is characterized by the use of flat unmodeled washes and a predominance of pink, green, and purple. The unique shades of purple and blue in copy K, as well as the simplicity of the laying in of colors (particularly in those plates whose texts were not colored), make me suspect her hand.

³⁵As noted by Bindman, the coloring of *Europe* seems "in fact . . . to belong to the mid-1790s" (*Art and Times* 106) and not "about 1805" as Bentley claims (BB 147). It is stylistically closer to *Urizen* copy B than *America* copy A; the texts of *Europe* copy A are not



washed and the coloring is not as heavy. Many of the figures, though, were deepened with a second wash in the same hue or in another color; the wings of angels (plates 6 and 8) are multi-colored in the manner of the snake in *Urizen* copy B, plate 24: pink, blue, yellow, green. A few plates in these copies (most notably the frontispiece of *Visions* copy G [illus. 12]) were stippled with a dry brush, a technique more characteristic of color-printed copies of *Urizen*, like copies C and F.

Bindman has also commented on the peculiar coloring of *Europe* copy A: "bold additions in opaque watercolour that may have been touched up by another hand" (*Art and Times* 106). This appears true only of plate 1. Bindman also describes *Europe* copy A as color printed, though only plates 1 and 4 were printed in this style and even then only in a rudimentary manner.

³⁶The similarity in palette is especially apparent between *Urizen* (B) plate 10 and *America* (A) plate 8; *Urizen* plate 24 and *America* plates 4 and 5; *Urizen* plate 18 and *America* plate 12; and *Urizen*

plate 25 and *America* plate 7 in the coloring of the bodies.

³⁷If these were large paper copies printed with other copies of the title, then *Innocence of Songs* copy A would probably have been printed recto-verso or at the very least have included plates 34–36, which were, however, printed as *Experience* plates. This dates the printing of the plates after *Experience of Songs* copies B–E. See n. 43.

³⁸Bindman and Butlin date the *Small Book of Designs* copy A (and by association the *Large Book* copy A) 1794 because the date on *Urizen* plate 1 was left as printed, i.e., "1794." They date copy B 1796 because the printed date was altered in pen to "1796" (Bindman, *Graphic Works* 476; Butlin, *Paintings and Drawings* 2: 136). Given these dates, Bindman believes the two copies represent different projects and motives, the former serving as a "sampler of his best designs" to "demonstrate his colour-printing process," the latter possibly "some kind of emblem book [compiled] out of a selection of his own designs" (476). A printed date, however, does not date a printing session, as is clear from nearly any *reprinted* illuminated book; *America* copies A and B, for example, retain their printed date of 1793 despite their having been assuredly printed later. The altered date is reliable for both sets because many of the impressions making up copies A and B were printed sequentially, as is self-evident in color reproductions in Butlin's *Paintings and Drawings* and Essick's *Separate Plates*. The two pulls of "Albion Rose" from the *Large Book* copies A and B, for example (Butlin, *Paintings and Drawings* illus. 331 and 332), have the same palette, color placement, and brushwork, which are material and stylistic features independent of the plate image and which could not have been duplicated months or years apart. The same is true of "The Accusers of Theft Adultery Murder," "A Dream of Thiralatha," and "Joseph of Arimathea Preaching to the Britons" (see Essick, *Separate Plates*, color plates 2–5, and 7–8). And the same is true of the impressions in the two copies of the *Small Book of Designs*. The three impressions of *Urizen* plate 5 in copies A and B (Butlin, *Paintings and Drawings* illus. 329, 357) and an independent pull (illus. 380) reveal the same kind of repetition (cf. 329, which is reproduced in color, with no. V in Bindman's *Art and Times*, a color reproduction of Butlin, *Paintings and Drawings* illus. 357). Color-printed impressions pulled from the same plate at *different* times do not show this kind of exact repetition. Compare, for example, the two copies of *Visions* plate 1 from the *Large Book of Designs* copies A and B (Butlin, *Paintings and Drawings* illus. 362 and 337), where the highlights at the right corner and at the waves are exactly the same, with that of copy F (363), which was printed a year or so earlier. The same kinds of repetition and difference are apparent in color-printed drawings printed in 1795 and those printed in 1805 (see n. 46 and Butlin, "Physicality").

Color-printed impressions are easily misdated, because the sequentiality of color prints is not always self-evident. In color printing, a second pull is often weaker than the first and must be touched up more extensively in water colors and pen and ink, which in turn disguises the material and stylistic features it may have initially shared with another impression. This is especially apparent with the second copies of the *Large* and *Small Book of Designs*. Their impressions were more carefully outlined in pen and ink and attentively finished in water colors (see Butlin, *Paintings and Drawings* illus. 337, 338, 353, and 360). They were also given multiple frame lines, a stylistic feature characteristic of late production and similar to those employed in *Songs* copy R and *All Religions are One* copy A, both of which were printed early (c. 1795) but also refinished and sold late, both to Linnell. Like these other works, the impressions constituting the *Large* and *Small Book of Designs* copies B appear to have remained with Blake; three of the former were acquired by Linnell, and one of the latter given to Tatham. These impressions, in other words, appear to have been reassembled and freshened up

late, and the "1796" date written in pen and ink may have occurred at that time, many years after the impressions were printed. For that reason, the altered date is probably the more trustworthy record of the initial production.

It is interesting to note that D'Israeli or his son acquired three separate impressions from the *Large Book of Designs* copy B, and that Humphry's impressions appear to be the first and finer pulls (see Essick, *Separate Plates* VIII, IX, and X). The impressions of copy B, which admittedly may exist as a *book* only by analogy with copy A, appear not to have been presented as part of a set or portfolio, but as autonomous paintings. Even the impressions making up copy A may not have been intended as a book, since they were never bound as a set but instead inserted and bound at the back of Humphry's copy of *Europe*.

³⁹Flaxman also paid Blake four shillings in Oct. 1795 for "Blake's Engravings" (BR 569), which may account for *Experience*, but if so, then *Innocence* would have by itself cost 10s.6d., or six shillings more than *Experience*, which is very unlikely since it was printed on both sides of the paper and thus involved fewer leaves. Perhaps the 10s.6d. refers to *Innocence* copy D and an untraced drawing or print. If any other of Flaxman's payments to Blake can account for *Experience*, it is probably the £2.2s. of Oct. 1797 (BR 570); this, of course, does not necessarily mean that *Experience* was produced this late, particularly since by then Blake was busily at work with *Night Thoughts* and Gray's *Poems* (Bindman, *Blake as Artist* 109). It does suggest, though, that the printing session responsible for this copy of *Experience* occurred between 1795 and 1797.

⁴⁰It is not true that only "posthumous copies uniformly show this dark rim while copies printed by the Blakes do not" (Bentley, *William Blake's Writings* 1: xlix). For plate borders, see the impressions from *Songs* copy I reproduced in *The Illuminated Blake*. The borders in a few impressions printed lightly, not because they were wiped of ink, as was Blake's earlier practice, but because they were avoided (i.e., incompletely inked) during inking. The ink varies in hue from lighter to darker brown, but it is the same ink. The variation is due to the thickness of the layer of ink as it is spread out and as it is applied to the plate, and even of slight differences in the thickness and dampness of paper, since the condition of the paper affects pressure and receptivity.

Innocence copy W, which is untraced, was probably part of this edition. The rudimentary description in Sotheby's auction catalogue for 30 April 1941 (lot 641) strongly suggests this possibility: "22 plates printed in brown on one side of the paper only, watermarked 'Whatman' on plate 18, wrappers, loose in morocco binding (7¹³/₁₆ in x 4⁹/₁₆ in)." An otherwise irregular pattern of production (seven sets of *Innocence* and eight of *Experience*) also suggests that *Innocence* copy W was part of the edition.

⁴¹Besides sharing stylistic features like format, size, and ink, these copies share accidentals in inking (filled counters, blemishes from shallows, missing letters, etc.). "The Lamb" of *Innocence* copy N, for example, shares inking patterns, such as the same words darker and lighter, with "The Lamb" of *Songs* copy O. "On Another's Sorrow" in *Innocence* copy N is the same as the impression in *Innocence* copy R, with the same letters missing and same letters strengthened. These are signs of edition printing and cannot be repeated by printing copies over a few years, matching them to an unstated but presumed archetype. An even more overt sign of edition printing is the exact repetition of recto-verso plate pairs in *Innocence* copies A–G, K–M, and *Innocence of Songs* copies B–E, which are thought to have been produced between 1789 and 1800 (BB 376–77, 382). Bentley says "there is no easy explanation for why" the same two plates would be "invariably paired" (BB 387). The difficulty dissolves once the unstated assumption that illuminated books were printed one at a time and by commission is dismissed. Indeed, if illuminated impressions were printed per book and not per plate

as was standard practice, then the exact repetition among copies supposedly produced over an 11 year period necessarily implies a model, an idea especially difficult to accept for *Innocence* and *Songs*. It means that Blake would have intentionally repeated himself only to undermine the model's pairing by ordering the pages differently in each copy, while within the same period producing copies of *Innocence* (copies I, J, X, and *Innocence of Songs* copy F) that do not repeat the model.

While traces of ink from the lower shallows may continue to print, their absence within a set of impressions is no more proof of discontinuous printing than are different inks or sizes of paper, but may be a sign of the cleaner impression having been pulled first, or of necessary adjustments in ink, dabber, pressure, etc., having been made to make the next print better. Indeed, the very existence of poorly printed or registered illuminated impressions is reason enough to believe that Blake printed multiple impressions per plate—and to have done otherwise would have been a terribly inefficient use of time, labor, and materials. He admits as much in the prospectus: "No Subscriptions for the numerous great works now in hand are asked, for none are wanted; but the Author will produce his works, and offer them to sale at a fair price" (K 208). Blake declares that multiple copies of each book had been and would continue to be produced independent of subscription, that he had, in other words, produced books on his own account and independent of advanced monies.

The idea that Blake printed most of the illuminated books in limited editions and not one at a time, printed the impressions per plate and not, as Essick (and others) argue, on "a per-copy basis" (Essick, "Materials" 856), alters the dates of most books and our understanding of what constitutes Blake's "style," as well as our idea of what motivated production. Perhaps more significant, it is a mode of production that reveals when Blake was and was not involved with poetry, which forces us to reexamine the role illuminated printing and poetry played in Blake's creative life after 1795. The evidence for this mode of production is dealt with briefly in my *Art of William Blake's Illuminated Prints* and more extensively in a forthcoming article.

⁴²Separating coloring from printing also gave Blake the option of offering monochrome copies as "finished," that is, illuminated prints as prints instead of hand colored drawings, should that be requested of him. In any event, monochrome copies of *Innocence* and *Songs* are not "proof" copies, as *Songs* copy K is described by the Pierpont Morgan Library's catalogue. There are no "proof" copies of these works, since the point of proofing a plate was to check its design or to test and adjust the press. Neither case requires the whole set of plates be printed.

⁴³*Europe* copy F is not listed as being color printed (BB 142, 145), but all of its plates were color printed from the surface in the same manner and, more important, with the same colors and inks as copies D, E, and G, which suggests that the four copies were printed together. In plate 9, for example, the two women, child, and background are color printed in four different colors: green, reddish brown, yellow ochre, and black. In copies D–G, the same four colors are used, though their placement may alternate. The figure on the right is reddish brown in copies D, E, and G, and there are slight traces of that color in the hands of the figure in copy F, which is in yellow ochre. The very same inks and placement were used in plate 9 of copies B and C, except that the reddish brown of the right-hand figure was also printed from the shallows. It appears that Blake painted the plate six times using the same palette and printed four impressions on two sides of the sheet and two impressions on one side only.

All six copies are on undated I. Taylor paper, with at least two sheets of 1794 / J. Whatman in copy C; the four recto-verso copies

match recto-verso copies of *America*, or, rather, give buyers the opportunity to have matched copies, buyers such as Ozias Humphry who owned recto-verso copies of *America* (H) and *Europe* (D). At this time (c. 1794), though, there were only recto-verso copies of *America*; copies A and B, the single-sided colored and monochrome copies of *America* had not yet been printed. They were produced as part of the large paper set and appear to have had as their counterparts *Europe* copies A and H, which were similarly colored and uncolored. The *Experience* plates of *Songs* copies B–E, all on undated I. Taylor and J. Whatman papers, were probably printed recto-verso for the same reason as *Europe* copies D–G: to match copies of *Innocence* printed earlier. That the two parts were printed at different times is indicated by plates 34–36 having been printed with *Innocence* but moved over to *Experience*, taking with them plate 26 (the recto of pl. 34), which belongs to *Innocence*.

⁴⁴Platemarks are most noticeable in *Experience*, *Marriage*, and *Visions* color-printed plates; given their embossments, these plates were apparently bitten deeper than *Urizen* and *Song of Los*. Todd's assertion that color printing did not require a press is unfounded and ignores the fact that both levels are being printed and that the inks were burnt oil and not glue based like the colors. The former is the vehicle for intaglio ink and necessitates more pressure for its clean transference from plate to paper than can be gotten "by the hand" (Todd 37).

⁴⁵For a description of copy F, which was recently rediscovered, and color reproductions, see Dörrbecker. A comparison of the ink color and inking peculiarities of plate 4, for example, reveals that the impressions from copies A–F were pulled sequentially; Essick notes the same with plates 1, of copies A–E, though finding a different printing order than myself (Essick, *Printmaker* 129). Other color-printed works, like the *Large Book of Designs* copies A and B, the *Small Book of Designs* copies A and B, and the monoprints of 1795, followed this practice (see n. 38).

⁴⁶Color printing preceded and led to Blake's great color print drawings of 1795, which are technically monotypes. Tatham described Blake's monoprinting process to Gilchrist as making "prints in oil," and although the medium appears not to have been oil paint but a mixture of ink and size color, and the support appears not to have been exclusively millboard (at least one print, "God Judging Adam," was pulled from a relief-etched metal plate), and although Linnell dismissed the account as inaccurate (without saying how or why), Tatham's description is essentially correct for both the monotypes and the color-printed illuminated impressions. According to Tatham, Blake painted his colors upon the support:

roughly and quickly, so that no colour would have time to dry. He then took a print of that on paper, and this impression he coloured up in water-colours, repainting his outline on the millboard when he wanted to take another print. This plan he had recourse to, because he could vary slightly each impression; and each having a sort of accidental look, he could branch out so as to make each one different. The accidental look they had was very enticing.

(BR 33–34, my emphasis)

Tatham admits that impressions could be sequential and *different*, though, as noted (37), the overt differences were due more to finishing than to printing. He also admits that impressions could be produced whenever Blake "wanted to" repaint "the outline," which implies that multiple color-printed drawings could have been printed during one session or years later, which is exactly what recent research of Martin Butlin, the leading expert on the color-printed drawings, has verified, that some impressions were printed sequentially in 1795 and others from the same plates in c. 1805 (Butlin, "Physicality" 12). The fact that Blake was producing color prints in c. 1805, with all their blots, blurs, and opacity, indicates that color printing's use and abandonment were not tied to Blake's changing theories about perception.

⁴⁷Blake's comment in 1827 about needing six months to print a copy of *Songs* was seriously qualified with "consistent with my other Work," and cannot be taken to reflect his practice or abilities 30 years earlier, when he was not "shut up in a Corner" but had a "whole House to range in," i.e., was set up to print, physically and mentally, in that the illuminated books in the early 1790s were his primary creative work (K 878). Equally important, in 1827 he was no longer just washing impressions, but rather painting them elaborately, which took more time and attention. The coloring of most books produced before 1795 and not color printed is simple, consisting of a few washes; for example, the five broad washes in "The Lamb" of *Innocence* copy B probably represent no more time and labor than it took to ink and print this plate one time, since those acts involved applying ink to the plate with a dabber, which had to be handled carefully to keep it from touching the shallows, wiping the borders, registering the plate on the bed of the press and registering the paper to the plate, and pulling the bed through the rollers. For plates like "School Boy" and "Holy Thursday," laying in simple washes would have taken far less labor than inking and printing. Nor do Blake's late comments accurately describe his late practice, which may seem to have been to print and color books by order, "having none remaining of all that [he] had Printed" and little room to do otherwise, but actually conformed to his earliest practice of printing in editions, albeit smaller ones, as is evinced by the material and stylistic features shared by the last copies of *Songs*, copies V, Z, and AA, *Visions*, copies N, O, P, and *Thel*, copies N and O (see n. 51).

⁴⁸What little information that exists about Blake's activities for 1795 is nearly all in Stedman's journal and does not reveal Blake's work schedule (BR 49). It appears that Blake executed only three small frontispieces that winter and spring, finishing them by March and May (BR 614). The year before that he had no commissions other than six outlines for Cumberland's *Thoughts on Outline* (1796); conversely (and understandably), Blake produced and printed more illuminated plates in 1794 than any other. It is important to understand that printmaking and printing were Blake's life, that he was not a poet lucky enough to know how to etch or unlucky enough to have to leave off writing and make time to print. It is also important to recognize the fallacy of Cunningham's popular depiction of Blake as a man working for the publishers by day and for himself at night (BR 484, 501). The truth is that Blake worked at home and structured his own time, worked on book illustrations, which were relatively small and syntactically uncomplicated compared to separate plates, i.e., reproductive engravings after paintings, like his "Beggar's Opera" of 1788 after Hogarth. Indeed, with the possible exception of two etchings and an engraving after Fuseli (c. 1790? BR 612), Blake did not execute any separate commercial plates between 1789 and 1795, the period of illuminated printing, and, as mentioned, appears to have had a good deal of time on his hands in 1794 and 1795.

Had Blake started the *Night Thoughts* designs in 1795, as Butlin believes, he would most likely not have begun till after he printed his last books and the monoprints, since that enormous project would have necessitated rearranging his work-space as well as his time. That painting and printing made different practical demands Blake made clear in his refusal in 1808 to reprint illuminated books, fearing "that it is impossible for me to return to [them] without destroying my present course," "which in future must alone be devoted to Designing & Painting" (K 865-66).

⁴⁹Though D'Israeli's copy of *Visions*, copy F, was not printed with the set, *Visions* copy G was, which keeps the number at 160; in addition to these 160 plates there were the 23 small plates of *All Religions* copy A and *No Natural Religion* copy L, and with more than one impression printed from the *America*, *No Natural Religion*, *Europe*, and possibly *Songs* plates, there may have been about 275 impressions. The estimate of 7 to 10 days to print these plates is based also on the experience of Paul Ritchie of the Manchester Etching Workshop, who printed the Workshop's Blake facsimiles of *Songs* copy B in 1983. According to Ritchie, if Mrs. Blake was the "clean-hand person," then this estimate is very charitable. Working together, "100 uncolored relief prints of *Songs* could be done in a day and the 180 larger *America* prints [10 copies] could easily be done in 3 days" — and this would include "a pint & a pic at lunch-time" (private correspondence). Again, it must be remembered that once the shop was set up, printing small relief plates was relatively easy, that printing was what Blake and Mrs. Blake did for their material and spiritual livelihood, and that my estimate of 30 to 40 impressions a day supposes a mere three to five impressions an hour, an output easily reached even with intaglio plates and color printing. In preparation for this article, I printed two of the electrotypes we used in the Manchester Etching Facsimile of *Songs*. Working alone and with a linen dabber, I printed 30 impressions, 15 from each plate, in two hours.

The relation between practice and style is beyond the scope of this essay, but suffice it to say that Blake's practice only seems inconsistent because his mode of production and its effect on dating are poorly understood, obscured by our focus on differences instead of similarities (by which style is defined and discernible) and our assumption that artifacts as unique (and valuable) as illuminated books must have been produced uniquely, that is, one at a time.

⁵⁰*America* may have been reprinted because there were no copies in stock on one side of the sheet; *Europe*, on the other hand, may have been reprinted because copies B and C, which were color printed on one side of the leaf (though probably with recto-verso copies D-G, see n. 43), did not match the copies of *America* texturally or were already sold. Cumberland, one of Blake's earliest collectors, owned *Europe* copy C; Hanrott owned *Europe* copy B, which was not necessarily purchased early or directly from Blake. Hanrott bought *Songs* copy P in 1826 from another collector (BB 419), and his copies of *America* (G), *Europe* (B), and *Jerusalem* (B), which were bound possibly as early as 1821 (the date of a flyleaf; BB 102), may also have been purchased late. As with D'Israeli, there is no evidence other than the books themselves to suggest Hanrott knew or met Blake.

⁵¹Blake was to print the canon in this fashion, that is, print various books around the same time using the same paper, printing format, palette, and inks, in c. 1815 and 1825, apparently to replenish stock. For example, he printed copies of *Marriage* (G), *Visions* (N, O, and P), *Thel* (N, O), *Milton* (D), *Urizen* (G), and *Songs* (U, T2) all on the same Ruse & Turners / 1815 paper and in the same shades of reddish brown and orange ink. All of these copies except *Thel* copy O and *Milton* copy D, which were stabbed together for Vine, have a similar single frame line outlining the plates. The technical, material, and stylistic similarities suggest that these copies were produced in the same printing sessions.

⁵²Christie's catalogue of 1876 (BB 405). *Innocence* copy D was probably produced in 1789, but no later than 1793, yet Flaxman returned from Italy late in 1794. *Innocence* copy C was said by R. H. Shepherd to have been "executed" for Samuel Rogers (BB 405n2). Both cataloguer and critic equate ownership with commission.

The Deterioration of the 1951 Blake Trust *Jerusalem*

BY DENA BAIN TAYLOR

In my dual capacity as Blake scholar and Blake bookseller, it is always a particular pleasure for me to handle the Blake Trust/Trianon Press facsimiles, especially the 1951 facsimile of the full one hundred plates of the Stirling copy of *Jerusalem*. The Stirling *Jerusalem* was the first Blake facsimile produced by the Trianon Press and the Blake Trust, and the plates were presented in two different formats: five signatures in paper wrappers (fascicles), or bound in book form. Both came in a drop-front book box. In the spring of 1988, I sold one of the bound *Jerusalem* copies (no. 399) to the University of Waterloo in Waterloo, Ontario, whose head of collections management, Stuart MacKinnon, has taken great pains over the last several years to assemble an excellent Blake research collection.

Some weeks after the book was shipped to Waterloo, I received a call from MacKinnon, asking me if I had noticed that the pages in their *Jerusalem* had begun to discolor, and asking if I could account for this. I told him that I had never noticed it. I also told him that I was at a loss to account for it, since the plates were advertised as being on a pure rag paper made to match Blake's own and therefore ought not to brown or discolor.

MacKinnon then took his copy to McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, to be tested for acidity by the head of their Preservation and Restoration Unit, John Winch. He chose McMaster because that institution has one of the most advanced and well-equipped conservation units on the continent. Using a computerized pH meter, Winch discovered to everyone's dismay that Waterloo's copy has a pH level of 4.34. McMaster's own copy tested at the same level. Since a reading of 7 indicates a neutral level of acidity, pH 4.34 is alarmingly acidic. Furthermore, Winch reported that the paper has not yet stabilized; it is still deteriorating. His estimate is that, if left untreated, the copies have a life of only approximately another twenty years. If treated with Wei T'o, a magnesium hydroxide and methanol solution, the life of the facsimile could be extended to about eighty years, at which time new advances in technology might

provide a more permanent answer. The box in which the facsimile is housed is made of extremely acidic cardboard.

With this information, I contacted Richard Landon, head of the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library at the University of Toronto. That library owns two copies, one in fascicles which is in good condition and another in the bound format which is heavily used. They also had on loan to them the bound copy belonging to G. E. Bentley, Jr. The University of Toronto does not have the same sophisticated equipment that McMaster has, and their copies were tested by what amounted to an ordinary litmus test. In other words, strips of treated paper were held against the paper and then the color changes on the treated paper were read against a chart. Even by this relatively crude method, the copies tested at a little under pH 5.

At this point I contacted Jerry James, Humanities Bibliographer at the University of California Santa Cruz, since that university now owns the bulk of the archives of the Trianon Press. On the staff of the library is Maureen Carey, a fine printer and paper conservator who has been working intensively for some time on the massive amount of Trianon Press archival material; I spoke with her at length after she had a chance to test their copy, which is also bound.

Carey used the same type of litmus test that the University of Toronto had, and the result was a pH level of 5. She also noticed some "burning" or "ghosting" of the ink outlines (but not the water-color pigment) onto the facing pages of the plates. She asked whether I had seen that on any other copy; I had not. She mentioned that the library also owns about fifteen hundred sheets of overs from the edition, which are yellowing heavily and also foxing. This condition is probably due to their storage in the original book boxes in damp stone warehouses for years. They are acidic, 4.5-5.0 pH.

She also noticed some other very disturbing things about their copy. First, there are no watermarks on the paper (either in the bound copy or the fifteen hundred

loose sheets). In addition, the sheets have the grain of the paper running against the spine of the book page. Cutting and printing this way means that there is less waste but it is not an acceptable procedure in fine printing. A combination of inferior glue and pressure created on the binding by the horizontal grain has resulted in a tendency for the pages to pop out of the binding. Asked if I had ever seen this before, I said that in fact I had noticed it in most of the bound copies I have seen over the years. Finally, Carey found that the thickness of the sheets is inconsistent—some are nearly as thick as felt and others almost as thin as tissue paper. Carey's opinion as a fine printer was that all of these are cost-saving features and that the paper was seconds or retrees. She said that she herself would not have used it for a project of this importance. She compared the paper to glorified newsprint. As it happens, she was not far from the truth.

In the meantime, David Ouellette of the Preservation and Restoration Unit at McMaster had sent, with the concurrence of Stuart MacKinnon of Waterloo, a 6.0 by 6.5 cm sample of paper from Waterloo's copy to Gregory Young at the Canadian Conservation Institute in Ottawa. Young placed a drop of water onto the paper sample and teased fibers from both the surface and the interior of the paper matrix. He transferred portions of pulp fibers to microscope slides and applied Herzberg's iodine stain. He immediately examined the slides by polarized light microscopy and discovered that almost all the fibers had stained an intense violet color; very few fibers stained yellow. Vasicentric tracheids, fibers, parenchyma cells and vessel elements were all present. The color given by the stain and the extensive fibrillation and breakup of most of the fibers in the matrix enabled Young to conclude that the paper was made from a high quality, low yield (low lignin content), well beaten, chemical hardwood pulp. In other words, the paper is definitely not the pure rag paper it was extensively advertised to be.

Another major problem with the book form of the facsimile is the binding. Because Ouellette had to remove the plates of the Waterloo copy from their binding in order to deacidify them, he was able to examine the binding very closely. He found that the text block is in single leaf format, notched on the back and glued, with cords sunk into the notches and a cloth mull pasted over top. There is no sewing whatsoever. In his report to MacKinnon, he said that such a structure could not be expected to last very long under normal use, given the weight and stiffness of the paper. The headbanding is another questionable structural feature of the volume. The headbands are false and stuck on, as opposed to bands sewn on vellum cores found in bindings meant to

last. The boards are apparently a low quality strawboard, but adequately joined to the text block by way of French groove reinforced with cloth at the outer hinges. The hollow spine was apparently made from a cheap kraft paper. Both the volume and the nicely made box are covered with a good quality linen.

The question naturally arises as to why the principals involved in producing the facsimile of *Jerusalem* used an inferior paper and binding. This first project of the Blake Trust and the Trianon Press was produced by committee, with most of the members knowing little about book production, paper, or collotype. It was a very trying experience for all concerned and just short of a miracle that the facsimile was published at all. It was, for example, because of conflicts within the committee that the facsimile was produced in two different formats, and the commentary by Joseph Wickstead, which was originally to have been included with the facsimile, was published separately. The archives of the Trianon Press provide a fascinating picture of the struggles—artistic, financial, and political—that went on during the whole period of production. In particular, the correspondence between Arnold Fawcus of the Trianon Press in France and his partner in England, Patrick Macleod, sheds light on the difficulties that had to be overcome. Unfortunately, there are no final answers, since neither man anticipated the problems of deterioration forty years later, but there are many clues.

Although Fawcus was dedicated to the idea of producing fine facsimiles, he was not himself a fine printer and initially had little knowledge of paper. In some of the letters in the archives, Fawcus asks very basic questions concerning the grain and weight of paper, things that are generally understood by people in the business. He clearly shared the general belief, at a time when there was little awareness of conservation factors, that a rag paper from a reputable mill would probably last as long as antiquarian books generally had lasted.

His role as the head of the Trianon Press was to find the various technical experts who were required; organize and coordinate their work; and—most difficult task of all—find the money to back the enterprise and the sales to make it succeed. He spent a good deal of the period in which the *Jerusalem* was being produced traveling in both the United Kingdom and the United States to raise money.

The paper had to be purchased in France, because the duties on paper coming from England were so high as to make using imported paper quite out of the question, and Fawcus and Macleod relied on the printer, Daniel Jacomet, to find a suitable source. Jacomet himself was faced with an awkward situation. He would nat-

urally have wanted the best paper possible, but both the Trianon Press and the fledgling, as-yet-unendowed, Blake Trust were operating on a shoestring. Furthermore, he had submitted an estimate to the Trust in October 1948, and he had to make sure he kept his costs low enough to stay within the figures he'd quoted and still make a profit.

Jacomet chose to recommend that the Trust purchase the paper from the Papeteries de Renage in the town of Voiron, about ten miles from Grenoble. In his estimate of 18 October 1948 he stated that (in the English translation provided for the members of the committee):

The paper which approaches the original most closely is Velin Chiffon de Renage. The price of this paper is lower than that of Rives, which is also too light weight. Renage paper can be delivered in two months from the date of ordering.

The committee had been very concerned about selecting suitable paper, and there is a significant item in this regard in the minutes of the July 1949 meeting at which the committee accepted Jacomet's October estimates:

Mr. Fawcus showed a sample of "RENAGE" paper which M. Jacomet had considered might be suitable. This paper did not appear to have a pure rag content, nor to be sufficiently "colle." It was therefore suggested that further samples should be obtained at once, and that if possible Mr. Goyder should visit France to assist in the selection of paper. It was stressed that paper selected should be treated against "foxing."

George Goyder did in fact visit France for this purpose (a letter from Jacomet to Macleod refers to the visit), and a sheet—now sadly yellowed and foxed—of the *Jerusalem* paper in the archives contains Fawcus's penciled notation, "Accepted by George Goyder." Clearly, Jacomet and/or the people at Renage had managed to convince the less knowledgeable Goyder that the paper was suitable. On 14 November 1948 four days after the letter from Jacomet that referred to Goyder's visit, a letter from Macleod to Renage confirms the order for paper Pur Chiffon Blanc and encloses an actual sample of the paper from the original *Jerusalem* to assist Renage in making as close a match as possible.

Renage, now defunct, was a small paper mill; Carey could find no references to it other than its charter. At a loss to understand why Jacomet chose such an insignificant mill over one of the larger, better known mills, Carey could only suggest that there may have been personal, political, or economic factors involved. He may have had to pay a debt by giving work to some friend or relative who was involved with Renage; or he may have been forced by the French Fine Printing Society (now

also defunct) to give Renage the job in order to spread around what printing work there was; or he may simply have been offered such a good deal on the paper that he couldn't turn it down.

As for the paper itself, the financial state of the book trade in France at the time, and the physical conditions under which the paper was manufactured, may have been two of the major factors contributing to its poor quality. Money was, of course, very tight in postwar France in general, and in the book trade in particular. Many had no money for food, let alone for books. Producers needed to bring in as much money as possible for as small an outlay as possible. Cost-cutting was almost certainly on the minds of everyone involved.

The physical conditions under which the paper was manufactured must have been anything but ideal. The area in and around Grenoble is heavily industrialized, producing steel, hemp, cloth, paper, silk, and a number of other products. The town of Voiron itself is on a major river that services many towns in the area, and the amount and nature of pollutants being pumped directly into the river must have been appalling. In addition, as a heavily industrialized area, it was likely bombed during the war. All of this means that the water used in the manufacture of the paper was drawn from what amounted to a chemical sewer, putting who can say what kind of impurities into the paper itself.

Finally, there is the further issue of who physically made the paper. The Renage mill may well have been short of skilled labor, for a lot of reasons—the ravages of the war; the inability of a small, struggling mill to pay well; the necessity for skilled laborers to move to the larger mills where the work and the money were. The paper may have been sized improperly, or some chemical used for the sizing which has ultimately contributed to the deterioration. The workers' possible lack of skill would account for the remarkable differences in paper thickness.

Whatever factors were involved in the deficiencies of the manufacturing process, it seems inconceivable to me that experienced people like Jacomet and the owners of Renage could not recognize that the product they were selling the Blake Trust and Trianon Press was greatly inferior to what they had been contracted for, not to mention that it was not rag paper in the first place. Jacomet, indeed, seems on a number of occasions to have been working at cross-purposes to the Trust. Clearly, from his point of view, time was money and the more time spent on the project by people working for him, the less he would make. On 28 August 1950 Fawcus complained to Geoffrey Keynes about the number of in-

accuracies in Jacomet's work and the "delicacy" of approaching him to correct them by hand. On 29 December 1950 Macleod wrote:

I was amazed to read about Jacomet cutting the pages. Why? Surely this has to be done by the binders. Or is it a question of giving one straight edge which he has balled up.

And on 6 January 1951 Macleod reported to Fawcus that the binding of the bound volume was satisfactory, but that the "fascicles present some problem owing to discrepancy in printing by Jacomet."

However, one characteristic of the paper that Maureen Carey supposed to have been a cost-cutting measure turns out to have been the responsibility of the Trust, and that is the lack of a watermark. Jacomet had passed on to the Trust the information that Renage would allow them to include a watermark as a courtesy, but by the time the Trust got the design to Renage, the papermaking process was too far advanced for it to be included.

The attractive drop-front box in which the *Jerusalem* is housed can only have contributed to the problem. Not only does the box create an unventilated environment for the book within, but the highly acidic cardboard from which it is made may easily have further contaminated the paper within. On the other hand, as David Ouellette pointed out, the fact that the box was so well constructed has surely saved the binding of the heavy but relatively flimsily constructed volume from disintegrating.

It is difficult to understand how such a poor binding came to be used. The letters between Fawcus, Macleod, and Keynes between November 1950 and April 1951 are filled with details of their problems and frustrations in deciding on binding methods and binders. It was during this period too that they nearly lost the original Stirling *Jerusalem*, when an overzealous French customs officer impounded it. It is also clear from their letters that they had not only to make crucial decisions to ensure the strongest, most durable binding possible, but that they also had to deal with a divided and somewhat captious committee. The result, despite the scrupulous agonizing that comes through clearly in the letters, was not only two different formats but, sadly, a weak and inadequate binding.

Whatever the original causes of the problems with the paper and the binding, these problems are very much with us today and certainly will not go away on their own. The McMaster Preservation and Restoration Unit performed the following salvage operation on the University of Waterloo's copy: to strengthen the paper, after deacidifying it with Wei T'o, and to create a tradi-

tional sewing structure, McMaster conservators backed each print with fine quality Japanese paper, leaving an extension along the back edge to be folded like a center fold. Four prints were then gathered per section and center sewn onto linen ribbons. The volume was then bound in the durable "Library style," with split boards lined with buffered card, linen reinforced French joints, headbands sewn on by hand on vellum cores, hollow spine made with buffered card, and chieftain goatskin leather on the spine and corners. The original cloth spine and sides were added ovetop and the original box repaired and modified to accommodate the larger size of the restored volume. The conservators also recommended that future users wear gloves. The time involved to perform these operations was approximately one hundred forty hours, but they are expected to add at least sixty years to the life of the facsimile.

It is doubly distressing that it should be the *Jerusalem* to which this has happened. The *Jerusalem* was the first, the most ambitious, and the most impressively accurate of the series. After the *Jerusalem*, Fawcus and Keynes collaborated, worked out a project, and presented it to the Trust. The guidelines as to how exact the Trust and Trianon could afford to be were set with the production of the *Jerusalem*; the projects that followed, although very exact, were considered finished when the essence of the water color was reached, not necessarily when it matched the original.

It also seems tremendously unlikely—given our present technology and the costs of facsimile reproduction—that the Stirling copy of *Jerusalem* should ever be reproduced again by the cooperative work of individual artisans. After all, we need only look at the example of the recent Manchester Etching Workshop edition of the *Songs*, a much simpler work to reproduce than *Jerusalem*. It had originally been the intention of the Workshop to produce a whole series of facsimiles, much as the Trianon Press and Blake Trust had, but the time, labor, and expense involved quickly made the principals realize the impossibility of such an extended project.

Fortunately, it is increasingly likely that the Blake Trust will soon be embarking on a collected edition of the illuminated books that will reproduce the plates from the best available copies, using newly taken photographs. If this project is successfully launched, the *Jerusalem* will be among the first of the volumes to be issued. Even this, however, cannot serve to mitigate the impending loss of the 1951 *Jerusalem*, and it is painfully obvious that it now falls to the individuals and institutions who own copies of the *Jerusalem* to display the same sort of commitment Stuart MacKinnon has shown in preserving the University of Waterloo copy.

REVIEWS

William Blake, *Oeuvres IV: Vala ou les Quatre Vivants, et Annotations à divers ouvrages*. Texte original présenté, traduit et annoté par Jacques Blondel. Paris: Aubier-Flammarion, 1983.

Reviewed by Martin Bidney

Despite the modest self-appraisal implicit in Jacques Blondel's remark that "Une traduction des Livres prophétiques de Blake peut faire penser à une tapisserie sans les couleurs" (48), his rendering of *The Four Zoas*—the first ever into French—is rich in color, a superb achievement. Of course the original rhythm ("le septénaire iambique et plus souvent anapestique" [50]) cannot be conveyed in a non-accentual language. Nor can long sequences of marching adjectives be rendered in analogous processions: "Hearing the march of long resounding, strong heroic Verse" becomes "Entendant le progrès du puissant Vers héroïque aux échos prolongés" (61). Blondel alters the rhythm, the placement of words, and sometimes even the logic of their interrelations because the French language requires these changes. "Long" has to refer to the resonance, the resounding, rather than to the verse itself, though in Blake's line it can refer to both. Certain fruitful ambiguities must be sacrificed to clarity. But not all. For instance, "Mighty was the draught of Voidness to draw Existence in" becomes "Le souffle du Vide était puissant pour aspirer l'Existence" (115). Here the punning play on "draught" and "draw" (and their alliteration, too) finds a perfect counterpart in the pairing of "souffle" and "aspirer." There are even bonuses. When "rav'ning like the hungry worm" becomes "vorace comme le ver avide" (115) we feel we have received an extra gift of evocative music.

A six-part introduction offers useful background to the new reader of Blake's epic. In "Révolution et révélation" Newton and Milton offer earlier precedents for Blake's insistence on the primacy of apocalyptic vision. In "Millénarisme et mysticisme" specimens of revolutionary-minded apocalypticism from Southey's *Joan of Arc* and Coleridge's *Religious Musings* enrich the context. As Blake is shown interiorizing his revolutionary hopes, parallels with Winstanley are drawn: Blake is pre-

sented as seer rather than mystic ("voyant" vs. "mystique"). "Le mythe des Quatre Vivants" makes the point that the Zoas "sont des personnifications, des états d'âme, et non des vertus et des vices, comme dans une allégorie médiévale" (27). ("Vivants" is a wonderful rendering of "Zoas," in my opinion, especially for the new reader of Blake; it clears up the line "We are become a Victim to the Living"—"Nous voilà devenus Victime des Vivants" [63]—in a way that is very helpful right at the outset. Blake's later explanation, "they are named Life's—in Eternity" is rendered by Blondel as "elles ont nom les merveilles de la Vie—dans l'Éternité" [425].) The section "Les nuits" sums up the plot and, borrowing a fine phrase used in another context by Gérard Genette (*Figures I*, 1966), characterizes *The Four Zoas* as "pourvu d'un surplus de sens inépuisable et toujours indéfiniment présent" (40). "Du chaos à la pastorale" relates Blake's pictorial art to Fuseli, Tibaldi, Barry, Flaxman, and Stothard. Blake's vivid baroque is encapsulated in Bachelard's aphorism that all three Blakean epics are "litanies de l'énergie qui sont comme des interjections qui pensent" (47). Finally, "Le langage symbolique" summarizes Josephine Miles' groupings of Blakean rhetorical figures and modes of diction.

Wonderfully Blakean is the epigraph from Saint-John Perse that heads up the Introduction; in part it says, "De l'exigence poétique, exigence spirituelle, sont nées les religions elles-mêmes, et par la grâce poétique, l'étincelle du divin vit à jamais dans le silex humain" (7). Study of the "spark" image in the poem itself shows Blondel's refusal to be bound by any strict literalism, his openness to context in modifying diction. "Los answer'd in his furious pride, sparks issuing from his hair" becomes "Los, superbe et furieux, répondit, les cheveux pleins d'étincelles" (179). The French Los has hair "filled" with sparks to match the fullness of his pride. The element of motion in "issuing" is omitted. But one page later, the sparks return, and this time they show twice as much motion in French as in English, to dramatize Los' redoubled fury as the translator wants us to feel it. Thus, "In scorn stood Los, red sparks of blighting from his furious head / Flew over the waves of Tharmas" now becomes "Méprisant se dressait Los, et de rouges étincelles dévastatrices jaillissant de sa tête furieuse / Volèrent au-dessus des vagues de Tharmas" (181). Here "sparks of blighting" are "étincelles dévastatrices" (superb majesty of destructive indignation!). But just a bit later, "From his mouth curses, and from his eyes sparks of blighting" becomes "De sa bouche sortaient des malédictions, et de ses yeux de funestes étincelles" (207). These new "sparks of blighting" are merely "funestes étincelles"; fatal, funereal, they make us think of a pyre, not a lightning blast from heaven. Moods change, and the translator responds.

The poem's very last line offers another fine instance of precision and care combined with vividness and force. For "The dark Religions are departed and sweet Science reigns" Blondel gives us "Les sombres Religions ne sont plus, et du Savoir délectable c'est maintenant le règne" (483). Here he tries to reproduce the cadence, the rhythm, and he does it so well that we do not feel the syntactic inversion as at all forced. "C'est maintenant le règne du Savoir délectable" would be quite inappropriate, for we wish to end with a sense of innocence re-organized, of organic form, of a rule which is not Urizen's dividing rule. The translator, incidentally, as word-connoisseur has done as much careful thinking about the word "sweet" in Blakean usage as he has devoted to the imagery of sparks and blighting. In the Introduction he contrasts Blake's "sweet Science" with the Shelleyan "sweet eclipse / When soul meets soul on lovers' lips" (45) to help illustrate the difference between the more earthly apocalypse of the *Zoas* and the ethereal one of *Prometheus Unbound* Act IV. "Sweet," in Blake, also proves quite variable in meaning according to context. "Redd'ning, the demon strong prepar'd the poison of sweet Love" becomes "Rougissant, le puissant démon prépara le poison de l'amour souriant" (285). This is translation as interpretation, and it deserves high praise.

One can always cavil about a few details. I don't know why "all the black mould sings" should be weakened to "toute la terre noire chante" (457). "Mould" here refers to the rich, friable, black topsoil; why not "l'humus noir" instead of "la terre noire"? And surely it is more than a cavil to suggest that the Erdman text should have been used, not the Keynes.

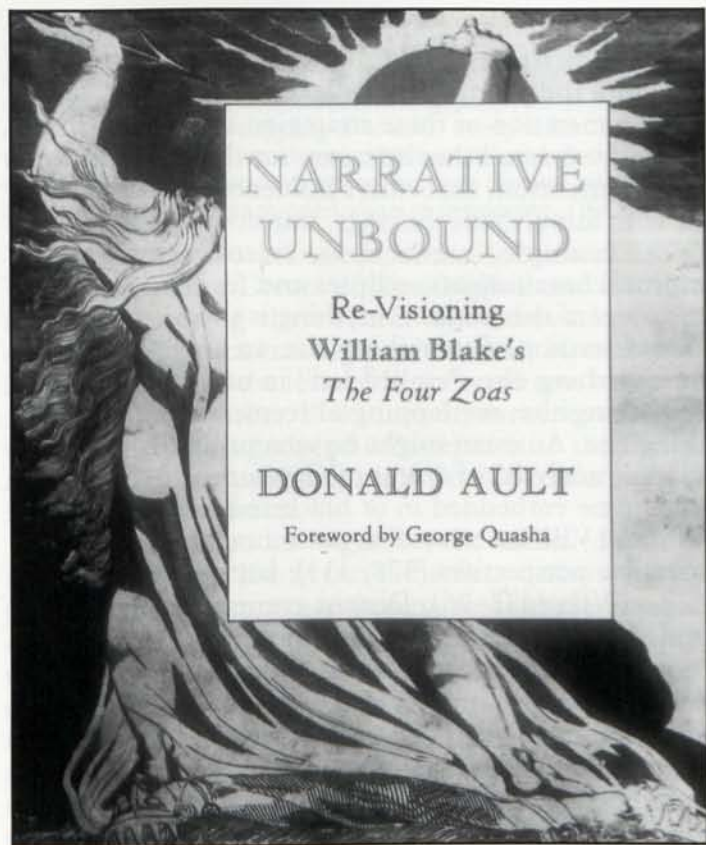
But overall, the version is excellent. I cannot resist citing still another instance of taste and discernment. "Fearing thy frown, loving thy smile, O Urizen, Prince of Light" becomes "Redoutant le courroux de ton front et aimant ton sourire, O Urizen, Prince de Lumière" (411). "Le courroux de ton front" was by no means the inevitable choice for "frown"; there are many possibilities—"renfrognement," or "froncement de sourcil," or "regard courroucé." But the mention of Urizen's "forehead" is perfect in a picture of this Zoa of the head, or Schoolmaster of the Sky—and "front" even sounds like "frown." The whole *Quatre Vivants* abounds in exquisite touches of this kind. The notes to Watson, Bacon, and Boyd included in the same volume are also finely done into French. And the sample sketches reproduced from the *Zoas* manuscript increase our pleasure.

A total of six volumes is envisioned for this bilingual Blake series, which is under the direction of Pierre Leyris.

Donald Ault, *Narrative Unbound: Re-Visioning William Blake's The Four Zoas*. Barrytown, NY: Station Hill Press, 1987. xxvi + 518 pp. \$37.50 cloth/\$14.95 paper. Reviewed by Paul Mann

An enormous, astonishing, monumental book; a quantum leap in the reading of *The Four Zoas*; etc. (It is difficult, at one level, to avoid the rhetoric of dust-jacket superlatives in appraising the scale and importance of Ault's accomplishment; but so too the puny scale of a review will inevitably belittle his book even in singing its praises.) For more than fifteen years, patiently, obsessively, Ault has labored over *FZ*, his "master text," reading and rereading, revising and revising ("re-visioning"). The phrase "master text" (xviii) is in fact exemplary. But Blake sought no disciples and Ault is no false-humble acolyte. What we are given are the results not only of scholarly study but of a sustained attempt to rise to *FZ*'s occasion, to answer to its demands. In fact, *Narrative Unbound* is nearly as demanding as *FZ* itself. One imagines readers so severely tested by the demands *NU* transfers to them—outrageous demands, for a patience and obsessiveness approaching Ault's own—that they resort to the stock charge of self-indulgence. Here, they will say, is still one more critic who thinks he deserves as much attention as the poet he interprets, who doesn't read and explicate but usurps, who overwhelms us with an excess that some Blake slogan or other calls for but no one really wants to witness. Just who is the master of this master text, Blake or Ault? But in reading Ault's vast book one might also come to the conclusion that the only way really to appreciate *FZ*, to be faithful to it, is to exceed it, or rather to *keep it* excessive, to refuse reduction at all costs.

What sort of mastery does this master text require? For Ault, reading must see itself in the light of Blake's radical insistence on the primacy of perception. It is no longer a matter of choosing between a hypostatic Poem Itself that pretends to bracket off every "extrinsic" relation and one immersed in some "concrete" historical context, nor between authorial intention and readerly affect. Ault's proper reader is neither usurper nor servant, neither before nor after meaning: in *FZ*, Ault discovers, "text and reader come into existence simultaneously to constitute and alter one another at each point



in the poem" (6). It is a revolutionary notion, if taken seriously, and announces what might be the most Blakean project that Blake criticism could take upon itself, one in which ontology recapitulates phenomenology: being as an act of perception, an act of minds in relation, with no actuality outside of relation. Becoming and beholding and being beheld are simultaneous, interconstitutive, a single nexus: "perspective ontology," in Ault's phrase. We have seen this sort of claim before—Frye, of course, begins his own study with an analysis of Blake's radical epistemology—but in Ault it is not just a claim, it is a *modus operandi*. Ault's *FZ* is an attempt to generate in its reader an *actual* awareness of the primacy of perception, and *NU* is an attempt to respond to that awareness in kind. But to respond in this manner is necessarily to produce something excessive, outrageous, monstrous, no longer simply a book on a poem: indeed, it will be difficult henceforth to separate study-title from poem-title. Perhaps they should be rewritten thus: *NU/FZ*.

So the massive bound object that Ault names *Narrative Unbound* is a monument to the inter-exorbitance of text and reading. It is a monument constructed by the relentless disclosure and intercalation of what became,

in practice, endlessly resonant, mutually interfering *details*. So much detail that Ault can provide no index: "categories that would make sense for an index . . . would generate [one] competitive in length with the book itself" (xxii). The very detailedness of Ault's study is its first gift and one of its foremost theses about *FZ*. "The physical bulk of this book is integral to its program: the accumulation of details does not *exemplify* but actually *constitutes* its argument" (xxiv; Ault's emphases). Ault's project is Blakean not only in its epic scale but in its microscopic attentiveness. Not a single verbal blur or mark is permitted to admit of insignificance. Minute particularity is not just a "theme" here, it is an operational principle, a way of enacting or embodying a specificity that remains, for others, only a general idea. We must imagine a reading that has so thoroughly appropriated the poem that it knows immediately if some instance of food or circles or the sun or sitting or mildness or armour recurs similarly or differently at some distant elsewhere in the poem, and if that *kind* of recurrence or difference resonates with narrative strategies at yet other junctures; for Ault the poem is a complex web (an image that may already mark a reservation about *NU*) whose slightest vibration is transmitted throughout the entire network. We must imagine him coming to know the poem virtually by heart and still, daily, uncovering new details, new relations between cruxes he had once thought settled, with each discovery having to alter his sense of the whole until the constant flux of this alteration finally unsettles every hope for a wholeness dependent upon closure—until alteration becomes the poem. That is the sort of monument we encounter here: *NU/FZ* is an altar to alteration. The key is once again in epistemology. "The Eye altering alters all": to mark well some hitherto unmarked detail is fundamentally, substantively, to transform the whole. Nor can such revision ever end. The potential and perhaps virtual endlessness of Ault's reading is epitomized in *NU*'s extraordinary marginalia, where he not only frames, summarizes, annotates and glosses but also interrupts, extends, departs from his own text, reaches toward still other "possible" readings. For Ault, the perpetual perceptual motion of this reading *is* the meaning of *FZ*.

Let me try to summarize *NU*'s argument without displacing either the primacy of its detail or its radical phenomenological embeddedness.

Assume that, faced with a text of *FZ*'s density, the Common Reader would try to organize the experience of the poem into some unitary and coherent sense, some interpretation that would, in effect, be simpler than the poem itself. The task would be to resolve difficulties into

singular meanings—however complex, however admittedly partial. For Ault, such resolutions, such closures, are profoundly anti-Blakean; perhaps the very concern with establishing the poem's meaning is anti-Blakean. Every attempt to define some "character" as an autonomous allegorical identity; every attempt to read through the poem's incredible flux to the presumed core of some more or less coherent plot; every attempt to locate in the poem a single narrative agent finally capable of resurrecting its fall into division into a unity that has anything in common with classical aesthetic categories: every normative critical project toward *FZ* is classed as single vision, as *Newtonian*. (We might remark here that Ault has a particularly single vision of the common reader's commitment to single vision; Ault's invocation of this normative reading as a basic plot in any actual encounter with the text might very well overdetermine it, rendering it at times little more than a strawman against which to measure his super-anti-methodology.) The poem's chief task is to resist and supercede both Newtonian narrative structures and their counterparts in the reader's mental operations. Instances of such Newtonian projects are not difficult to locate, even prior to what Ault apparently takes as "reading." The persistent editorial attempt to normalize the text of *FZ* and of Blake's work in general is one instance of the sort of attitude against which Ault militates; the ongoing debate about whether Blake—as primary creative agent—has succeeded or failed, finished or abandoned this poem is another. In what is one of its most radical gestures, *NU* simply hypostatizes the manuscript text, takes it as is, sets aside all questions of whether "Blake" finished the poem as irrelevant to its true purposes. What once seemed editorial "discrepancies"—accidents of the poem's incompleteness—are neither resolved nor dismissed but "taken to be significant *as such*" (xvii; Ault's emphasis). Along lines like these, *FZ* is constituted as a *process* by which the propensity toward Newtonian single vision that dominates normative reading, that dominates most normative mental activity, is continuously and at times brutally "subverted." The poem becomes a School for Epistemologists in which we are retrained for Fourfold, or at least Non-Newtonian, Vision.

This subversive education is carried out not only through the poem's corrosive flood of detail but, at the same time, in *NU/FZ*'s deployment of these details in a

range of extremely complex and "incommensurable" narrative strategies. *NU/FZ* gives us an unprecedented look into the poem's flux. Indeed, one suspects, it is in the enumeration of these strategies, as much as in the quantity of detail that he raises, for the first time, into critical attention, that Ault's influence is most likely to be felt. Tumultuous shiftings, transformations, disruptions, multiple intersections, fractured mirrorings, mutual containments, eclipses and feedback loops are the order of this world. Everything is a version, an inversion, a revision of something else, an aspect or analysis of something else, "embedded" in or a suppression of something else, overlapping or reemerging from something else. An event might be seen primarily as a "perspective analysis" of one or more prior events and at the same time embedded in or bracketed by them. Nights VIIa and VIIb are treated, at one moment, as alternative narrative perspectives (328, 333); later, VIIb is embedded in VIIa (475–76). Distant events are coterminous and consecutive events are simultaneous; an established sequence of events might turn out to be simultaneous from another perspective and in reverse order from yet another. "Event-clusters overlap but are by no means unequivocally identical" (268). An outcome can create "preconditions" for a prior event that seems to be its origin: "The Lamb [of God] and Satan are . . . preconditions for each other's entrance into the narrative proper" (275; also 327, 336, etc.). What is at one juncture seen as a cause will later appear as an effect of what it appeared to have caused. Transformations can as easily be "retroactive" (300) as successive: new information might substantially change not only our understanding of what has preceded but *therefore*—and this is precisely the causal link these transformations underscore—the character of the event-complex itself, and of the chains of events that depend from it. "[R]e-enactments *alter* those earlier relationships through a complex process of feedback" (329; Ault's emphasis). Competing versions of events (e.g., the two versions of the "war plot" concluding Night I) cause the reader either to suppress differences, to invent overviews that circumvent incommensurability—both Newtonian responses—or to embrace narrative undecidability and a radically perspectival sense of the real. As Ault remarks, in one of his provisional summaries of the onto-epistemo-narrative strategies of *NU/FZ*:

Among the comprehensive textual models or patterns for perspective transformation which Blake invokes throughout the poem, the following are most prevalent: 1) perspective analysis and linearly embedded structures; 2) hierarchical displacement; 3) fictions of causal sequence; 4) overlapping of "events" by repetition; 5) involution of events by causal circularity and information loops; 6) disjunctive jumps (within a nexus of events) between discrete information bits; and 7) continuous re-orientation of perspective. (16)

The strategies, in other words, of the dreamwork itself. This is, after all, a Dream of Nine Nights, and for Ault the engine driving these narrative condensations and displacements is essentially psychosexual. Nonetheless he insists that it is the least of Blake's concerns to *represent* dreaming. Rather, Blake uses dreamwork strategies to disorient the reader's habitual relation to the nightmare of single-vision reality itself. So that readers might read themselves awake.

The same flux that organizes the narrative defines its characterology. It is in fact difficult to discuss characters and narrative structures in separate terms: events are displacements of characters and characters are condensations—"crystallizations," in Ault's recurrent phrase—of events that are perspectives on them. Ault's radical treatment of Tharmas, Enion, Urizen and so on surely constitutes another way in which this book should mark future studies. None of these names any longer represents an entry in some Blake Dictionary. Now characters overlap each other, are projections or returned repressions of each other, arise into the "narrative proper" only through event-contexts. Everything here is context-dependent, but contexts are no more fixed or absolute than what they contain: a context out of which some character arises might later be shown to be a projection by the character it seemed to create. Urizen is not an identity who steps from *The Book of Urizen* into this poem, nearly if perhaps not fully realized: he is sung into it by Enitharmon in a response to Los. Urizen "begins" not as a character but as a name attached by Enitharmon to an aspect of her own reactive vision. But he does not rest within the fictive frame of her song: Enitharmon "calls Urizen into the narrative proper out of his function as a dialogical operator in her interpolated vision" (69). She invents him as a fiction of her needs, *ergo* he exists. But when he is "wrenched out of his interpolated status," forced into "the narrative proper," it is *as* an agent, equipped with a history and identity that influence events not only after he appears but retroactively, as if he had always been there. And Enitharmon is "herself," "originally," a projection of Enion, without prior existence but with retrospective force.

Everything in *NU/FZ* is generated out of the repression or absence that demands it; everything is desired, imagined, projected, sung before it can exist, and then exists as if it had always been there, until in some other context it disappears into the never-was. Just as characters arise, so they dissolve back into event-clusters, or are repressed in the "psyches" of other figures, or end up exerting force only as absent or displaced, or function subliminally as "primary aspect[s] of all the characters" (175). Their names are like linguistic shifters, words without inherent referents that attach themselves to various entities and forces, and that can be determined only relationally within a given utterance. As Ault describes it, characters are "substitutions for, or analyses of, previously narrated relationships" (120), "aspects of one another syntactically and semantically" (234). The flux of characters—an "interchangeability of roles in a field of difference" (175), a "crisis of relational versus individual identity" (241)—and the flux of events are linked versions of each other. In other words, the Zoas and their various Emanations, Spectres, children and so on interconstitute one another in the same "perspective ontology" by which, Ault's Blake proposes, we are ourselves interconstituted with the text, and with the world we might regenerate out of it.

Let me cite as evidence at least one passage in which these various concerns emphatically converge:

Blake forces us to experience the Lamb of God and Satan totally from the outside: they appear and disappear enigmatically throughout Night VIII. Though they are in some ways the most important "characters" in Night VIII, we have no sense of their motives: they seem, even more than other characters, to be complexes of relationships, with no real interiors. Although Blake relentlessly forces the reader to experience characters as interlocking sets of transforming relationships rather than static identities, Blake can lure the reader into accepting the alternate fiction that his characters have desires and feel that they are acting causally. The Lamb and Satan, however, in Night VIII act exactly as if they are characters totally *constituted by situations* in a way that, for example, Los is not. It is impossible to imagine an interior, in this sense, of the Lamb and Satan: they remain as completely enigmatic to the characters in the poem as they do to the reader. They perform functions, create situations, make conditions possible, and act as consolidations of conditions and relationships. But they remain fundamentally indeterminate, successfully evading all attempts at scrutiny because, if Blake's perspective ontology holds, there is nothing there to scrutinize. . . . This enigma is central to Blake's establishing the reader's expectations for entrance into Night IX. The reader's need to seek out motivation, *internal* cause, within and behind these images, is a corollary of the reader's urgent need for an *external* redemption in the text. (280-81; Ault's emphases)

It is a dense passage and could be unraveled along several lines, but what we need most to mark here are the various implicit and explicit relations between writer, poem and reader. What Ault has produced, in the anti-Newtonian epistemological school of Blake's text, is a version of reader-response criticism—a fact underscored by one of Ault's few overt references to other critics, a late reference to the influence of Stanley Fish (511). In *Surprised By Sin*, we recall, Fish reconsidered the perennial problem of the attractiveness of Satan and decided that Milton's Satan is so designed in order to lure the reader as well as Adam and Eve into choosing badly, so that the reader can experience and hence better understand the Fall. Ault's version of Blake's reader also falls. The reader is tempted by the radically disjunctive experience of Blake's poem to choose not Satanic rhetoric but Newtonian order—a bad choice that, as the poem's characters and events themselves demonstrate, leads only to further chaos. Like Milton's, Blake's reader must be driven toward a paradise within, happier far, a difficult paradise of radical indeterminacy and perspective ontology. Hence it is hardly surprising to find, in Ault's text, the familiar Fishian melodrama of author as omnipotent manipulator, punishing the reader for his or her own good. In the passage cited above, Blake relentlessly forces the reader, lures the reader; again and again in Ault's critical narrative, Blake's reader is tempted, dazzled, seduced, overwhelmed, frustrated. Possibilities of establishing solid origins or closures, of grounding the experience of the text in some external order, some non-visionary truth, are continually held out to the reader only to be immediately withdrawn. Every discontinuity and discrepancy, every blur and mark is recruited into the service of this (dis)abusive project. What used to seem accidents of the manuscript's incompleteness now become holes purposely left for the reader to fall through in a bizarre, almost sado-masochistic form of visionary therapy.

But the situation is even more complicated than this. For the traditional administrative order of reader-response criticism would be incoherent in the perspective ontology Ault's Blake seeks to reveal. Blake's perceiver cannot be merely manipulated by the perceived: reader-response must be recast within the terms of the

profoundly relational ontological orders of *NU/FZ*. As we have seen, text and reader are "interconstituted," in effect operate as writers and readers of one another; or rather—for it is still more complicated—"narrative, text, and reader come into existence and alter one another at each point in the poem" (6). The reader is not merely a screen on which the text's operations are projected—their teleological alibi, as it were, and as they are in so much so-called reader-response criticism; here the reader is in some sense the text's proper agent, its producer. But its blurs and marks are no Rorschach either: the matter is more complicated yet:

Though the actual individual reader is absolutely indispensable to the existence of the *Four Zoas* narrative and text, it is not the reader but the narrative itself that is the primary agent of transformation, while the text participates equally with the reader in their acts of mutual constitution and revision. . . . [T]he *Four Zoas* narrative is a purely relational process that has no existence (cannot be pointed to) in any form except through the act of reading. But instead of simply coming into existence as a dialectical product of the interaction between reader and text, the *Four Zoas* narrative actually brings the reader and text into mutual existence. This radical relational narrative process undermines Newtonian narrative ontology (through retroactive transformation, aspectual interconnection, and so on). . . . The *Four Zoas* narrative can come into existence only if reader and text are freed from existing independent of reading, but this liberation can be performed only by the narrative itself: reader, text, and narrative are thus mutually preconditions for one another's existence. (22)

The distinction between "narrative" and "text" in passages like this is especially, and perhaps purposefully, difficult to determine. Narrative is not simply the order of the poem's events but the non-Newtonian order that those events generate in the reading—which is here to say the text's production—itsself; text is not simply manuscript or printed words on the page but some order of verbal/authorial agency that is finally indistinguishable from the indistinguishability of narrative and reader. There is no reader or text or narrative prior to the unfolding of reading, no identity or truth to fall back on; before reading animates it, the poem has no ontological priority. (This explains, at least in part, Ault's bracketing-out of all but a few references to prior literary theory, or Blake criticism, or influences on Blake; though this is not to say that such references are not everywhere implicit.) Like the *Zoas* themselves, in *NU/FZ*'s own elaborate characterology, nothing and no one has any being except

through context, through relation, through manifold interenactments.

Within the narrative of *NU* itself, however, this gordian knot of interconstitutions is laid out in more familiar and, I would argue, regressive terms. In the syntax of the typical Aultian sentence, the threefold ontology of text, narrative and reader becomes "Blake," "narrator" and "reader." "Blake" is the familiar omnipotent poet-god, in unerring command of his words, marshaling them for heroic battle with Newtonian demons; the "reader," as we have seen, is the standard victim of reader-response manipulations, lured, tempted, forced, frustrated, etc. The third figure, the "narrator," is a quasi-authorial personage distinct from the all-seeing, all-knowing "Blake"—something like the "dramatic speaker" or "poet" of New Critical analyses, that ineradicable, functional voice left over once the intentional author is eliminated. In the hands of Ault's Blake, this narrator is in effect an internalization of the same sorts of Newtonian attempts to resolve the poem's purposive indeterminacies that, Ault maintains, the Newtonian reader undertakes; hence "narrator" and "reader" are paired functions, mirror-dupes of the poem's subversive strategies. The narrator operates more or less as a character in the poem, not on the event-level of the Zoic drama but perceiving, responding, mistaking, retelling from his own skewed, partial and usually single-vision perspective. Witness this characteristic passage, dealing with the feast of Night IX:

We learn, as we did with Luvah, that Luvah's sons populate the feast only as they arise to gather the vintage in golden baskets. At this point Blake shows how easily the narrator can lapse into language that instantly allows the reader to seize on a hope of redemption on the page and thus forget the chain of past unfulfilled expectations. (433)

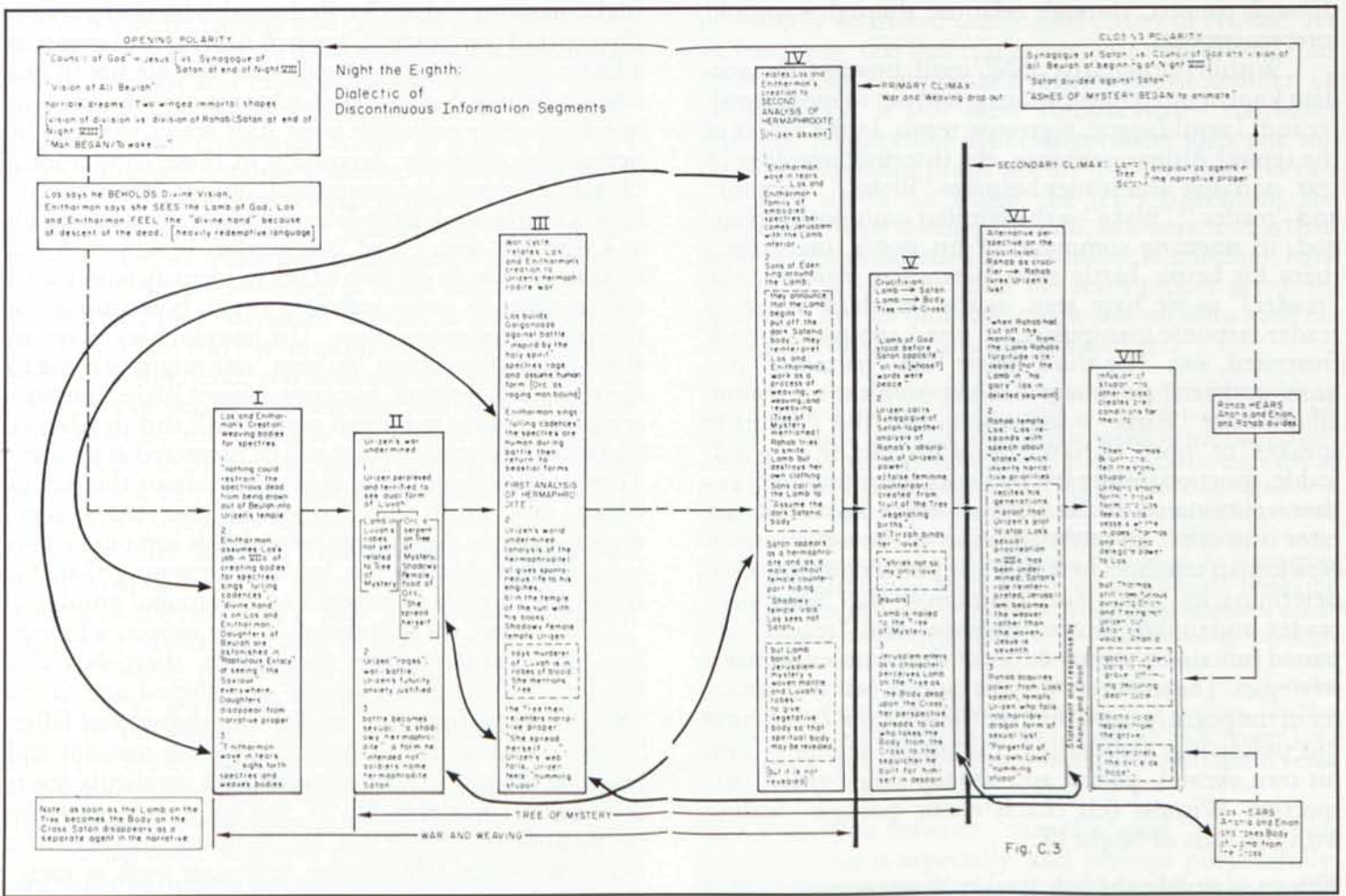
Or this:

The narrator's explicit demarcation of embedded structures at this point is the most obvious in the entire poem and calls attention to how extensively we ourselves have been lured into the dream. We too have suppressed the wracking confusion; our own senses have become orb'd; and we too have been "entertained" by these perverse visions, which Blake will now proceed to eradicate just as totally as Vala's world succeeded in repressing its immediate narrative context, the harvest. Blake accomplishes this feat by turning his narrative inside out. (411)

There appears to be some sort of contradiction between the radical interconstitution of narrative-text-reader and the more conventional reader-response hierarchy of

Blake, narrator and reader. Perhaps this hierarchy is simply a critical convenience, as when Ault lays out events in a linear form while assuring us that they are not in fact linearly arranged. But reader-response conventions cannot adequately represent what Ault seems to mean by perspective ontology. According to those conventions, "Blake" knows all and exerts total control; "the narrator" knows a little, understands less and fails again and again as a visionary writer; and "the reader" is subjected to a thousand tricks to get him or her to identify falsely with the narrator in order someday to see how stupid the choice was in the first place. The narrator also serves, in effect, as an alibi for any "failures" one might perceive in the text—a bad writer, but certainly not Blake, the master of the master text, who planned all this in advance and whose reputation must still be protected at all costs. There is something quite Newtonian about this sort of Blake, and while one recognizes that the reader-response syntax might have helped Ault sort out various local relationships, it is a lot less interesting than his notion of a purely situational and relational ontology.

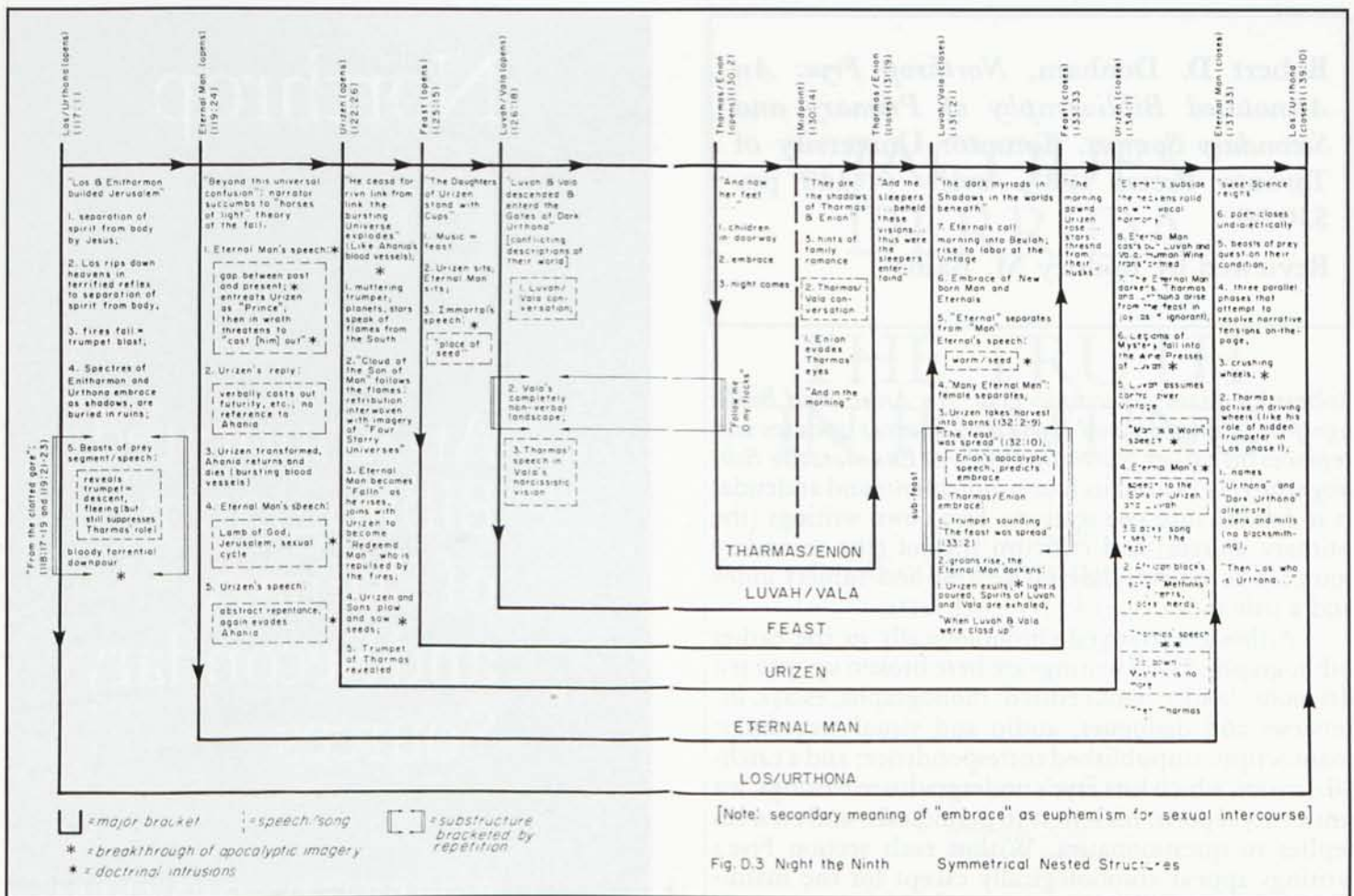
But where there is threefold one expects a fourth. Not just Blake, narrator and reader, then, but also Reader, *Ault*. If the "narrator" is a duped and fallen "Blake," so perhaps the "reader" is a duped and fallen "Ault." Blake and Ault pair off opposite narrator and reader as the properly interconstituted, implicitly resurrected writer-reader of *NU/FZ*. But none of this ever rises to the surface of Ault's text; he continues to observe the decorum of the self-effacing explicator even as everything in his book demonstrates how false this is. One cannot dismiss Ault's study as subjectivist or impressionistic or a mere reading-into; one cannot say that what he discovers in *FZ* is not "there," in the senses of thereness that *NU/FZ* allows; but there is something more than casually personal driving this reading. It is hardly accidental that this particular reader—with his background in mathematics and engineering, and long-standing interest in the history and philosophy of science—produced an anti-Newtonian reading. What is being mastered in this master text is not just a text. *NU/FZ* is the narrative of a struggle with Newton not only in but through Blake's work: the narrative of Ault's struggle with the Newton in himself. It is a struggle—an event-cluster, if you will—out of which Ault as Reader is born, and Newton is the Zoic name he sings out of this struggle into the narrative proper of *NU/FZ*. This Newton-Within partly explains the complex Urizenism



of Ault's obsession with structure, witnessed spectacularly in *NU*'s incredible charts. The elaboration of narrative structure is presented as a discursive convenience, but it is clearly a great deal more than that; it is evidence of a reader striving with systems in order to deliver himself from them. Perhaps then we might re-vise the Blakean motto Ault takes for his own: in *NU*, the manifold I of *FZ* autlers all.

The reader-response paradigm thus serves, ironically, as a cover for the agency of the "real" reader. We should also observe that the question of reader-response criticism in *NU* is linked to the question of what claims on the reader can be made by a text that remains essentially an unpublished manuscript. Ault's "reader" is a familiar fiction that extends the interrupted trajectory of the manuscript's journey through a publication it never had, just as his "Blake" extends the realities of the poet's relation to the manuscript into an ideal of authorial control. Perhaps the most serious problem with *NU/FZ* lies precisely in the manner in which work-in-progress is hypostatized into "finished" work—or rather, into a

work that is neither finished nor unfinished but hyper-finished. Forms of completion and control proposed along one line of Ault's argument are belied both by the manuscript itself and by the forces in Ault's own reading that militate against Newtonian closure. In a sense, then, what is most conspicuously absent in this study is a more serious interest in the poem's manuscript status. At times Ault can be especially subtle about the vagaries of punctuation and orthography in the manuscript, and when it suits him he may make a marginal comment about layers of revision; but for the most part he treats the manuscript as a Poem, overtextualizes it, relegates any specific attention to it as a "visual text" to a few appendix pages. The powerful author and the mastered and masterful text of Ault's critical allegory usurp the possibility of fully exploring the manuscript-poem's openness. Such an exploration might have shown us the poem's "radical optionality" at the most material levels; and it might have allowed Ault to articulate even more clearly his own (and any reader's) actual and *proper* agency in the interconstituted universe of this work. It is,



after all, "Ault" who finishes *FZ*; he is the reader liberated by reading from Newtonian bondage; but he binds that liberation into the fiction of dutiful critical service to master poet and master text. But I must also apologize to him for, in effect, demanding another five hundred pages of close study. I am being greedy, and foolish: this sort of exploration could have kept *NU* out of our hands for another decade.

There is, finally, the question of this study's place in Blake criticism. It is interesting to speculate on whether Ault has opened a door only to close it behind him, whether his monument is the end of a golden string or a wide world of solid obstruction. I have suggested a few ways in which Ault should someday be seen to have made a contribution to Blake scholarship: in unearthing a wealth of detail, in the elaboration of narrative and characterological strategies. But the very nature of his project—the mode in which these discoveries have been carried out, which is *NU*'s interpretation of *FZ*—is more likely to be passed over. In a Blakean economy, the book's excesses make perfect sense: the more that is

done, the more there is to do; the more exhaustive the reading, the more inexhaustible the poem. But in the economy of Blake criticism, the book is an aberration, a transgression. In being so radically exemplary, it becomes eccentric. Perhaps it is for this reason that Ault self-consciously remarks that his analysis "is not intended to compete with the existing body of Blake scholarship but rather to be fundamentally incommensurable with it" (xi). *NU/FZ* is more than incommensurable with existing Blake scholarship, it is a condemnation of it. If it is "not a necessary reading" but "a possible reading" (xxiii; Ault's emphases), it also presents itself as precisely the sort of possibility the Blake industry has to marginalize. Nothing will permit the vast majority of Blake's readers to devote this much or this kind of attention to his work. *NU/FZ* is an indictment of a critical economy in which such a book cannot really be useful, perhaps cannot even be exemplary except as the sign of a project that most readers will find neither the time, the patience, the energy, the courage, nor the professional latitude to pursue.

Robert D. Denham, *Northrop Frye: An Annotated Bibliography of Primary and Secondary Sources*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987. xviii + 449 pp. \$50.00.

Reviewed by Rodney M. Baine

Robert Denham's *Northrop Frye: An Annotated Bibliography of Primary and Secondary Sources* updates and replaces his earlier *Northrop Frye: An Enumerative Bibliography* (1974) and its four supplements and addenda. It is divided into two sections: Frye's own writings (the primary sources) and criticism thereof (the secondary sources). It has two indexes: a name and subject index and a title index.

Although arranged chronologically in the earlier bibliography, Frye's writings are here broken up into ten divisions: books; books edited; monographs; essays, interviews and dialogues; audio and visual recordings; manuscripts; unpublished correspondence; and a catch-all division which lists Frye's undergraduate writings, his university reports, his letters to periodicals, and even his replies to questionnaires. Within each section Frye's writings appear chronologically except for the manuscripts and unpublished correspondence, where several thousand items are listed according to the special collections or archives where they are held. All editions, reprints, and translations are listed (up to June 1987) along with the main entry; and a system of cross-reference and a comprehensive index of titles insure that a reader will find any item (except book reviews). All these entries are followed by a descriptive statement, varying in length according to the importance, length, and complexity of Frye's original.

The secondary sources appear in six divisions: books and collections of essays; essays and parts of books; reviews, where each of Frye's twenty-two books receives separate treatment; dissertations and theses; bibliographies; and a miscellaneous section which includes news stories, biographical notices, letters, and anecdotes. In the earlier bibliography Denham included summaries for "Writings about Frye's Criticism," which reappear here virtually unchanged, but he now includes expositions for almost all the secondary materials, with a "brief notice" for short and unimportant entries. All are arranged by author; but for those who wish to trace changes of attitude toward Frye's work, Denham has

Northrop Frye

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added an appendix, "A Chronological Listing of Entry Numbers for Books and Essays about Frye's Criticism."

Denham's new bibliography is a welcome tool for researchers into the work of an author whose writings have established him as probably the most influential humanistic critic living, an author who is still productive. His writings on Blake have established him as surely the most seminal influence in Blake studies. Although the analytical arrangement makes the new bibliography somewhat difficult to use, this reviewer has only two other, relatively minor complaints to register. In the earlier book Denham made some attempt to winnow the wheat from the chaff. Here he has excised all his praise and denigration. Moreover, in the earlier bibliography Denham informed his readers that the reviews were not listed in the title index. However, on page 430 of the *Annotated Bibliography* the opening statement leads a reader to expect to find them in the title index. He does not.

Jacques Derrida. *The Truth in Painting*.
Trans. by Geoff Bennington and Ian
McLeod. Chicago and London: The Uni-
versity of Chicago Press, 1987. xiv + 386
pp. \$49.95 cloth/\$19.95 paper.

Reviewed by David Worrall

"I owe you the truth in painting and I will tell it to you" (Paul Cézanne to Emile Bernard, 23 October 1905). Derrida's book first appeared in France in 1978 and is largely a compilation of writings from the mid 1970s. What is "the truth in painting" and does Derrida tell it to you? Do you need to know what deconstruction means to the visual arts? The answer to the former is partially explained by this review but it could actually be the latter question which proves to be of immediate and wider interest.

At the end of March 1988 London's Tate Gallery played host to "the world's first symposium on art, architecture and Deconstruction." Derrida was to have appeared at this packed conference but it turned out he was absent except in the reproductive (what else?) medium of a video interview specially recorded for the event. The Tate symposium was breezily covered by most of the quality newspapers but there was one substantial report by David Lodge (*The Guardian* 8 April 1988, London ed.: 25). However, a more lasting testament to deconstructive movements in art and architecture is the publication of two special issues from the Academy Group. The issue of *Art & Design* is devoted to "The New Modernism: Deconstructionist Tendencies in Art" (4 [1988]), while *Architectural Design* covers "Deconstruction in Architecture" (58 [1988]). Of the two, the *Architectural Design* issue is probably the more substantial and scholarly although the *Art & Design* number has excellent color reproductions of work by Adami (discussed below) as well as a spicy set of aphorisms by the translator of *The Truth in Painting*, Geoff Bennington ("Deconstruction is Not What You Think" 6-7). *The Truth in Painting* is also excerpted in the magazine.

There are several reasons why deconstructive architecture will probably be of future note (or notoriety). Deconstructive buildings have already been built and deconstructive architects seem already to have identified their own high-priests and coteries grouped around Bernard Tschumi, Peter Eisenman, Frank Gehry, and Zaha Hadid. It is also the case that Derrida has been recently thinking (or has been asked to think) about architecture

JACQUES
DERRIDA

THE TRUTH IN PAINTING

Translated by
Geoff Bennington
and Ian McLeod

The University of Chicago Press
Chicago and London

especially in connection with his contributions and dialogues with Peter Eisenman and Bernard Tschumi. There is a spiky interview in *Architectural Design* between Charles Jencks and Eisenman ("that is silly of you . . . there's no need to get on your high-horse and dichotomise. . .") with lots of talk of *différance*, intertextuality, and the dislocation of the center. Derrida has contributed "an unfinished text that he was working on from Plato's *Timaeus*" for a Choral or Chora work of Eisenman's: "We finally forced Jacques to draw something. He then drew the lyre which became both the figure and the frame for the site" (or *liar*, Eisenman concedes). Derrida has also written on Bernard Tschumi's "Parc de la Villette" which is now well under construction and whose sets of gardens have a collaborative contribution from Jean-Francois Lyotard. Perhaps it is in these ways that deconstruction will become a genuinely popular, or populist, idea. Charles Jencks has ventured to bet that a multinational corporation is likely to build

a major deconstructivist building in two years time and a major headquarters in probably four years time.

Meanwhile, although reports of its demise appear daily, deconstruction still seems to be only narrowly, or even mistakenly, understood. It is easy enough to detect in some of the writings and interviews with architects and art historians in these issues some rather willful readings of Derrida's work (although the essays by Andrew Benjamin are notable exceptions). Nevertheless, precisely because artistic practice may be running ahead of academic theory and practice, it is invigorating to have such a seminal book as Derrida's translated into English.

The Truth in Painting is an exciting book. Why read Culler, Eagleton, or Norris when Derrida's methodology is visible in all its rigor at every turn? Begin anywhere. Although Derrida has slotted disparate writings together (journal articles, prefaces to exhibition catalogues), the argument is consistent throughout and each stage can be treated discretely. In *The Truth in Painting* as well as in painting there is no frame, no passe-partout of a necessary introduction or conclusion which is not already a part of "the work." The "work of art" (and Derrida's *The Truth in Painting* can stand in its place) has no outside which is not already inside and no inside which is not already outside: "These prolegomena of *The Truth in Painting*, themselves the *parergon* of this book, are ringed together by a circle" (9). Begin anywhere and lace it together.

Of Grammatology (trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1974]) is now over twenty years old and its discoveries, and its author's subsequent discoveries, should no longer be considered optional. *Différance* is not "free-play" or "anything-goes" or "lack-of-referentiality" brings "any-referentiality." Still less is it "nihilism." Rather, *différance* is process, an economy of presence and absence (and anything else structured like language: e.g., psyche, painting) which is like the rattle of a machine. This is worth saying at the outset because of the frequent misreadings of Derrida which occur in print and in the conference hall from people who seem to have read nothing but "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences" (cf. *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass [London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978] 196-231). Their position is as ideological as any they think they are "deconstructing." "Free-for-all" free-play is as good a demon-

stration of the workings of the supplement as could be hoped for as any careful reading of "Structure, Sign, and Play" will reveal.

The Truth in Painting has all the rigor of Derrida's other books and, of the principal works to date, can be neatly placed chronologically between *Glas* (1974) and *The Post Card* (1980). Much of the book is directed at a re-reading of Hegel's, Heidegger's and Kant's aesthetics with a concentration on textual examples rather at the expense of the visual. Derrida quotes Kant to the effect that "Examples are thus the wheelchairs of the faculty of judging" but, in his own view, "If things run as though on wheels, this is perhaps because things aren't going so well. . . ." (78-79). Perhaps examples are to logic what metaphor is to language. Anemic: white logic.

In many ways the arguments of *The Truth in Painting* are an elaboration from the revelation of the workings of *différance*. It is seldom recognized that Derrida shares with Saussure an urge to keep things simple. This is perhaps the only way in which it is fair to say that he is reductive. The book has a simple formal structure: a large section (half the book) called "Parergon" discusses the frame in art. This has further subsections on "The Sans of the Pure Cut" (the beautiful) and "The Colossal" (the sublime). The book then moves into the exciting chapters "+R (Into the Bargain)," "Cartouches" and "Restitutions" which deal with the way Derrida looks at pictures and where there is a usually a transition from the more didactic format of "Parergon."

In "Parergon" Derrida asks what is not of the work of art? Does it have an end and a beginning? What is a frame? Is ornament of the work or outside it? Derrida provides an illuminating example: Lucas Cranach's *Lucretia*, 1533 (Staatliche Museen Preussische Kulturbesitz, Gemäldegalerie, Berlin) which is reproduced in a (barely adequate) black and white photograph. Cranach's *Lucretia* holds the point of a dagger to her chest while, with the other hand, she positions a diaphanous veil over her upper thighs. She wears a necklace but is otherwise unclothed. Derrida asks ". . . where is the *parergon*? Should one regard as a *parergon* the dagger which is not part of her naked and natural body and whose point she holds turned toward herself, touching her skin (in that case only the point of the *parergon* would touch her body, in the middle of a triangle formed by her two breasts and her navel)? A *parergon*, the necklace that she wears around her neck?" (57). The

lack of plenitude in the "content" of the painting produces its meaning as a supplement. But which is the supplement? Lucretia, the dagger, the veil, the necklace, the picture frame, other works by Cranach, other paintings of his epoch, the title and its supplements? The *parergon* is "lacking in something and it is lacking from itself" (56). What works, what labors is the frame: "The frame labors [*travaille*] indeed. Place of labor, structurally bordered origin of surplus value, i.e., overflowed [*débordée*] on these two borders by what it overflows, it gives [*travaille*] indeed" (75). In other words, the production of meaning is absent from what one might call "pictorial content" and is deferred to the frame which is the site of the picture's placement in the process of *différance*. Whereas "the whole analytic of aesthetic judgment forever assumes that one can distinguish rigorously between the intrinsic and the extrinsic" (63) at the place of the frame, which is the site of the production of supplement, "Deconstruction must neither reframe nor dream of the pure absence of the frame. These two apparently contradictory gestures are the very ones — and they are systematically indissociable — of what is here deconstructed" (73).

The Derridean frame has already been discussed by Edward Larrissy in *Re-Reading . . . William Blake* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985) but rather than discuss *parergon* further, I would like to come back to an earlier, more immediately recognizably Blakean, example from *The Truth in Painting* in order to lead on to Derrida's discussions, in the earlier parts of the book, on the limits of the representational in art. Derrida reproduces a printer's emblem showing the ubiquitous Renaissance device of hands-in-clouds-holding-dividers-inscribing-a-circle, a device which has long been held to be generic with Blake's "The Ancient of Days" and the Urizenic attempt to contain the abyss. Derrida abruptly begins "Parergon" with the words "it's enough to say: abyss and satire of the abyss" (17). Admittedly this is Derrida at his most apparently gnomic but the phrase gets worked through reassuringly and systematically. In a brilliant piece of deconstruction Derrida argues that the "abyss," which is forced between being presented and yet remaining unrepresentable, "saturates," fills up and yet "hollows out" (33–34) the content of its meaning: this is why the abyss is "satire, farce on the edge of excess" (17). Any idea of the "abyss" is forced into representability which is narrativity (parody, satire, farce) or, to put it more simply, supplement. This, it seems to me, was exactly Blake's problem: how to present the unrepresentable?

Derrida's discussions of the sublime (in "The Colossal") are highly relevant to Blake's arguments with his contemporaries about the presentation and content of his pictures and poems. What looms perilously close is the satire of the abyss, a presenting of the unrepresentable as a lack of presentation. Blake's way, and he has no other, was "Sublime Allegory," a satire of the abyss. It is worth pursuing a deconstructive reading of Blake's important statements on this in his letter to Thomas Butts: "Allegory addressed to the Intellectual powers while it is altogether hidden from the Corporeal Understanding is My Definition of the Most Sublime Poetry" (to Butts, 6 July 1803, E 730). Blake's position is a fairly standard phenomenological one (dilute Husserl) where the "Intellectual powers" are capable of being remotely "addressed" across the abyss from "Corporeal Understanding." In other words, Blake bridges the gulf between the corporeal and the intellectual in an analogy or allegoric narrative while maintaining the discretion of these two faculties: "The abyss calls for analogy . . . but analogy plunges endlessly into the abyss as soon as a certain art is needed to describe analogically the play of the analogy" (36). There is nothing "wrong" with Blake's allegoric innovation: there is, quite simply, no other way.

The colossal, like the abyss, like Blake's "Sublime Allegory," is appeased into presentation by a lack in presentation: "Colossal *Fort: Da*. What comes-in-front [*devant*]-of-it-to-erect-itself. Having to [*Devant*] erect itself in the excessive movement of its own disappearance, of its unrepresentable presentation" (145). This is why "Singular & Particular Detail is the Foundation of the Sublime" (Annotations to Reynolds, E 647) and why "Obscurity is Neither the Source of the Sublime nor of any Thing Else" (E 658). Blake's position on the sublime is, in fact, postmodernist. It is worth comparing Jean-Francois Lyotard's definition, which is more succinct, if less rigorous, than Derrida's: "The postmodern would be that which, in the modern, puts forward the unrepresentable in presentation itself; that which denies itself the solace of good forms, the consensus of a taste which would make it possible to share collectively the nostalgia for the unattainable; that which searches for new presentations, not in order to enjoy them but in order to impart a stronger sense of the unrepresentable" ("What is Postmodernism?" [1982] printed as the appendix to *The Postmodern Condition* [1979], Manchester: Manchester UP, 1984, 81; also in *Innovation/Renovation*, ed. Ihab Hassan and Sally Hassan, Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1983). The essentialism of Blake's ideas may be rather at variance with his artistic practice.

The *télos* of this journey, from essentialist reaction against eighteenth-century mimesis to postmodernism, has already been hinted at in an account of art history from the perspective of postmodernism (see Simon Morley, "A Differance," *Art & Design* 4 [1988]: 26-32).

To come back to Blake's letter to Butts once again: Derrida helps us to see very clearly the aporia in Blake's statement. This is not, structurally, the corporeal/intellectual opposition but, rather, the supposition that the two powers can be "addressd." The fully located address from addressor to addressee is Blake's bridge plunging into the abyss as intention tries to deposit itself into absolutely referenced meaning: "both potent and impotent, potent in its very impotence, all potential in its unequalness to itself. Everything here resounds and echoes in the dynamic sublime" (146). This echo or resonance is the rattle of the frame or *pas-partout* and is denotative of "The *Sans* of the Pure Cut."

"The *Sans* of the Pure Cut" is a fascinating section on the beautiful facilitated by the use of the work "cise" by Derrida's translators: "an obsolete spelling of 'size' . . . and suggestive of cutting (cf. incision)" (120n32). The *sans* of the pure cut is rather like reformulating Derrida's "*il n'y a pas de hors-texte*" (*Of Grammatology* 158). This phrase seems to have been the subject of repeated, ideologically positioned, misreadings: it is not just that "there is nothing outside of the text" but also that "there is no outside-text." In order to understand the *sans* of the pure cut (Derrida's example is a ubiquitous print of a single cut tulip), it is necessary to take the object of beauty and notice that "This tulip is complete from the first because a concept cannot fill it up" (94). The tulip or tulip-print is installed within an economy of *différance* because the single tulip is the *parole* within the *langue* of the tulips of the field, the tulips of Nature. As such, the cise of the single tulip has no meaning fully unto itself. Its only completion is that it signifies, which is to say that it fixes no referent: "A beautiful flower is in this sense an absolutely *coupable* [guilty, cuttable] flower that is absolutely absolved, innocent. Without debt. Not without law, but of a law without concept" (94). In other words, the concept of the beautiful tulip is another labor at the frame. The cise is what samples this tulip from millions of others, makes it into a small-sized sample, but also cuts it off from signification: "The *without-goal*, the *without-why* of the tulip is not significant, is not a signifier, not even a signifier of a lack. At least insofar as the tulip is beautiful, *this* tulip. As such, a signifier, even a signifier without signified, can do anything except be beautiful" (95). This is the double-bind

of the work of art: a Blake *Song of Innocence*, say, is a snap-shot, a photographic print (both unique *and* reproducible) which is the cise of "Innocence": both the size of "Innocence" and cut-off/cut-into it. This cise, this "*sans*" of the pure cut (there is nothing outside the cut/there is no outside cut, we might say) is the economy of *différance* in pictures.

The without/absence of the pure cut is an important contribution to the philosophy of art. It is, substantially, a philosophy based on a grammatological method (not that grammatology is exclusively, or even strictly, an epistemology). As such, it is analogous to Lévi-Strauss's application of the method of Saussurian linguistics to anthropology. What Derrida has put forward is rather more than a *simple* intertextuality of pictures; rather, what is discovered is the *différance* of pictures. To repeat Derrida's words: "What comes-in-front [*devant*]-of-it-to-erect-itself. Having to [*Devant*] erect itself is the excessive movement of its own disappearance, of its unrepresentable presentation." Pictures present themselves, yet they do not present themselves completely: in the presence of presentation is the absence of presentation. Perhaps the easiest way of putting across Derrida's point about a presentation of the unrepresentable is to look at his discussion of the deconstructionist painter Valerio Adami and at one picture in particular. Adami's pencil drawing *Disegno par un ritratto di W. Benjamin* (1973, private collection) has a reasonably good illustration in *The Truth in Painting*.

Derrida's discussion is, essentially, a simple one. Adami uses a familiar, fairly ubiquitous, photograph of Walter Benjamin as the basis for his picture. Benjamin was the author of the important "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (1936). What, then, is the relationship of Adami's drawing to Benjamin's photograph "reproduced," off-center, by Adami's pencil?

Derrida notes that Adami has captured Benjamin in an economy of *différance*:

Benjamin had a theory of the portrait, which, according to him, played a transition role, on the frontier between "ritual religious art" and "technical reproducibility." The photographic representation of the face is the remainder, the last resistance of ritual. When the face begins to disappear or, as here, no longer to occupy the top or the center, the legend [*Beschriftung*] becomes necessary. "Its character is quite different from the title of a picture." *Ritratto di Walter Benjamin* is of a type as legendary as the name "Benjamin." Just about in the middle land on the subject's forehead [*front*], the name is also at the bottom of a frame. Title of one absent (picture): of one no more [*disparu*]. *Disappeared* [*disparu*] is the subject. What has disappeared *appears*, absent in the very place of the commemorative monument, returning to the empty place marked by his name. (178)

This is a brilliant commentary: concise, witty, and flawless.

But there is something of further, perhaps of greater, importance here. Reproduction is a *condition* of painting: there are no "originals." This case can be proven with regard to Blake's life and art. Blake's deconstructive economies (this is not an anachronism: deconstructive economies are consistently latent and have never waited on Derrida's writings) can be identified by the paradoxes of his positions with regard to drawing and engraving which may be conveniently discussed in relation to Blake's *Canterbury Pilgrims*. To follow the usual formula of deconstructive styles of argument: *on the one hand*, Blake protests that Stothard and Cromek stole the essence of his conception of *Chaucer's Canterbury Pilgrims* while, *on the other hand*, Blake offers his own multiplication of that essence as an engraving.

Blake's status as an artist offering a supplement at the origin can easily be seen from Blake's first prospectus on *The Canterbury Pilgrims*: "no other Artist can reach the original Spirit so well as the Painter himself, especially as Mr. B. is an old well-known and acknowledged Engraver" (E 567). In other words, the "original Spirit" which "the Painter himself" offers to "reach" in painting is simultaneously offered as a reproduction deferring the "original Spirit," just as writing signs the absence of the author. In a revealing passage from the Notebook "Public Address" Blake seems to specify that the reproductive supplement is already there at the origin of drawing: "I request the Society to inspect my Print, of which Drawing is the Foundation & indeed the Superstructure it is Drawing on Copper as Painting ought to be Drawing on Canvas or any other [table] < surface > & nothing Else" (E 572). In saying that drawing is both "the Foundation & . . . Superstructure" it seems that drawing must operate as *both* an original *and* a reproduction. Blake's intensifier, "indeed," is a signifying aporia which attempts to bridge the "Foundation" and "Superstructure" of "my Print" but which only reveals the inevitable break into allegory. Drawing is both the original "Foundation" *below* the "Print" (embodying "the original Spirit") which might offer the artist's invention as presence (his "reach"), but at the same time, drawing is also the reproductive "Superstructure" *above* drawing, mystifyingly close to "Print" yet retaining the trace of the origin (the "drawing"). Blake's architectural metaphor notifies the chiasmus operative at the ground level between foundation and superstructure: precisely the "ground" of the copper plate which has to act as two and yet one. Drawing operates as Blake's

version of Freud's Mystic Writing Pad (cf. *Writing and Difference* 196–231): it must be both breachable *hyle* (i.e., a "Print" made by "an old well-known and acknowledged Engraver" "on copper") and yet also remain (for it precisely *is* a remainder or supplement) an "original Spirit." Blake's art was never elsewhere but in The Age of [Mechanical] Reproduction.

I have tried, so far, to sketch out some of the theory of Derrida's book and how it might apply to Blake's works. But, *how does Derrida look at pictures?* The final part of *The Truth in Painting*, called "Restitutions," is a long meditative argument about those series of paintings by Van Gogh on the subject of shoes which prompted Meyer Shapiro's criticism of Heidegger's discussion of them in *The Origin of the Work of Art*. To give Derrida's long and careful critique a rather violent and injurious summary, Derrida puts forward the view that shoes, like paintings, cannot be located determinately with their peasant owners or their painters. To do so would be to give not *The Truth [in Painting]* but "hallucination in painting" (366), the spectres of painting as he calls them elsewhere (374). Yet, at the same time Derrida does not simply end up with the position that nothing can be said about Van Gogh's shoes; *différance* may be in process but so is representationality and the viewing subject. The viewing subject is constantly modified by pictures acting like texts, like post cards: picture post cards.

I emphasize picture post cards by way of alluding to Derrida's *The Post Card*. If Derrida's datings of his missives are to be believed, the early parts of *The Post Card* were being written at the same time as *The Truth in Painting's* "Cartouches," that is, in approximately the last few months of 1977 (a few specific days in November 1977 do appear to coincide between the two works). "Cartouches" was published at the time of the exhibition of Gerard Titus-Carmel's *The Pocket Size Tlingit Coffin and the 61 Ensuing Drawings* (National Museum of Modern Art, Pompidou Center, Paris, 1 March–10 April 1978). *OED*: "Cartouche: in architecture, scroll ornament e.g. volute of Ionic capital; tablet imitating, or drawing of, scroll with rolled-up ends, used ornamentally or bearing inscription; ornate frame . . . F, = cartridge." "Cartridge: . . . spool of film, magnetic tape, etc., in container . . . ink-container for insertion in pen. 2. --paper thick and rough, used for cartridges, for drawing and strong envelopes." That there are no "strong envelopes" for pictures might be implicit from Derrida's remarks on painting, but "Cartouches" is also a discussion of the concept of what constitutes a series. Of a series of 127, why were only 61 drawings exhibited (plus

the extraordinary *Pocket Size Tlingit Coffin* which is hand-sized and made of wood, glass, fur, and brass with lacings hanging from it, cf. 187)? At least two drawings are said by Derrida to have been destroyed or else there would have been 129 (209). Answers to me on a post card, please, which, no matter how clearly addressed, will be sure to go astray. Which is exactly the point about the other 66 drawings: they never arrived.

Derrida's meditations on Titus-Carmel's series of productions is a matter of concern for anyone thinking about what constitutes a series. Despite the oddness of Titus-Carmel's titles, his naming is no more performative than, say, Blake's *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* or *Visions of the Daughters of Albion*. What Derrida discusses is the relationship, or lack of it, between the producer, performances, and readers or viewers. The Tlingit Coffin is a fascinating device that may very well work like, say, one of Blake's *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* in that each is a pocketable cise (a size) of Innocence and Experience yet each cise is interlaced to something beyond itself. The relationship of one *Song* to another is like the Tlingit Coffin: it is both self-contained and yet interlaced beyond itself, like a post card and its unforeseen readers. The squared margins of Blake's plate at once defines and falls short of defining his *Song*. Derrida seems to modify his earlier concept or condition of *brisure* to accept this lacing effect (*Of Grammatology* 65-73). Instead of texts being both hinged/broken, the lacing allows us to see that while *brisure* might be a condition of text, lacing is a condition of the relationship between reader and text (or viewer and picture). "A parallelepiped (OED: "solid bounded by parallelograms") like the coffin . . . the matchbox has the peculiarity that it does not open, like so many other caskets, along the articulation of a hing . . . Here, for once, *one* box opens or shuts by sliding *into another*, which is none other than itself . . . The hermetic closure composes the two openings, is composed by them both" (226). Or, a *Song of Innocence*, like the brief hermetic closure of a post card, closes on itself yet opens out into *Innocence* (which is its cise) and opens out to the play of reading. The post card, or *Song*, never arrives at its destination because the specificity of its communication is readable by everyone. Theoretically it may have its own conditions (William Blake, 1757-1827, may well have *intended* to say something with it) but it is always laced to something else, to another *Song* or another ideology:

There are remains of cartridge, because the dissemination of the cartridges or cartouches (in all sense/directions, in all genres/genders) never exhausts a *total*. There is no total of meanings and genders (masculine/feminine). Always a box *in* the box, some supplementary cartridge, a *parergon*, that's what the coffin's mutism *says* to us, and, in it, the couple of beakless fledglings. Always a box *outside* the box. (231)

This is Derrida at his most creatively rigorous (the silent fledglings are the fur deposited in the Tlingit Coffin): cartridge is to *Song* as cartridge is to can(n)on (229)! "The play of the supplement, the repetition of the deviation can go on *ad infinitum*, or *almost*, unless, with a 'that's sufficient' you let the series stop one fine day" (237). In other words, the *Song* cartridge is already in the can(n)on: the can(n)on bears the trace of other *Songs*/cartridges.

Pictures act like Van Gogh's shoes: their laces offer to lace themselves to an hallucinatory Van Gogh yet they also unlace themselves because Van Gogh can never fill the shoes shown in his pictures. The paintings of shoes by Van Gogh and Derrida's discussion of them is the culmination of an "interlacing" effect he has hinted at throughout *The Truth in Painting*. The lacing of the picture to the viewer passes towards the viewer but also behind the picture. Valerio Adami's *Study for a Drawing after Glas* (reproduced on consecutive pages, 153-54) makes this point by having one side of the picture have a penciled-in frame across which words transgress (Marcel Duchamp's *The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors, Even* [1915-23] would be an early deconstructive piece of art working in the same way). On the other side, a sketched scaffolding of ladders and thongs keeps the picture moving in, out, near, far, there, gone.

The logic of lacing, of stricture and destructure, is one I want to finally turn to, coming back to my earlier comments about "play" in Derrida. Derrida says quite clearly that "Any stricture is *simultaneously* stricturation and destricturation" (340). To emphasize: stricturing is a necessary alternation of destricturing. "The loosening of the laces is not absolute, it does not absolve, unbind, cut. It keeps an organized stricture. Not a more or less of stricture but a determined (structured) form of stricture: of the outside and the inside, the underneath and the top . . . Deferring: it never sutures" (340). In other words, this is not "play" (except in the sense of the play of loose machinery) but, rather, *fort/da*: "lacing across the line in both directions, making come back, making go away, making come back again, inside, outside, down

there, here, *fort/da*" (357). Certainly the picture goes away from us, destricturing, deferring itself in "the logic of stricture, in the interlacing of *différance* of (or as) stricture" (340) but it also comes back, strictureing itself into the would-be fullness of representation: "What we know is that every step (discursive or pictural in particular) implies a *fort/da*. Every relation to a pictural text implies this double movement doubly interlaced to itself. It is a kind of *fort/da* that is *described by* the circuit of the lace" (357).

This seems to be a little different from the emphasis Derrida's works are sometimes, mistakenly, given. If, simultaneously, with destricturing there is a "determined (structured) form of stricture" then it is clearly one to which attention must be paid and to which "the whole path of thought, for Heidegger, leads back, by a dis-tancing, to a *Da* (thus the *Da* of *Sein*) which is not merely close, but whose proximity lets the distance of the *fort* play within it" (357). The word "proximity" is important and Derrida isolates this word as something wanting in Heidegger's discussion: "No doubt he mis-recognized the necessity of the argumentation, the lacking movement of its coming and going and the abyss of its *fort/da*" (358). After these discussions (and one now sees that the truth in painting is something I cannot give you) we are left with (remaindered with) logic and strictureed play: "*There is* painting, writing, restitutions, that's all. Who among you knows Van Gogh? Does anyone here know Heidegger? Goldstein? Shapiro? This square—" (371). When we look at a picture all we can bet on is that we *are* going to bet on it:

All these shoes remain there, in a sale, so you can compare them, pair them up, unpair them, bet or not bet on the pair. The trap is the inevitability of betting. The logic of the disparate. You can also try to buy the trap and take it home, as a tribute, or the way you think you're taking something away on the soles of the painted shoes. All these shoes remain there—for he painted so many. . . . (381)

Pocket up Blake how we may, something will remain: "It gives to be rendered. To be put back on/put off. —It's just gone. —It's coming round again. —It's just gone again" (382). *Fort/da*.

In deconstruction there is no *lack* of referentiality but, rather, an *excess*: "Enough! or Too much" (*MHH* 10; E 38). It will be interesting to see the emergence of deconstructive analyses of painting for which *The Truth in Painting* will be to art historians what *Of Grammatology* and *The Post Card* have been to literary critics.

William Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*

DIY Theatre,

**Rosemary Branch Theatre Club, London,
July 1988**

Reviewed by Michael Grenfell

Is Blake entertaining? One step inside this tiny café theatre and the average member of the public might well regard any encounter with him as a pretty hellish experience: strange subterranean voices cry out like lost souls in an auditorium covered in shroudlike drops. From the ceiling hang various luminous objects with no apparent sense or meaning. Striding through the audience onto the stage, the three actors (two men and a woman) continue in the same vein — "Energy, Genius, Infinite, One Law," they hiss in witch-like tones before stating "The Argument." I say stating, but really it was chanted using various vocal styles — unison, staccato, and syncopation. This made quite a sound, but what was gained in energy and sheer dynamics was lost in clarity and finally in comprehension of the text. Happily this was not the case elsewhere, and, often following Blake's original "color-coding" (Copy H), the swapping of lines between the actors injected a terrific pace and direction into the words. At key points, as in "A Song of Liberty," the players set the text to music, but this was less successful, the natural rhymes and rhythms of the words seeming to fight with the imposed melody.

The biggest laughs of the evening came from the "Proverbs of Hell" — whether out of excess sorrow, nervousness, or at the audacity and wit of the man. With so many on offer it was inevitable that some were passed over rapidly, while others were given a more lingering treatment. Intended interpretation, too, was often heavily hinted at by the use of appropriate intonation. For the most part this was acceptable, but, less forgivable in the interrogative, puzzled tone adopted for "Enough! or Too much" — surely more didactic and imperative in the text?

But this was mostly a dramatic presentation, the three actors flinging themselves about the stage in the kind of ecstatic postures of "William" and "Robert" depicted in *Milton*. Things settled down, though, for the Memorable Fancies which gave them stronger character and more conventional narrative to follow. Isaiah was played as pompous and illusory to the Blakean protagonist, whilst Ezekiel became lying and pretentious. Debatable as these interpretations may be, it did make good theatre. Indeed, considering the drama of much of Blake's work, I wonder how more has not found its way onto the stage.

"Energy," they finally cried, "is eternal delight," tearing away the shrouds to reveal painted fire over all the walls. A powerful and visual performance, then, of Blake's Hell with all its heavenly delights. Corrosive stuff!

Greg Brown, *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*. Red House Records, RHR14, 1986. Cassette, \$9.00, LP \$9.00.

Reviewed by Alexander S. Gourlay

Greg Brown's contributions to the growing number of musical arrangements for Blake's *Songs* will be of interest not only to students and teachers of Blake, but also to everyone who thinks about the relationship between lyric poems and popular songs. Brown is most familiar to national audiences from Garrison Keillor's *Prairie Home Companion*, where he appeared as a musical celebrator of small-town midwestern life. He is a singer and guitarist, and writes exceedingly diverse songs on a variety of subjects other than small-town life. These range from jazz ballads to spare country songs in the manner of Jimmie Rodgers to imitations of traditional songs so authentic-sounding that they are sometimes taken by folk purists to be as old as the hills. His biggest commercial hit so far was recorded by Carlos Santana and Willie Nelson in an improbable duet.¹

On this recording of sixteen arrangements of the *Songs* Brown is very ably accompanied by Angus Foster on bass, Michael Doucet on violin, Peter Ostroushko on violin and mandolin, and Dave Moore on button accordion, harmonica, and pan pipes; the last two musicians, both regulars on *Prairie Home Companion*, are also songwriters and solo artists with their own followings. These performances have been arranged only loosely;

Brown's singing and guitar are backed up by accompaniments that sound largely improvised. If Brown followed his usual practice, he and the sidemen settled on ad hoc arrangements in rehearsal, probably in the studio, and then recorded the bulk of the parts together in a single take. This procedure gives the recordings an entirely appropriate feeling of spontaneity and informality, even if it results as well in occasional moments of aimless noodling; these performers are all experts at improvisation, and some of them have worked with Brown for years.

Brown's settings are extraordinary in several respects. For one thing, this seems to me to be by far the most successful attempt ever to put the *Songs* to something like traditional popular melodies (I don't recognize any wholesale borrowings, but the songs incorporate jazz, blues, Irish fiddle tunes and many other things here and there). Brown's background as a popular songwriter is evident in the dexterous weighing of the rhythm, stress, meter, and melody in his phrasing; the results will startle those accustomed to art-song arrangements of these and similar lyric poems, which tend to work against the grain of the spoken word. Although Brown was aware of the work of Ralph Vaughan Williams and others, he reports in conversation that he paid no attention to previous settings; nor did he attempt to be authentic in any historical sense. Most listeners will agree that these performances are not only extraordinarily sensitive to Blake's complexities and ironies, and that some work as popular songs in their own right, but also that they are authentic in spirit, reflecting music in the air today (and relatively modern instrumentation) as well as melodies that were around in eighteenth-century London.

Brown's bass-baritone voice might appear to present a difficulty in that it obviously can't cover all the personae called for by the *Songs*, but this is not as serious a problem as it might seem. For example, "The Lamb" must be understood as having an innocent speaker, presumably the boy shown in the illustration. But Brown's performance in deep, rolling tones interposes an inconsequential additional distance, and the effect is successful—far more successful than, say, a formal performance of the song by even the most accomplished child. At the same time, the melody is simple enough that we can imagine a boy singing it to himself, or to a lamb.

This is a consistently thoughtful and sensitive treatment of the *Songs*, even if it was undertaken in a spirit of genial distaste for most Blake criticism and is never merely reverent. Brown sometimes makes minor changes and additions in the individual songs in order to create verses and choruses, but he is mostly careful with Blake's words and the work in general evinces a subtle reader's appreciation of his ironies. Certainly the



choice of songs reflects a better understanding of the contrary states than the typical selection in poetry anthologies. One side of the record is devoted to "Innocence" ("Introduction," "The Lamb," "Infant Joy," "The Chimney Sweeper," "The Ecchoing Green," "Night," "On Anothers Sorrow"), and the other to "Experience" ("The Tyger," "The Angel," "The Garden of Love," "Infant Sorrow," "Holy Thursday," "Ah! Sun-

flower," "The Little Vagabond," "The Poison Tree," "London").

At one point in writing this review I contemplated adapting Coleridge's graphic grading system for the original *Songs*—"Night," for instance, doesn't do much for me, whereas the rollicking "Little Vagabond" seems just right—but listeners can surely make judgments about individual performances for themselves. Not all

the ensemble performances are equally satisfactory, and I sometimes found myself preferring some sparer arrangements that Brown recorded informally a few years ago. But even the songs that don't quite work are illuminating, especially because Brown finds so many ways to complement and complicate the metrical stresses—as I listened to this record, I couldn't help feeling that I didn't know the poems as well as I thought I did.

This should also be a useful tool in teaching. W. J. T. Mitchell reports that he sings the songs himself to his own arrangements when teaching them, and for those with his talents that is probably the best approach. But Brown's performances (and perhaps his arrangements) may help many of the rest of us who teach the *Songs* to students who are not yet comfortable with poetry on the page, especially because these versions are so unthreatening and their idiom is so familiar to students. One runs the risk, of course, of fixing their imaginations upon one interpretation of the poems, but one also gains from having them hear them as songs, and catchy songs at that.

The record is on a minor label, Red House Records, but it is distributed by Rounder Records on the East Coast and can be obtained through record stores almost anywhere. Or, write to Red House Records at P. O. Box 4044, St. Paul, MN 55104.

The song, "They All Went to Mexico," was released as a single (and made the Top Ten in the Netherlands); it appears on Nelson's *Half Nelson* LP on Columbia and on Santana's *Havana Moon*, also on Columbia.

Dan Miller, Mark Bracher, and Donald Ault, eds. *Critical Paths: Blake and the Argument of Method* (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 1987). \$45.00 cloth/\$17.95 paper.

Reviewed by Anne K. Mellor

It is the argument of this uneven collection of essays that modern critical theory provides us with new and necessary ways to interpret Blake's poetry and art. While no one would argue with that in principle, too many of these essays take this occasion to summarize at length by now familiar critical methods, from the Chicago School

of Aristotelian formalism and Derridean deconstruction through Lacanian psychoanalysis to Marxism and feminism, for their own sakes, rather than using them with subtlety and originality to produce understandings and interpretations of Blake's work that enhance our reading or viewing experience. There are some notable exceptions—fine essays by Hazard Adams, Nelson Hilton, Elizabeth Langland, and David Aers—to which I shall return.

The general tone of the volume is set by Dan Miller in his introduction, a rather florid, impressionistic meditation on methods and divergent paths which says little more than that the criticism of Blake reflects the critical variety present everywhere in the discipline and that all readings of Blake, as of any author, are inherently theoretical and therefore biased. Stephen Cox's "Methods and Limitations" strenuously recovers much of this same ground by insisting that critics must be aware of the ways in which their own theoretical assumptions and

C R I T I C A L
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O F M E T H O D

Dan Miller, Mark Bracher,
and Donald Ault, editors

critical failures define the limits of their interpretive results. Unfortunately his own analysis of the criticism of plate 23 of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* ends up, as does his essay, "like poor, tiresome Swedenborg, . . . writing 'all the old fals[e]hoods' but not 'one new truth'" (40). William Dennis Horn, in "Blake's Revisionism: Gnostic Interpretation and Critical Methodology," offers a persuasive (albeit hardly original) critique of the limitations of Harold Bloom's revisionary theory, and rightly insists on the affinity of Blake's thought to gnostic texts—a claim that will surprise no reader of Blake, Kathleen Raine, or Elaine Pagels. However, he fails to identify any particular gnostic texts which Blake could have read or known and proceeds at such a level of oversimplified generality that, again, he provides no "new truth."

The essays by the three editors elaborate with varying degrees of success the ways we might use highly sophisticated critical methods to approach Blake. Donald Ault's "Blake's De-Formation of Neo-Aristotelianism" demonstrates convincingly, if perhaps unintentionally, that neither a mathematical approach—his own 14-year-old attempt to provide a "calculus of perspectives" on *The Book of Urizen*—nor the Chicago School of neo-Aristotelian criticism helps us to understand the subversive complexity of Blake's thought. After a particularly sensitive visual/visceral response to the titlepage of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, Mark Bracher invokes Lacanian psychoanalytic techniques both to elucidate his own responses and to show how Blake's visual and verbal texts force the reader to experience "interpellation" (in Althusser's sense) or intellectual repositioning. Arguing that Blake's language becomes "a force capable of promoting change in the reader," Bracher offers somewhat tendentious, heavily phallic/Oedipal, readings of the Proverbs to show how Blake first evokes desire, then elicits interpretation, and finally constructs a new linguistic code.

Dan Miller provides a needlessly long, if lucid, explication of deconstructive methodology (a useful primer if you haven't already read your Derrida) before moving to an analysis of the logical inconsistencies in Blake's attempts to define the distinction between nature and vision, allegory and imagination, in *The Vision of the Last Judgment* and *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. His final comments on the way the chariot at the end of *Jerusalem* functions as an allegory that both blocks final revelation (by sending us to other texts for elucidation) and at the same time effects an apocalyptic climax is a telling example of deconstructive reading. The utility and continuing appeal of a Derridean ap-

proach is stressed again by David Wagenknecht in his "Afterword." However, his chosen example, an interpretation of why the central soldier in Blake's "The Soldiers Casting Lots for Christ's Garments" raises his left hand in blessing, is seriously flawed, to my mind, by his failure to consider other alternatives, for example, whether it matters that it is the left rather than the right hand, whether this is unequivocally "a gesture that resembles benediction" (to my eyes it also resembles gestures of surprise, protest, throwing the dice overhand, mere hovering, etc.). A third Derridean "unreading" is provided by Thomas Vogler's "In vain the Eloquent Tongue": An Un-Reading of *VISIONS of the Daughters of Albion*, an illuminating discussion of the ways in which the poem is about seeing and knowing, about its own interpretation, which places the semiotics of the text in the context of eighteenth-century political and sexual discourse.

Vogler reaches an insight via de Sade which also informs Brenda Webster's feminist and psychoanalytic discussion of "Blake, Sexuality and Women," that Blake's vision of a liberated female sexuality is designed to gratify only male fantasies. Hence Oothoon offers to spread "silken nets and traps of adamant" to catch for Theotormon "girls of mild silver, or of furious gold," (*VDA* 7:23–24), but no male in the poem offers to provide Oothoon with a corresponding orgy of male lovers. Webster's essay condenses the argument already available in her *Blake's Prophetic Psychology*—that Blake never resolved his Oedipal fixation with killing the father and possessing the mother and hence that the sexually liberated woman is also the sexually available mother. But she is particularly shrewd here in seeing the ways in which Blake's fantasies have gratified his male readers, who have persistently ignored or denied his misogynistic attitudes to women.

A more sophisticated feminism informs Elizabeth Langland's formal-thematic interpretation of Blake's "The Sick Rose." Not only does Langland provide an excellent overview of the possibilities and problems of contemporary feminist theory, but she tracks through a careful reading of the poem, its design, and its Notebook contexts the difference that gender makes, both to our understanding of the Rose (which could be male as well as female) and the speaker (who could be female as well as male). The essay is flawed only by the failure to include an illustration of the poem, an odd omission since less useful illustrations are provided for other essays. Her close reading of the myriad contexts of the poem gives added force to her conclusion, that "ideology" (she should probably specify gender as a crucial

dimension of ideology here) determines the "nature of critical knowledge itself."

A similarly powerful argument for Blake's ideological blind spots is made by David Aers in his Marxist essay, "Representations of Revolution: From *The French Revolution* to *The Four Zoas*," in which he analyzes the way in which Blake's failure to envision particular differences and a meaningful plurality among the classes of the oppressed enables Blake to posit a polarized, two-class society, and then to celebrate a "salvific violence" whereby the sons of Los trample down the sons of Urizen in Night IX of *The Four Zoas*, a violence that modern readers ought to find extremely troubling. Aers's essay, which invokes both Bakhtin and Carol Gilligan's concept of a female ethic of care to good effect, is flawed only by its failure to incorporate into its argument an analysis of what should be Aers' primary text, *Jerusalem*.

Nelson Hilton and Hazard Adams both pay close attention to Blake's use of particular words and rhetorical methods to generate convincing readings of specific texts. In "Literal/*Tiriell*/Material," Hilton offers another demonstration of what he has called Blake's literal imagination, the way allusion and wordplay function in Blake's texts. In this case, he turns to the Concordance to show how *Tiriell* becomes a calculated meditation on the death of old myths, the curse of inherited language and metrics, and the ways Blake attempts to lift off the burden of the rubbish heap of the past. In "Synecdoche and Method," Hazard Adams describes the peculiarly radical and progressive nature of Blake's use of synecdoche, which he illustrates with a brilliant analysis of the way both intrinsic and historical clues enable us to understand the way Blake's mind worked in composing plate 10 of *Europe*.

These essays provide a compelling illustration of how contemporary critical theory both impedes and enables our understanding and appreciation of literary texts. When theory becomes the focus of critical attention, as it does in the essays by the editors, Stephen Cox and David Wagenknecht, it can lead to little more than a self-indulgent hermeneutic exercise, resulting in reductive, predictable (or unconvincing) readings. Typically, for all that these exercises claim to take into account the necessary self-reflexivity of both language and ideology, they are usually carried out with no recognition, as is the case here, of the individual critic's personal psychological profile, gender, ethnicity, religion, or other ideological commitments and interests. But when theory enables the critic to uncover the blind spots or fault lines of both the author's and previous critics' ideological limitations and thus opens the way to more en-

compassing and genuinely critical understandings, as the essays by Langland and Aers do most effectively in this volume, it must be welcome. Perhaps, in the context of the deconstructive and self-critical methods advocated so pervasively in this volume, I should add, "to me." And end with a personal credo that grows out of my experience of gender oppression and teaching of feminist theory: I believe that the time has come for contemporary literary criticism to move beyond deconstructive theory (whose intellectual insights have by now been absorbed, even exhausted) in an effort to recuperate more politically engaged, less elitist, practices of reading and teaching.

MINUTE PARTICULARS

Blake and Burke in Astonishment!

V. A. De Luca

On those occasions when Blake discloses his most important views on art and poetry—say, in the *Descriptive Catalogue*, or in the Annotations to Reynolds's *Discourses*, or in the letter to Butts of 6 July 1803—the sublime never seems far from his mind. We do not know the extent of his acquaintance with formal eighteenth-century theories of the sublime but we can be certain that he read the most famous treatise on the subject—Burke's *Philosophical Enquiry into . . . the Sublime and the Beautiful*: "Burke's Treatise on the Sublime & Beautiful," he tells us in the annotations to Reynolds, "is founded on the Opinions of Newton & Locke on this Treatise Reynolds has grounded many of his assertions."¹ Blake tells us that he read it when "very young," and what he read when "very young" usually stuck, held in a strong clasp of love or hate. The avowed hatred in this case has tended to mask a rich overlay of tastes and assumptions. A few critics have recognized the link between the two men,² but our sense of the complexity of the relation may still need some refining—such as how much even Blake's departures from Burke issue from a Burkean ground.

One handy and efficient way of approaching a complicated relation between two writers is to focus on key terms that are shared in their vocabularies. Blake and Burke share "astonishment," one of the central terms in

the idiom of the eighteenth-century sublime, and an examination of their use of the term sheds light on the parallels and divergencies of their aesthetics. In the discourse of sublimity "astonishment" comes laden with ambiguity: it names a human psychological state, yet resonates with the powers of external nature, from the airy might of thunder (from which it derives etymologically) to the solidity of stone (which it resembles in sound). Burke begins the second part of his *Philosophical Enquiry*, an analysis of the sublime proper, with a definition of "astonishment":

The passion caused by the great and sublime in *nature*, when those causes operate most powerfully, is Astonishment; and astonishment is that state of the soul, in which all its motions are suspended, with some degree of horror. In this case the mind is so entirely filled with its object, that it cannot entertain any other, nor by consequence reason on that object which employs it. Hence arises the great power of the sublime, that far from being produced by them, it anticipates our reasonings, and hurries us on by an irresistible force.³

Writers throughout the century refer to astonishment in similar terms.⁴ But however much these formulas are repeated, perplexities abound. The psychological state itself seems curiously resistant to straightforward discursive explanation, as Burke's own highly figurative language demonstrates. There is a marked ambiguity in the play of these figures. At the moment of astonishment, when the power of the sublime manifests itself, the mind becomes utterly open to the influx of what it beholds ("filled with its object"), and yet this flood of power into the mind produces no kinetic transfer of energy to the mind's faculties but rather the reverse, a suspension of internal motion, a total arrest. At first appearing entirely permeable, the mind in an instant becomes impenetrable, like a container packed to the bursting point ("so entirely filled with its object, that it cannot entertain any other"). The mind is quite stopped ("suspended"), only to be "hurried"; its internal density becomes crushing and yet finally it is easily carried along. "Astonishment," then, cannot be so much described as circumscribed by a ring of mutually canceling figures such as action/arrest, penetration/resistance, inertial mass/momentum. The figures are drawn from physical mechanics, but they compose no mechanics that Newton would recognize. Here the continuum of cause and effect breaks down; outward forces have unpredictable inward consequences. As Burke presents it, "astonishment" marks the intervention of sharp discontinuities in the spheres of both nature and mind: nature suddenly manifests itself in so overwhelming a fashion that normal relations of subject and object are abolished; at the same time the mind loses its consistency of operation and becomes a thing of paradox, of self-contradictory extremes.

It is easy to comprehend the part that astonishment plays in the dynamics of a Burkean "terrific" sublime. Terror and astonishment are kindred states, as Burke makes clear in an etymological aside:

The Romans used the verb *stupeo*, a term which strongly marks the state of an astonished mind, to express the effect either of simple fear, or of astonishment; the word *attonitus*, (thunderstruck) is equally expressive of the alliance of these ideas; and do not the french *étonnement* and the english *astonishment* and *amazement*, point out as clearly the kindred emotions which attend fear and wonder?⁵

To be struck by lightning is literally a form of astonishment, for etymologically the word means "thunderstruck." Perhaps the prestige of the term "astonishment" in eighteenth-century aesthetics derives ultimately from Longinus, who tells us that "the Sublime, when seasonably addressed, with the rapid force of Lightning has born down all before it, and shewn at one stroke the compacted Might of Genius."⁶ The two metaphors that Longinus employs here for the onset of the sublime, the stroke of natural lightning and the blow of intellectual power, imply a hidden and prior third, one that connects the forces of nature to the forces of mind. This mediating figure is of course that of a divine being, like the Jove and Jehovah of myth and scripture, at once the author of natural thunder and of human inspiration. Hence the word *astonishment* incorporates within itself two contradictory aspects of the sublime; it immobilizes or releases, destroys or raises up. One is either struck by the divine power and "hurried" on to participate in its glories, or one is struck dead as a stone.

Blake shows a surprisingly persistent allegiance to Burkean settings and diction, giving us imagery and narrative scenarios that are full of sensory deprivations—darkness, cloudiness, and the host of disquieting sensations that gather under the general term "terror."⁷ He also uses the term "astonishment" more frequently than any other major poet in the period 1660–1830,⁸ and always with careful discrimination. Extraordinarily sensitive to the possibilities of word play,⁹ he is quick to hear the thunder and to see the "stone" in *astonishment*.¹⁰ The word thus could easily encompass the whole program of *Urizen*, armed with "his ten thousands of thunders" (*BU* 3.28), to bring about a "solid without fluctuation," "a wide world of solid obstruction" (*BU* 4.11,23). Hence to experience astonishment means in one sense to turn to stone, to be "filled," as Burke would say, with the inducing power and filled solid. Thus in *Urizen*, "Wonder, awe, fear, astonishment, / Petrify the eternal myriads" (*BU* 18.13–14). As it is the fate of overweening deities in Blake to be struck by their own thunder, as soon as *Urizen* manifests himself in all his pride, he is struck down and stunned (from *étonnement*) into "a

stony sleep" (*BU* 6.7) or, elsewhere, into "a stoned stupor" (*FZ* 52.20). The moment of astonishment, then, is *par excellence*, the moment when, in Blake's famous formula, one becomes what one beholds. Beholding Urizen's stony sleep, mentioned above, Los is "smitten with astonishment" (*BU* 8.1). But whose astonishment is meant here? Los's own or that of Urizen whom he beholds lying stunned? There is no meaningful way of sorting out distinctions of this nature. Astonishment astonishes, the petrified petrifies. Thus in *Jerusalem*, seeking for the Minute Particulars, Los is again "astonished he beheld only the petrified surfaces" (*J* 46.5); two lines earlier we read "Los was all astonishment & terror: he trembled sitting on the Stone." Los is now filled with his stony object and is *all* astonishment; we see *all as stone* in these regions. From becoming all astonishment it is easy to become a thing that causes astonishment, as in Los's statement, "I now am what I am: a horror and an astonishment" (*J* 8.18). The abstract noun becomes a stony particular, substituting itself for an individuality now petrified and soon to petrify others.

But as there is a thunder that immobilizes and petrifies, there is also a thunder that cracks open the stones, releasing our buried powers to freedom, a "crack of doom" for a sullen old dispensation. In contrast to the "inarticulate thunder" that Urizen booms at his misshapen children in *Vala* (*FZ* 70:39), we have the articulate thunder of that true God who "To Man the wondrous art of writing gave" and who "speaks in thunder and in fire! / Thunder of Thought, & flames of fierce desire" (*J* 3.4,5-6). There is also the awakened Albion, "Loud thundring, with broad flashes of flaming lightning & pillars / Of fire, speaking the Words of Eternity in Human Forms" (*J* 95.8-9). And there are the at last fraternal Zoas who "conversed together in Visionary forms dramatic which bright / Redounded from their Tongues in thunderous majesty" (*J* 98.28-29). In contrast to the obliterating power of the Urizenic thunder, the power of this thunder resides in its incisive capacity to clarify and reveal. It does not stun with an avalanche of sound but cleaves through darkness and obstruction, employing as its cutting tools those instruments that inscribe the definite lines of Blake's "writing," "Words," and "Forms."

It follows that the "astonishment" produced by this clarifying thunder encompasses the moment when surfaces and opacities are burst to reveal an infinite potential within. Thus when Eno in the *Four Zoas* "took an atom of space & opened its center / Into Infinitude & ornamented it with wondrous art / Astonishd sat her Sisters of Beulah to see her soft affections" (*FZ* 9.12-14) A similar response to visionary revelation appears in Blake's ecstatic report of his first days at Felpham:

In particles bright
The jewels of Light
Distinct shone & clear—
Amazd & in fear
I each particle gazed
Astonishd Amazed
For each was a Man
Human formd.

(Letter to Butts, 2 Oct. 1800, lines 15-22, E 712)

If visions of nature humanized bring astonishment, so too do the recognition and recovery of unfallen portions of humanity within the self: "Los embrac'd the Spectre first as a brother / Then as another Self; astonishd humanizing & in tears" (*FZ* 85.29-30). Images of barriers broken, of visions glimpsed through sudden openings, of obdurate forms melting down and flowing together, attend this form of astonishment:

Then Los said I behold the Divine Vision thro the
broken Gates
Of thy poor broken heart astonishd melted into
Compassion & Love

(*FZ* 99.15-16)

Finally, in the single instance in Blake's poetry where astonishment is modified by the adjective *sublime*, Jerusalem recalls ancient days before Albion's dreadful separation: "I taught the ships of the sea to sing the songs of Zion. / Italy saw me, in sublime astonishment: France was wholly mine" (*J* 79.38-39). The response of the nations embraces the full paradox of the sublime moment; arrest is freedom here, for to be filled with the object in this case is to be filled with a being who is "called Liberty among the Children of Albion" (*J* 54.5).

Blake's wide-ranging use of the term *astonishment* provides a good index of his understanding of the problematic dynamics of the eighteenth-century sublime. Not only does astonishment occupy a gap between polarized states of experience but it also unfolds within itself alternate destinies of the sublime moment. Two possible sublimes quiver in the indeterminacy of the moment of astonishment: one, the sublime of terror and deprivation most closely associated with Burke, and the other, a sublime of desire and plenitude. Blake's imagination is repeatedly drawn to the Burkean sublime, as our examination of his vocabulary and imagery indicates, but nowhere does this evidence suggest that he finds in Burkean "astonishment" any genuine access for the mind to an expansive and liberating power. Burke would have us believe that psychic disequilibrium, suspension of faculties, and immobilization of will are sure indications of the presence of an overwhelming external power or magnitude. Blake reads such scenes otherwise: encountering "terrific" objects his protagonists reel not at a magnitude of power made present but at the magnitude of power lost, at the degree of petrification re-

vealed in so-called powers by the time they present themselves as natural "terrors."

Blake seeks a less melancholy sublime, and if as a poet he is to gratify desire and recover plenitude, he must attempt some sort of redemption of astonishment. When Reynolds repeats the Burkean saw that "obscurity . . . is one source of the sublime," Blake retorts that it is "Neither the Source of the Sublime nor of any Thing Else" (E 658). Yet in a famous letter to Thomas Butts where he proclaims the sublimity of his own poetry (he calls it a "Sublime Allegory"), Blake ventures an important clarification: "Allegory addressed to the Intellectual powers *while it is altogether hidden* from the Corporeal Understanding is *My Definition* of the Most Sublime Poetry" (E 730; emphases mine). To obscure originally meant to veil, cover, or conceal, and nothing can be more thoroughly obscured than that which is altogether hidden. Thus a sublime object (in this case the poetical text) becomes "most sublime" when it is altogether obscure to our mundane faculties. There is no apparent conflict with Burke here. Indeed, it is not immediately easy to see how this bafflement of the "Corporeal Understanding" differs much from Burke's own opinion in the *Philosophical Enquiry*: "It is our ignorance of things that causes all our admiration, and chiefly excites our passions."¹¹ Blake apparently has no intention of abandoning the drama, the clash of oppositions, and the suspense inherent in Burke's account of the sublime. He is willing to exploit Burke's evocations of giddiness and irresistible rush since they so easily consort with Blake's own imagery of centers opening up, gates broken down, and forms melting. There is a need, however, to relocate the scene of this drama, away from a point of humiliating encounter between the experiencing mind and some thunderous externality. As Blake's own notions of the sublime become fully articulated, the encounter is seen to take place between a lesser and a greater faculty of the mind, made manifest through the mediation of the poetic text. Blake not only represents scenes of astonishment in his work but also seeks to create fresh moments of astonishment in the encounter of poem and reader, offering a petrific text to stony understandings and a field of openings for the receptive.

It becomes increasingly clear that we should attach the term "astonishment" to that moment when the reader's mind divides into a stunned Corporeal Understanding and privileged intellectual powers. Astonishment is thus a liminal or threshold state, dividing the complacent mind from the stunned understanding and the latter from exalted powers of intuitive reception. The function of liminal states is to mark boundaries and hence to provide bounding outlines for what lies beyond

them. Blake's sublime allegory serves to isolate the intellectual powers from the other components of the mind, for the essence of Blake's sublime resides in intellect becoming present to itself as a wholly determinate form (see the *Descriptive Catalogue*: "The Beauty proper for sublime art, is lineaments, or forms and features that are capable of being the receptacles of intellect" [E 544]). The analogy to this process in Burke's system would be the recoil of delight that floods the consciousness when it realizes its safe distance from the contingent pain or deprivation that provoked the sublime experience in the first place.¹² Blake and Burke do not differ in their understanding of the structure or the dynamics of the sublime experience. Blake's quarrel is with Burke's choice of sublime objects (ratios of the five senses rather than glimpses of Eternal Death or of Divine Vision) and Burke's apparatus of transformation (nerves and muscles rather than passion and imagination). But both writers place discontinuity of consciousness at the center of their ideas of the sublime.

If anything, in stressing the determinate, the particular, and the distinct as necessary qualities of sublime objects, as he does in the Reynolds annotations and elsewhere, Blake provides for a more radical discontinuity and deprivation of the ordinary senses than anything that Burke can supply from his storehouse of the corporeally vast and terrific. The Blakean visionary symbol, the reflexive emblem of the Intellectual Powers—determinate, particular, and distinct in itself—must be radically discontinuous with everything that is beyond its bounding outline. Here Blake occupies a sphere of conception that would be "altogether hidden" to Edmund Burke, but we would be wrong to ignore the elements of a Burkean sensibility that lick about the borders of this sphere like a darkness to its radiance, enhancing its outline. Blake always assimilates his enemies' strength before he discards their excrementitious husk.

¹¹David V. Erdman, ed. *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, newly rev. ed. (Garden City: Anchor P/Doubleday, 1982) 660; hereafter referred to as E.

¹²See, for example, Josephine Miles, *Eras and Modes in English Poetry* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: U of California P, 1957) 78–99; Morton D. Paley, *Energy and the Imagination: A Study of the Development of Blake's Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1970) 18–24; and especially Paley, *The Continuing City: William Blake's Jerusalem* (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1983) 57ff.

¹³Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful*, ed. J. T. Boulton (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958) 57.

¹⁴Addison, for example, tells us that "our imagination loves to be filled with an object, or to grasp at anything that is too big for its capacity. We are flung into a pleasing astonishment at such unbounded views. . . ." According to Johnson, "[The sublime is] that

comprehension and expanse of thought which at once fills the whole mind, and of which the first effect is sudden astonishment, and the second rational admiration." Here is a sampling of similar contemporary opinions: "The sublime . . . takes possession of our attention, and of all our faculties, and absorbs them in astonishment"; "[the sublime] imports such ideas presented to the mind, as raise it to an uncommon degree of elevation, and fill it with admiration and astonishment"; "objects exciting terror are . . . in general sublime; for terror always implies astonishment, occupies the whole soul, and suspends all its motions." See, respectively, *Works of Joseph Addison*, 6 vols. (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1811) 4: 340; Samuel Johnson, "The Life of Cowley," *Lives of the English Poets*, ed. George Birkbeck Hill, 3 vols. (1905; Oxford: Clarendon P; New York: Octagon Books, 1967) 1: 20-21; James Usher, *Clio: Or, a Discourse on Taste*, 2nd ed. (London: T. Davies, 1769) 102; Hugh Blair, "A Critical Dissertation on the Poems of Ossian," in *The Poems of Ossian*, trans. James Macpherson, 2 vols. (London: W. Strahan and T. Cadell, 1773) 2: 422; Alexander Girard, *An Essay on Taste* (London: A Millar, 1759) 19.

⁵*Philosophical Enquiry* 58.

⁶Dionysius Longinus, *Essay on the Sublime*, trans. William Smith (London, 1756) 3.

⁷Just as Burke's sublime rides on an aesthetics of darkness, deprivation, pain, and "whatever is in any sort terrible" (*Philosophical Enquiry* 39) so in Blake's vocabulary *dark* prevails numerically over *light*, night over *day*, *death* over *life*. More notably, the word *terror(s)* and its co-derivatives *terrible*, *terrific*, *terrified*, taken as a collectivity, would rank in the dozen most frequently used words in his concorded vocabulary (David V. Erdman's *Blake Concordance* [Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1967] reveals a total of 393 uses of these terms). Despite his stated aversion to Burke, Blake so closely associates the sublime with the terrific that the terminology of the latter often acquires an honorific lustre in his work. Thus we have such phrases as "Terrified at the Sublime Wonder" (a reference to the beneficent Spaces of Erin—see *J* 11.8-15), "terrible Blake in his pride" (When Klopstock England defied," line 2), an uncharacteristically affectionate Enitharmon's "Lovely terrible Los wonder of Eternity" (*FZ* 90.160), the "terrors of friendship" (*J* 45.5), and the "terrific Lions & Tygers" that "sport and play" before the Great Harvest at the end of *Milton* (*M* 42.38). In these instances *terror* loses most of its terrors, and one gets the sense that in such cases Blake is not paying tribute so much to the signified *feeling* of terror but rather to the signifier, a vocabulary of the sublime fondly preserved from the fashions of his youth.

⁸There are 51 uses of the terms from the collectivity (*astonish(ed)(es)(ing)(ment)*) in Blake's poetry. Among poets of comparable stature, range, and sublime interests, Milton's poetry yields only 6 instances, Wordsworth's, 17, and Shelley's, 11. Pope draws upon this cluster of terms 16 times, almost entirely for his translations of Homer, and Dryden, 11 times, mostly for the *Aeneid*.

⁹See Nelson Hilton, *Literal Imagination: Blake's Vision of Words* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1983) 16-17, and especially 239-57.

¹⁰This connection is reinforced by the older sense of *astonished* (or its variant *astomied*) to connote death-like paralysis and insensibility; thus the *OED* on *astomied*: "Stunned; made insensible, benumbed, paralyzed (1611)"; cf. also Milton on Satan's legions, who "lie thus astonisht on th'oblivious Pool" (*Paradise Lost* 1.266).

¹¹*Philosophical Enquiry* 61.

¹²See *Philosophical Enquiry* 37, 40.

A Twist in the Tale of "The Tyger"

Desmond King-Hele

Most readers of "The Tyger" have their own ideas of its meaning: I shall not be adding my own interpretation, but merely offering a factual record of minute particulars, by pointing to a number of verbal parallels with Erasmus Darwin's *The Botanic Garden*. A few of these were given in my book *Erasmus Darwin and the Romantic Poets*; the others I have come across more recently.

Darwin's poem *The Botanic Garden* was published in two parts, with Part 2, *The Loves of the Plants*, appearing first in 1789, and Part 1, *The Economy of Vegetation*, nominally in 1791, though it did not actually appear until about June 1792, probably because of delay in printing Blake's superb engravings of the Portland Vase.¹ After my quotations I give the canto and line numbers from the third edition of *The Loves of the Plants* (1791) and the first edition of *The Economy of Vegetation*.

One of the best-known passages in Darwin's poem was his vivid description of a nightmare, based on Fuseli's painting (illus. 1), which features the half-visible head of a large animal with unnaturally bright eyes, enveloped in black night. Obviously the head is intended as that of a horse, but the word "nightmare" has no etymological connection with horses, male or female.² (The nightmare is produced by the incubus, or "squab fiend" as Darwin calls him.) Could Fuseli's monstrous animal, with eyes burning bright in the blackness of the night, have given Blake the cue for his Tyger? Such a speculation is encouraged by a verbal parallel between "The Tyger" and Darwin's verses about the sleeping girl. The nightmare induces in her an "interrupted heart-pulse" and "suffocative breath", as frightful thoughts

In dread succession agonize her mind,
O'er her fair limbs convulsive tremors fleet,
Start in her hands, and struggle in her feet.

(*Lov. Pl.* 3: 68-70)

This is not quite "What dread hand? and what dread feet?," but dread is powerfully present, "in her hands, and . . . in her feet"; and "dread" was a favorite adjective with Darwin, used twenty times in *The Botanic Garden*.

The burning brightness of the first two stanzas of "The Tyger" has some resemblances to Darwin's picture of Nebuchadnezzar ordering "a vast pyre . . . of sulphurous coal and pitch-exuding pine" with "huge bel-lows" to fan the roaring flames:



Henry Fuseli, *The Nightmare*, oil on canvas, 40 x 50 inches, 1781. Courtesy of The Detroit Institute of Arts.

Bright and more bright the blazing deluge flows,
 And white with sevenfold heat the furnace glows.
 And now the Monarch fix'd with dread surprize
 Deep in the burning vault his dazzled eyes.

(*Lov. Pl. 4*: 61-64)

Nebuchadnezzar was so dreadfully surprised because Shadrec, Meshec, and Abednego were enduring the heat of the furnace unscathed: "Fierce flames innocuous, as they step, retire; / And calm they move amid a world of fire!" (*Lov. Pl. 4*: 69-70). In these two quotations we

have *burning* once and *bright* twice, as well as *dread* and four other obvious words from "The Tyger"—*furnace*, *deep*, *eyes* and *fire*. Also Darwin has a complete answer to Blake's question "What the hand dare seize the fire?"

There is another curious parallel in Darwin's picture of the night-flowering *Cereia*, who lifts her brows "to the skies" at midnight, "Eyes the white zenith; counts the suns, that roll / Their distant fires, and blaze around the Pole" (*Lov. Pl. 4*: 21-22). Blake sets "the fire of thine eyes" deep in "distant . . . skies": the image is similar,

though the Tyger is very different from the strange plant that flowers unseen.

In an earlier canto of *The Loves of the Plants* there is a correctly-ordered preview of Blake's word-sequence "deeps . . . on . . . wings . . . aspire . . . fire": Darwin

Calls up with magic voice the shapes that sleep
In Earth's dark bosom, or unfathom'd deep;
That shrin'd in air on viewless wings aspire,
Or blazing bathe in elemental fire.

(*Lov. Pl.* 2: 297-300)

Darwin likes the "aspire/fire" rhyme and uses it in *The Botanic Garden* on three other occasions (*Lov. Pl.* 1: 281-82; *Ec. Veg.* 1: 225-26 and 1: 255-56).

After all these parallels you may think it is easy to find a parallel for anything. But that is not so: unlike conventional literary criticism, which can sweep unwanted facts under the carpet, source-hunting is sharp and scientific—failures cannot be hidden. Thus there is no "fearful symmetry" to be found anywhere in the verse of *The Botanic Garden*. Also Darwin never mentions a Tyger specifically in his poem. The nearest he comes to it is with his fierce-eyed "Monster of the Nile": "With Tyger-paw He prints the brineless strand . . . / Rolls his fierce eye-balls, clasps his iron claws" (*Ec. Veg.* 4: 434, 437). Nor does Darwin offer a "forest of the night": his closest approach is when Hercules "drives the Lion to his dusky cave" in "Nemea's howling forests" (*Ec. Veg.* 1: 313).

No labor of Hercules is needed, however, to find parallels in canto 1 of *The Economy of Vegetation*, because its subject is Fire. Darwin tells us how Vulcan and Cyclops "forged immortal arms" on "thundering anvils"; when Venus came to watch them she "Admired their sinewy arms, and shoulders bare, / And ponderous hammers lifted high in air" (*Ec. Veg.* 1: 169-70). Blake has *shoulder, sinews, hammer* and *anvil*, though his immortal artificer is forging not fearsome weapons but a fearsome Tyger. Darwin is equally creative at times, for example in bringing to birth the Tyger-pawed Monster of the Nile:

First in translucent lymph with cobweb-threads
The Brain's fine floating tissue swells, and spreads;
Nerve after nerve the glistening spine descends,
The red Heart dances, the Aorta bends.

(*Ec. Veg.* 4: 425-28)

The first two lines answer Blake's "In what furnace was thy brain?" In the last line Darwin's phrase "The red

Heart dances" is too pretty for Blake, who soberly states "thy heart began to beat"; in *Urizen*, however, closer links with Darwin's picture can be found.³

There are many other parallels from canto 1 of *The Economy of Vegetation*. For example, lines 216-22 have "dread Destroyer . . . bright . . . dread snakes . . . immortal . . . Terror." The noun *chain* appears thirteen times in *The Botanic Garden*, notably in the picture of a shackled "Giant-form" bursting his chains to bring about the French Revolution, an image that may have links with Blake's *French Revolution*.⁴ However, the phrase "what the chain?" does not appear in *The Botanic Garden*. Nor do Blake's "deadly terrors": the best Darwin can offer is "twisted terror" (*Ec. Veg.* 3: 502), with "sinewy shoulders" in the previous line, to parallel "shoulder . . . twist . . . sinews . . . terrors" in the third and fourth stanzas of "The Tyger."

That brings me to the fifth stanza of "The Tyger," which I have already discussed at some length in my book,⁵ where I quoted from Darwin's long note on the aurora, to show that it might be a source for "the stars threw down their spears." I also gave a quotation from Darwin's *Zoonomia*, with his evolutionary explanation—now sanctioned by modern science—of how the tyger was created from the same original "living filament" as the lamb. Thus he answers Blake's question in stanza 5, and the query in stanza 1 about the framer of the Tyger's fearful symmetry. Darwin's answer was timely too, for volume 1 of *Zoonomia* was published in 1794, the same year as *Songs of Experience*.

Perhaps I have been twisting the tail of the Tyger too sadistically; but a full scholarly appreciation of Blake's poem should take account of all such verbal parallels. There is much evidence⁶ that Blake was influenced by Darwin between 1789 and 1795, so the parallels may well be significant.

¹Desmond King-Hele, ed. *The Letters of Erasmus Darwin* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1981) 215.

²N. Powell, *Fuseli: The Nightmare* (London: Allen Lane, 1973).

³See D. C. Leonard, "Erasmus Darwin and William Blake," *Eighteenth Century Life* 4 (1978): 79-81.

⁴See D. Worrall, "William Blake and Erasmus Darwin's *Botanic Garden*," *Bulletin of New York Public Library*, 78 (1975): 397-417.

⁵See Desmond King-Hele, *Erasmus Darwin and the Romantic Poets* (London: Macmillan Press, 1986) 49-50.

⁶Worrall 397-417; N. Hilton, "The Spectre of Darwin," rev. of *The Botanic Garden*, by Erasmus Darwin, *Blake* 15 (1981) 36-48; King-Hele, *Romantic Poets*, chap. 2.

Six New Early Drawings by William Blake and a Reattribution

Martin Butlin

No fewer than four early drawings by Blake turned up in Bond Street in the summer of 1988; in fact I first saw all of them within the space of ten days or so in June. Two belong to dealers, while the other two belong to clients of these dealers from whom I learned of their existence. Seeing these early works, and relating them to other works of the same kind by Blake, finally convinced me of

the authenticity of a large drawing in the Fogg Museum of Art that I had previously rejected as being by Blake and omitted from my catalogue.¹ Four of these drawings are in pen and wash, usually over a slight pencil under-drawing, while the fifth is in pencil alone. The four pen and wash drawings have all previously been attributed to John Flaxman, an understandable attribution but one that does not bear comparison with works in the same technique and general neoclassical manner that can definitely be attributed to him. On the other hand they fall naturally into place among the large group of "Miscellaneous Early Works, Mainly in Pen and Wash" dating from c. 1775 to c. 1790, included in my catalogue as nos. 71-183. This group was based around certain key works



1. William Blake, "Angels Gathered Around a Book," c. 1785. Pen and wash over pencil, 32.5 x 40.5 cm. Colnaghi, London.



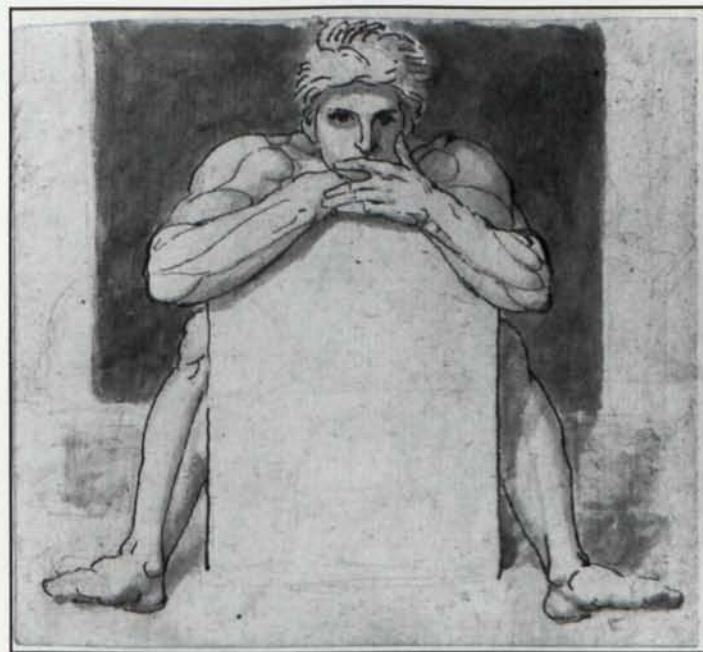
2. William Blake, "Moses with the Tablets of the Law," c. 1780-85. Pencil, 20.8 x 14.6 cm. Private collection, Great Britain.

that related directly to well-documented works by Blake, such as the two sketches (B 159 recto and verso) for "Joseph Making Himself Known to his Brethren," exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1785 (B 157).

The first of these newly discovered drawings (illus. 1) shows a group of haloed figures standing around a table bearing a book with a Hebrew inscription; rays of light emanate from the book. Allowing for the difficulties most people find in describing works of art accurately, it is just possible that this drawing is that described by the daughter of Charles Augustus Tulk, the Swedenborgian friend of Flaxman and patron of Blake, as one of a group of drawings for Swedenborg's "Memorable Relations": "A Female Angel Instructing a Number of Children in the Spiritual World" (B128). A similar book appears in the drawing in pen and watercolor in the Tate



3. William Blake, "Three Naked Children Crouching Around a Source of Light," c. 1785. Pen and wash over pencil, 14.3 x 19.2 cm. Thos. Agnew & Sons Ltd., London.



4. William Blake, "A Young Man Seated Behind a Stone Slab," c. 1785. Pen and wash over pencil, 14.3 x 14.5 cm. Private collection, London.



5. William Blake, called "The First Sight of the Spiritual World," c. 1785. Pen and wash over pencil, irregular, 48.5 x 56 cm. Courtesy of the Harvard University Art Museums (Fogg Art Museum; bequest of Grenville L. Winthrop).

Gallery, at present called "An Allegory of the Bible" (B 127). This drawing is fairly exceptional among Blake's early works in showing a good feeling for the solidity of the body beneath the flowing draperies, and the sense of graceful contraposto, particularly in the foremost angel on the right, is particularly striking; it can be compared with that of the figure of Christ in the version of "The Good Farmer" in the collection of Robert N. Essick (B 122 recto) or the left-hand fairy in "Oberon, Titania and Puck with Fairies Dancing" in the Tate Gallery (B 161). What is particularly noticeable is the sense of movement in the figures on the right (how many angels exactly are there?), produced by the pentimenti by which Blake has changed the position of the angel's leg.

Something of the same effect is seen in the pencil drawing of "Moses and the Tablets of the Law" (illus. 2), another of the newly discovered drawings. Pencil drawings of this type are exceptionally difficult to date but this one would seem to relate to the series of pen and wash drawings dealing with the story of Moses, dated by me to the first half of the 1780s (B 111-15). The forcefulness of this drawing, linked with a certain stiffness and angularity of line, is found in such pencil drawings as that of a "Man with Arms Upraised, Perhaps the Resurrection" in the National Gallery of Art (B 78 verso) and "The Resurrection of the Dead" in an American private collection (B 79), both dated by me to the early 1780s.

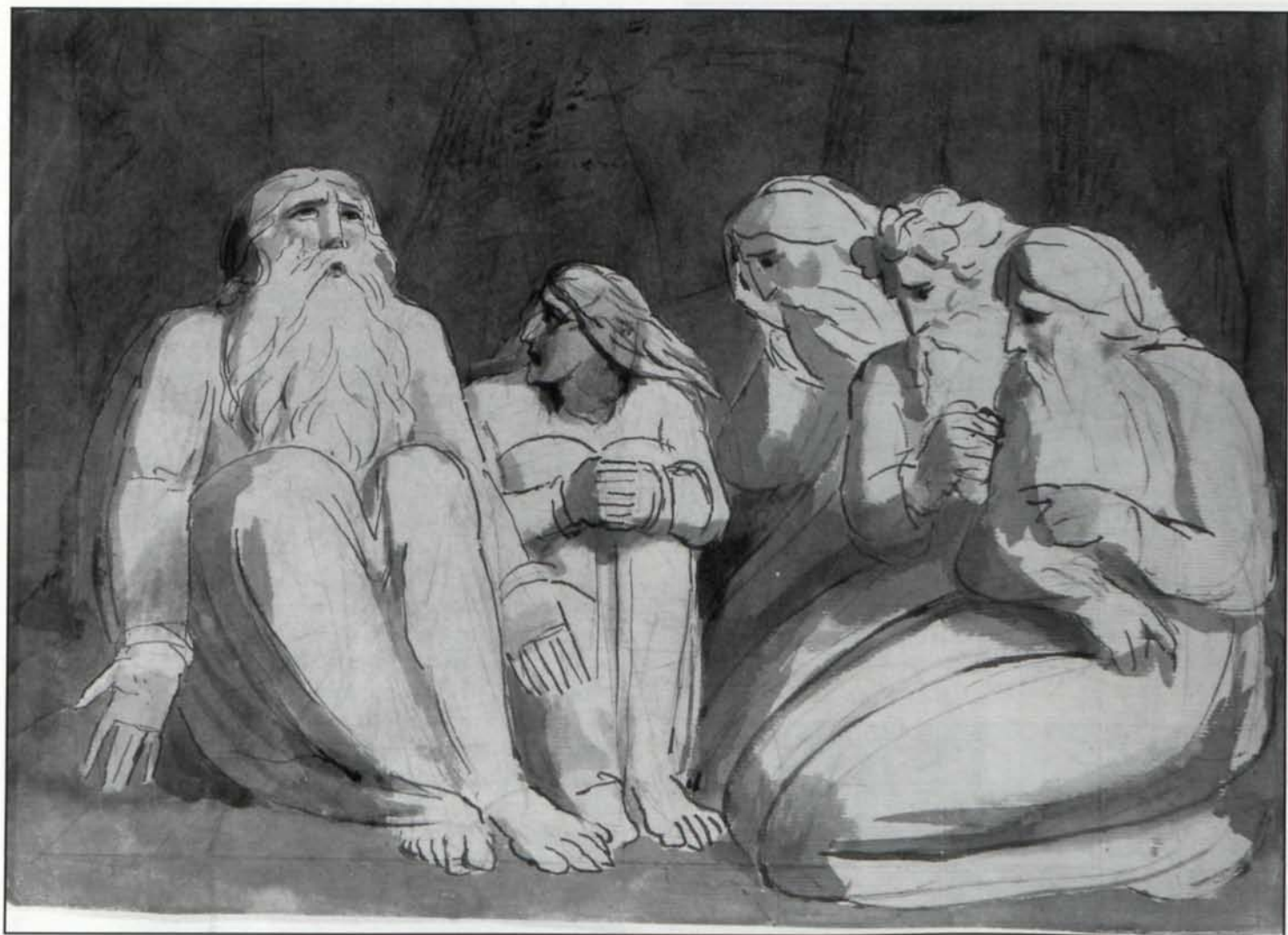
Another of the newly discovered drawings in pen and wash (illus. 3) shows three naked children crouched round a bowl-like source of light by which they are illuminated. As in the case of the drawing of "Angels Gathered Around a Book" the precise subject is difficult to ascertain, but again one senses a reference to Swedenborg. The relatively heavy outlines are, allowing for the difference in scale, relatively close to the drawings for the Job and Ezekiel engravings already mentioned.

Very similar in style is the drawing (illus. 4) of a young man shown seated behind a slab of stone on which he rests his arms, though this is carried slightly further in that the muscles of the arms and legs are suggested by lines within the general outlines. Mark Fisher has suggested that this might be a design for a book-plate.

In the large drawing in the Fogg Museum (illus. 5)² the internal modeling of the foremost figure goes further, and is executed in a much more delicate way with a pen or the point of a brush, the same fine line being found in the figures and horses rushing across from right to left in the background. The old man holding his arms outstretched above the kneeling youth is of the type found in the pen and ink drawings of Moses already mentioned, while a parallel for the head of the young man can also be found in one of these, "The Children of Israel Receiving the Ten Commandments from Moses" in the Israel Museum, Jerusalem (B 114). The use of fine line to define internal forms is similar to that in the drawing, apparently after the antique, of "Charon" in the Tate Gallery (B 178 recto) and in the copies after



6. William Blake, sketch for "Joseph's Brethren Bowing Before Him," c. 1785. Pen and wash over pencil, 33.5 x 47.4 cm. Courtesy of Sammlung der Zeichnungen, National-Galerie, Staatliche Museum, Berlin, DDR.



7. William Blake, "The Complaint of Job," c. 1785. Pen and Indian ink, 33.2 x 47.1 cm. Thomas Gibson Fine Art Ltd.

d'Hancarville in the British Museum (B 174 and 175). The helmet of the figure on the right in the background also suggests a classical subject though it is difficult to see what this might be.

Little if anything is known of the history of these drawings. The one in the Fogg Museum was purchased by Grenville L. Winthrop from A. J. Finberg at the Cotswold Gallery in London in 1923 and was displayed in the exhibition of *Drawings by J. M. W. Turner, William Blake, Samuel Palmer and Others* held there in July 1923. On the back has been written the number "504" and, more interestingly, "This belongs to JLG/by Blake." However, the only JLG that I can trace is Mrs. John L. Gardner who, with George N. Black, presented the Thomas Butts set of illustrations of Milton's *Comus* to the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston in 1890. If the

drawing did belong to John L. Gardner it would have to have returned to London by 1923. The other drawings have no history before they turned up, separately, in the art trade recently. The drawing of "Angels Gathered Around a Book" turned up, perhaps significantly, in Germany, the others in Britain.

Since the appearance of the four new drawings discussed above, my friend David Bindman has kindly drawn my attention to another of the early group of pen and wash drawings, found by him in the National-Galerie in East Berlin. This is in fact an additional key work in dating the whole group, being a preliminary sketch for "Joseph's Brethren Bowing Before Him" (illus. 6), one of the three watercolors of Joseph subjects exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1785 and now in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge (B 155). This new dis-

covery means that we now have sketches for all three of the group, one of which is the sketch with a certain amount of color for "Joseph Ordering Simeon to be Bound" now in a private collection, Milan (B 158); the two others, in pen and ink, the recto and verso of a sheet, are in the Royal Collection at Windsor Castle (B 159). What is interesting about the new sketch is that it differs considerably from the final watercolor—Joseph is placed on the opposite side of the composition, though in the same pose deriving from the antique—with the prominent figure, also from the antique, of a girl holding a large dish on her head again filling the space between Joseph and his brethren.

It never rains but it pours! No sooner had I posted off the preceding paragraph to the ever compliant editors of *Blake* than yet another of the early pen and wash drawings appeared, this time one included in my catalogue as "Untraced since 1928" (B 163; illus. 7)³. This is the intermediate sketch of "The Complaint of Job" of about 1785, falling, as Geoffrey Keynes said it did, between the verso of the drawing in the Tate Gallery (on which Blake takes the figure of Job's wife from the recto and redraws it in the pose that he was to retain through the subsequent sketches until it appeared in the engraving "Job. What is Man That Thou Shouldest Try Him Every Moment?") and the more finished pen and wash drawing formerly in the collection of T. E. Hanley and now in the Fine Art Museums of San Francisco (B 164). It bears exactly the same relationship to the drawing in San Francisco as does the Homans drawing of "The Death of Ezekiel's Wife" to the more finished version in the Philadelphia Museum of Art (B 165 and 166).

The drawing on the reverse also fits with what was known about the formerly untraced drawing, showing a full-length figure, fully draped, with wild locks and beard as described in the Sotheby's sale catalogue for 17–21 December 1928 (illus. 8). The appearance of this drawing on the reverse was the more exciting because of its close resemblance to the two drawings labeled "Ossian" in the newly rediscovered larger Blake-Varley sketchbook, sold at Sotheby's on 21 March 1989⁴. It resembles both the double-page spread showing the figure full length holding his harp on the edge of a cliff with a landscape to the left, and the page devoted to his head alone. Moreover at first glance the drawing looked to be later in style than that on the recto. However, two factors suggest that it is more likely to date from about the same time as the recto or slightly earlier. First, the figure fits uneasily on the page as it now stands, cramped at the top and with plenty of space below. Indeed there are signs that the page was cut and the paper trimmed all round. The composition of "The Complaint of Job" on the recto however fits the page very nicely, with slightly more space around the figures, particularly on the left (which

is the top of the verso), than in the more finished pen and wash drawing in San Francisco. This implies that the drawing on the verso was probably done first, the paper then cut, particularly at the top, and then used for the recto. Moreover the subject of the drawing on the verso, though prefiguring the Ossian of the larger Blake-Varley sketchbook, could equally well be the Bard; the drawing seems most likely to have been a preliminary sketch for the lost work, almost certainly a watercolor, exhibited by Blake at the Royal Academy in 1785 as "The Bard, from Gray" (B 160). The composition lacks the figures of the royal train and deceased bards that appear in the tempera included by Blake in his exhibition in 1809 and now in the Tate Gallery (B 655), but the other evidence suggests that we now have, in this newly discovered drawing, at least an idea of the appearance of the 1785 exhibit. It was this work of his youth to which Blake returned when asked by John Varley to see Ossian in a vision.



8. Sketch for "The Bard, from Gray," c. 1785. Pencil, 47.1 x 33.2 cm. Verso of "The Complaint of Job." Thomas Gibson Fine Art Ltd.

¹I am indebted to Andrew Wyld of Thos. Agnew & Sons Ltd. and Mark Fisher formerly of Colnaghi for helping with the works belonging to their galleries and in private collections. I was able to see the drawings in the Fogg Museum of Art during a recent visit, thanks to the helpfulness of the staff there; I had first seen the drawing in 1966 when I failed to recognize its authorship.

The drawing at Agnew's (illus. 3) was included in *Agnew's 116th Exhibition of Watercolours and Drawings*, February–March 1989 (22 illus.); it now belongs to a British private collection.

My catalogue, *The Paintings and Drawings of William Blake*, was published in 1981. The abbreviations "B 159," etc. in my text refer to the catalogue numbers in this publication, where all the works referred to are illustrated.

²No. 9 in the catalogue, with the title "The First Sight of the Spiritual World," no size or medium given.

³This work has been brought to my attention through the good offices of Mrs. Gottesman at Thomas Gibson Fine Art Ltd. It measures 13³/₁₆ x 18¹/₂ in. (33.2 x 47.1 cm) and is on laid paper. The recto is in pen and wash, the verso, which is an upright, in pencil. It has apparently remained in a single British private collection since the sale of 1928.

⁴Lot 184. The sketchbook is fully illustrated in a separate catalogue devoted to this one item. The double spread of Ossian occurs on pages 33 verso and 34 recto, and the single head on the following page, 34 verso.

NEWSLETTER

TRAVEL NOTES

A traveler (Janet Warner) sent photos of a statue she saw in a Hong Kong park. Eduardo Paolucci is the artist, and the statue is called "Concept of Newton." As our correspondent said, ". . . we know whose concept it was, too! I think Blake would have liked the addition of the glasses and the overall machine-like changes to the body."

BLAKE'S CRITICAL PICTURES

A session will be held at the 1989 MLA Convention in Washington, D.C. (see the MLA Convention issue for the exact time and date, Dec. 27–30) on:

Blake's Critical Pictures: The Major Illustrations.

Session leader, John E. Grant, Department of English, University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa 52242.

Participants:

J. M. Q. Davies, Northern Territory University: "Iconography and Construal of Designs for Milton's Poems."

Alexander S. Gourlay, University of Nebraska: "Blake's 'Allegory of Idolatry': Chaucer's *Canterbury Pilgrims*."



Mark Lussier, Arizona State University, Tempe: "Contradiction as Design: Blake on Gray's Cat."

Jeanne Moskal, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill: "Blake's Advocacy of Forgiveness in the Dante Illustrations."

Full-length versions of these papers will be available from 20 November to 8 December from John E. Grant for \$3.00. Some full-length copies will be available gratis at the meeting itself. Each of the participants at the special session will first give a brief slide-accompanied synopsis and then be prepared to discuss questions related to his or her paper.

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF ROMANTICISM

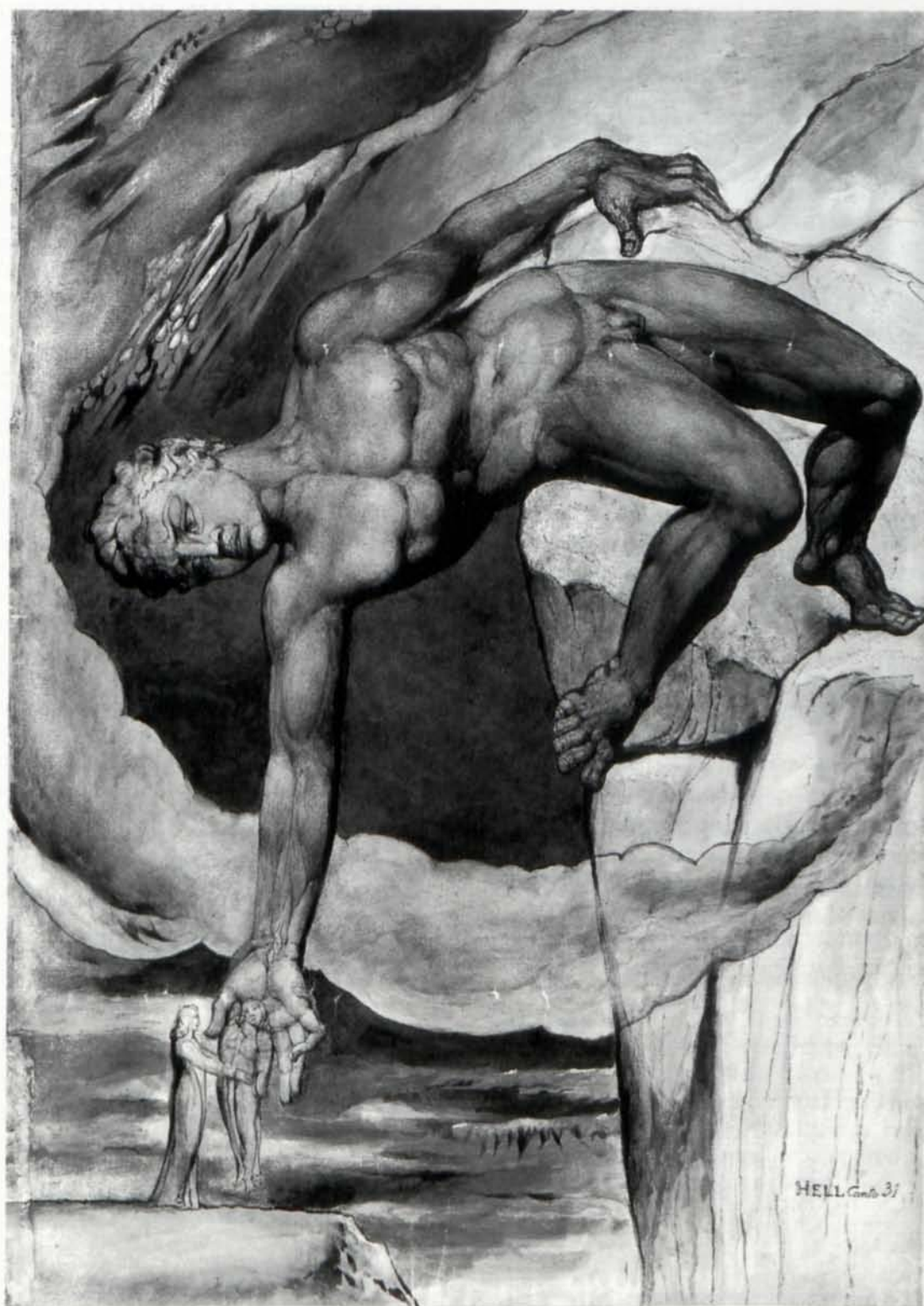
Romanticism: An Encyclopedia. Contributors are sought for Garland Press's forthcoming one-volume study of the culture, lives, and times of English Romanticism. Original essays from five to 20 pages in length that treat topics drawn from all aspects of the period will be assigned according to scholarly interest, expertise, and enthusiasm. Topics will be commissioned probably spring of 1990 and due at the end of the summer. Write to Professor Laura Dabundo, Department of English, Kennesaw State College, PO Box 444, Marietta GA 30061.

BLAKE SOCIETY NEWS

The Blake Society at St James's, Piccadilly, London presented three lectures and a retrospective of the work of Humphrey Jennings this fall. On 13 September Peter Marshall, whose publications include *William Godwin* (Yale UP, 1987) and *William Blake: Visionary Anarchist* (Freedom Press, 1988) spoke on "The Visionary Anarchism of William Blake." On 12 October Geoffrey Ashe gave a talk on "Blake's Albion and Arthur," accompanied by Caitlín Matthews on the harp. This talk explored Blake's myth of the Giant Albion in relation to King Arthur; the music was drawn from Arthurian and Mabon traditions. The third lecture in the program featured Andrew Lincoln, who spoke on "'All Nature is But Art, Unknown to Thee': Eighteenth-Century Optimism and Blake's 'Innocence.'" Other events include a two-hour retrospective of the work of Humphrey Jennings—poet, painter, and film-maker—and a celebration of Blake's birthday on Tuesday, 28 November.

REVOLUTION AND ROMANTICISM

In 1990 Morton D. Paley will be offering an NEH summer seminar for college teachers on "British Romanticism in an Epoch of Revolution." The seminar will run from 18 June to 10 August (eight weeks) at the University of California, Berkeley. Those interested in applying should write Paley at the Department of English, University of California, Berkeley CA 94720. From 15 February to 15 May, write Paley at V. Valhallavagen 4, 18263 Djursholm, Sweden (tel. Stockholm 755-5574). He describes the seminar as follows: Consciousness of living in an epoch of revolution shaped Romantic literature written in the period from the American Revolution through the French Revolution and ending with the Greek War of Independence. Beginning with Blake's *Poetical Sketches* and ending with Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's *The Last Man*, participants in this seminar will analyze the role of these revolutions as thematic, imagistic, and structural parts of the works themselves. Some of the works, like Blake's *The French Revolution*, focus primarily on the revolution, while other works, such as Mary Wollstonecraft's *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark*, respond to the revolution indirectly. In addition to these works, participants will study Godwin's *Caleb Williams*, Coleridge's *Destiny of Nations*, Wordsworth's *The Prelude of 1805-06*, and Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*. Questions to be addressed include: Is Blake's *The French Revolution* a rewriting of Revelation in contemporary terms? Are Keats' Hyperion poems, depicting as they do the aftermath of cosmic revolution, susceptible of sociopolitical interpretation? Is Mary Shelley's *The Last Man* simply an "anatomy of failed revolution" and a repudiation of the most cherished attitudes of Romanticism or is it a pessimistic vision of the fate of art? Although the central focus of the seminar is English literature, historians, art historians, and others interested in the Revolution and Romantic periods are encouraged to apply.



WILLIAM BLAKE

IN THE COLLECTION OF THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF VICTORIA

WILLIAM BLAKE

IN THE COLLECTION OF THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF VICTORIA

EXHIBITION, BOOK AND SYMPOSIUM


Exhibition at the National Gallery of Victoria
14 September-19 November 1989

Presented as part of Melbourne Spoleto Festival



The National Gallery of Victoria houses one of the world's finest collections of art by William Blake (1757-1827), the British artist, poet and mystic. In a dramatic new display in the Robert Raynor Gallery, this major exhibition will show the N.G.V.'s Blake collection in its entirety, including the Dante and Milton watercolours, hand-coloured relief prints (*Europe, Urizen* and *Jerusalem*), *Virgil* wood-engravings, *Job* engravings, and illustrated books.

Highlights include the unveiling of the Gallery's two superb new Blake acquisitions, Copy X of the *Songs of Innocence* watercoloured by Blake, and a hand-coloured volume of his engravings illustrating Edward Young's *Night Thoughts*.

This exhibition is sponsored by  **McPHERSON'S LIMITED**

Admission and Hours

Entry to the exhibition is *free*, but normal Gallery admission will apply.

The exhibition will be open Tuesday to Sunday, inclusive, 10.00 a.m. to 4.45 p.m.

New Book, William Blake in the Collection of the National Gallery of Victoria

Robert Raynor Publication in Prints and Drawings, Number 3

By Martin Butlin and Ted Gott, with an Introduction by Irena Zdanowicz.

A comprehensive catalogue of the exceptional Blake holdings of the National Gallery of Victoria. Lavishly illustrated with complete colour reproduction of the Gallery's Blake watercolours, relief etchings and the *Songs of Innocence* illuminated prints. Dozens of other plates illustrate the National Gallery of Victoria's full collection of Blake's prints for the first time.

An appendix reproduces the Gallery's most recent purchase, a hand-coloured volume of Blake's engravings for *Night Thoughts*. Essays by Martin Butlin and Ted Gott analyse Blake's printmaking career and offer a new study of the Dante watercolours.

To be published in September 1989 by the National Gallery of Victoria. For orders, contact: The Gallery Shop.

Blake in Melbourne An International Symposium Dates: 16-17 September 1989

A weekend Symposium at the National Gallery of Victoria and the Victorian College of the Arts. International Blake scholars Martin Butlin (Keeper, Historic British Collection, Tate Gallery, London) and David Bindman (Professor of the History of Art, University of London) will join Australian speakers in a celebration of Blake's life and art.

We wish to thank the British Council, The Ian Potter Foundation and the National Gallery of Victoria Business Council for their funding of this Symposium.

The programme:

Saturday 16 September 1989

Place: Great Hall, National Gallery of Victoria

10.30 a.m. *The Melbourne Blakes—Their Acquisition and Critical Heritage in Australia*
Irena Zdanowicz, Senior Curator of Prints and Drawings, N.G.V.

11.45 a.m. *Outlines & Contours—Blake and the Neoclassical Tradition*
Peter Tomory, Professor Emeritus, Art History, Latrobe University

12.30 p.m. Lunch

1.30 p.m. *Songs of Innocence—The Experience of Copy X*
Ted Gott, Research Associate, Department of Prints and Drawings, N.G.V.

2.45 p.m. *Blake and the Book of Job*
David Bindman, Professor of the History of Art, University of London.

Sunday 17 September 1989

Place: School of Music Lecture Theatre, Victorian College of the Arts

10.30 a.m. *Melbourne's Recent Purchase—A Coloured Copy of Blake's Night Thoughts*
Michael Tolley, Associate Professor, Dept. of English, University of Adelaide

11.45 a.m. *Blake's Prophetic Books*
Peter Otto, Lecturer in English, University of Melbourne.

12.30 p.m. Lunch

1.30 p.m. *Innocence Regained—Blake's Illustrations to Dante*
Martin Butlin, Keeper, Historic British Collection, Tate Gallery, London

2.45 p.m. *Cleaning Melbourne's Blake Watercolours—Methods and Analysis*
Anne Cotter-Ross, Paper Conservator, N.G.V.

Cost \$50 (\$25 students) for the entire weekend symposium, including lunch each day, and morning and afternoon tea. Enrolments limited to 140.

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