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NEWSLETTER

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CONTRIBUTORS
Bo Ossian Lindberg describes his Life and Works of William Blake, a series of paintings executed in 1978 and 1979, as "... seven paintings in oil on canvas, each 116 x 89 cm., painted 1978-79. They are: (1) William Blake, age 12, autumn 1769, going from his parents' house, 28 Broad St., to Par's drawing school in the Strand. (2) Blake making a measured drawing of Countess Aveline's tomb, Westminster Abbey, 1779. William and Catherine experiencing the pleasures of married life, 23 Green Street, 1782. (3) Robert's death, February 1787, 28 Poland Street. His spirit flies through the ceiling, clapping its hand for joy, William & Catherine watching. (4) Blake sees the Ancient of Days at no. 13 Hercules Building, Lambeth, c. 1791. In the window Catherine, Flaxman, Fuseli--anachronism ignored, I wanted the friends in. (5) Blake throwing the soldier out of his Felpham garden, 1803. Blake rewrites Night VII transcribed and illustrated. (6) Blake's house 17 South Molton St. 1803-21, Napoleonic wars and page of Jerusalem inserted. Blake drawing The Ghost of a Flea 1819, John Varley looking on. (7) Blake engraving pl. 14 of his set of engravings for the Book of Job, Catherine grinding paint. Their friend Samuel Palmer climbing the stairs and a chimney sweeper shouting "weep weep." 3 Fountain Court, 1827. We reproduce numbers 4 and 6.
REVIEWS

HOW ORIGINAL WAS BLAKE?

Robert N. Essick and Donald Pearce, eds. 
Reviewed by W. J. T. Mitchell.

Blake has, on the whole, been well-served by scholarly anthologies. Visionary Forms Dramatic (ed. David Erdman and John Grant) showed us how to read his pictorial language in harness with his visionary poetry; Blake's Sublime Allegory (ed. Stuart Curran and Joseph Wittreich) taught us that his major prophecies have a formal and rhetorical integrity to match their intellectual brilliance. Now Donald Pearce and Robert Essick give us Blake in His Time to make clear what should have been obvious all along, that Blake's work did not spring from nothing, but emerged out of a deeply learned and thoughtful examination of his cultural milieu. In some ways this message does nothing to redeem Blake from his splendid isolation: seeing him in his own time does not necessarily make him more accessible to ours, and nothing will ever remedy the combination of bad luck, intransigence, and indifference which led to Blake's neglect by all but a handful of his contemporaries. But the other kind of isolation, the kind that T. S. Eliot referred to when he complained of Blake's "meanness of culture"—this misconception has been decisively eliminated. Most major artists encounter precisely the opposite sort of fortunes in cultural history. Criticism of them begins with the study of influences, and attempts to place them in a network of historical relationships. With Blake this sort of thing has come very late, having to wait, it seems, for the formation of a modern community of scholars and general readers, the fit audience that Blake so fervently desired.

To judge by this collection of essays the scholarly audience is very fit and in no danger of being few. Some of the essays manage that most difficult of balancing acts, reconstructing the historical context of a work of art while suggesting its renewed importance for our own time. Gerald Bentley's meticulous reconstruction of the artistic response to The Book of Enoch when it appeared in England in 1821 recovers a tiny but fascinating moment in cultural history (five major artists and poets illustrated or wrote about this apocryphal book when it appeared) at the same time that it makes visible the remarkable inventiveness of Blake's designs for Enoch. Where Flaxman had translated the Angels who couple with the daughters of men into his predictable classical warriors, and Westall made them winged shepherds in a sentimental pastoral, Blake seized upon a passage much later in The Book of Enoch (message for illustrators: read the whole book) in which the fallen angels are seen in the shape of "great stars, whose parts of shame resembled those of horses." Blake, as Bentley shows, presents this image pictorially as a pair of Apollonian nudes with starry rays and giant phaluses emanating from their loins. This grotesquely
effective invention (which sounds a bit ridiculous, but is quite powerful in visual form) exemplifies Blake's rare gift as an illustrator, his ability to express something independent of, almost in spite of his text (in this case, an affirmation of the eroticism which is condemned by Enoch), and to do so not by violating the text, but by imitating some carefully selected particular image in a surprisingly literal way. Bentley's account of this invention highlights the central problem that unites the essays in this collection, the question of Blake's originality, uniqueness, and novelty; or, to put the matter in its more vexed form, the question of Blake as a copyist, imitator, and borrower—a parasite on the art of his precursors and contemporaries.

A practical and sensible way out of this dilemma is the formula enunciated by Morton Paley, who speaks for most of the other contributors on this issue:

In discussing Blake's theory and practice in the light of traditions about ancient sculpture, we do not at all detract from his uniqueness as an artist; nor do we violate Blake's own view of art. "The difference between a Bad Artist & a Good One," Blake wrote in his Annotations to Reynolds, "is the Bad Artist Seems to Copy a Great Deal: The Good One Really does Copy a Great Deal" (E 634). Blake really did copy a great deal. The material he copies often originated in other works of art but was assimilated by his own mind and thoroughly recast, so that Blake could truly say, no matter how important or how numerous his "sources," that he copied Imagination. (193)

Paley's formula raises, of course, as many questions as it answers: What is the difference between "seeming" to copy, and "really" copying? What exactly is the "material" that is copied (motifs? style or technique? inventions and compositional arrangements of figures?)? What does "recasting" this material imply? Melting it down into a shapeless mass to be molded into Blake's own "new" forms? Or taking the old forms and casting the raw material of new circumstances, ideas, and meanings in those forms? What, finally, does it mean to "copy Imagination"? Paley's excellent essay on "Blake and Ancient Sculpture" does not answer these questions, but it provides the materials that might help us answer them, and his formula for reconciling Blake's tradition with his individual talent allows us to have our cake, eat it too, and get on with the practical work of interpreting Blake: Blake is an original copyist, an imaginative imitator.

But other voices are not able to utter this paradox with the same sort of equanimity. David Bindman traces Blake's theory and practice of imitation to neoclassic traditions expressed by, among others, Blake's arch-foe, Joshua Reynolds, who claimed that "Invention, strictly speaking, is little more than a new combination of those images which have been previously gathered and deposited in the memory: nothing can come of nothing: he who has laid up no materials can produce no combinations" (quoted in Bindman, 93). But Bindman notes that "there are potential problems in such imitation" for an artist who has Blake's sort of ambivalence about tradition: "So long as Blake accepted the widespread eighteenth century assumption of the supremacy of Greek art—and there is every evidence that he did so in the 1790s—then Blake's practice of imitation did not present a dilemma... But after 1800 or so he began to turn against 'the silly Greek & Latin slaves of the Sword' (E 94) and to regard Greek art and literature as Allegory rather than Inspiration; i.e., the product of Memory rather than Imagination" (95). This turnabout was not, however, accompanied by a straightforward repudiation of classical art or art theory. "Unable to relinquish his profound feelings for Greek art," Bindman argues, Blake devise[s] from his "conflicting impulses... one of the more bizarre artistic theories in the history of art, in which all contradictions are reconciled and only historical probability is sacrificed" (96). This is, of course, the notorious idea that classical art is all derived from lost Hebrew prototypes, and is a weak (but the only available) imitation of the divinely inspired originals. Blake's theory thus frees him to vili[fy] classical art while borrowing from it, to profess a Romantic theory of imagination and original inspiration while practicing the classical method of imitation and invention. Bindman's theory psychologizes Paley's paradox of the "original copyist," making it the irrational solution to an insoluble conflict, and historicizes it at the same time, presenting us with a classical Blake to 1800, and an apparently anti-classical Blake after 1800. The really fundamental Blake, however, remains for Bindman "eighteenth century in spirit... determined even to the end of his career by classical idealism" (98).

One could wish for a strong counter-statement to Bindman's neoclassical Blake from the spokesmen for the Gothic tradition in this volume. After all, one of the unmistakable "materials" of Blake's imitation is the illuminated manuscript, a form which presupposes a rather different sense of artistic imitation based in the roles of the scribe, grammarian, translator, and illustrator, and a different sense of the text (radically unlike that of print culture) as open to indefinite embellishment, correction, and imitative "improvement" (this attitude persists in England at least up until Dryden's "creative" translations of Chaucer). The words "imitation," "copy," and "Invention," are not exhaustively defined by eighteenth-century neoclassicism with its Greco-Roman pantheon, its library of printed (and thus, in an important sense, closed) classical texts, and its empirical, associationist psychology of the creative process.

The essays on Blake's relation to Gothicism in this volume tend, however, to treat this influence in a rather generalized way. Roger Easson's essay on "Blake and the Gothic" consists mainly of pronouncements about "the Gothic reality" and "the Western view of the world." When Easson descends to particulars his comments often seem odd or unconvincing. "The decisive factor in neoclassical art is proclaimed to be "verisimilitude" defined as representation of the "material world" (147; a cursory look at Reynolds' Discourses or at Bindman's..."
essay would correct this impression). We are told that, for Blake, "the fall always has to do with the act of drawing fine distinctions, differentiating between the Good and the Evil, between heavy and light, between strong and weak, between right and wrong" (152). Easson has here mixed a half-truth with a host of patent falsehoods. It is true that Blake criticizes the construction of abstract "Negations," particularly the reduction of existence to abstract categories of good and evil. But no one has ever been more insistent than Blake on the importance of "fine distinctions" and "minute discriminations" as an intellectual and artistic duty, and this includes the distinctions between right and wrong, honesty and dishonesty, knaves and fools. This sort of obfuscation is not surprising, however, in an essay which concludes by defining Blake's Gothic as "the spirit of vision that embraces mystery rather than allegory" (153), at one fell swoop identifying Blake with a phenomenon (mystery) that he consistently despised, and opposing him to a literary form which, with qualifications, he practiced throughout his career.

Edward J. Rose's essay, "The Gothicized Imagination of Michelangelo," is considerably more substantial and reliable than Easson's, suggesting in its linkage of Michelangelo with the Gothic tradition one way of mediating the conflict between the neoclassic and Romantic versions of Blake, and pointing us toward an exemplary predecessor who was himself a genius at "imitating" the antique, but in a spirit rather unlike that of eighteenth-century neoclassicism. Yet Rose's essay leads to a conclusion which seems, curiously enough, to leave Blake not "in his time" but more isolated than ever: "Blake was not really committed to the direction of the art of the next hundred years any more than he was at peace with the art of the hundred years that preceded his time" (166).

The best theoretical account of Blake's struggle with the classical tradition comes in Hazard Adams' analysis of the annotations to Reynolds' Discourses. Adams shows, in the same spirit as Bindman, that there are many issues on which there is "really no contradiction" between Reynolds and Blake, "but Blake wants there to be one," partly because of Blake's resentment of Reynolds' status in the art world in contrast to his own neglect, partly because of Blake's fundamentally different understanding of the psychology and epistemology of art. Adams is strongest in showing why Blake attacks Reynolds' disparagement of "minute neatness" in imitation: "On the matter of this kind of deception [illusionistic verisimilitude] Blake must have been in agreement with Reynolds" (134), yet it is more important for Blake to defend "Minute Neatness of Execution" than to concur with Reynolds' attack on illusionism, because Blake wants to insist on a concrete, particular, and individualized sense of the universal, as against Reynolds' "general form," an incoherent hybrid of Platonic and empirical psychology. On "the whole matter of copying and drawing from models," Adams notes that Blake "sometimes agrees and sometimes disagrees with Reynolds" (138). Blake agrees with Reynolds' idea that copying is an essential part of artistic apprenticeship, the way to learn the "language of art," but he takes issue with Reynolds' relegation of copying to a merely preparatory function; like "mechanical excellence" and "facility in composing" (which Reynolds also disparages), copying is for Blake the activity of the mature artist who "copies Imagination," and not a merely subordinate or preliminary function. That is why Blake can sound even more conservative and "classical" on the issue of copying than Reynolds, calling "Servile Copying ... the Great Merit of Copying" (E 634): for Blake, ends and means, invention and execution, realization and conception are not, as they are for Reynolds, separable aspects of the creative act.

The essays in Blake in His Time that deal with his imitation of particular motifs or techniques of predecessors and contemporaries tend to rely upon the formula of imitative transformation or criticism without reflecting upon it, generally with useful results. Leslie Tannenbaum's "Blake and the Iconography of Cain" presents the most deeply developed critical argument in this group, showing how Blake's pictorial treatments of the Cain and Abel story criticize the sentimental and moralistic treatments that Blake could have known, and transform the story into a "sublime" confrontation with the nature of divine justice. The other essays on pictorial motifs are more in the line of preliminary efforts, mapping out areas for future research. Jenljoy La Belle's discussion of "Blake's Visions and Re-visions of Michelangelo" traces one route of Michelangelo's influence from the Sistine frescoes through the sixteenth-century engravings of Adam Ghisi, to the drawings which Blake made after these engravings when he was a student. La Belle's attempts to show significant "alterations in emphasis" between original and copy are hampered, however, by the lack of reproductions of many of the Ghisi engravings and Michelangelo originals. One wishes also that La Belle had been more persistent in raising the question of how much allusiveness to the original figure is operative in Blake's echoes of these motifs in later work: she seems content to generalize Michelangelo's figures into familiar pathos formulae (the "Blake learned from the Manasses lunette how to show devitalized humanity," but is evidently unconcerned about who Manasses is). The only figure from Michelangelo that La Belle credits with "a pre-existing conceptual context" that Blake might have employed allusively is that of the Prophet Daniel. Her conclusion, that Blake "approached Michelangelo's art in much the same way" that he approached his own visions, "and that the usual distinction between copying another artist and envisioning one's own designs does not pertain" (22), seems exactly right, and an important contribution to the discussion of Blake's concepts of imitation and invention. But if it leads to an emptying out or generalizing of the "original" which is being copied then it is hard to see how the imitation can have much critical, transformative, or inventive content.

The other two essays which deal with "regions" of Blake's imitation are solid, reliable efforts. Kay Easson's discussion of "Blake and the Art of the Book" is a good introduction to Blake's use of and departures from traditional patterns in the layout of illustrated books. The most important departure
One thing that must strike a reader of Blake in His Time is the relative scarcity of professional art historians among its contributors. It is one of the great misfortunes of Blake scholarship that he continues to be neglected by all but a few art historians, and his pictures thus have to be explained by moonlighting literary scholars. Side from David Bindman, whose training in traditional art history partly accounts for his neoclassical version of Blake, the only certified art historian in this volume is Martin Butlin, who finds himself explaining to the Blakeans what would be perfectly obvious and trivial to an audience of art historians, the mysteries of "Cataloguing William Blake." Butlin's essay is a treasure trove of information in problems of dating, authenticity, and the nuances of "evidence of the eye," and should be studied attentively by any Blake scholar concerned with the historical context of Blake's pictorial art.

The other essays which focus on Blake's pictorial achievement are the work of literary critics who have been doing their homework in art history for so long they should have honorary degrees. Jean Grumiaux contributes a richly suggestive exploration of the possible influence of Romney's drawings on Blake's early work; and Robert Essick discusses the subject he probably understands better than any other scholar in the world, Blake's "iconography of techniques." Essick shows how "controlled accidents" in Blake's printing procedures can take on significance—a significance that, one suspects, is sometimes more attributable to the beholder than the creator. Essick seems on solid ground when he discusses the multi-representational effect of patterns of color printing which "refer simultaneously to geological, biological, and psychological forms." But when we are told that Blake's "foul inking" on plate 47 of Jerusalem copy C "is part of his revolt against empire, against the hegemony of machine over man" (6), we feel that the boundaries of probability are being breached. Either that or Blake was expressing in an ineffective and self-defeating way what he was capable of saying much better in other ways.

I save for the last the two essays which deal with subjects closest to my own interest in Blake, his work in composite art forms which unite poetry and painting, and, by implication, time and space. Yvonne Carothers' essay on "Space and Time in Milton" is a worthy, but seriously flawed attempt to relate Kant's understanding of time and space to Blake's art (the flaws are: an understanding of Kant which seems to come mainly through secondary sources; a failure to make an argument as to why Blake should be connected with Kant; and some uncertainty about exactly what the subject of the essay is). Joseph Wittreich's "Painted Prophecies," on the other hand, is one of the most important essays on the nature of Blake's composite art in recent years. Wittreich takes up that side of the se pictura poesis tradition too often ignored by scholars steeped in the classical tradition, the model of "Sacramental" and Biblical pictorialism embodied in the text and interpretive traditions of the Book of Revelation. Wittreich surveys the complex variety of verbal/visual and textual/pictorial relationships that inform the peculiar discourse of prophecy: the prophetic experience as a psychological drama that combines visual and verbal material; the rhetorical concept of visionary prophecy as a "universal language of visual icons"; and descriptions of the book which is given to John on Patmos as a scroll adorned with pictures and hieroglyphs.

There is an unacknowledged tension in Wittreich's presentation, however, that bears on the problem of original and copy that we have been tracing throughout this volume. In one sense, of course, there is for the prophetic artist no such thing as "imitation" in the classical sense because the prophet is always at the origin, in direct, unmediated contact with divine inspiration, and thus freed from the historical chain of influence and imitation. The visual, visionary, and pictorial characterizations of prophecy are, in fact, a way of stressing this unmediated, intuitive access to the divine message. The verbal element of prophecy is, for the commentators on Revelation, a kind of supplement to the original message: "the assumption of all these commentators is that Christ's vision is presented initially as a picture; for John's (and our) sakes, that vision is preserved in a book, this time with words accompanying the pictures; and this book, in turn, is translated by John into the Apocalypse, into its verbal icons" (104). The text is added as an accommodation "for our sakes": it mediates, preserves, and interprets the original vision for those of us who do not have access to prophetic insight, or to the original illustrated scroll given by Christ to St. John. But we need to ask at this point why these secondary, supplemental steps are necessary if the original vision is inscribed in the universal language of pictorial representation, the medium which needs no learned reading or interpretation, but needs only to be beheld to be understood? Isn't this universalizing and democratizing of the divine message precisely the point of illustrating or illuminating the sacred text? What else but this is the logic of producing an illustrated biblia pauperum that can be read by the illiterate laity? Why doesn't the prophet simply paint what he sees, or copy the pictures from Christ's scroll, thus eliminating the priestly, scribal middleman who will become custodian of the prophet's verbal translation of the divine vision? The answer can only be that those pictures are not transparent, unmediated, universally readable.
revelations of divine messages, but are "concealed and dumb prophecies," hieroglyphs which require interpretation, a verbal supplement to unveil their hidden meaning. The pictorial expression no longer reveals the original inspiration but conceals it, is no longer eloquent but dumb; the verbal translation no longer appears as a superfluous covering or husk to the original prophetic picture, but becomes "revelation in the literal expression," a textual expression of the original meaning intended by and concealed in the picture. This new genealogy of prophetic expression reverses the priority of visual to verbal expression insisted on by the commentators on Revelation, and restores the priorities of Old Testament and English Protestant prophecy: "There are three kinds of prophecy, says Luther in his 1545 Preface to the Apocalypse: Moses' kind which consists only of words, Daniel's which combines words with symbols, and John's which is purely visionary and consists only of 'Pictures'" (103). As Wittreich notes, "Hebrew law, in fact, forbade the kind of pictorial adornment that Christianity encouraged" (104). The picture is not simply supplemental and secondary, a necessary evil, but now becomes an unnecessary evil, a vain idol to be smashed by the iconoclast.

These reversals in the verbal/visual dialectic of prophetic poetics provide new perspective on the exact character of Blake's illuminated books. Blake's refusal to grant privilege or priority to text or design, his construction of his illuminated books as a kind of icono-logo-machia, the text a battleground of verbal and pictorial modes, is a strategy for dramatizing a fundamental conflict in the network of religious signs upon which he draws. The ambivalence about the icon or image in Protestant culture, its double life as a transparent window on the divine message, or an obscure hieroglyph which conceals that message and threatens to become an object of idolatry—this ambivalence is converted by Blake into a source of energy for the poetic and pictorial circuits of his illuminated texts.

The tension between verbal and visual expression which is revealed in Wittreich's account of "painted prophecies" also clarifies, I would suggest, Blake's complex attitude toward the problems of origin and copy, invention and imitation. Verbal and pictorial modes are continually discussed in prophetic poetics in terms of priority and supplementation, "original" vision (or verbal message) and a secondary translation, interpretation, or illumination which replaces, transforms, or unveils the "original meaning." What if one is a classicist who believes that the only omnipotent deity worth mentioning is the one that "resides in the human breast," the Poetic Genius or human imagination? The notion of imitating a previous work of art cannot be seen from this point of view as supplemental, secondary, or parasitical, cannot be incompatible with creation. In fact, "imitation is Criticism," not a slavish copying of the external form of a prior work, but an interpretation which reveals what the text has previously hidden, an illumination or explanation. The "original meaning" of a text is not lost, or locked forever in the receding moment of its historical creation, but unfolds in the history of its imitative interpretations. That is why Blake can seem to have both an ahistorical view of art as unprogressive revelations of the imagination, and yet see himself as building his own art progressively out of Milton and the Bible (both read in the "infernal sense"), and out of a classical tradition which has fallen prey to "tame imitation" by treating its sacred texts as closed books, traces of an unrecoverable origin. When Blake imitates a work of art (which will itself, he knows, be an imitation—an engraving of a Renaissance master, a text which supplements or interprets a vision, a picture which illustrates a text) he imitates the original authority that enables human beings to construct for themselves a world of signs, and thus "copies Imagination." There is thus no distinction for Blake, as there is for Reynolds, between the phase in the life of an artist, or the history of art, when we must copy and invent: we learn the language of art by copying other works of art; we execute original works of art by copying forever.

With Blake of all writers most aware of the positives and negatives of imposition in all its forms, does it help, I wonder, to distinguish the poet read in Britain from the poet read in North America? If so, then British Blake is the function of an audience not entirely sure that their poet "makes sense," and one which tends to insist that where he does make sense then it is in terms of a directly embodied concrete image, historical pressure, or social outrage. Conversely, American Blake might be cast as the apostle of visionary novelty and eternal history, a poet therefore infinitely generative of further critical riches, neither wanting nor daring to stop (for there lies standing water), and conformable thereby to a logic of the imaginative body and bodily discovery, one suggesting the secondary determinability of culture and history by the devolutions of the individual mind which is divine. Blockages may appear, and repetition invade creation, but the blockages are never quite the same twice running.

Complications of course arise. The best book on British Blake has been written in America, by David Erdman, and it may be that the above version of American Blake is to be related to the generations of the late 1960s. But I find the distinction useful if only as a way to say that there is very little of that American Blake in this British book.

Two versions of Blake, in the form of two questions addressed to him, may be specified in it. First, does he make sense? As usual, this question tends not to question itself, never recognizing "sense" as ideological rather than universal. Fortunately, there is not too much of this. Second, where does Blake stand in history, and can we establish a history which entitles us to dismiss certain kinds of ambiguity or puzzlement as beside the point, while establishing others as central to "meaning"? This second question is more firmly and usefully addressed, if not always with the self-consciousness one might hope for in the presentation of its implications. But then self-consciousness and dialectical agility tend not to belong to British Blake, being matters ordered in France.

Michael Phillips' brief introduction indeed tries to set the tone of what is to follow. He promises a series of "close analyses" helping us to "read and objectively explain" Blake's meanings. Indeterminacy is insinuated, but only under constraint: "Where interpretation is concerned, an essential principle has been observed that it should not be imposed" (p. 1). No patience here, it seems, with those who see only imposition; or those who find, as I myself do, a more troublesome and dialectical obligation in the concept of "interpretation," one which questions or at least demands closer
definition of the aspiration to "articulate objectively." The best essays in this book do address themselves to that aspiration.

The anthology opens with E. P. Thompson's "London," a poem which is notoriously central to the debate between history, vision, and visionary history. In its length and closeness of focus, Thompson's reading must be admitted to the canon of "necessary reading" for this poem. The thesis is that "London" is a "unitary analysis" (p. 20) of a historical condition, a poem whose "symbolic organization is within the clearly conceived and developing logic of market relations" (p. 22). The strongest part of this case is the context provided for Blake's use of the word "charter'd," which is I think of undeniable importance. The other word on which Thompson spends a good deal of time is, predictably, "mark." Though he generally claims to accept "seventeen types of ambiguity in Blake" (p. 15), Thompson strongly objects to any "gesture towards an ulterior 'ambivalence' in which Blake has assimilated the damned to the elect." Such a reading would "destroy the poem" and introduce "into its heart a direct contradiction of intention and of feeling." A possible reference to Ezekiel is dismissed as that to Revelation is asserted. Blake is "not setting marks on foreheads, he is observing them" (p. 12).

I find this case interestingly tendentious. Perhaps the word "heart" tells all. Do poems have hearts? No, the people who write them do. But could not that heart be divided between intention and feeling, and could not that division itself be an important part of social history? For Thompson, it seems that the heart is what gives authority to unambiguous perception, and to a social outrage uncontaminated by self-implication. The logic of the heart is an important theme in nineteenth-century literature, and I hope my point does not seem trite. What is the credibility, for example, of the unitary heart with which Dickens endows Esther Summerson in Bleak House? Can we not ask questions about its sufficiency? Are we not meant to? In making Blake an angry outsider, commenting on a situation with which he has nothing to do, and which he objectively transcribes, Thompson removes him from membership of that class of dialectically constructed Romantic subjectivities who experienced alienation not as something going on around them but also as something reduplicated or created within them. Thus Wordsworth is able to chronicle, with an honesty which at times almost creates incogercence, the problems of power and exchange which occur in the most solitary encounters and the most spontaneous perceptions. The mind is inescapably social even in its assertions of separateness, and a wider reading of Blake might at least suggest a poet very well aware of the intersubjective determinants and consequences of outrage. I cannot quite complain that Thompson wants a Blake who is pure of heart and eye (an un-regenerated Milton), devoted to one law and one polemic, without being uncomfortably aware of the literary critic's besetting interest in ambiguity. But I can wish him to be more aware of the alternative history of consciousness which I think he is ignoring.

Thompson's reading of the last two stanzas is, to my mind, less convincingly maintained. The idea that there is a reference to "the smoke of expanding commerce" (p. 16) in the word "blackning" needs refining. Commerce itself does not produce smoke. Industry does, and it is this which helps to make commerce possible. This may seem a pernickety objection, but to ask what kind of industry Blake might have had in mind seems to me rather important for the poem. Erdman notes that London in 1803 was not so much a standard factory town as "a war arsenal and the hub of the machinery of war." Could it have been so earlier, at the time "London" was being meditated? If so, then this would specify Blake's positioning of commerce as hand-in-hand with empire and war. Taken together with Erdman's reading of this poem, which suggests that the "hapless soldier" could be either the foreign mercenary or indeed the now superfluous English yeoman made redundant by him (pp. 277-78), we can see an important issue here. The wealth which enabled the king to afford mercenaries would have been related to commerce, and J. G. A. Pocock's work has shown us the importance of this debate in the eighteenth century. Commerce erodes the rights of freeborn Englishmen by replacing militias with standing armies in the pay of the king, as it also erodes their capacity for civic virtue. Instead of being self-sufficient and self-determining, they now indirectly pay other people to fight their wars. They therefore have no control over war, which can happen without their wanting it, and in addition a force has been created which can be turned against the people itself. If this situation is indeed behind Blake's poem, then it importantly differentiates him from an economist like Adam Smith, who had seen in commerce and free trade a civilizing and peacemaking function. Soldiers too may be chartered, and hapless in their expression of the alienation imposed upon them by the division of labor; helplessness affects both those employed and those displaced and affronted.

Thompson's essay concludes with an account and eventual dismissal of a Swedenborgian context for the poem. Finding Swedenborg's writing "remote from experiential controls and affective references" (p. 26), he concludes that it has little to do with "London." What he says of Swedenborg is, however, a useful preliminary to Morton Paley's more extended account of the relation between Swedenborg and Blake's writing (Blake 50).

Focus is widened somewhat in Heather Glen's essay, "Blake's Criticism of Moral Thinking in Songs of Innocence and of Experience." The argument is that the Songs both express and subvert the terms and assumptions of "contemporary ethical discussion" (p. 32), showing forth a "distrust of moral thinking itself" (p. 33). By "moral thinking" Glen means not only the assertive imposition or deduction of values, but also the more elusive logic of the feelings--charity, pity, and so forth. The case is carried on in a close reading of several among the Songs, paying particular attention to the status of the speaking voice, and to the metrical patterns and local ambiguities that enforce it. Impressively, this traditionally "literary" way of reading is incorporated with a historical specification of the allusions these poems demand or invite. Readings
of "The Chimney Sweeper" of *Innocence*, of the two "Holy Thursday" poems, of "London," and of "The Human Abstract" are offered. In general they contrast usefully and provocatively with Thompson's account of "London," in their argument for inclusive rather than exclusive reference (see, for example, Glen's comments on "mark"). Thus the figure of the sweep is described as a "potent image of subversive passion" (p. 42) in ways which are at once sexual, social, and political. Not that Glen presents ambivalence as itself a virtue; on the contrary, she composes it into a more sophisticated concept of the "unitary" than the one Thompson offers. In so doing, she leads us closer to the point where social and individual determination coincide in the construction of Blake's speakers.

In this achievement, it might in fact be said that Glen goes almost too far. The speaker of "London" is thus presented as "imaginatively bankrupt" (p. 57), one who is "more deeply and consciously implicated in the abstracting modes of his society than anyone else" (p. 60). Glen's general contention about the speakers of *Experience* is that they reveal "the same abstracting, distancing strategies which have produced the social consequences that they seek to condemn" (p. 66). Why, then, should the speaker of "London" be more deeply contaminated by this habit of mind than others in his society? This seems to me to go too far in locating essential responsibility with the speaker; it fails to stress (though it implies) the degree to which his options about what to see are themselves foreclosed and pressured by what is around him, the real historical situation whose terms we can adduce from Thompson and Erdman. (It depends, too, on an implicit antithesis between the innocent and experienced speakers which we need not, I think, follow.) The point may be tested against Glen's reading of the second of the "Holy Thursday" poems. She admits that this is a difficult case, and one is grateful for an account of this often ignored poem. It becomes wholly a poem about the speaker, who is presented as totally cut off from what is really around him in a gesture of hysterical moral inscription. He "reduces things to their moral qualities, and robs them of their rich reality"; he is responsible for a linguistic vapidity which gives no sense of "a rendition of a real scene, the expression of a moment when the speaker saw what was before him with more than usual vividness and clarity" (p. 54). Glen's reading is more sophisticated than I suggest here, and is to be taken seriously, but I want to pick out this contention to highlight a question: is there really a "rich reality" which the speaker simply cannot see because of imposed ways of seeing, but those constraints are there to be reexperienced again in the periods when the claims of habitual perception accrue. This mediated view of Blake becomes itself "historical" when we recognize all that came in the way, in the 1790s, of openly expressed revolutionary fervor, and understand the pressures toward the advocacy of private experiences as redemptive. (No one has done more than Thompson, in *The Making of the English Working Class*, to make this information available.) In the communication of that privacy, I think that Blake made a place for all the versions of pathological and social opposition which occur when interests clash in the forum of meaning and authority. Glen's is a fine essay, but it would be the poorer if it were not set against what is of worth in Thompson's more trenchant pronouncements. Taken together, they present a useful tension to help us decide between authoritatively single-hearted and hysterically alienated speakers in Blake's *Songs*.

Frank M. Parisi's "Emblems of Melancholy: For Children: The Gates of Paradise," shifts the focus wholly from the verbal to the visual aspect of Blake's work. Concentrating on the first issue of these designs, Parisi seeks to recover what Blake "originally intended" (p. 12) by them, while he argues to be an embodying of and response to eighteenth century conventions of melancholy:

My conclusion is that the *Gates* presents the life of fallen man as a melancholy cycle turning on frustration, defeat and despair, the more insidious for being self-renewing. At the same time the *Gates* goes far beyond contemporary analogues, for it points unequivocally to a way one may break out of the cycle into a visionary and creative state. (p. 74)

Let me say at once that I am in no sense qualified to offer a proper assessment of the success or failure of this argument. But I will say that I am not given much information on which to base a judgment. For an essay which discusses entirely visual contexts, it is perversely under-illustrated. One might perhaps pass over the absence of Blake's own designs, which have often been reproduced elsewhere, though this is at the least an inconvenience. But I frequently find that reference is made to, and arguments built on, pictures or engravings which are not reproduced. For example,
Dürer's *Melancolia I* is often cited as of great importance: but we have to head for a library to confirm that importance. Exhaustive descriptions of things which depend for conviction on being seen make this essay very hard to follow. Other frustrations appear in an occasional lack of evidence, or lack of consideration of alternatives. What is the force of seeing the "butterfly" of plate 7 as "the female aspect of nature" (p. 73), and of Blake's conversion of a traditional motif into anthropomorphic images? Why is the insect of the frontispiece a "worm" rather than a caterpillar (p. 76)? It is about as obvious a caterpillar as one could hope for, and clearly differentiated from the worm of plate 16. Points like this matter because they threaten to qualify the whole drift of Parisi's argument, making the designs look more like what Erdman saw as a "series illustrating the progression of contraries" (p. 204). Against this, Parisi wants to argue that plate 13 is the only one which offers a pointer beyond the constraints of earthly melancholy. The rest belong to a "closed cycle" and present a "problematic view of life" (p. 108). See the worm as a caterpillar, however, and it is hard not to think also of the butterfly, and of its immanence as an emblem of the soul. Moreover, if plate 13 really is authoritative in the way Parisi suggests, "the most articulate event in the series" (p. 110), why does it not come at the end? At least, one might ask for some discussion of the point of its not being final.

There are good things in this essay. The context provided for resolving (or beginning to resolve), the nature of Blake's response to Gillray (noted by Erdman, pp. 202-04) in plate 9 is well-constructed, taking us through Ariosto, Milton and Burton. Indeed, on every design Parisi has something new and insightful to say. There seems to be no doubt that Blake invokes reference to desire and melancholy at key points in the series. However, I remain unconvinced that the invocation of melancholy constitutes the unitary message of these designs. There is an obvious problem with visual images in that their significations are more naturally less determined than verbal ones often are; I am left wanting a stronger case, with more evidence illustrated, to convince me that the essay does all that it says it does. But, with this essay more than the others, I must plead a measure of incompetence.

Harald A. Kittel's "The Book of Urizen and an Essay Concerning Human Understanding" poses a different kind of difficulty. There is much here of real value and interest, but its leading ideas are not emphasized with sufficient force. This produces an argument of considerable density, likely to inform at first only those already very familiar with the special vocabularies Locke uses. It lacks the declaration of priorities which makes the first chapter of Frye's *Fearful Symmetry* so memorable. There is also some confusion about what kind of relation is being argued for between the two texts; this becomes problematic because of the closeness of the correspondences apparently being adduced. Is Blake really reading Locke closely, and incorporating point-by-point responses to his arguments, or is there in *Urizen* a general satire on the rational tradition which Locke's *Essay* happens, in exemplary ways, to embody? Kittel reads *Urizen* as "satire directed against John Locke's theory of knowledge" (p. 111)—in other words, principally against the second book of the *Essay*—but it is only at the end of his account that he admits that "Urizen is neither a systematic nor an explicit critique of Locke's *Essay*. Nevertheless, elements of Locke's theory of knowledge affect theme, symbolism and structure of the poem" (p. 143). Had this declaration come earlier, it might have suggested to the author that he look elsewhere in the rationalist tradition for suggestions informing the argument and imagery of the poem. Newton, for example, is not mentioned, and yet Donald Ault has published a very important book on the Blake-Newton relation, with significant reference to *Urizen*.

For example, Kittel glosses the "globes of attraction" (*Urizen* 3:36) as specifying reference to Locke's primary qualities—bulk, figure, texture, and motion of parts—whereas a much more obvious allusion, to my mind, is to atomism (planets as atoms involves the familiar Blakean conjunction of micromos and macrocosm) and to its exponents in scientific method, Newton and perhaps Boyle, whose account of forms and qualities itself informed Locke's argument but was stressed by Locke in a different way. Globes of attraction are the primary particles of matter or body which are variously composed into form, whether through names alone (as suggested by Boyle) or through some form of figurative perception. As such, they do indeed lie behind Locke's account of qualities, but in a way which brings out the more important element in the expression of "things" (an element stressed also by Hobbes) Locke is here much more sophisticated than he was often seen to be by later readers who saw in him merely the apologist of materialism, and Kittel's over-brief statement of the connection misses the complexity of Locke's account, as it deals with the way in which qualities are assembled into "things" (which things Hobbes had actually called "phantasms"). He thus does not stress the radically unstable element in Locke's epistemology, which in fact could be taken to inform a much more thorough "Romantic" notion of how we perceive. Ault (p. 59) argues in this context for a discontinuity between Newton and Locke over how "reality" is knowable, and over what it is that is called "real." What matters most for Locke is how we share perceptions. Although information comes to us through the senses, it takes mental processes to convert it into ideas, and it is the nature of that conversion which was so widely argued. If it is done through names, which impose unitary identity on assemblies of ideas, and thus insinuate the idea of substance, then Kittel passes over a useful angle on his own case for Urizen as imaging Locke's complex idea of substance (p. 128).

For the name "Urizen" is itself infinitely decomposable (you reason, your reason, horizon, etc.), just as the identities of Los and Urizen consistently merge and overlap throughout the book. Locke argues for personal identity in consciousness, not in substance (Essay II, ch. 27, 19). Urizen finds that both body and consciousness shift and divide, or impose impossible pressures on themselves in trying not to. Urizen's faith in one law, and one name, then becomes a satire on something Locke's theory might itself satirize; a belief in the substantial identity of something which has a name.
I think that the reader who does not already know Locke will find this essay very hard to follow; and the reader who does might wish for fuller explanations of some of the subtleties of Locke's positions. His rather evasive use of arguments from divine sanction ("our Maker") and its relation to the coherence of the social contract might be seen to inform Urizen's parodic construction of a community, one which attempts to be a series of self-images. Does Blake mean to imply the inner identity of consent and authoritarian mandate? "I am your reason"? Kittel's account of the Urizenic versions of space and time also needs, to my mind, stronger emphasis. They are clearly very important to the poem, and Ault has much to say of them. They have a suggestive relation, moreover, to the questions of narration (text/time) and perspective (design/space) which are deliberately put into crisis in this poem. Perhaps different readers will find this essay helpful in different ways, and impose emphases for themselves. I think the notion of Urizen's world being composed of primary qualities (pp. 127, 136) is an interesting one (though I would then want some analysis of his relationship to the Eternals, which need not be read as straightforwardly negative), and I am fascinated by the suggestion that the basis of the Urizenic mode in deferral by rational decision (pp. 118, 140) might come from Locke. This suggests nothing less than a taxonomy of desire, which was of great importance to the eighteenth century: witness, for example, its place in Adam Smith's The Theory of Moral Sentiments. Locke's delineation of rational doubt, whereby "we are able to suspend the present satisfaction of any desire" (11, ch. 21, 52), is full of prophetic futurity in this respect. Thus do sun and moon go out.

Peter Butter's contribution, "Milton: The Final Plates," is of a kind which makes me wonder whether opposition can really be true friendship, and leaves me affirming a case for refusing to meet halfway. It belongs to the "Does it make sense?" aspect of British Blake, but unfortunately sense itself is not questioned or reconstituted. Butter's curiosity emanates from a genre of literary criticism which nowadays tends not to read Blake at all. Thus his comments will strike readers of some of the negative virtues of Leavis' classic misreading of Shelley, which by the very precision of its dismissals alerts us to an ulterior motive in Shelley, and an alternative way of reading. Thus Butter looks for "an immediate appeal to the senses" (p. 147), for something "touching and effective" (p. 148), and for what helps us to "visualize . . . clearly" (p. 149). His war-cry is indeed the classic one of "fully realized presence" (p. 157), and needless to say it does not come up with much to admire in this poem. When Butter says that Blake too often "leaves the reader without firm ground under his feet" (p. 157), I am reminded of a whole tradition of firmness, concretion, grasping and embodying (different from Thompson, who at least provides the heart). It belongs to the browbeating school of criticism which asserts that "poetic quality" (p. 145) is an entity mysteriously removed from ideas, and to be elucidated from the loaded comparison of good poets and bad poets.

Substantially, the centerpiece of Butter's account is the argument that Satan is presented incoherently, and that is perhaps the issue on which readers might most profit from his essay. However, I hope it would not be adjudicated with exclusive reference to the end of Milton, which even the most diligent readers are unlikely to resort to with expectations of immediate transparency. Blake might have expected a reader who had seen the rest of the poem, and perhaps knew something of John Milton; he undoubtedly would have expected a reader who saw before him a composite art, and not just a text on a page. Remarkably, Butter manages to discuss the end of Milton without any reference to the designs (which by now should hardly surprise us in this anthology), and without any mention of sexuality. Who are the naked figures on the rock in the famous full-page plate, reengraved for copy D? Albion and Jerusalem/Babylon? Milton and Oolon? Blake and Catherine, waking from a dream? Prometheus, now joined by a female, and with the eagle of Zeus now also bespeaking prophecy in dismemberment? Had he at least looked at the poem, in some modest acknowledgment of what Blake actually "wrote," Butter might have found some clues to the problem of identity which bothers him when he finds (e.g., p. 152) more than one persona offering itself for the ownership of a pronoun.

The test of this kind of essay must be, I think, whether the impositions are generous or not. Ultimately, it is not the things of which I have written above which I find myself resenting most strongly; it is the tactic of false modesty. In the same paragraph we find the conventional critical humility--"With more understanding I shall probably withdraw some of the criticisms in this essay"--and the firm dismissal which it is used to insinuate: Blake becomes one "whose command of language is not equal to the reach of his imagination" (p. 163). As proof of this, we have a gallery of the dirty tricks which are the embarrassment of the trade. A comparison is introduced--"These lines remind one of Hopkins"--only to be turned immediately into a judgment--"Hopkins' lines convey greater intensity than Blake's longer and slacker ones"--without the relevance of Hopkins (or anybody else) ever being established. Literary history exists here as an unanalyzed spectrum of the effective and the less effective, the one functioning as a stick with which to beat the other. Butter centers himself as the arbiter of taste, the "literary critic" who is "entitled to ask the questions" (p. 161), having dismissed (as it happens) Harold Bloom as a critic "telling his own story"; something which, we are told with coy humor, is "quite common in Blake studies" (p. 155).

If opposition is to be friendship, then there is no place in it for the smiley with the knife under the cloak. This is British Blake at its worst, a product of difficulty and embarrassment which has gone hard, so that it is no longer felt
or thought out. Like those who complain of the limited number of orifices in the human body, Butter finds in the prophetic books an "obsessive return to a rather small number of ideas, repeated sometimes without enough variation or addition to make the repetition acceptable" (p. 157). This essay, to my mind (and I am a partial reader), has no ideas at all.

James Ferguson's "Prefaces to Jerusalem" sets out to show that the four prefaces to the four chapters of the poem provide structural guidelines for reading it. The themes he selects for emphasis are interesting in themselves, but they do not provide what we seem to be promised, which is a firm anticipation in the prefaces of the most important ideas in the poem. Moreover, themes are selected from each of the prefaces, which are thus in no sense completely expounded or interpreted. From the first, Ferguson takes up the issue of style (mildness and ruggedness), but explores it in a way which is neither historical (as an analysis of the conventions Blake reacts to might be) or intrinsic in any fully sustained way. Stylistic plurality and many-voicedness are undoubtedly very important in Jerusalem, but in much deeper ways than Ferguson seems to specify. For example, is explained almost by apology, as "by no means the most important of the diverse poetic styles to which Blake refers in his defence" (p. 169), instead of being recognized as an integral part of meaning and idea, which is how Blake might well have meant it to be seen. The accounts of Reuben, Rahab and Ezekiel (very useful in themselves) which form the substance of the rest of the essay seem to be very loosely connected to the prefaces to chapters 2, 3, and 4, so that I begin to wonder if Ferguson has forgotten his own thesis. Scholars concerned with the interpretation of those figures should certainly not miss this essay, but Ferguson's claim to set forth a new structural patterning does not convince me. The essay is thus not quite an authoritative introduction for people coming to the poem for the first time, but it does illuminate certain special items in it.

The book concludes with John Beer's "Influence and Independence in Blake," which not only summarizes and (very modestly) answers many of the positions taken up by other authors in the volume, but does so without distracting attention from its own subject matter. The essay presents a synopsis of problems encountered and methods adopted in reading Blake for influences, and proceeds under the control of a most admirable self-consciousness. Beer states his positions and declares his assumptions. The tact is genuine, informing the arguments themselves rather than remaining a preliminary ploy. Seeing Blake as an artist whose response to influence was "dominated above all by his own obsessive concerns" (p. 202), Beer examines a series of ways in which we might find Blake to have been influenced.

Dealing first with visual sources, he produces one of the few arguments in this book which is adequately illustrated. Two kinds of influence are examined. First, that of a general context, in this case the iconographic conventions surrounding the "Ugolino" scene in late eighteenth century art. A very convincing case is made for Blake being aware of a reading of the incident as depicting "the tyranny of the priesthood" (p. 207). Second, the possible bearing of the engraving of Cipriani's "Perseus and Andromeda" on the frontispiece to 'Visions of the Daughters of Albion' is rehearsed. Here, the influence (if it is there) is more specific and direct.

In the account of possible modes of verbal influence, Beer's comments on the word "mark" in "London" (pp. 218-21) offer a response to Thompson and Glen, and also add something else, a possible Shakespearean echo. He sees the range of choices open to the reader of the poem as rather wider than the other two authors do, but at the same time he communicates a sense of the urgency of choosing. Ambivalence is not avoidance, but a form of crisis. In general, the remarks on verbal influence open up an area of possible influence on Blake which is comparatively new (at least to me); that composed by seventeenth century literature. Allusions he finds to Donne and Herbert are especially interesting, and there is a convincing account of the neoplatonic background to Blake's use of the word "intellectual" (pp. 221-23), and of the philosophical contexts for the word "inlet" (pp. 223-27). Of particular relevance to Kittel's case is Beer's reading of Blake's "minute particulars" (pp. 227-29) in the context of specific passages in Locke's Essay. He sees a positive implication (for Blake) in Locke's description of "minute particles, which open out a source of light that would otherwise be invisible to the eye... bringing out the visionary nature of every detail while remaining faithful to their own nature" (p. 229). Locke becomes, in this way, a precursor of imaginative vision.

Having described and embodied ways of plotting specific influences in both visual and verbal contexts, Beer passes on (p. 237f.) to an assessment of "extensive influences," those which may be thought to have been behind Blake's work over an extended period of time. Three successive pages of Whichcote's Aphorisms are seen to appear in various forms and at various points in Blake's writings, and a similar "cluster of words and expressions" (p. 241) is discovered in Pope's "Eloisa to Abelard."

The final section of the essay makes a case for the importance of alchemical imagery and reference in Meriel. The result of the whole is to suggest the highly eclectic and specifically motivated nature of Blake's philosophical, literary, and artistic borrowings or stimuli. The coherence which ensues then becomes a function of "Blake's originating artistic identity" (p. 261), which is able to react to a wide range of influence without ever merely repeating a preestablished doctrine. Influence is neither anxious nor burdensome; it provides a field of intellectual and imaginative experience for redispersion and interpretation. It is imagination, not guilt or shame, which determines Blake's reconstruction of the past. Implicitly, Beer frees Blake from some of the limits imposed upon him by other authors in the book who have more monothematic priorities.

If one were to ask "What is the audience for
these essays?" then Beer's essay comes through with the clearest answer. In its wealth of local observation and specific attentions (which I have not done justice to), it will be of use to any specialist. At the same time, because of the clarity and self-consciousness of its format and taxonomy, it comes over as a very recommendable starting point for, say, a graduate student reading Blake for the first time, and wanting to know what methods and approaches are possible. It has both scholarly and pedagogical virtues, and as such it sets a standard which few of the other essays attain. Glen and Thompson, to my mind, come closest to it, but they are best taken as a pair, with interesting questions arising from the interaction of the two accounts. The teacher who wishes to suggest to students a mode of close reading which is both literary and historical could confidently recommend Glen's essay, in particular.

For essays which took so long in coming into print—five years between the Edinburgh conference and the appearance of the book—many parts of the other essays have an unfinished quality, as if the passage from first draft to reworked statement has not been made. This may appear as an omission of the emphasis helpful to a reader in following an argument, or as the ignoring of alternative possibilities supplied by the work of other critics. More seriously, the book as a whole is lamentably under-illustrated. This applies to Parisi's essay, which depends upon illustration, but it also reflects the lack of attention paid to composite art by most of the other authors. John Beer aside. Thompson, Glen, and Butter do not discuss it at all; nor do Kittel and Ferguson, though their arguments do not as obviously suggest that they ought to do so. I do not mean to assert that this emphasis away from design is any kind of fault, for it will always be appropriate for some essays to concentrate on aspects of Blake's work. But it may be significant in view of the declared ambitions of the anthology (objective articulation without imposition) that the visual side of the composite design is so often elided. Conviction is often easier to come by when one considers the text alone; the relation of text to design often sets up reflections which are less stable, and not verifiable in the conventional ways. In many cases, in this act of relation, there seem to be no obvious "influences." It thus becomes hard to "read" it without confronting the more indeterminate aspects of Blake's aesthetic.

Even in the realm of the verbal, intrinsically considered, it may be a peculiar justice that "mark" emerges as in many ways the fugal word of the book. The variant readings offered by Thompson, Glen, and Beer would serve as a means of articulating some of the questions generated by the chosen title word, "Interpreting." I have found that interpreting Blake is an activity calling for thought about interpretation. That element is built into Glen's essay, and into Beer's. But I have the sense, perhaps unjustly, that such a concern would be dismissed by some of the other authors as a piece of fashionable nonsense. If so, then I am left wishing that British Blake might set out to be a little less authoritarian, and perhaps thereby start to explore the evidence for the historicoality of the various aesthetic indeterminacies in Blake's work. Meanwhile, some mark with the eye, some through it, and some with red pens.

In February 1829, after ten years as an Associate, John Constable was elected to full membership in the Royal Academy by a margin of one vote. Other reasons besides the narrowness of his election made it difficult for him to enjoy the recognition that it officially conferred. He had lost his beloved wife Maria a few months before, and his painting was popular neither with critics nor collectors. Still smarting from his election seven months after it, Constable planned a series of prints that would summarize, diffuse, and defend the principles of his art. He hired an engraver, David Lucas, to render in mezzotint several of his paintings and sketches. Lucas submitted his proofs to Constable and revised his steel plates according to the latter's corrections, heightening and dramatizing the effects of natural light. The series appeared from June 1830 to July 1832 (four issues of four prints, and a fifth of six) under the title *Various Subjects of Landscape, Characteristic of English Scenery, From Pictures Painted by John Constable, R. A.* Although—or perhaps because—the project, which he financed himself, was not a great success, Constable published a second edition of the series in 1833, this time with an expanded commentary and a new title, *Various Subjects of Landscape, Characteristic of English Scenery, principally intended to mark the Phenomena of the Chiar'oscuro of Nature.*

All twenty-two mezzotints, along with eighteen other prints from the Constable-Lucas collaboration, have been reproduced after forty years of scholarly neglect in *Constable's 'English Landscape Scenery'* by Andrew Wilton, who carefully catalogues them and details their history and dates of issue. Mr. Wilton has performed a valuable service, though one more valuable than he evidently knows. His prefatory essay is strangely lacking in reasons why this little known part of Constable's work should be better known. Mr. Wilton only finds in the prints further evidence of that "freedom from mannerism, from preconceptions derived from the work of other artists" that Constable's work is traditionally supposed to demonstrate. Even on its own sweepingly general terms, this commonplace can scarcely be maintained. E. H. Gombrich has shown the considerable extent to which Constable did work from preconceptions, and the Bicentenary Exhibition at the Tate Gallery in 1976 amply demonstrated Constable's debt to the work of Claude, Gainsborough, Wilson, Girtin, Cozens, and even Turner. It is not nature that determines the composition of Constable's work, so much as naturalism, that is, an artistic rhetoric meant to convey the effect of nature. It is particularly inappropriate to extol Constable's freedom from mannerism in the context of these mannered mezzotints, where such a rhetoric appears at its most theatrical.

All that motivates Mr. Wilton's resurrection of *English Landscape Scenery* seems to be an ideal of scholarly thoroughness. In fact, the work has far more interesting claims to our attention. Born of Constable's anxiety to secure public understanding and acceptance of his art, the series marks a
significant turning point in his style, from the restrained naturalism of his early works to the personal expressionism of his late ones. The shift, of course, is only the most conspicuous version of a tension running throughout all Constable's work between objective representation and subjective expression. Even the rhetorically restrained work of his early period makes covert allusions to private reminiscences (of his boyhood, his father's business, his courtship). In the bolder, reverse strategy taken in English Landscape Scenery, Constable identifies the overt personal expressionism of the prints with an utterly empirical study of nature. As the change of title indicates, together with the changes of design asked from Lucas, the key to this identification is Constable's conception of chiaroscuro. As he asserts in his 1833 introduction, chiaroscuro is both a natural and an artistic means for giving landscape its expression. As a result, "the Chiar'oscuro of Nature" permits Constable to equate nature's moods with his own. At the same time as the inky shadows and glittering highlights evoke the dramatic effects of natural light, they also imply an equally dramatic emotional response to them. (Both dramas, unfortunately, are lost in the British Museum's muzzy reproductions.)

Chiaroscuro is thus Constable's anxious way to seduce the uncomprehending public into collaborating in the meaning and purpose of his art. We participate at once in nature and in the emotional life of an artist deeply moved by nature. If art historians have neglected English Landscape Scenery, the reason may be that the prints were not executed by Constable himself. Yet insofar as they carry forward the dramatic revelation of the uses of chiaroscuro, they are directly pertinent to works that he did execute: those intensely tonal late masterpieces like "The Valley Farm" (1835) that seem to aspire to no less than the state of mezzotint.


Two years Blake's junior, an ambitious Mary Wollstonecraft arrived in London in 1787 at the age of twenty-eight, seeking a living by her pen and declaring in a letter to her sister, "I am going to be the first of a new genus." Like Blake, Wollstonecraft was essentially self-educated. She had survived a penurious childhood and the conventional and humiliating employments of widow's companion and governess. She had abducted a sister from a bad marriage, organized a school for girls, participated in Newington Green's community of intellectual Dissenters which included Richard Price, and attended the deathbeds of her mother and of a best friend in Portugal. Having written Thoughts on the Education of Daughters and Mary, a Fiction, both published by Joseph Johnson, she meant to support herself—and a number of kin. She was, she told Johnson, "not fond of grovelling."

Working for Johnson first as translator and reader, later as reviewer and editorial assistant for The Analytical Review, Wollstonecraft continued...
to produce tracts: at first moral, then—under the influence of the Johnson circle—profoundly political. Her Original Stories from Real Life, in which two girls are taught virtue and benevolence by a stern but compassionate mother-figure, was illustrated by Blake in 1788, and contained no revolutionary notions. In 1789 the Bastille fell, and all was changed utterly. Price preached his sermon welcoming the revolution and urging reform in England. Edmund Burke replied with the eloquently conservative Reflections on the Revolution in France. And Wollstonecraft excitedly wrote Vindication of the Rights of Man, defending reason and liberty, attacking "the demon of property," inherited privilege, and the hypocrisy of Burkean sentiment—which could pity queens but not the hungry poor.

In one important digression, Wollstonecraft assails Burke's opinion of women. Another passage criticizes the "narrow circle" of the wealthy family which loves only itself instead of all mankind (cf. Blake on "soft family love" and "storgous appetite") and sells its children into "legal prostitution." Johnson published the book immediately in 1790, and it was widely reviewed. The argument extended in 1792 to the Vindication of the Rights of Woman, which brought fame and notoriety; for Horace Walpole the author was "a hyena in petticoats."

Though ardent, impulsive, and thirsty for love, Wollstonecraft seems to have had no affairs of the heart before 1791. In this year she became infatuated with Fuseli, pursued him desperately in person and by letter, and proposed to live with him and his wife. Rejected, she sailed for France. There ensued the self-deluding, initially ecstatic and finally diastrous affair with Gilbert Imlay, which resulted in a daughter, two suicide attempts, and an offer—again rejected—to live with Imlay and his new mistress. A tract on the French Revolution, and a book of travel letters, come from this period. Wollstonecraft's ultimate liaison and secret marriage with Godwin ended in her death in 1797 after the birth of Mary Godwin, and the shattering of her reputation when her widower fondly published her Posthumous Works including her love-letters to Imlay, which he praised for their "sentiment and passion," and his Memoir, which told the tale of Fuseli as well as Imlay. A torrent of abuse hailed down. A 1798 poem entitled The Throe'd Females depicts a licentious and volupitous Wollstonecraft. The Anti-Jacobin Review ridicules both Godwins and calls The Rights of Woman "a scripture, archly fram'd, for propagating whores." Its author had met, by common consent, the death she deserved. If the Pickering "Mary" is a tribute to Mary Wollstonecraft, born like Blake with "a different face," it may owe as much to Blake's horror at her critics as to her actual character.

The largest debt, if debt there be, of Blake to Wollstonecraft, is in Visions of the Daughters of Albion, whose heroine is unique in romantic literature—and unique for Blake, since his later heroines do not feel and think at the same time. Like Wollstonecraft, Otooith is heart and head. She is both assertively erotic and brilliantly intellectual, generous of spirit yet smart enough to attack patriarchy root and branch. Though the "story" of Visions is not Wollstonecraft's, her proposition to the Fuselis (assuming these matters were gossiped about) might have made Otooith's offer to fetch silver and gold girls for Theotormon seem plausible. Moreover, the Vindication of the Rights of Man may be linked to Visions by imagery and rhetoric as well as by the fact that we have a distinctly unladylike female addressing a man who loves chivalry. "Why cannot estates be divided into small farms?" Wollstonecraft asks Burke:

Why does the brown waste meet the traveller's view, when men want to work? . . . Why might not the industrious peasant be allowed to steal a farm from the heath? . . . . how much misery lurks in pestilential corners . . . . how many mechanisms, by a flux of trade or fashion, lose their employment . . . . Where is the eye that marks these evils, more gigantic than any of the infringements of property, which you piously depreciate? Let these sorrows hide their diminished head before the tremendous mountain of woe that thus defaces our globe! Man preys on man, and you mourn for the idle tapestry that decorated a gothic pile, and the dronish bell that summoned the fat priest to prayer.

From Vindication of the Rights of Woman, Blake might, while ignoring its central argument in favor of female independence, have been impressed by a woman who could declare, "I . . . deny the existence of sexual virtues, not excepting modesty" and "the modesty of women . . . will often be only the artful veil of wantonness." The Blake of "London," "To the Accuser who is the God of This World" and Jerusalem would have approved Wollstonecraft's sympathetic treatment of prostitutes, and the fact that one of the two heroines in her second novel, The Wrongs of Woman, is an ex-thief and prostitute, while the other lives with the man she loves though married to a brute, and assails the marriage laws in court. Blake would, I think (this is my understanding of the major prophesies) have agreed with Wollstonecraft that "from the tyranny of men . . . the greater number of female follies proceed; and the cunning, which I allow makes at present a part of their character . . . is produced by oppression." And if he read Wollstonecraft on the French Revolution, he would surely have been struck—as Janet Todd points out that John Adams and Percy Bysshe Shelley were—by its idea of mental evolution ("the image of God implanted in our nature is now more rapidly expanding"), her dialectical view of history and politics, and her ability both to deplore and to analyze the causes of revolutionary violence.

Todd's Wollstonecraft Anthology performs the valuable service of making selections available from all the author's works, some of which exist in print only in expensive facsimile editions. The general introduction gives a good synopsis of Wollstonecraft's life, writing, and reputation, stressing the development of her thought from rationalism to radicalism, and seeing her life essentially as a "struggle" against her own social conditioning. Blakeans may be interested in this point, though Blake's personal struggle with Reason is archetypically male, while Wollstonecraft's with Passion is archetypically female.
The headnotes to individual selections in this volume place them in the context of their genres, and the selections themselves are ample, illustrating the variety of the writer's styles and concerns. I personally would have enjoyed seeing fewer of the not-immensely-original "Thoughts on the Education of Daughters" and the uniformly disdainful reviews of novels by women Wollstonecraft thought were idiots. I would have liked more of The Wrongs of Woman and some of the early letters to friends and family as well as the letters to Inlay and Godwin, and perhaps one of the Vindications in full. On the other hand, the decision to give a large sampling of hard-to-find material makes sense. All in all, this will be a highly useful book.


When Damon's Dictionary was published in 1965 almost all scholars recognized it as an indispensable companion to Blake studies. It was handsomely printed in large clear type and thus quite expensive. Not many who acquired the first printing also got the slightly revised and amplified second printing in 1967, which Brown University Press has commendably kept in print. In 1971 Dutton brought out a small paperback edition of the 1965 printing with severely reduced print and narrowed margins—presumably because Brown University Press wished to reserve the small improvements of the 1967 printing (chiefly articles on Everlasting Gospel, Innocence and Experience, and Lavater). The Dutton edition went out of print some years ago. Now Shambhala has reissued the 1965 version in the same small print as the Dutton reprint but with more generous margins and also an excellent index (pp. 463-532) by Morris Eaves. May Damon's great work of scholarship, thus helpfully embellished, long remain available at a moderate price.

It may not be obvious why a "dictionary" should need an index, especially since the interconnected entries are usually cross-referenced. But Damon's Dictionary is practically an encyclopedia of the subjects indicated in the subtitle, and anyone who consults the Dictionary needs to be able to skim over its entries without turning every page, for one symbol leads into another beyond the cross-references given under any one entry. Only after running through Eaves's index can one answer the elementary pre-publication question: "Have you checked Damon's Dictionary?" (I did notice an important unindexed mention of Joseph of Arimathea on p. 136; this is fair warning that one must also consult Erdman's Concordance.)

Damon was a great scholar because he had read deeply in all the authors Blake himself read and also in more recent authors like Melville and Joyce that Blake would have cared for had he lived long enough. Gossip used to represent Damon as a mystagogue, but nobody who conversed with him thought of him as a crank, even though some of his students admitted they couldn't work up an interest in subjects he knew deeply. During the meetings I had with him late in his life, Damon was a wonderful...
subjects and exhibiting a love of life such as many are not capable of, at least in this culture. To be sure, it was not easy to argue a point with him, but this was evidently due to his having become hard of hearing, rather than to a dogmatic or authoritative cast of mind. It must be admitted that nobody could persuade Damon that the evidence for Shelley's being the Bard of Oxford (Dictionary, pp. 314-15; also eight other references in the index) is weak, but he was also able to recognize the complicating evidence of a letter to Hayley in which Blake had referred to the insignificant Edward Marsh as "the Bard of Oxford." Damon correctly felt that Marsh lacked the cast of mind. It must be admitted that nobody could require a Bard of Oxford fit to be entrusted with the leaves of the Tree of Life. What cannot be denied by any lover of Blake is that, if the Bard of Oxford must be imagined as some actual person known to history, Shelley would have fitted the bill and Marsh would not. This is Damon's essential point and as such the proposed identification fosters rather than contradicts true scholarship.

The hostile reviewer in TLS 2 September 1965, p. 756, complained that Damon's Freudian views "seem old-fashioned." Considering the current flood tide of books, articles, and remarks concerning Blake and Freud, Damon's outlook, has, on the contrary, proven to be prophetic. Neither Blake, Freud, nor Damon can, of course, be held responsible for the sexual politics causing this overproduction. A more specific challenge by the TLS reviewer better identifies a weakness in Damon's method. Noting that Damon's expository manner is simply affirmative rather than suggestive, she pointed out that in the awesome picture on Jerusalem 41 [46] the formidable flaming chariot--composed of coiled serpents in which are seated an aged couple drawn by humanized leonine bulls against a background of flames--is too flatly identified as a version of Elijah's fiery chariot (art. ELIJAH, p. 118--thanks to Eaves's index). Indeed, she declared, without counter-evidence, that there is no connection whatever with Elijah's chariot. She must have persuaded Erdman, who does not mention Elijah's chariot in The Illuminated Blake, pp. 320-21. In this case the redesignation of the color print now called God Judging Adam (formerly Elijah in the Fiery Chariot) has complicated the problem of identifying all the meaningful elements in Jerusalem 41 [46]. Briefly, the chariot remains either that of Elijah or of "God" even when its vehicular power is supplied by Assyrian-descended bulls and great serpents related to the ones ridden by children in Thel 6 and America 11. But in Jerusalem 41 [46] the context has become pessimistic and parodistic so that the aged couple are carried along with the supervising eagles and spirits (related to on) would have them go. Though Blake's images change somewhat in the last chapter of Jerusalem, the reader approaching them on the Fiery Chariot of his Contemplative Thought will recognize that the aged couple must take control again to be transported and transfigured.

What Damon actually tells us leaves out too many of the refinements and conditionals in this picture. But it is surprising how often he was able to justify the conclusion of his confident expository manner. Because Blake is normally not mystifying and only complicated according to principles mostly made clear in Damon's first book, Blake's ideas and symbols can usually be coherently explained. Damon did not pretend to say the last word about any subject, and few readers will have the impression that he was condescending to them or attempting to lead them around by the nose.

The best way to assess the continued usefulness of Damon's Dictionary is to follow it in action. As a research tool, it seems never to lose its freshness. Recently I noticed that Bentley, William Blake's Writings I, 14, glossed the concluding aphorism of There is No Natural Religion, "God becomes as we are that we may be as he is," with a remarkably apposite quotation from Irenaeus's Five Books Against Heresies, which Bo Lindberg, William Blake's Illustrations to the Book of Job (1973), p. 38, also cited in Latin only. In checking the Dictionary (p. 402), I found that Damon had chosen to quote Athanasius: "He indeed assumed humanity that we might become God," though he also gives references to Irenaeus (Book III, not Book V, which was preferred by Lindberg and Bentley) and Calvin. Damon's conclusion, however, concentrates on the difference that keeps Blake's use of traditional ideas from ever seeming commonplace: "Whereas the theologians all use the past tense, as of an historical event, Blake uses the present tense, for the act is eternal and is always going on." Often the real force of Blake's ideas can be recognized neither by those of Eliot's persuasion who suppose that Blake had no tradition nor by those of Raine's persuasion who suppose that all Blake's ideas were already in the Perennial Philosophy. Damon is usually right in spirit because he could see the element of truth in both these schools.

Damon used to insist on the spelling "Tyger" whenever one referred to Blake's creation: I remember his checking my convictions about this matter before he could relax and speak joyfully about Blake and the other visionaries such as Dante and Dostoevsky (cf. p. 410 re. THE TREE). Curiously, Damon was less scrupulous in referring to design 10 for Dante's Comedy by the Victorian title, "The Circle of the Lusful" (p. 97)--a traditional solecism that negates Blake's own (reversed) inscription. The only appropriate title for the greatest of pictorial ideas ever related to this wonderful episode is "The Whirlwind of Lovers." One can be confident that Damon would have immediately corrected this anti-Blakean error if it had been called to his attention, perhaps even troubling to explain why it is misleading, as he did in the case of "Gladd Day" (p. 14). Since the old customarily wrong title falsifies Blake's vision it is an error in the usages of Blake scholarship that must forthwith be corrected.

Let us suppose that we wanted to look up Blake's idea of The Covering Cherub. The long way would be to start with Erdman's Concordance, but Damon's Dictionary, pp. 93-94, COVERING CHERUB, gives a good
account of the essence of this basic symbol, which has also been well discussed by Frye, but few others. Unfortunately Damon neglected to cross-reference CHERUBIM (p. 80) where the crucial early reference in The Marriage of Heaven and Hell 14 is correctly identified so that one can understand that this Cherub has a key place in all Blake's subsequent symbolism. If one had started at CHERUBIM Damon's own cross-reference to COVERING CHERUB would have sufficed, but no student would ever hunt to find the fourteen other references given in the Eaves index. (One of these, a reference to IEREUS (p. 194--i.e. priest--is incorrectly spelled "iereus" in the index, p. 478). The Covering Cherub is two-faced and many-faceted. Naturally the Covering Cherub flourishes in an age obsessed with problematics, ambiguities, and anxieties. The most learned of Blake scholars, Sir Geoffrey Keynes, to whom the Dictionary was dedicated, even professed to see the Covering Cherub where he is not, on the frontispiece of Songs of Experience. Damon was a great critic because he recognized the face of error and could uncover the difference between what Blake was driving at and much else that can be thought and said about the same thing.

Damon's method with pictures is simple and productive: his thoroughness in matching the figures with words had rarely been equaled except by Wicksteed and Roe. As a rule Damon refrained from translating Blake's pictorial symbolism into terms of Blake's "system"--the finding of Zoas and Emanations wherever men and women were gathered together--at least when there is no call to do so. For this reason, one can readily sort out truth from error in Damon's interpretations, whereas the cloudy equivocations of another sort of critic are built on presumed ambiguities and thus are neither hot nor cold.

In my earlier review in Philologica Quarterly, XLI (1966), 533-35 I praised Damon's precision and also called attention to some errors in the exegesis of major pictures, which are an important part of the Dictionary. Damon reproduces and discusses ten major pictures, starting with the greatest, as represented by the Rosenwald drawing of the Last Judgment. For this picture he also provides a shadow picture in which most of the figures are numbered and keyed, usually with appropriate passages from "A Vision of the Last Judgment" as given in the Keynes text. Among the errors to be noted are that Damon called group 71 Hagar and Ishmael, but they are certainly Sarah and Isaac; the other pair are an unnumbered group between 64, The Church Universal, and 70, Abraham. This error and part of Blake's description of the lost tempera, which must have differed from the drawing, led Damon to identify the winged and bearded record keeper below them as Mohammed. This is a major error, for the figure accords clearly with Blake's own description (which follows directly after that for 64, the Church Universal): "The Aged Figure with Wings, having a writing tablet and taking account of the numbers who arise, is That Angel of the Divine Presence mentioned in Exodus XIV, 19 v. and in other Places; this Angel is frequently called by the Name of Jehovah Elohim, The 'I am' of the Oaks of Albion" (V pp. 80-81, K 610). Damon must have realized that the Angel of the Divine Presence had to be somewhere so he put him in at the upper right as number 12; unfortunately this is a pair of kneeling figures associated with the Communion above the clouds where damnation begins to operate. I am sorry to say that this severe dislocation of Blake's master design went unremarked at the MLA meeting devoted to the Last Judgment some years ago. All of us who were there seem to have had our minds on other matters that Damon had handled with ease. I must add, however, that Damon's article on THE ANGEL OF DIVINE PRESENCE, p. 23, is concise and suggestive.

A word of caution for anyone who sets out to correct Damon's Last Judgment: the picture in the Dictionary is fairly clear but in the Shambhala format it is so much reduced that one must use a magnifying glass. Even in the more elegant treatment of the Brown University Press edition where the shadow picture and key fold out and face the reproduction, not enough is visible for certainty. Much preferable is the reproduction in Keynes' Pencil Drawings: Second Series (1956), pl. 27, or Keynes's 1970 Dover edition of the Drawings, illus. 51; both, though considerably reduced, are a good deal clearer. Though we must lament the loss of the great tempera of the Last Judgment, we ought to realize just how good the Rosenwald drawing is in its own right, not just as an indication of what is lost. Roe's description is entirely justified: "A great masterpiece of design and linear draftsmanship, with an amazing feeling for delicate and swift movement which weaves through the wonderfully organized multitude of figures, preserving complete clarity amidst complexity, this drawing ranks as one of the outstanding achievements of Blake's life" (A. S. Roe, "A Drawing of the Last Judgment," Huntington Library Quarterly, 21 [1957], 40; reprinted in R. N. Essick, ed., The Visionary Hand, 1973, p. 205).

Elsewhere, often in this journal, I have written at some length on five other pictures reproduced in the Dictionary. In every case I have profited from Damon's observations, yet I have usually had to disagree with or refine some aspect of his basic interpretations. As regards the central figure in the Spenser cavalcade, for example, I show that she is undoubtedly Britomart, not Amoret, as Damon had proposed (see Dictionary, illus. VIII and p. 384, vs. Grant-Brown in Blake Newsletter 31, 3 [Winter 1974-75], 66-67). And in the Arlington Court Picture, referred to by Damon as "The Circle of Life," I have argued that the figures at the center must be Los and Jerusalem, not Luvah and Vala (see Dictionary, illus. IV and p. 87, vs. Grant in Blake Newsletter 11, 3 [May 1970], 99 and 13, 4 [August 1970], 17-18; also Studies in Romanticism 10 [1971], 26-30).--repr. The Visionary Hand, pp. 483-91). As for my discussions of the designs for L'Allegro and IL Penseroso, two of which Damon reproduces, which appeared in Blake Newsletter 16, 4 [1971], 117-34, repr. The Visionary Hand, pp. 418-48, and Blake Newsletter 19, 5 [1971-72], 190-202--Eaves's index shows me that my note references to passages in the Dictionary were incomplete, but that luckily what I had overlooked does not affect my understanding of Damon's position. In his article on PLATO Damon saw well enough that in IL Penseroso 9, "Milton and the Spirit
of Plato" (illus. IX and pp. 327-28), Blake was attacking Plato, not defending him, as Raine had wished to suppose. Yet Damon remained enough affected by the Platonizers to declare that Plato was Blake's "former idol," whereas he should have said Blake had never been a Platonist.

In my Philological Quarterly review of the Dictionary I complained of Damon's identification of the male figure who stands on the curve of the earth and receives a scroll from Jesus in the second version of the Genesis title page as the Holy Ghost. As a caption for the picture, illustration II, Damon refers to the article ZOA, p. 459, but the discussion in the article GENESIS, p. 151, is more informative, indicating also that Damon had confused the first and second versions of the title page. The additional five references identified in Eaves's index do not make the theory more persuasive that the receiver of the scroll should be identified as the Holy Spirit.

Curiously, Damon neglected to mention the third divine figure in the heavenly regions who is represented as rushing with outspread wings above the top of the picture, thus appearing in a position of superiority both to the Son on the left and the Father on the right. While the body of this superior figure is quite distinct, his actions and circumstances are only sketchily indicated. First we must recognize that the Father (with his compasses—not a bow, as I had asserted—held at his side) who stands in a mandorla above the Tree of Life, is dividing the waters above the firmanent from those below. It is an extension of the supernal waters that the superior spirit is rushing across as, with outstretched arms, he wields a gigantic bow-shaped object that arcs around him and even over the horizontal line sketched across the top to indicate the planned limit of the picture.

The figure himself is a direct quotation (reversed) from Marriage 3 and Urizen 3—as noted in Erdman's The Illuminated Blake—but in the final context he is freed from the flames that variously crippled the attempts of both Orc and Los to resist the devastating hegemony of Urizen. The sketched bow-shaped object he deploys is perhaps best understood as a more regular version of the involved scroll that curves around the genial self-image Blake drew in the Upcott autograph book on 26 January 1826. From the directing right wing of the Holy Spirit descend two continuations of this scroll: they blend into the second letter of the "Genesis" title and thence pervade the whole word, being also passed on below in the smaller scroll from Jesus to regenerate man who has arisen above the curve of the Earth and even the sphere of air to receive it. The wings and position of the originating figure alone show that in the end (on paper watermarked 1826) Blake wanted to depict the Holy Spirit not as a bird (as he had done as recently as the Last Judgment, and elsewhere)—and certainly not as a vacuum—but as a virile man with the power to disseminate the spirit of prophecy.

Damon tried to draw some of these implications out of the fourth figure who stands on the curve of the earth wearing as a loincloth the phallic letter "I" of the title, but his position as the receptor of a scroll from Jesus shows that he is human, not a Spirit. He is, to be sure, a glorified human who wears a large plate halo, which is perhaps the Sun itself, as he reaches up to receive the scroll from the Son while drawing sustenance with his outspread left hand from the mandorla of the Father. I am convinced, though I cannot prove it, that the scroll must contain the Everlasting Gospel, which was promised to regenerate man in the Book of Revelation and partly written out in Blake's own Notebook. The new Adam who receives it is the energetic embodiment of Albion who has arisen and, after his dance, is fit to return to paradise, to make a human fourth with the three persons of the Trinity. His posture is nearly identical with that of the giant man who reaches up in The Angel of Revelation and declares "that there should be time no longer."

In the first version of the Genesis title page (watermarked 1821) there are many different ideas and symbols which Blake refined and also altered in the second version. Here three of the Four Zoas at the bottom also raise their arms, thus echoing the gesture of the central man, while the fourth, though bound, looks inward to witness the transfer of wisdom. But in the final version the Four Zoas appear in animal forms and only one, a dishumanized serpentine man, raises his (left) arm toward the Tree of Death, which is added in this later version. Here it appears that even Los as the Eagle can sight with only one eye the redemptive transmission of the Everlasting Gospel, which in the last day can tell unobfuscated truth. These bestial Four Zoas appear still bathing their feet in the waters outside of Eden, but the flames that play over their figures in the earlier version of the title page are no longer shown. The spectator is to infer that until after all the Zoas have bathed in the other waters, the waters of life evident above the firmament, the Zoas constitute bestial impersonations of the Covering Cherub, as yet unable to find their places within the bosom of Albion.

Still, the story of "Genesis" that Blake wished at last to show correctly must have been that of paradise regained rather than of paradise still lost. It will be interesting to see whether the edition of the Genesis manuscript that has been promised for some time by the American Blake Foundation has been conceived so as to reveal the extent of Blake's purposes in this project of the wonderful last year of his life. If so, correct understanding will have grown out of the leads Damon left us by calling attention to what is important and, what is even rarer, in communicating the right spirit of interpretation even when details, even major details, of the interpretation offered were inaccurate. Because Damon's imagination was always in the right place, the need for his Dictionary will continue to be felt by every Blake scholar. With Eaves's assistance in locating all Damon had to say, we cannot envision a time when it will be possible to get along without the Dictionary.*

* Evidently my concluding and opening exhortations do not quite express a consensus. Michael J. Tolley, for one, does not agree. He calls my attention to his review of Damon's Dictionary in Southern Review
(Australia) 2 (1967), esp. 271-74, which showed in
detail that Damon was often wrong about Blake's
understanding of the Bible. Perhaps the number of
scholars who, like Tolley, can forego use of the
Dictionary is larger than I have supposed. Still,
I can think of few books or articles published
during the last fifteen years that would not have
been better if the elementary pre-publication question
I ask in my second paragraph could really have answered
"yes."

Maureen Quilligan. The Language of
Allegory: Defining the Genre. Ithaca
305 pp. $15.00.
Reviewed by Nelson Hilton.

Maureen Quilligan's The Language of Allegory
nowhere mentions Blake, yet it should prove
highly rewarding to those students interested
in Blake's verbal art, and particularly to those
pursuing his murky distinction between "vision" and
"allegory" (VLJ, E 544).

Quilligan's thesis is that the defining
characteristic of non-mechanical allegories--what
links them into a genre--is "their very particular
emphasis on language as their first focus and
ultimate subject" (p. 15), and her book unfolds the
consequences and operations of that focus through a
theoretical framework (the book moves from sections
on "The Text" to "The Pretext," "The Context," and
"The Reader") larded with discussions of "allegories"
as diverse as Piers Plowman, Melville's The Confidence
Man, and The Crying of Lot 49. For Quilligan, the
kind of language which is the subject (and object)
of allegory displays three interrelated features:
it is polysemous, non-arbitrary, and--striking to
read in a work of contemporary literary criticism--it
asks for a reader "willing to entertain the
possibility of making a religious response to the
ineffability invoked by [allegory's] polysemous
language" (p. 223).

Emphasizing "the possibility of an otherness,
a polysemy, inherent in the very words of the page,"
Quilligan proposes to reorient the idea of allegory
"away from our traditional insistence on allegory's
distinction between word said and meaning meant, to
the simultaneity of the process of signifying
multiple meaning" (p. 26). The allegory can then
be seen as a kind of extended pun, generating its
narrative out of wordplay, unfolding "as a series of
punning commentaries, related to one another on
the most literal of verbal levels--the sounds of words"
(p. 22; though here one must query, why not the
graphic shapes of words as well? sound is not the
most literally literal of verbal levels). A Blakean
example might be "Of the primeval Priests assum'd
power" (BU 2.1), where you must wonder about prim
and proper evil priests and then the power they
assumed or that you assume they have--fit questions
to open the book of your reason (among other possi-
bilities). Such a text--manifesting Quilligan's
suggestion regarding the function of wordplay in
allegory--addresses the reader's production of
meaning and forces him "to become self-conscious of
his own reading" (pp. 21, 41). The end result of
this dynamic is to make the reader aware of his or
her own interpretative acts, to force the reader to
reflect on how the text has been read, and in
reflecting on this operation to realize the choices
he or she has made about the text and, finally, the
kinds of choices the reader makes in life (p. 253).
The effect of the confused "Argument" (which means,
wordplay is to make the reader self-conscious of Heaven and Hell medium (not to its action) by decentering the narrative's self-reflexiveness to its own verbal "literally," "to make clear") of The Marriage of Heaven and Hell perhaps offers an oblique example for Quilligan's contention that "the effect of wordplay is to make the reader self-conscious of the verbal surface rather than the imagined action. The narrative's self-reflexiveness to its own verbal medium (not to its action) by decentering the reader's interest, unsettles the focus, so the reader becomes more conscious of his own production of meaning" (p. 254). "Rintrah roars & shakes his fires in the burdend air" seems as much about verbal surface rather than imagined action. The two remaining defining features of the language of allegory are expressed in the contention that Allegories are not only always texts, predicated on the existence of other previous, sacred texts, they are always fundamentally about language and the ways in which language itself can reveal to man his highest spiritual purpose within the cosmos. As such, allegory always presupposes at least a potential sacralizing power in language, and it is possible to write and to read allegorically only in those cultural contexts which grant to language a significance beyond that belonging to a merely arbitrary system of signs. Allegory will not exist as a viable genre without this "supra-realism" attitude toward words; that is, its existence assumes an attitude in which abstract nouns not only name universals that are real, but in which the abstract names themselves are perceived to be as real and as powerful as the things named. Language itself must be felt to have a potency as solidly meaningful as physical fact before the allegorist can begin; out of its magic phenomenality--out of language sensed in terms of a nearly physical presence--the allegorist's narrative comes, peopled by words moving about an intricately reechoing landscape of language. (p. 156)

Quilligan's belief that "Allegory calls attention to the other--in a word, to God, or to some sort of possible sacredness" should be related to her argument that the Bible is the necessary "pretext": "All allegories incorporate the Bible into their texts ... and its problematic incorporation into the text becomes therefore a defining characteristic of the genre" (p. 96). I confess some puzzlement here--it is as though Quilligan wishes to characterize allegories as "logocentric" exercises, deferring to "the word," "scripture," "the book," but chooses instead to localize those signifieds as the Bible. This formulation is one of several that cannot easily be applied to Blake, despite his belief in the Eternal Vision contained in the Bible. Milton, Shakespeare, Paracelsus & Behmen, the American and French Revolutions are equally among Blake's informing pretexts; and these in turn are equally manifestations of imagination, the pretext (or, preludium) of an imminent and immanent sacred power. Besides, Blake's early statement about creating a "Bible of Hell," and his later assertion that "God from whom [all books are given]" is again speaking through him, suggests that not the Bible only, but all works of imagination are privileged. Quilligan herself seems to admit this wider scope of allegory, recognizing that "since allegories take as their province all the wisdom stored in the repository of man's language, they, of necessity, tend to an encyclopedic sprawl" (p. 141).

Quilligan's remark concerning "those cultural contexts" necessary for the intelligent reading and writing of allegory is also unsatisfyingly vague. She refers to "those periods when language is felt to be a numinous object" (p. 281); furthermore, allegory attempts to place the reader in relation to self and to society as a whole ("which is considered as well to be part of a cosmic play"), and "this whole process relies on a public acceptance of the polysemous potency of language to connect these (now, to us, disparate) realms" (p. 192). This feels true as far as it goes, but one is driven to wonder: when were those periods? what is the psycho-social-economic-spiritual matrix behind the context she posits? Nineteenth-century New England was evidently one of the periods--judging by the presence of examples from Hawthorne, Emerson, and Melville (but who was reading The Confidence Man "intelligently" when it was published?) Examples from Nabokov and Pynchon, and quotations from Foucault suggest that we are again entering one of the periods. Medieval and Renaissance England of course. The correspondences get difficult to see. Obviously, the one glaring example (since it offers no sample of real allegory) of an unprivileged period is eighteenth-century and romantic English literature. Given "the essential affinity of allegory to the pivotal phenomenon of the pun" (p. 33), that period's strictures on the pun manifest its rejection of allegory. For Quilligan, that wide body of literature serves only to make a negative point: "After Pope, poetry's main value lies in the intricate process by which words uncreate darkness, bringing up from private recesses the previously unacknowledged fundament of human experience. The privacy of the romantic lyric, its devaluation of didactic purpose, along with the often-stated romantic distastefully a mechanism by which allegory, reveal what might, in another context, be unlikely to be perceived as a generic fact about allegory--that its purpose is always public, at the least, 'national'" (p. 191). Whatever else may be objected, one sees vividly the liability of generalizing without taking account of the Blakean particular (W.1, "Public Address," inter alia).

Indeed, the issues raised by Blake's "Sublime Allegory" (letter, 7 July 1803) are, so to speak, isomorphous with the questions suggested but not answered by Quilligan's provocative book. Or perhaps simply--although it manages to embrace The Crying of Lot 49--Quilligan's conception of allegory would not include Blake; for all its emphasis on "polysemism" Quilligan's book seems to involve a conception of the text curiously closed to "dissemination" and even poetry (after Spenser). Quilligan notes "allegory's characteristic concern for process," which "can be spoken of only in terms of ... language" (p. 221), yet her reader feels in the end that despite the invocation of "the sacred," "language" is just another name for process to facilitate the academic concern for defining a genre.
She says that her interpretation "suggests that allegory goes beyond mere literary categories" and that "The approach to allegory I have been describing attempts to show how each work provides a conscious portrait of the reader in the act of reading" (p. 241). Portrait for whom? is the text merely a profound mirror in which the reader sees his or her manipulations of the text? Or, what seems closer to the almost mystical, unspoken vision of the book (and closer also to Blake), is the "portrait" itself "conscious," taking its life as "a Representation of what Eternally Exists. Really & Unchangeably" (VLJ, E 544). For Blake, of course, this is a description of "Vision & Imagination" as opposed to "Fable or Allegory . . . a totally distinct & inferior kind of poetry." But it strikes this reviewer that Quilligan has in part written about just such Vision, seen as "concern for process, for the complicated exfoliation of interdependent psychic, intellectual, and cultural revelations, which can all be spoken of only in terms of the force that shapes them all: language" (p. 221). Ultimately, however, "Process," "language"--"going forth & returning wearied," "the Words of Eternity"--seem in Quilligan's conception to be separate from some pre-existing "sacred": the genre she is limiting is marked by "a truly allegorical concern for a sacred pretext" (p. 284). The ambiguity of the last quotation would be appreciated by the Devil of The Marriage, for whom "All Bibles or sacred codes, have been the causes of . . . Errors." For Blake, "language" itself, "process" itself is sacred and holy, and the true perception of such states, Vision: to defer with Quilligan to some earlier sacred is to invoke "an allegorical abode where existence hath never come" (Eur 6.7). Read diabolically (allegorically?), Quilligan's book helps us to understand why "Allegory & Vision ought to be known as Two Distinct Things & so called for the Sake of Eternal Life."

Lest I leave the reader with the impression that Quilligan wanted to write on Vision but ended up trying to define allegory, let me repeat that The Language of Allegory offers a great many inspired moments and deserves close consideration by any reader interested, as all readers of Blake must be, in "all-powerful Human Words!" (J 24.1). The last words here ought to be hers:

Perhaps language cannot redeem society; fiction may only entertain. But all allegorists do aim at redemption; and because they must work with language, they ultimately turn to the paradox at the heart of their own assumptions about words and make the final focus of their narratives not merely the social function of language, but, in particular, the slippery tensions between literalness and metaphor. They scrutinize language's own problematic polysemy. (p. 64)

1 The word is glossed by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in the introduction to her translation of Jacques Derrida, Of Grammatology: " . . . Derrida offers this version of textuality: A sowing that does not produce plants, but is simply infinitely repeated. A semination that is not insemination but dissemination, seed spilled in vain, an emission that cannot return to its origin in the father [i.e. author]. Not an exact and controlled polysemy, but a proliferation of always different, always postponed meanings" (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976; p. lxv).
The Book of Urizen has in recent years become a staple of college classrooms where Blake is introduced. Its sublimity, its awesome temporal, spatial, and narrative dislocations, the totality of its cosmic vision, all make it a work representative of Blake's mature prophetic mode but accessible to the novice easily overwhelmed by Milton and Jerusalem. As art The Book of Urizen exists on a plane of mastery comparable to its achievement as poem, and again it is an exemplary casebook for exploring the complex relations of text and design in Blake's work. Up to this point teachers have had to rely on the indifferently reproduced black-and-white redaction of copy G, the Rosenwald copy, edited by Clark Emery for the University of Miami Press, or the reproduction of copy B in Erdman's Illuminated Blake, generally better in printing but uneconomical for a class not concentrating on Blake. With a strong library, of course, one can coordinate the energies, the clean fingers, and no. 2 pencils of one's students in a stampede on the rare book room, where the Trianon facsimile of copy G merits an annual dusting. None of these alternatives, however, can vie with a reasonably priced and reasonably presented color reproduction of copy G, for which there is a student, and (not to be discounted) a fair public, demand. To have an edition backed by a major trade publisher heralds wide acceptance, and one might accordingly anticipate wide applause. That is, I think, unlikely. Unfortunately, the defects of this edition, which will undoubtedly dismay purists, are such as to disturb even those who take long views and do not foresee residence in Jerusalem next year or for the determinable future. No aspect of the edition—the reproduction, the edited text, or the commentary—escapes them. Since this review is intended for the journal of record for Blake, I will tax the reader's patience with a specification of the problems that this edition poses for use in teaching, scholarship, and (lest it be forgotten) one's aesthetic experience of an undeniable masterpiece.

The Eassons' decision to present us with yet another facsimile of copy G is not to be disputed: this latest known complete copy, despite the absence of Urizen's soliloquy in the problematical plate 4, has come to be thought of as the standard copy, for, unlike earlier copies colorprinted in pastel, here Blake employs a richly layered watercoloring and even the overlay of gold and silver leaf. Copy G is, quite simply, one of the great triumphs of Blake's art. It does not, however, appear such in this edition. One's first inclination is to waive minor discrepancies in color, arguing that film technology is still unreliable when it comes to absolute fidelity with four-color plates. This is, of course, the justification for the laborious and expensive collotype-and-stencil process undertaken by the Trianon Press series of facsimiles. In the
Shambala/Random House Book of Urizen, with color plates printed by Lehigh Press, economy has prevailed over even a minimum standard of fidelity. To begin with, as was noted previously in these pages with the like edition of Milton copy B, glossy photographic paper insures a flatness of effect in place of Blake's subtle texturing. One might imagine the editors over even a minimum standard of fidelity. To begin manifest. In general, one may summarize them as a paper insures a flatness of effect in place of Blake's subtle color, especially in earth tones, being deepened into heavy reds and oranges. Even a cursory glance through the colored plates here will reveal how dominated they are by red. It is not altogether facetious, given this reproduction, to suggest that Fuzon evacuated Egypt to escape the plague of measles ravaging its inhabitants.

For the purposes of this review, somewhat delayed by the death of Lessing J. Rosenwald, I have compared the Easson reproduction closely with the Trianon facsimile and with the original copy G, recently transferred from the Alverthorpe Gallery to its permanent residence in the Library of Congress. It should be noted from the start that Blake's familiar siena, rose printing base for copy G, is transmuted more or less (the values change from plate to plate) to a strident red.

1. Title-page. A premonition of what is to follow is figured in the anomalous change of the plate numeral "1" in the upper right from an orange-red to bright green. The sky in the upper right is changed from muted blue to azure; indications of pale green vegetation above an otherwise barren tree in the upper left are lost in blotches of orange over olive. A similar swathe of pale green across the bottom is changed to olive.

2. Preludium. Ugly red stipple disfigures the flesh of woman and child as well as the central background: these are subtle flesh tones in the original. The woman's outlandish henna hair should be auburn. To her upper right gray-blue sky adopts a greenish tinge toward the top: here all is azure. The flame-like vegetation surrounding the text is a lovely spring green in the original: here, olive-orange, it suggests only fire.

3. Headpiece of youth racing through flames: in the original pen lines and gold flecking give a textured sense of the body's immersion in the medium.

4. Full-page design of crouched Urizen surrounded by rock. The splendid gold flecks in the rock, of obvious iconographical significance, are lost here. Gray-blue in upper left, consistent with rock, here looks like the intrusion of sky. Urizen's body is simply not rose-purple.

5. Headpiece of haloed Urizen holding open book. Again, the loss of gold in the halo and in the text of the book removes iconographical significance. The very top should be wholly dark blue, not mostly black. The opaque black blotch across the book is in the original a translucent shadow.

6. Full-page design of Urizen in semi-cruciform position, immersed in water. This is far from the original with all colors transmuted. Red on face and in hair replaces subtle orange: Urizen's eyes are not, as here, madly blood-shot. Where there is white, read gray throughout; where electric blue, a faint azure tint. Considerable overpainting with silver leaf (in water to right of Urizen, on his right foot, right knee, and on his beard) and gold (on nose, right big toe, and below him) is lost and with it the three-dimensional sense of immersion.

7. Three-quarters page design of three falling figures encoiled by serpents. The basic background color of the medium through which they fall should be green, not as here orange. Considerable gold flecking arching over the left figure and accentuating the serpents is absent. The wonderful effect of a scarlet overwash on gold leaf at the bottom is lost. (Incidentally, even the Trianon facsimile erred here by inverting the overlay.) Again, the figures have a blotchy red rather than the grayish flesh tone of the original.

8. Full-page design of figure balanced on hands surrounded by rock-cloud medium: as a whole much too bright and stark. Where Blake uses a gray or pink-white this has simply white. Red striations are too emphatic. The chief loss is the overwash of lines on the left leg, suggestive of a veil or cloud.

9. Three-quarters design of agonized Los (?), hands crossed over ears: far too red. Gold flecking above head, to the right of and below the body, is lost.

10. Two-thirds design of crouched skeleton. Background of text should be light blue, not violet, with azure rather than black above skeletal circle. The basic hue of the skeleton is gold to green, not, as here, orange to red. Flecked gold accentuating cranium and other parts of skeleton is lost.

11. Full-page design of shackled, weeping old man. The figure sits on golden vegetation, with golden rocks next to his right shoulder, and gold also implicated in the halo-sunburst surrounding his head. That burst is bright red here, but orange to deep red in the original. The face and body have a basic gray cast in the original: here there is much pink and red.

12. One-third headpiece of figure in rear view supporting rocks. Again as before, the rock should be suffused with gold.

13. Two-thirds tailpiece with emaciated figure and Los, surrounded and divided by flames. The text has a gray, not violet, wash. The skeletal figure, here an olive brown, has a distinctly green cast with silver flecks on his legs. Los, in contrast, has gold flecks on his legs. There is also gold to far left and in flames above Los: the flames have a lighter rose tint.

14. Full-page design of crouched nude, arms behind head, has too much red and white. There is gold
leaf throughout the corona surrounding the figure.

15. Central design of figure holding apart clouds lacks gold in clouds and on rear of head and left shoulder.

16. Three-quarters design of four heavenly figures looking down to earth. The cloud drapery out of which the two on the right emerge should be a gray-azure, not rich blue. Gold leaf surrounds the descending arm of the one figure. The medium in which his hand trails should be a gray-blue suggestive of water, not green. An anomalous red bull's-eye intruding just to the left of the plunging beard of the figure to the far right suggests defective film or unprofessional processing: Blake is not responsible for it.

17. Full-page design of globe emerging from hair of bent figure is perhaps beyond the capacity of a photograph to reproduce. Considerable gold leaf distinguishes the globe.

18. Three-quarters tailpiece of a cruciform Los in flames, with hammer in left hand and right hand on rock. Gold leaf is missing from the bottom. There is some success in capturing his immersion in flames here.

19. One-third headpiece of ascending Enitharmon and crouched Los. The text is backed by a much more pronounced gray wash. Background in the design should be gray-black with azure, not turquoise, shading. In the original, gold at Enitharmon's foot suggests fire, with gray smoke billowing to her left: this simply is lost.

20. One-third tailpiece of infant falling in fire. A blotchy woodcut quality at the bottom is without basis in the original. The dominant color of the fire is yellow, not as here orange, with streaks of gold.

21. Full-page design of Los-Enitharmon-Orc. The true cast of these bodies is gray: the whitish-red tones here are still preferable to the inexplicable chocolate to which they are darkened in the Trianon edition.

22. Two-thirds tailpiece of Urizen exploring his dens. The blue is too strong, and red splashes in the rocks behind Urizen are missing, but this plate is relatively close to the original.

23. Full-page design of heavily draped, moving figure, viewed from the rear. Heavy red striations on the drapery, overpainted in the original, have a distinct and ugly presence here.

24. Full-page design of Urizen's four children, the elements, is a very poor reproduction. Green at the top is transmuted to orange; bluish gray sky to heavy blue; the gray-green vegetation out of which Grodna arises is olive, with his hand surrounded by scarlet, not orange. The muted orange flesh tones in the original are altered to ugly pinks and reds.

25. One-third headpiece with figures immersed in green medium and entwined with serpent coils. The original gray-green has become forest green, with the purple wash at the bottom a gray-blue.

26. Full-page design of boy and dog before immense door. The bottom half of this plate looks as if it were splattered with bright red paint: these are subtle accentuations of hue, done with orange, in the original.

27. Two-thirds tailpiece with Urizen caught in his nets is in general too olive in hue.

Plate a of copy C—plate 4 of the reading text—is reproduced following plate 27.

To summarize briefly: one may ignore the aesthetic consequences of the considerable transmutation of color values throughout the plates, but the infidelity has interpretive significance as well. Fully a quarter of the plates have lost detail essential to their meaning (plate 19 being especially obvious), while the marked alteration in hue in several (e.g. plates 2 and 16) obscures their import or subjects them to serious misinterpretation. In effect, this is not a reliable facsimile for scholarly purposes, nor can it be used with confidence in the classroom.

The twenty-eight color plates are followed by a handsomely printed edition of the text. The "Textual Note" acknowledges that "the nature of the punctuation often shapes the reader's perception of the meaning of Blake's words" (41), but that recognition has insufficiently shaped the editors' attitude toward their task. They appear not to have been guided by the accrued consensus of modern editorial procedure, which emphasizes a selfless modesty as the editor's abiding virtue. Instead, there is considerable editorial intrusion here, the main feature being a lavish (and at times ungrammatical) sprinkling of commas throughout. These have a palpable rhetorical effect, separating integrated components, slowing the momentum, and often removing a studied ambiguity of modification that is distinctly Blakean. One recognizes that Blake's idiosyncrasies, like those of Emily Dickinson, pose insoluble problems for a systematic editor. Still, the caveat should be that less is more. Here, the rule is that an editor's job is to make editorial decisions wherever possible. Many are curios; some are clearly wrong.

A few examples, compared with the original, will illustrate the effect of such fussing with the text. (I identify line numbers, which are not included in this edition, for convenience.)

And self-balanc'd, stretch'd o'er the void,
I alone, even I! The winds merciless
Bound, but condensing in torrents
They fall & fall;  (4:18-21)

And self balanc'd stretch'd o'er the void
I alone, even I! the winds merciless
Bound; but condensing, in torrents
They fall & fall.
But Los saw the Female & pitied.
He embrac'd her; she wept; she refus'd.
in perverse and cruel delight
She fled from his arms, yet he follow'd.

(19:10-13)

But Los saw the Female & pitied
He embrac'd her, she wept, she refus'd
In perverse and cruel delight
She fled from his arms, yet he followed

In both these cases Blake's intentions are clear. The misunderstanding of Blake's point of emphasis for an end-stop in plate 4 forces "Bound" to do service as a passive participle, a wholly unnecessary barbarism. The second case speaks for itself; it is a model of the success often attained by Blake's peculiar ideas on punctuation. The intruded stoppage obliterates the rapid succession of interdependent actions and the double import of line 12.

If the Eassons were consistent in regularizing Blake's punctuation, one might overlook cases where they deliberately remove it. But they retain and dismiss seemingly at will. These two examples, for instance, violate Blake's apparent intentions, and one is simply puzzled to understand what would motivate or justify such unsupported emendations.

In harrowing fear rolling round,
His nervous brain shot branches
Round the branches of his heart
On high into two little orbs;
And fixed in two little caves,
Hiding carefully from the wind,
His Eyes beheld the deep. (13:10-16)

In harrowing fear rolling round;
His nervous brain shot branches
Round the branches of his heart.
On high into two little orbs
And fixed in two little caves
Hiding carefully from the wind,
His Eyes beheld the deep,

And his world teem'd vast enormities
Fright'ning, faithless, fawning.
Portions of life, similitudes
Of a foot, or a hand, or a head
Or a heart, or an eye, they swam, mischevous
Dread terrors, delighting in blood. (22:2-7)

And his world teem'd vast enormities
Frightening; faithless; fawning
Portions of life; similitudes
Of a foot, or a hand, or a head
Or a heart, or an eye, they swam, mischevous
Dread terrors! delighting in blood

Similarly, the end-stop of 15:53-54 is wrongly placed, as the parallel repetition of 18:5 surely indicates. Sometimes, such rhetorical leads are all that Blake offers a reader or editor, and they cannot be disregarded. But sometimes, too, emendation cannot be avoided. Faced with a shambles, does it make sense to create another? I quote the original first, then the Eassons' version:

Shudd'ring, the Eternal Prophet smote
With a stroke, from his north to south region
The bellows & hammer are silent now
A nerveless silence, his prophetic voice
Siez'd; a cold solitude & dark void
The Eternal Prophet & Urizen clos'd

Shudd'ring, the Eternal Prophet smote
With a stroke, from his north to south region.
The bellows & hammer are silent now,
A nerveless silence his prophetic voice
Siez'd, a cold Solitude & dark void.
The Eternal Prophet & Urizen clos'd. (15:35-41)

Adding two periods and reducing a semicolon to the force of a comma do not bring sense to the passage. But if one reads Blake's punctuation as indicative of stress and also gives due force to line-endings, one might come up with something like the dark, dramatic force that Hazard Adams realizes for his Rinehart reading text:

Shudd'ring, the Eternal Prophet smote
With a stroke from his north to south region.
The bellows & hammer are silent now.
A nerveless silence his prophetic voice
Seized, a cold Solitude & dark void.
The Eternal Prophet & Urizen closed.

Finally, I cite a passage whose punctuation makes no sense at all: it could have only one source, the raising in the photographic print of a faint dot, accepted as such by most previous editors, into a full-fledged comma in plate 25, line 12. One supposes, then, that the inadequacies of reproduction have had their unfortunate effect on the text as well.

And where-ever he wander'd in sorrows
Upon the aged heavens,
A cold shadow follow'd behind him,
Like a spider's web, moist, cold, & dim,
Drawing out from his sorrowing soul
The dungeon-like heaven dividing,
Where ever the footsteps of Urizen
Walk'd over the cities in sorrow. (25:7-14)

If one transposes the comma of line 12 to follow "heaven" rather than "dividing," the passage makes perfect sense.

The passages cited here are striking representations of a list that could be extended considerably with more minor examples. One does not wish to be either uncharitable or excessively pedantic, but my own sense is that the list is too long to be dismissed with a shrug. Nor is its presence to be extenuated by arguing that, in critiquing it, the critic wants absolute fidelity in one place and emendation in another. If editors are to command authority, they must proceed from clear principles and with critical perception. These are not the hallmarks of this edition. Neither conservative nor loose in practice, the edition has a tendency to violate common sense and a distinct unwillingness to leave "well enough" alone.

The commentary exhibits the same penchant on a grand scale, and again one surmises that the purposes for which such a commentary exists have been
inadequately considered. Rather than establish a basic set of premises for reading *The Book of Urizen*, suggesting areas for exploration and leaving the reader to distinguish plain from swamp, the Eassons have attempted an exhaustive reading of the poem in thirty-five pages of print. To many it will perhaps appear as an exhausted misreading, for where the commentary might have been simply provocative of new possibilities for looking at the poem, it becomes rigidly dogmatic, riding its various theses into a lather.

For all their fulminations against Urizen, "The Adversary," and their enjoinders to their students to look within, the Eassons seem not to have recognized that it is all perfectly fine to cast him as the barrier to spiritual travel, whatever that is, but that, more to the point and closer to home, Urizen's spirit dominates this commentary. The primeval Priest is the first to ride a thesis, the creator of formulae that obliterate necessary distinctions in search of inflexible pattern, the regularizer who converts analogy into systematic identity, metaphor into doctrine. This commentary boasts the most thorough analysis yet attempted of the import of embryology for *The Book of Urizen*. As potentially significant as such an investigation might be, it is inappropriate here on two accounts. First, the proper home for such an elaboration is a learned journal: here, though there is considerable assumption of eighteenth-century scientific knowledge, there is not a single reference to substantiate it, and thus one has no solid terms by which to judge the accuracy or sensitivity of the application. Second, there is a crucial misunderstanding of the aims and limits of metaphor, which need have neither the factual truth, the consistency, the elaborateness, nor the scientific credibility of a treatise on gestation. *The Book of Urizen* is pummeled from all sides to accord with such a model. If contemporary physiology demands, as the editors say, that halfway through the nine-month period of human gestation the sensorium be developed, then halfway through this nine-chapter progression that must be seen to happen, "the brain case is produced in the fifth chapter; the soul appears in the sixth chapter. The soul, having been introduced, is enclosed within the sensorium in the seventh chapter, and the brain begins to function" (76). This seems disarmingly simple—until one looks at the appropriate texts; for this particular brain-case goes by the name of Enitharmon, and her son Orc is, by force of logic, the soul. Having begun the trial of a logical fallacy, the commentary must take it to its end. "When Orc, the soul, is formed, Urizen, hearing the voice of the child, awakens. Apparently, Blake believed the fetus quickened, came to life, began to move, in its seventh month" (79).

A second metaphorical elaboration, of "The Book of Error" and "The Book of Transformation," is even more elaborate, and, not having even the textual basis of embryology to go on, is correspondingly more eccentric. Picking up the witty self-referential comments on engraving in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, the Eassons pursue the extent to which *The Book of Urizen* is a critique of traditional bookmaking. And there is virtually no limit to it, though there is also not a single piece of evidence to support the supposition. Typesetting is seen as almost the ultimate in Urizenic behavior, with no greater sin than that of justifying margins. A quick glance at Calvinist justification is enough to witter Milton by metaphorical transfer, and we turn to the plates for pages of corroboration. *Past hae, ergo propter hae*: the fetal skeleton of plate 10 is the very type of the book; the trees to be found here and there in the plates represent books, inasmuch as trees have leaves; the preponderance of tailpiece designs surely indicates that "the foot of the artist/prophet is bruising the head of the typographer/serpent" (91); and a little in-depth inspection of the falling, serpent-bound trio of plate 7 reveals that the plate is actually about books, the spine of the central figure (who is, let us recall, facing us) coming in the center of the plate and the spectral faces between the figures being here called flayed skins, which are the materials for book-binding, the entire plate representing "Blake's visionary joke" (99) about royal folios.

I don't get it. The real joke is that such an extensive travesty of the rules of evidence and of logical development should be serious and that it should be accepted without question by a reader—or a press—on the grounds of "mad Blake." Students, with an unerring instinct for the outrageous and obscure, will be quoting this stuff to their teachers for decades, especially since much of the tone of the commentary is ostentatiously pitched down to a freshman level. Urizen "is incapable of meaningful communication . . . meaningful conversation" (69), just like Charley down the hall in the dormitory; but if Charley responds best to Daffy Duck, remember that *"The Book of Urizen* has . . . a seeming comic book clarity. However, while *Urizen* is comic, Blake intentionally compounds its comic clarity with prophetic obscurity" (88).

The Eassons, who are experienced journal editors, have ventured into editing Blake for the first time, and unquestionably they and their projects would have profited from experienced editorial oversight. Half of the commentary should have been suppressed, and a rigorous scrutiny—not that of Urizen, but of Los—applied to the whole. You do not advance scholarship or knowledge by indulging in high-school cant or culture, nor by placing the claims of perverse ingenuity above the formal demands of logic, nor by speculating wildly without a shred of support under the pretense of editorial authority. You do by such indulgences set a decidedly negative example for students, one that I would predict most educators would prefer not to have to counter.

It would have been good for the Eassons to have pondered the local application of the sentence with which they begin their long exposition of "The Book of Error": "According to Blake, the medium of the book is predisposed to generate error, though it is not necessary that the medium of the book cause error" (81). The fact of the matter is that this edition generates and dispenses a remarkable amount of error in each of its three divisions. It was not necessary that it do so, nor that any successors, if there are to be such in this series, should do so. There is commendable ambition in this series: the
opportunity to do lasting service to Blake studies is manifest. But there is a commensurate responsibility on the part of the editors, a responsibility to which in this volume they appear wholly unconscious. Reviewers, who in their professional existence prefer the dulcet tones of Palamabron to the hard judgments of Rintrah, nonetheless must assume their responsibility—with the hope that both editors and reviewers, the next time around, will discover the States that please both them and the Blake community.


The purpose of this study, Jackson says in his introductory chapter, is "to propose yet another approach to the complicated subject of English poetry and criticism in the later years of the eighteenth century, my inquiry guided by sustained reference to the informing theme of the probable and the marvelous" (p. 3). At the beginning of his concluding chapter, he suggests that the usefulness of the work lies not "in the way of discrete analysis," of which there is a considerable amount but for the most part not unfamiliar to students of the period, but rather "within the area of general interpretation" (p. 169). The interpretation he offers is historical, laying out a kind of map of the changes occurring not only in the ways in which poems were made and responded to but in assumptions about the arts, human nature, and the relation between the ideal and the real. The changes are focused in two revolutions, the first in the middle and the second at the end of the eighteenth century.

The contours of Jackson's map can be clarified by comparing it with that presented by the students of "pre-romanticism" seventy or eighty years ago, who covered the same time-span and the same critics and poets. Beers, Phelps, Gosse, Saintsbury, and others of that school were like Jackson in seeing the mid-century writers as "intentionally and radically disruptive of the complex equilibrium maintained by the major late seventeenth-and early eighteenth-century writers" (p. 15)—as in revolt against what Saintsbury called the "neo-classic creed" and Jackson "neoclassical restraint" (p. 30) or "Augustan humanism" (p. 62). They differ from him in their late-nineteenth-century assumption, tacit but unshakable, that the Romantics had discovered the true nature of poetry and in their contention that Collins, Gray, the Wartons, Hurd, and other contemporaries had at least partially glimpsed the same truth and striven to follow it; as Gosse quaintly remarked, they were "bicyclist scouts who prophesied of an advance that was nearly fifty years delayed." Jackson is much too sophisticated to make the first assumption, and he finds much more difference than resemblance between the mid-century poets and the Romantics. In his view, the revolution of Blake and Wordsworth was made necessary by "a mid-century poetic of such drastic limitations that it offered the poet no specifically contemporary act of mind and no imitative models other than the extrapolated sublimities of past poets" (p. 80; cf. 87, 144, 180-81, etc.), and the reform was directed at least as
much against that poetic and the art it produced as it was against Dryden, Pope, and Swift. If anything important was shared by the two revolutions, it was a desire to restore passion to poetry, but they differed radically on the nature of passion and the means by which it could be realized poetically.

Jackson argues for a historical continuity from Shakespeare, Spenser, and Milton through the eighteenth century to Blake and Wordsworth, but in a curious way most of the causal connections seem to lie in the kind of influence that Harold Bloom has called "creative misprision." Each generation made its own selection from and interpretation of its predecessors. Collins and Gray found inspiration and a model in Milton's minor works, especially L'Allegro and Il Penseroso, but were blind to the Christian and Platonic elements that were essential to Miltonic sublimity. As Irene Taylor, John Grant, and Kathleen Raine have previously observed, Blake's illustrations of Milton, Gray, Young, and Blair reveal the terms in which he preferred to read their poems, often contrary to their authors' intentions, reinterpreting and reorganizing "the latent potentialities of vision which Blake discerned within them" (p. 90; cf. 88, 89, 91). In his own poems he returned to the subject of Paradisus Lost and Paradise Regained, but he rewrote the Miltonic theme of innocence and experience, correcting what seemed to him the limitations and misconceptions of his great predecessor (pp. 112-14). Jackson does not make this kind of point about Wordsworth, however.

Since his interest is in historical continuity, it is understandable that Jackson should concentrate on the early works of the two Romantic poets whom he discusses, without attempting any comprehensive treatment of their total oeuvres. In the chapter on Blake (ch. 4) his main concern is with the Songs of Innocence and Experience, with some supporting evidence from the early, shorter prophetic works and a few references to the still earlier Poetical Sketches. On the side of general interpretation, Jackson's main contentions are that Blake built his revolution on that of the mid-century poets, inheriting the passions from them but mythologizing the gift and transforming it into the terms of his own vision; that the emergence of Romanticism is best accounted for by the confluence of mid-century passion with the dissenting religious tradition, heterodox Christianity; and that Blake's lifetime task was to reimage Milton's myth of innocence and experience (pp. 108-14). On the side of discrete analysis, as Jackson calls it, his readings are interesting but somewhat unorthodox. He thinks that E. O. Hirsch is misleading in recommending that the poems of Innocence should be read seriatim and as an autonomous whole, and Robert Greckner mistaken in claiming that the meaning of Blake's symbols is accretively established from occurrence to occurrence. In Jackson's less unitary view, the Songs of Innocence are not exclusively about innocence, although they unmethodically explore that state, and the various speakers see it in different perspectives. In "The Chimney Sweeper," for example, the speaker is a corrupt, rationalizing voice of experience which offers a hypocritical moral about "duty" at the end of the poem. The morality of "pity" in "Holy Thursday" is similarly corrupt, "the rigorous and stony-eyed truth of an abstract morality" (pp. 97-99). It would be interesting to see some responses to these readings.

In the chapter on Wordsworth (ch. 5) Jackson's evidence is primarily drawn from the Lyrical Ballads and Poems in Two Volumes, 1798-1807, though with full awareness of the Prelude and Excursion. The argument is more diffuse than that of the Blake chapter, almost half of it being a prolegomenon (pp. 123-44) on the mid-century poets, with a few pages on Coleridge; much of this background material repeats points already made in chapters 2 and 3, and its pertinence to Wordsworth is not always clear. Although Wordsworth had apparently not read Blake until 1807, after the publication of Poems in Two Volumes, Jackson finds the poems in that work to be commonly concerned with innocence and experience as states of the soul. "To a Butterfly," "The Green Linnet," "To a Young Lady," "The Sparrow's Nest," Written in March," and "To the Cuckoo" are all songs of innocence, while "The Small Celandine" and "A Complaint" describe the contrary state. Wordsworth's conception of the fall from innocence to experience is different from Blake's, according to Jackson, since the latter recognizes it as not only inevitable but productive of good through the prophetic imagination and the mental warfare it generates, while Wordsworth "seeks ways to minimize its reality, to limit and curtail its effects by strategies that begin with recovery and lead to transcendence" (p. 156). Jackson supports this interpretation by extended exegeses of the Lucy poems, "Resolution and Independence," and the "Immortality" ode. In this major phase of his career, Jackson concludes, Wordsworth "has recreated an image of human nature both probable and marvelous, the fusion of the ordinary and the sublime within the permanent image of man" (p. 168).

If I have any serious reservations about this well-written and challenging study, they arise from two distortions, as they seem to me, which he shares with the old-fashioned students of pre-romanticism. The first is to exaggerate greatly the revolutionary thrust of mid-century critics, as when he asserts that their position on the relation between the probable and the marvelous was "hardly tempered at all by moderate neoclassic principles" (p. 26). Hurd sounded radical to Beers and Phelps when he defended Gothic elements in Renaissance epic poems, but he did so in terms of imitation, nature, the rules, and poetic effects proportioned to the kinds. In spite of his belief that the chief nerves of genuine poetry are the sublime and the pathetic, so that Eloisa to Abelard and the Sigg to an Unfortunate Lady are superior to Pope's satires and moral epistles, Joseph Warton still operates within the traditional framework summed up in Dryden's definition, "just and lively images of human nature" and Johnson's "just representations of general nature." The Time-Spirit may have been carrying Warton along, as Saintsbury said, but it did not sweep him far out to sea.

The fundamental error of the Beers-Phelps school was to apply nineteenth-century categories and criteria in interpreting the thought and art of the mid-eighteenth century. In my opinion, Jackson
distorts Blake and Wordsworth by a similar but converse anachronism, interpreting them through the theme of the probable and the marvelous, an issue and a terminology that belong to a different, earlier realm of thought and discourse. The resulting account, which he describes as "no distortion of literary history"—"not a historian's invention but a discovery"—has some prima facie descriptive plausibility as applied to Wordsworth, since he avowedly attempted in the _Lyrical Ballads_ to present ordinary things to the mind in an unusual aspect, throwing a certain coloring of imagination over incidents and situations from common life (Preface of 1800). He can even say, in a letter defending _Peter Bell_, that the action of the imagination does not require supernatural agency but may be called forth "by incidents within the compass of poetic probability" (quoted by Jackson, p. 146). But neither he nor Blake thought habitually or systematically in terms of such an opposition; it is drawn from a radically different intellectual context and is alien to their new ways of conceiving man, God, nature, and art. If we may adopt M. H. Abrams's fruitful contrast, the notion of a mean or balance between the probable and the marvelous belongs to the aesthetics of the mirror, not to the Romantic poetic of the lamp.

THE CIRCLE WITHOUT A CENTER

Reviewed by G. E. Bentley, Jr.

Joseph Johnson was a major publisher, a friend of Henry Fuseli and William Godwin, patron of William Cowper and Mary Wollstonecraft and William Blake, publisher of Erasmus Darwin and William Wordsworth, of S. T. Coleridge and Joseph Priestley, of Tom Paine and Horne Tooke, of Humphrey Davy and T. R. Malthus, of Maria Edgeworth and William Beckford. The most advanced poets, political, medical, and religious writers, and scientists of the last quarter of the eighteenth century in London were his authors, his customers, and his friends. Any work seriously concerned with such authors or such books must deal with Joseph Johnson and his publishing house. And until Dr. Gerald Tyson published _Joseph Johnson: A Liberal Publisher_ in May 1979, very little was known of either.

A symptom of the neglect of Johnson is the fact that Joseph Aikin's obituary of him in _The Gentleman's Magazine_ in 1809 "found its way unchanged into the _Dictionary of National Biography_" ninety years later (pp. 215, 217). There have been a few articles about him in the last decade and a half, by Tyson, Phyllis Mann, Jane Smyser, Paul Zall, and especially Leslie Chard, but previous to this there...
was little in print about Johnson beyond what Gilchrist published in his biography of Blake in 1863.

To tell the truth, there is still not much known about Joseph Johnson as an individual, for clearly he was a genial but self-effacing man. He did not write books himself, very little of his correspondence has been traced, and his contemporaries did not write much about him. This book is not so much about Joseph Johnson as it is about his publishing house, or rather about the books he published and his relationships with their authors. It is a topological paradox, a circle without a center. Of the books Johnson published, what contemporaries thought of them, Johnson's generosity to their authors, we learn a good deal. But of the man who focused and fostered so much of this activity, we still know surprisingly little.

This is not for lack of energy or thoroughness on Dr. Tyson's part. He has used an impressive range of original sources, from reviews of the most important books Johnson published to manuscript diaries of their authors, and he has consulted manuscripts in Guildhall Library, Stationers' Hall, the Public Record Office, Houghton Library, Bodley, Dr. Williams' Library, Manchester Public Library, and the Library of Congress, as well, of course, as the most important books Johnson published. We must reconcile ourselves to knowing little of Joseph Johnson the man, for if Dr. Tyson has not found such information it is not likely to survive. And in any case, even though Fuseli lived with Johnson for eight years and Mary Wollstonecraft treated him as father, brother, and priest, his chief importance is as a publisher and a patron of authors. In these roles we see him in considerable detail.

Of his life outside publishing, there are comparatively few facts. Among the more intriguing are that he was apprenticed in 1754 for a fee of £63 to the Musicians' Guild (p. 6), not to the Stationers' Company, that he was a stout Unitarian and numbered many Unitarians among his authors, and that the epitaph on his tombstone was composed by Fuseli (p. 215).

His generosity and hospitality were instinctive to the man and were enormously important in attracting and securing authors to him. In 1839 William West wrote:

Under his roof were, perhaps, as much genius, taste, and talent combined among the distinguished writers who assembled at his weekly literary parties, as at any house in the kingdom. . . . Mr. Johnson's business was for some time conducted by a person of the name of Redman, who had, I believe, originally followed the profession of a schoolmaster, and retained the cross habits and manners of the pedagogue. . . . Mr. Johnson's business was for some time conducted by a person of the name of Redman, who had, I believe, originally followed the profession of a schoolmaster, and retained the cross habits and manners of the pedagogue. . . .

Cowper wrote that "his behavior to me has been so liberal, that I can refuse him nothing," and when Johnson corrected the poetry of The Task Cowper was profoundly grateful:

as often as I could, I paid all possible respect to his animadversions. . . . I do not know where I could have found a bookseller who could have pointed out to me my defects with more discernment. . . .

(William Hayley, Life of . . . William Cowper, 1804, III, 134)

Coleridge wrote that "purely out of affection conceived for me, & as part of anything I might do for him, [Johnson] gave me an order . . . for 30 pound" (p. 173). And James Hurdis complained ruefully:

I have sometimes gone to town with the determination of playing the tyrant [with my bookseller], but that good-humoured face of Johnson's, with a candid shake of the hand, & how d'ye do Sir, I dine at three, always disarms me of my resolution, & I leave his house without speaking a single dagger.

The facts about Johnson as a radical are particularly well handled. Johnson was not only a publisher of radicals such as Tom Paine and Horne Tooke, but he was active privately in radical causes as well. For instance, he contributed £2.11.0 for boots for the French Army in 1792 (p. 155), at a time when official England was mobilizing its resources for war with France. Dr. Tyson has found the documents in the Public Record Office concerning Johnson's trial for sedition under the gag laws, and he quotes Johnson's modest description of himself there:

this Deponent further saith that his connections have been with respectable and scientific writers and his publications generally of a moral, philosophical, and medical nature, many of which as this Deponent is informed are an honour to his Country.

(p. 160)

Such has been the verdict of history, but a packed jury found him guilty of selling a radical book, and he was sentenced to six months in prison. During his incarceration, his business was carried on, doubtless to the Government's chagrin, but, as William Gifford exulted in the Anti-Jacobin Review, the objects of our immediate attacks, the Analytical Reviews [published by Joseph Johnson], has received its death-blow, and we have more reason to congratulate ourselves upon the share which we have had in producing its dissolution, than it would be expedient here to unfold.
As Dr. Tyson remarks, The Anti-Jacobin Review was a treasury journal (p. 166).

Joseph Johnson's name appears on several thousand imprints. About half of these were pamphlets, and more than half of the total were reprints. About a quarter of the titles were anonymous, mostly religious and political works, and the largest single category was religion. Johnson published comparatively little fiction, and most of the fiction he did produce was propagandistic. (Dr. Tyson does not mention Johnson's important relationship with Charlotte Smith as publisher of her novels.) The most important lack in the book is a bibliography, or even a list, of Johnson's publications. Clearly such a list would have been enormous and would have quite altered the character of the book, but without details of either publisher or publications the reader often feels himself to be in a twilight land, seeing uncertainly in the half-light and unable to distinguish for himself the woods from the trees. We may hope that Dr. Tyson will publish the list of Johnson's publications which, according to his publisher's blurb, he has already collected. Only then will we be able to place this book in a proper context.

It should also be recognized that there are few technical details here about Johnson's publishing house. There is no list of the printers he used, cost analyses, description of his house style, account of the paper in the books, the mode of issue (stitched, in parts, by subscription, etc.), or the publishers with whom he joined in partnership or in congeries. This is a publishing history in the perfectly legitimate old-fashioned sense of an account of patronage and friendship and how they affected literary substance. Joseph Johnson: A Liberal Publisher is a worthy publication of modest pretensions and dimensions, and careful scholars concerned with the last quarter of the eighteenth century will long be indebted to Dr. Tyson's devoted labors. We are unlikely to have a more comprehensive account of Johnson's circle, and that circle was of major importance in the political, religious, medical, intellectual, and poetic life of his time. But a circle without a center is a ring, and in this book it is the ring which is important. And doubtless this is as Joseph Johnson would have wished. A publisher lives through his publications and his authors, and it is astonishing how many of Johnson's authors are considered, in 1800 and in 1980, to be of major importance. It is through this ring of bright authors that Johnson lives today.

1 Despite this admirable research, a good deal of the information in the book, particularly about Johnson's authors, still derives from The Dictionary of National Biography. It might profitably have been extended by reference to London directories, to Ian Maxted's The London Book Trade 1776-1800 (1977), and to voting records of the time.


William Blake's Writings is the natural yet transcendent culmination of the monumental trilogy which Professor Bentley has been constructing for us since he began his work on Blake some twenty-five years ago. As the capstone to a library cromlech otherwise comprised of Blake Records (1969) and Blake Books (1977), it inevitably participates a good deal in the essential matter of the double pillars which support it, and, as Bentley suggests, is meant to be supplemented by them when economies of time, space, and editorial policy curtail bibliographical description and certain annotative and referential materials. The editor's primary purpose here has been to "present Blake's writings in a form as close to his originals as type will permit." Volume I contains the engraved and etched writings, with all (or nearly all) significant illuminations reproduced in black and white. Volume II contains all writings in conventional typography and in manuscript, including the letters and marginalia. The Introduction includes a brief account of previous important editions, statements of purpose and editorial methods, and is followed by comparably brief accounts of the printing and coloring of the illuminated works. Typically, the Bibliographical Notes for each illuminated work provide information about date, publication, coloring, catchwords, order, significant variants, errata, and copytext, with ad hoc notices of running heads, designs, and plate sizes, as they seem necessary or helpful. The Notes for the writings in conventional typography and in manuscript vary considerably according to the demands of the text described, but generally include location, watermark, leafsize, date, and description, with specific notice as needed of copytext, page and line numbering, design, running heads, full title page, collation, press figures, catchwords, corrections, ornaments, stab-holes, and order, while certain works are provided with selectively expansive commentary: Vala's dating, description, and variant handwriting; the Notebook's designs, description, and location. Supplementary materials include a chronologically arranged table of contents which locates both texts and corresponding bibliographical notes, a list and description of lost works, a list of the source and location of each plate reproduced, an alphabetized list of present-day locations of contemporary copies of Blake's writings, tables of ambiguously broken words, of repeated lines and designs, along with keys (maps) to Blake's London, Britain, and Holy Land, and a preface containing about sixty addenda and corrigenda, which selectively update through 1967 a text that went to press in 1971 and achieved its galleys-definition in 1974.

In the body of the text each illuminated work is provided with brief footnotes describing the design, variants in different copies (repeated in the Notes), as well as cross references, verbal changes, and identifications of people and places (usually historical or biblical). As a rule, the design descriptions are physically representative and conservative rather than symbolic and expansive, while the informational notes are relatively lean when compared with, say, those in the Longman Complete Poems. Volume II does not categorize its notes in the same way, but it provides, when apt, essentially the same kind of information. With a few exceptions, the design reproductions compare favorably with those in The Illuminated Blake, though one may feel Bentley has omitted some plates significant enough for reproduction, and one may lament the fact that it was apparently necessary on
occasion to divide the top and bottom designs on a given plate by placing them on successive pages. While the notes make no attempt at variorum inclusiveness by providing a history of editorial readings and misreadings, they do often (though perhaps not often enough) retail the textual recoveries and alternative readings of David Erdman, at times with a hint or statement that the Erdman eye has seen what Bentley does not believe is strictly there to be seen.

While there is still some disagreement about a very small number of substantive readings in Blake's illuminated works, the fact that for virtually all their extant impressions there was in the beginning only one (lost) archetypal source—the original copperplates—means that, except for a few notorious scratchings out and maskings over and even fewer verbal alterations, there is little question about the words of Blake's text from copy to copy, nor is there likely to be, even when a substantive (e.g., The's "Mme" and "o'erfired") balks all effort at extracting any definitive sense from it. Perhaps Bentley or Erdman or another keen-sighted adept in Blake and in mechanical aids to perception will recover an erasure here and a blot-out there—or perhaps rectify a word or two on the basis of relevant collations—but diminishing returns from this much-cleaned field may hardly seem to repay the scholarly effort at work in it.

The continuing uneasiness which must afflict the conscientious editor as he moves from impression to impression of a given copperplate will most likely be inspired by the punctuation. At first glance, several reproductions from a single archetype may seem to provide an editor with the maximum opportunity for a punctilious fidelity to an author's text but, in this instance, wind up providing him with a minimum temptation to take advantage of it. What abstractly considered seems to represent an ideal combination of author, illustrator, printer, and publisher—a veritable fourfold vision of a canon from its conceptual origin in Eden to its empirical dissemination in Ulro—disorganizes into a mere chaos of variable signs and inferences, chance associations, and contextual guesswork which not only makes a given editor (and his readers) the victim of the impression he chooses to rely on but threatens besides to invite the spectre of deconstructionism into the very sanctum of bibliographical objectivity by making every editor his own copytext, at least insofar as it matters what impression he decides to call his copytext. While times and expectations have changed since Geoffrey Keynes could tell us that he was redeeming Blake's text from the multitudinous accretions of error piled on it by previous editors in providing a thoroughly accurate text which, in effect, ignores Blake's pointing, it is not yet certain that times and expectations have therefore changed for the discernible better. How far beyond varying kinds and degrees of editorial ignorance have we moved, and can we move, when we find both Erdman and Bentley in fundamental agreement about one major premise at least—that there is no telling from copy to copy whether a given point at a given place in a given work by Blake is a comma or period, or, by logical extension, a semicolon or a colon?

The fact that the problem is compounded beyond a given editor's choice of copytext may be briefly highlighted by noting the different pointing inferred from the unique copy of The Book of Los by Erdman (E) in his "diplomatic" text (1965) and by Bentley (B) in this present "reconstructable" one. That is, E reproduces the pointing (or lack of it) as he reads it from the impression(s) he uses; B provides italics and half-brackets to indicate where he departs from the pointing in his copytext. (I assume throughout that B relies on his copytext even in accidental errors unless he tells us otherwise.) Ideally—or perhaps as a matter of course—we would expect that such two editors exercising their eyesight on a single mirror image of the archetypal copper would evidence a fairly high degree of correlation when their points were juxtaposed and added up. In fact, the editors disagree about nearly one third of the pointings possible in the three relevant plates. What may we infer? First of all, that Blake's pointing is often so ambiguous in its appearance that there is no defining it except arbitrarily. Consequently, we may suppose that the editors tend to read these ambiguous points differently, for whatever subjective, objective, or contextual reasons. There is of course the possibility that one editor sees more keenly than another, but insofar as that may be an applicable criterion, it probably does not generally enter into differing inferences about punctuation marks. The relative wobbling perhaps more than he should have in the direction of "usual expectation" when grooming Blake's dots and digs to the periods and commas of a letterpress edition. B, on the other hand, may save himself (and his readers) from a temptation to so wobble by his use of italics and semi-brackets, which allow him to print a functional reading text for a modern audience while still preserving for the scholar the underlying text as B thinks Blake etched it and which the scholar can then reconstruct at his need and leisure. The happy result may then be that B here provides a more accessible diplomatic text because he is not beguiled by his concern for modern expectations into departing from a computer-eyed rigor exercised on behalf of a consistent determination of a given appearance of a Blakean point, at least within the confines of a given context. That is the way it might have been. It does not really work out that neatly in practice, nor is there any unassailable argument in favor of its doing so.

To return to The Book of Los, we may first note in passing that here (as often elsewhere) substantive disagreements between B and E can be definitively arbitrated in E's favor: E's "Not" (10), "organs" (113), "the floods" (122), "those" (146) are right, B's readings wrong. Because the copy rates in the upper percentiles among Blake impressions for its finely etched clarity, a reviewer may take advantage of the invitation or challenge provided by the numerous pointing disagreements between B and E by further, if not definitive, arbitratation, as a way
into more circumstantially focusing on one or more of the sources of those disagreements. As I see them, E's points are preferable in 11, 9, 40, 50 (after "not"), 62 (after "duration"). 83 ("the"), 105, 109, 125, 151, but in another twenty-odd instances of disagreement B seems to me to have read the points as Blake made them—e.g., 11, 18, 20, 58, 65, 69, 73, 112, 132, 175. At times, even in this relatively clear impression, the pointing may be seen as either B or E sees it (e.g., 80, 164, 171); at times they may both seem wrong (e.g., 117 a semicolon or colon, 123 a period). On balance, B's punctuation looks most like what appears in the unique copy more often than E's does, partly because B more often allows us to have or reconstruct the dot Blake seems to have had whereas E tends to opt for the commas he and his anticipated readers may feel more comfortable with, though this tendency is not so marked here as it is elsewhere. To what extent this evaluation applies to other works will be partly indicated by what I say later, but it should be noted that the potential "copytexts" multiply, so do the variant apparitions of commas and dots that dance before one's eyes in the same place in different copies. Given the high incidence of discrepant appearances of a given point in different impressions from the same copperplate, it may well be that a second copy of The Book of Los could have sanctioned more of E's commas and fewer of B's dots than the unique copy warrants. Lo, what should an editor do? The answer may seem to be—whatever he wants.

Both B and E remind us, in their degree, that to supply punctuation is to change it—and of course to change it is to change it. But if it's not a clear or consensus case that the mark Blake etched is a comma or a period (as we may finally be obliged to call the indubitable dot, even where it is fairly clear that Blake did not use it that way), how can we be at all sure we are not changing his punctuation with every decision we make? Even in supplying bracketed pointings an editor is often the brink of a misleading assumption simply because he is trying, however tentatively, to suggest a needed relationship (according to modern needs, that is) which may well have nothing at all to do with Blake's syntactical flow (or blockage), and, who knows, may actually interfere with a submerged rhetorical significance which a given reader might, if unaided, apprehend.

A related problem which may or must worry the editor and later occur to the reader is that it is not at all clear that Blake was himself typically concerned whether his etching tool discriminated a given point as a comma or a period—whether in fact he distinguished between them either by themselves or as bases for a semicolon or colon (or exclamation). What does one finally make of those series and catalogs of epithets and names wherein half the marks are well-rounded dots and half are stabbed out in the general direction of a comma tail? Or how does one respond to a comparable series of parallel phrases or clauses which initially separate their components with a neat colon that evolves from point to point into a full-fledged exclamation mark at series end? It may be that we are being so presented with a progressive revelation of Blake's growing emotional involvement with his text and tool—something in the manner of Henry Moore's sculpting into his stone until the sky broke through—so that we might engage all the more vitally in the immediacy of the poet's creative act. Perhaps. On the merely mechanical side, one may conjecture that not only does a clearly imprinted comma in a given "best" or consensus copytext look like a period in a few seemingly less preferable impressions but also that it might have been made in the shape of a period in the original copper. Peripheral hindrances to an accurate sighting on Blake's points appear in some impressions as stray splatter, wash smudges, designing bits of vine, chaff, or pestilential blight, which, depending on where they occur, could as well be dots and commas.

As noted, B's principles allow him to supply suggested punctuation as he feels it desirable. More specifically, he supplies points where Blake had none at all. He supplies alternatives to Blake's ubiquitous dot as he deems necessary. Besides the comparative virtues of this method as already noted, another blessing is that intrusive signs of editorial emendation are relatively minimal. But there are two main problems with the method. The first, a side effect of the virtue just noted, is that to stop other than dots (or periods) will at times cry out with equal claim for ad hoc editorial atrocity. E.g., the interruptive semicolon in which Blake will occasionally plant between a subject and verb or between a verb and its object. The second and more fundamental problem deserves iteration: if one does not know whether a given point is a comma or a period, how can he arbitrate his italics and semi-brackets into place with any comfort? He must decide whether the best text, as he sees it, or the consensus text, as he arrives at it, provides before we agree, plate by plate and line by line, that an editor has exercised his judgment in such matters to, and perhaps beyond the limit of the possible when he prefers copy 0's exclamation mark to copy P's colon. How does one decide whether the best text, as he sees it, or the consensus text, as he arrives at it, provides him with the period he may change to a comma or with the comma he cannot change to a period? Or can one definitively wobble in such cases? And even if we agree that, roughly speaking, the latest and least colored of many impressions (assuming that that is an ascertainable choice) provides the best overall guide to accident as well as to substance, may we be sure that adherence to it in a given instance is not more the result of inertia than of requisite coattail? Or, what may be worse, a perfunctory adherence to a principle of copytext selection which cannot really apply to Blake's methods of production
might be that he has made the best use of that
development. It is not so clear as it may in a number of clear instances be much less than
the result. Given the conditions of
publication, couldn't it be that an assumed best text
and dissemination? Given the conditions of
authority, it may well seem that a species of eclectic
technique is the only way to go, however arduous a
task in collation it may be for the editor and however
suspect the result may seem to the bibliographical
fundamentalist. B has had the unique opportunity,
as he tells us, of inspecting all of the extant copies
of the illuminated works. It is not so clear as it
might be that he has made the best use of that
opportunity from plate to plate and from line to
line.

In order for me to make the best use of the
space available, I'd like to pin-point specific
problems about pointing, as perceived and supplied
by B, which will as well suggest more comprehensive
problems of editorial principles and copytext. As
a general rule, these specifics are representative
of a host of others I've accumulated, but I should
note that I am mainly concerned with pointing out
grounds for further editorial surmise rather than
with pointing an invidious finger at the bulk of
B's volumes. Let my overall appreciation of this
quite handsome and painstakingly compiled edition
be lost in the shuffle of my sometimes captious
highlights and comments, I should note at the outset
my comparative estimate of its worth: it is on
easily interpreted abbreviations for Blake's works.

MIH 8:34 "The rat, the mouse, the fox, the
rabbit; watch the roots. / The lion, the tiger, the
horse., the elephant, watch the fruits." B's
principles allow him to do nothing with the inter-
ruptive semicolon in 1.1 but in 1.2 allow him to
remove the dot he sees before each subject, including
the one separating the parallel "watch" predicate
from its most immediate subject, "elephant." The
comma he supplies could have been eliminated
altogether according to his principles and modern
practice, though in so mediating extremes as he
does he perhaps comes closer to what may be an
implicit Blakean and/or rhetorical norm at this
point. Of course "normative" punctuation, when
aligned with one of B's principles, could also have
prescribed here the semicolon before "watches"
retained above as having more contextual authority,
but it would have been as bothersome to the modern
reader to so supply it as is the preceding semicolon
which is allowed to stand. E maintains his diplo-
matic credentials here (and keeps his readers
comfortable) by seeing B's dots as commas. Without
moving farther afield, one may note comparable
interruptive semicolons which must be retained in
6:par. 24, "When I came home; on the abyss of the
five senses," and after "confirm'd" 12:par. 32, where
commas would probably have been provided if Blake
had used dots instead of semicolons. The apparent
assumption behind such a distinction in editorial
practice is that Blake himself distinguished between
semicolons and periods in parallel constructions.

MIH 7:par. 24 "with corroding fires [... he wrote
... . The semicolon here is supplied to
break up a relation that Blake's pointing suggests
he meant: "corroding fires" describes the process
by which the writing was done. Admittedly these are
judgment calls which the brackets make re-keuable.
Nonetheless, if left unquestioned they may work
their way into the reader's (or into another
editor's) mind to define a possible ambiguity that
should be kept intact. Again, both E and B supply
a semicolon after "shining," 18:par. 65 (which
becomes a period in the Erdman/Stevenson edition),
but the only point Blake supplies in this context is
the comma after "sun," which not only separates "sun"
from "black" and "shining" but also intimates
that these adjectives should adhere with no further break
to the "round it were fiery tracks" following, a
relation warranted by the blackness which later roles
through the deep after coming from between the black
and white spiders who are revolving on the tracks.
In effect, the comma which Blake did supply is
compromised by the semicolon he did not, and, again,
modernizing editors are led to accept a syntactical
relationship opposed to that which the poet not only
provided, but might have meant to provide. Compar-
able semicolons unquestionably resolving ambiguities
appear in Milton (M) a:22, where the semicolon after
"Cherubim" supposes that the "victims" are sacrificing
the Cherubim, a reading inferentially at cross
purposes, with M f:158-59 "who doth prepare the
Victims." The comma which Stevenson supplies after
"Sacrifice" seems preferable, if any point is needed.

M a:4's "Woven" is followed by a semicolon in
B, while E places a period before it. A likely
inference is that no punctuation would best aid the
reader when editors so sparing of their points and
changes differ so radically about the syntactical
relation of the word. Again, even tentative punctua-
tion becomes a species of editorializing a meaning
rather than aiding the reader towards a correct
understanding of Blake's intention here. M 20:56--
both B and E suppose an apostrophe after "Witnesses,"
a crucial supposition, particularly since it denies
Blake the comma he apparently had placed here for a
usual purpose in his practice: to introduce a quoted
(or implicitly quoted) statement. Taken with the
fact that Blake seldom provides possessive apo-
strophes, such practice suggests that the mark should
be read as the comma it looks like. It can then
introduce the lines following (57-58) which probably
should be read as the "cries of the Churches," with
or without the consequent punctuation which B perhaps
misleadingly supplies. Contiguity and an under-
standing of Blake's irony at this juncture will make
the reading of the point as a comma preferable to
some, even to more than some if the point is allowed
to stand as and where Blake made it.

M 3:25 and paraim--Seven times in six plates
Blake admonishes: "Mark well my words! they are of
your eternal salvation." There is almost no
correlation among the points used in the same place
from one reiteration to another. Nor does there
seem to be any editorial consistency in either
following or providing punctuation, with the most
notable instance of such discrepancy evident in the
two places where Blake does point the line the same
way by supplying nothing at all. But B puts an 
exclamation after "salvation" in a:20, a period after 
acceptable rationale can be found, except one based 
in the precedent found in Blake's own utter lack of 
concern for what points he used from context to 
context. But to that precedent there is no end of 
consequences, even to abolishing altogether the need 
for any attempt at providing such "aids" for the 
modern reader. What one does find highlighted here 
is the previously noted limits of B's bracketed 
punctuation. Since he can only provide points where 
there are either periods or no points at all, he 
must be content to let punctuation stand which he 
probably would not prefer if his editorial principles 
had not bound him to a species of syntactical incon-
sistency. Again, while it might have been better to 
have left the Notebook drafts as unpointed as Blake 
worth them, the points that are supplied should 
probably be those that Blake used (or B supplied) in 
the etched versions. E.g., if B reads an exclamation (it 
may well be a colon) after "Dream" (1) in the 
illuminated "The Angel," why not supply that 
inferable Blakean pointing in the draft rather than 
supply a comma? The likely answer may well suggest 
the bibliographical weakness of the principle behind 
it, or at least a descrepancy between the effect of 
following the principle and of following Blake. The 
principle is to aid the modern reader according to 
his expectations in a given context. But the given 
context for Blake ultimately fulfilled his expecta-
tion by providing his emphasis (or syntactical 
division), which the modern reader must (and really 
does) accommodate. However, in fairness, I should 
note that B generally does supply in the 
Notebook the pointing he either finds or provides in the 
etched texts of the Experience poems.

Theo, 88--"And says" is followed by a semicolon; 
in 93 "and said" is followed by a period. B can, 
according to his principles, bring the period into 
line with modern expectations by providing a colon 
to introduce what was said in 93, though he cannot 
do that in 1. 88 because Blake has, with character-
istic inconsistency, introduced a comparable location 
by a point other than a dot. The incongruity is 
apparent in contiguous contexts, but since "say"s 
and "said"s etc. are followed by all manner of 
pointing pasāmat, why bother cleaning up an occasional 
spot when the overall result only makes the mess 
left untouched all the more conspicuous? Milton 
3:21 reads "That cause at length mov'd Milton to 
this unexampled deed" in copy A, but, as B notes, 
was mended in the copper to "What cause" for copies 
B-D. B chooses to accept the original "That" over 
the copper emendation and therefore supplies a 
period at the end of the clause, where Blake had 
supplied nothing at all. E, whose preference in 
this instance seems preferable to B's, prefers the 
copper emendation and so concludes with a question 
mark (unbracketed). Even if "That" is preferred, 
it would seem that Blake's no-punctuation at line's 
end is better than anything supplied. Perhaps a 
comma would aid the reader a bit; the period supplied 
by B may obscure a connection between this line and 
what follows which Blake may care to intimate.

M 20:7, 9--The only discernible difference 
between the colon B reads in 7 and the semicolon he 
reads in 9 is that the first may seem to have a 
slightly smaller lower dot (though in B even that 
discrimination seems missing). As a general rule, B 
implicitly accepts the full colon (as the sign of the 
comma which makes a semicolon in such 
cases, though this principle, relative at best, 
seems variably defined and applied from context to 
context. Size differences between dots vary in 
different contexts. And the alternative criteria of 
rhetorical suggestiveness and modern desirability 
may tend to jaundice the eye somewhat so that it 
sees what best fits the apparent needs of a given 
syntax. On occasion, these inferable rules of thumb 
may contravene each other—e.g., the larger dot in 
11 (M 20) is at the top, but B nods in favor of a 
modern tendency to place a semicolon before anti-
thetical "but" clauses, perhaps gaining the slimmest 
warnant from a nearly discernible directional signal 
which may be protuding comma-wise from the base of 
the lower and smaller dot. Likewise, B (as E) has 
both context and modern usage on his side when he 
overlooks the relatively adequate comma potential 
observable even in copy B (more so in A) to read the 
lower dot as forming a colon after "remain," 20. 
Both B and E regularly accept a colon whose upper 
dot is a bit higher on the page, and so more widely 
separated from its mate below, as an implicit 
vertical forming an exclamation mark, when 
the context or their sense of Blake's rather expansive 
use of such tonal emphases aids at filling in the 
requisite part of the empty space between. E tends 
to opt for the lower and smaller dot than B when 
such options are available. Witness M 20:29, where 
E's exclaimations are reduced to the colons which B's 
copytext (and copy A as well) more nearly portray. 
Arguably, the "high colon" may indicate a faulty 
imprint which an editor is justified in filling in. 
Arguments the other way are obvious enough. 
Sometimes a slight teardrop effect becomes a vertical 
for exclamatory purposes when the context cries for 
one to modern ears—"Awake Albion awake!!" (M 22:5)— 
however unclear it is that Blake necessarily pre-
fereed exclamations to colons in such cases—either 
in practice or in theory. The apt Blakean comment 
on a good many of these and kindred inferences from 
the problematically intense inane may be found in 
the happily unpunctuated ambiguity of "what we hope 
we see." Another fairly common version of the 
exclamation mark is one in which the dot actually 
appears to be a comma. Most likely this simply means 
that Blake was negligent (though he does tell us 
that, however absurd he thinks nonsense about dots 
is, he knows how to make them), as he is in reverse 
when he provides periods rather than apostrophes to 
indicate elisions etc. M 12:27 provides an equivocal 
case in point, where a dot provides E with "earth's" 
and B with "earths," probably because the context 
does not require a possessive and the dot may there-
fore be supposed an accident. In impressions where 
there is evidence that the imprint of the point did 
not take, one may check other copies not only to see 
whether high colons are properly read as exclama-
tions because the upper dot has in fact expanded to a 
vertical but even to see whether a healthy, fully-
rounded dot in the best copies has not been partially 
eclipsed in its lower half so that a quarter-mooned 
comma tail appears in inferior impressions.

M 20:19--In keeping with a general policy of
not supplying any point at line's end when the next line begins with a coordinating conjunction, B has none after "permanent." E not only has a period here but provides it unbracketed, indicating that he had seen it in his copytext. Neither B nor E has anything here and yet if E's reading is not a mistake, then another copy may provide what these two do not. There are of course a great many such discrepancies. And this may not be the best of many possible examples but it should serve to indicate the need for establishing a best or consensus text, even to the given point, and letting the reader know what the evidence and the reasoning are that went into an editorial preference when (apparently) equally definitive alternatives are available. Without belaboring another kind of point which may be extraneous here, isn't the time at hand when computer calculations about Blake's multitudinous "copytexts" for a given work and the "vagaries" of his pointing can be made, collated, and inferred from, even if the end result is at best merely a higher degree of correlation between the point preferred by the editor and the one which Blake most likely etched?

"Earth's Answer," 7—the supplied semicolon arbitrates an ambiguity by associating "Cold and Hoar" with "I," when it may well belong to "den" or "Jealousy." In the Notebook draft, B supplies a comma, which may indicate some lessening assurance about what the adjectives are meant to qualify. "Does the sower?" (18) may suggest a heavy rhetorical emphasis by intruding a (rationally) redundant question mark in the midst of a sentence. It is possible—particularly if Blake etched his end-line points after he etched the text—that this rather poorly formed point was implicitly aborted when Blake realized he wanted it to go after "night" below.

M 22:36—B catches a dot after "Albion" which E misses; but E notes one after "Watch-Fiends," 40, which B misses or ignores. Always, there is the question of alternative copy texts which may justify opposed readings. The colon after "seems," M 26:45 is so clearly there in copies A and B that one is tempted to infer that another copytext, lacking the point, eliminated it from E's syntax.

M 27:54—The clear dot after "Month" is apparently read (by B—E sees a comma) as if it were over the "i" of "invulnerable" below. It is really too far up and to the right to do that service, given the available option. The clear dot (read as a comma by both B and E) after "Year" provides a parallel by way of confirmation. It would be tempting, though misleading, to suppose that Blake provided periods here, not elsewhere in the series, to suggest the elision of the verb. But Blake's pointing of any given series is a mixed bag of dots and commas throughout, with no apparent differentiating function, rhetorical or normative. (See, e.g., 27:33-34; 28:49.) In M 9:37 positioning suggests an opposition: inference about a dot's purpose. The period B reads after "Palambran" really (as E must infer) dots the first "i" of "Elynittria" in 38. The problem is (as the second "i" demonstrates) that Blake dots his i's with about as much consistency as he points his series.

VDA 134—B's copytext does not have the question mark he places after "lust"; it may, both in that and other copies, have the exclamation mark which E provides, but it looks most like what in context it may best be read as—a colon. In M 19:50 the barest hint of a question mark has allowed B and E to perceive it into place as the context may seem to need it, though a colon, an exclamation, or a semi-colon would be more the computer's view of the mark Blake made after "repentance." Often the best choice may well seem "None of the above," particularly when he has created an impossible hybrid by placing a comma under a vertical (VDA 187 provides a good example, visible even in The Illuminated Blake).

M 24:15—At times B seems to make the choice Blake should have made. As E notes, it is a semi-colon at line's end, but the context of colons which make up this catalogue of parallels seems to justify B against the strict demands of the point as Blake made it, however he meant it. And does Blake mean the distinctions his editors rightly note in such cases? In M 17:46-59 paavim, B and E often disagree on whether a point is a colon or an exclamation mark. Here, as generally, B is less likely to take advantage of a highly placed top dot or a slight projection from it towards the vertical, whereas E, who may after all be more sympathetic to the rhetorical demands of the sigla, is abundant with exclamations.

M 17:55—Given "A," E is preferable with a comma after "fibres," but "B" tends to justify B's period.

M 46:40—The apostrophe in "nam'd" which both B and E apparently saw is not really there in copies A or B, though these copies do show one over the "e" in "toned" (not recorded by B) in 11:47. Given the comparable accent to indicate a pronounced "ed" in "used," one may wonder whether Blake wanted the extra syllable pronounced where he did not so indicate. But a typical lack of consistency in such matters may be inferred from the "shudder'd" of M 12:33 and the "shudder'd" two lines later.

M 14:21—B and E agree in not seeing a comma after "everything," perhaps because it is partly obscured by the "E" of "Eternity" below, perhaps because it separates subject and verb. Such pointing could have its rhetorical purpose. More anomalous is the comma which E places after "loud," 14:45, but no copytext I've seen justifies it, nor does B confirm it.

M 22:61—An atypical example of B preferring the exclamation mark, E the period, in a context where they both felt some point should be supplied. M 10:24 is more typical, where the colon B seems properly to see and place after "Jehovah thunder'd above" becomes an exclamation for E. Four lines above E agrees with B in seeing a colon after the same location. While "Ecce signum" may be too often the cry of the blinkered textual fundamentalist, it may be at least an appropriate reminder now and then and leveled at an editor prone to reading the spaces between the dots where, in Blake, contexts elsewhere seeming to demand an exclamatory emphasis are low-keyed by a mere period or even an indifferent comma.

M 6:47—Both B and E read a comma here, probably because they would rather not break up the sentence
after "Truth," but a speculative reader straining to justify Blake's perhaps unjustifiable practice may support the clear period the poet put here by suggesting that its purpose is to establish a kind of apologetic parenthesis for "Truth" which a terminal point—particularly if it is understood as having no syntactical justification—may provide. The same inference may be applied to "Lie" in the line following. Admittedly such an inference will have a limited application and must be allowed even within such limits in the face of the conflicting and more easily demonstrable inference that Blake let his points fall into shape as arbitrarily as the chips from his copperplate defined them into dots or commas, colons or semicolons. In 27:49-51, 55-56, Blake demonstrates that he will, though rarely, place periods at line's end before the conjunction "And" when it introduces a clause. B, who does not typically supply points in such cases, changes all but one of these to semicolons. But, while this may provide some (really unnecessary) aid and comfort to the modern reader because it falls in more neatly with modern syntactical groupings, may it not for that very reason dissipate a rhetorical intention that Blake might have felt and conditioned Blake readers may infer? Again, I do not mean this as a criticism of B on principle—we can remove his italics and restore Blake's periods as we go—but I do suggest that where these changes or supplyings are not really necessary, where they arbitrate ambiguities better left to the reader's discriminatIon of relationships, or where they may lead a reader away from a rhetorical effect plausibly inferred, they represent a dubious editorial intrusion, because they do, however tentatively, represent an editorial authority. The crucial editorial judgment involved must decide whether suggested punctuation is not misleading punctuation.

VDA, 114, exemplifies the necessary contradiction often involved in trying to read Blake's points according to the way they look. The exclamation B and E read after "O Urizen" seems more a colon in the British Museum Print Room copies but would gain exclamation status (on the principle of the high colon) in copy E were it not that the required dot at the bottom appears as a perfectly tailed Blakean comma, much more to that point than the one which makes up (for B) the bottom half of a semicolon at the end of this line. One can argue on one hand that "O Urizen" is clearly exclamatory in its tonal suggestiveness, but one must also note that Blake will in comparable passages provide alternative forms of punctuation. Here, a contextual argument could be made for the colon, though, again, Blake could as well have used a semicolon in such a context, as B's copytext seems to indicate.

VDA, 122, suggests the infinite because utterly idiosyncratic rhetorical potential of Blake's pointing: "Does he who contemns poverty, and he who turns with abhorrence / From usury: feel the same passion or are they moved alike?" Had the colon been a period B likely would have removed it on principle. But one wonders—Could Blake have actually meant his colon here, as his dot elsewhere, to indicate a slow-down mark which would have emphasized the opposition he was setting up between the actions and passions of two quite different kinds of people? Of course here as often the point (whatever point) provides for the breathing pause the spoken lines may require. Insofar as Blake may be supposed to provide that kind of rhetorical aid, supplied and omitted pointings tend to withdraw it.

M 2, 11. 9-12 of the poem—"gold" is followed by a point with a big lower dot which elsewhere B would probably read as a comma (to make a semicolon), particularly since it projects a bit of comma tail as well. But since, as B sees it, all else is colon through here, he no doubt properly goes along with the drift of the context. Even the concluding exclamation (after "fire") is rhetorically apt (though perhaps no more than the three preceding it would be), but its top dot has little (if any) more tendency to a vertical than does the one after "unfold" above. Indeed E sees an exclamation in both places.

"On Anothers Sorrow," 27. Why supply a semicolon when the context demands, if anything, a period? But this seems another case of rhetorical and rational pointing working at cross purposes. The penultimate stanza here is meticulously effective and, one would like to hope, purposely pointed, whether one accepts B's periods or E's commas as Blake's points after the parallel "Think not"s of 29 and 31. It reads quite beautifully if the pauses of the original punctuation are observed and B's suggested omissions ignored. The last stanza contains a dot indicating a pause after "joy," which carries with it some of the weight on the exclamation after "O"—and then Blake rushes to the poem's end without a point to hinder him or the reader. The run-on passage is particularly effective after the slow and balanced cadence of the previous stanza. And so one may wish away the semicolon supplied to break up the flow in 34, particularly since the modern reader could get along without it, on other grounds, as easily as he does in comparable places where B does not provide a point.

M 23:20—Copy B has a clear dot after "where" which justifies B. In copy A there is nary a dot to be seen, which justifies E, who records none. Since there is also in copy B a dot below the dot transcribed by B we could assume that either we are in this copy presented with a fallen colon or, more likely, that both dots are inadvertent. In either case, the literalist of the text (copy B version) would seem obliged to note both dots as having justifiable reason for being there, or ignore both as kindred accidents. That they are likely accidents can be inferred—and this is the point—by appealing to other copies for arbitration. If the other copies supply the single dot, receive it with B; if not, ignore it with E—and with, I suppose, confirmation from our normative willingness to deny a point in a context where none is needed. (Note, however, that both copies A and B do provide a likely colon before "where," which E and B agree in ignoring.) In another view, one may find enough around enough in available copies to come up with a point which may seem better justified by modern expectations than that which exists (or does not exist) in an elected copy text. There may very well be in copy A the comma which makes a comforting appositive out of "Seat of Satan" (before "Seat") in M 24:45 and so E is
justified. But in copy B there is none, so B is justified in not transcribing it.

As already suggested, it will not always do to let the majority of impressions of a given poem stand as the workable consensus to abide by, since it is often clear that only the minority—perhaps only one—of the impressions have received the fully definitive stamp of Blake's copper or are free from obscuring coloration, splatters, encroaching tendrils etc., which will at times indeed seem to be just the point one may care to require in a given context. Even within the copy which seems on balance the best available a few points will be found that are less than definitive relative to their reproduction elsewhere. Out of a myriad of instances, one may note that a presumptive dot in the A and B copies of "Garden of Love," 3, after "midst" may tail off into a barely perceptive comma in copy I but evolves more clearly in copy N, which then confirms B here in his choice of a copytext rendition that better shows it as it no doubt was on the copper. Still, one cannot therefore abide in any given set of impressions merely because some or even most will provide less obscured and uncertain pointings, since often a given plate in a relatively superior copy will come a cropper for reasons which must be ascribed to the nature of Blake's reproductive process and techniques. One may suppose, for instance, that the many flyspecks surrounding and even filling in the gap between the colon after "regale" in "Little Vagabond," 6, required B to confirm the point by reference to a clearer copy than N. Indeed the extraneous mottles and dots on this impression at times make the words themselves nearly illegible (cf. 11. 5-9). Again, since there really is no such thing as a text whose reliability in matters of pointing is necessarily preferable to others extant, the editor must call his dots as he sees them with a counterbalancing pair of principles variably abetted by other considerations: on one hand, the consensus reading; on the other hand, the best text—even the best production of a single point in a given context, where that seems ascertainable.

The rhetorical license that Blake noted in the quite arbitrary pointings of the editions of Bacon, Swedenborg, and the Bible that he was familiar with could have served as precedent for the rationally frustrating uniqueness of his own practice. But, as often, he went beyond his precedents. It is, for instance, quite possible that he meant to imply a specific rhetorical emphasis when he placed a dot between subject and verb—"One thought, fills immensity." Should any letterpress edition even suggest our omitting it? Or note the effect of the dots as slowdown marks in "Cradle Song," 13-16:

Sweet moans. dovelike sighs.

Chase not slumber from thy eyes.

Sweet moans. sweeter smiles.

All the dovelike moans beguile.

This is the way B actually read the text (putting aside his italics etc.), and it is a good example of his providing the diplomatic version that E does not, because E is attracted to commas in most such cases, though his eye may indeed see more than his heart knows, as I'd think was likely the case here. There is generally a textual integrity in B's dottiness that may be preferred to E's well-meaning accommodation to a modern expectation for something less terminal than the dot or period implies for the modern reader. As already suggested, perhaps the best editorial expedient is to retain such dots with the reminder to the reader that in Blake they mean "slow"—sometimes "dead slow"—but hardly ever "stop period"; and that their recurrence in a given context after each word (as sometimes happens) merely means that that procession of words should be paced according to the measured emphasis that the poet's "cadences" thereby imply, whether the dots hint at a comma or keep their roundness unprojected. In "Cradle Song" an excellent comma after "mild," 7, could serve to call into question nearly all the others that a given editor might care to find elsewhere in this context. On the other side of the question, one may note that the dot after "eyes," 14, has as much claim to being a comma as others so designated by both B and E, here and elsewhere. But, since it may seem that every dot has a comma inside awaiting the editor who needs it, it is perhaps as well that editorial consensus compensate for editorial disagreement when the syntax in question is a matter of indifference, if it is here. In "Nurse's Song" (Inn.), the mark after "play," 7, and "play," 9, is the same, and could perhaps have led B to provide Blake with a consistency in commas or periods which he perhaps aimed at here, though consistency about such dots and tittles was not one of Blake's hobgoblins, as a collation of the following lines suggests:

And their sun does never shine.
And their fields are bleak and bare.
And their ways are fill'd with thorns.

(B sees no point here.)

It is eternal winter there.

("Holy Thursday," Exp. 9-12)

And I wept both night and day
And he wip'd my tears away
And I wept both day and night
And hid from him my hearts-delight

("The Angel," 5-9)

One may perhaps argue for different rhetorical intentions in the two passages, but the argument would have to gain most of its substance from the ingenuity of its advocate, since Blake himself seems blissfully innocent of weight and measure here and quite beyond the nets or needs of rationalization. Any discriminating rationale for the present arrangement of dots and no-dots could, if the pointing were reversed, find an aesthetic or rhetorical application for the reader intent on binding Blake to a contrary set of insights.

Besides those already noted, the following substantive and/or typographical errors should be corrected as indicated. M 27:14, for "or the Artist" read "or as the Artist"; M 1:3, for "Into Space" read "Into the Space"; M 31:2, for "the poem "Towards America: India rose up from his golden bed?; J 29:19, for "Sussex" read "Sussex"; J 39:25, for "Atonements" read "Atonement"; J 45:31, for "hand" read "hands"; J p. 524 should be renumbered;
J 77 (top of 588) for "Spirit & Truth" read "Spirit & in Truth"; J 96:34, for "rouze up: Eternal" read "rouze up: rouze up: Eternal"; VDA 6:66, for "yet their" read "yet are their"; VDA 6:73, for "and" read "&"; MH 5:par. 19, for "were cast" read "was cast"; MH 9:58, for "best water" read "the best water".

There are some other queries about substantives which may suggest a need for either change or further comment. M 25:53 is aptly read "The Thor" by B. Nor do I see any Blakean reason for not accepting "The" in this reference to Thor and Odin as opposed to the Gods of Priam and/or Apollo and Hercules. But since the reading has been seriously questioned by editors whose scrupulousness B praises, we should perhaps have a word noting their preference here. J 89:26 "flocks" is "Rocks" in E; again, a significant disagreement deserves a note, perhaps a justification of preference. Generally the alternatives "spake" and "spoke" are either used indiscriminately by Blake or they are all meant to be "spoke." A word or two of "one in Blake would not be amiss, since his "o" is very often 'look' like "a's when it is clear they cannot be. B generally does provide comments on E's recoveries from apparently blank spaces or illegible blots and scribbles—often cogently, given the evidence adduced, e.g., MH 5 par. 20 (on "the Devil"). Blake's caps are often hard to discriminate from his lower case initial letters—B and E often disagree about them—but when the context backs the look of the letter (consider "Stars" for B's "stars" in M 22:24) consistency is probably the best editorial policy, even if it is not often Blake's (the "spoke" so capped by B in M 23:43 seems much less deserving of the distinction). There is also much disagreement and perhaps some inconsistency in reading the expanded spaces Blake sometimes placed (purposely or not) between his lines. See, e.g., M 19:11, M 23:66, J 30:32, J 40:51. These are the kinds of errors and discords which an edition of this magnitude and complexity may seem inevitably to fall victim to. It could make one wish that highly significant and ideally definitive editions such as this one could receive the kind of widespread and critical reviewing in page proofs that they will as inevitably receive once the book has passed into the marketplace.

Manuscript disagreements and apparent errors are often more difficult to arbitrate because of the state of the mss., often chaotic, often palimpsestic in appearance. Notebook 49, 51 (10608), "ae" is probably "your." 51N has some erased lines at the top which E recovers and B discounts as illegible. The recovery seems reasonable, given the equipment and persistence we know E brings to such a task, and probably should have been noted for the reader's consideration. Both B and E read "Whitlors" for Keynes' "whitloes" on 61N (1039B). The OED lists no "whitlors" but it does note that "whitloe" (a variant of "whitlow") means a finger tumor, which is very likely what Blake is ascribing to the poor painters he is referring to. For comparable "-es" endings see the two "theres" on this page ("alludes" on 79N is still closer); nor did Blake typically make his "r" as this one would have to be (see "Booksellers" and "Dealers" below, 61N). Since "Whitlors" also appears in the Concordance, it may be that a typographical error was the original of this reading. E's "turnd on" seems preferable to B's "turned upon" 84N (1020B). Were it not that B's "night" of 67N (967B) looks very much like a definite "might" at the start of this poem, both its loops and context would make its reading preferable to E's. In 99N, E's "opened" seems preferable to B's "opend" (970B). In 103N, E's "whereere" ("Holy Thursday," 13-14) accommodates better to the number of cursive strokes available than does B's "wherever" (976), as it better accords with the metre and with the etched version. B's "flourishing" (105N, poem 40E), may be preferable to E's "flaming," but it looks to me more like "flowery" written over "flowering," with the "hair" following perhaps mended from "head" (978B). A few lines later, no question that the "The" B queries in his footnote was deleted. However, in 106N, "his little coat" (B) seems closer to Blake's script than "the little coat" (E) (981B). 114N's "Dreaming o'er" (E) seems justified by the "o'er" a bit later over B's "Dreaming of" (998). 115N, for E's "compelld" I prefer B's "compeld" (1001B); 116N, for B's "Reformation of" I read "reformation by": (1003B); 119N, for B's "are as follows" I see E's "are as follow" (1006B).

In Vola. p. 3, 1. 12, "Individual" was accidentally omitted before "[Man da]." V 8:6: B seems correctly to retain "fierce" and delete "bright," a decision reversed by E, who nonetheless accepts a comparable—and perhaps confirming—change in V 9:36. V 9:8 reads "Deep" (B), not "dark" (E), though the cap is doubtful. V 23:10, it is pretty clear that, as E records it, Blake meant to retain the words which B deletes. V 25:13, "the" (E) is preferable to "this" (B), as the other "The"s in this insertion indicate.

In the Watson "Marginalia," 1405, B notes that Blake wrote "Hypocrisy" in his Lavater notes, 1365, but there B transcribes "Hypocrisy." On the Watson titlepage verso, Blake seems actually to have written "is is not so," perhaps meaning "it is," as B transcribes it, but could be a scribal redundancy; "attacked by Paine" should probably read "attacked," as it does in the Concordance. The supplied "are the same" should probably be reduced to a supplied comma—as the context indicates. Blake is being elliptical here as a matter of expediency and rhetorical form. There seems no need to modernize "falsehood" so (1406, 1408); the spelling without the "e" was both common and Blakean. Since B caps "is," why not in consistency cap "blush" after the next supplied question mark (1406)? "Conscience...Locke," at the bottom of p. 2, should probably be followed by "If Conscience is not etc. Blake had no space for it at the bottom of p. 2, so put it at the top of p. 3 (1407-08). The capped "ON ALL OCCASIONS ACT RIGHT" should be preceded by an asterisk, indicating its specific relation to the asterisked comment following (1408). "Princip[le] another" should appear so; i.e., "le" was not written out (1406). "Can any man who writes ?ill so pretend" for "any" (1408). 115N, for E's "are as follow" I see E's "are as follow" (1006B).
The more there is of gradation in virtue, the more dramatic the energies of goodness and benevolence, the more sublime their character.

No wheedler loves. No fumbler kisses.

Great minds comprehend more in a word, a look, the squeeze of a hand, than vulgar men in day-long conversation, or the most arduous correspondence.

The more one gives, or receives, or feels, or comprehends, in little, the different time of composition and state of mind.

On 1420 (Blake's p. 29) the same hand sets in with comparable vehemence on the same subject. The hand recurs from Watson 35 ff. *passim*. I mention this in passing as a possible aid to dating. B's supplied exclamation in "a Question [!] Downright Plain" (1420) probably separates "Question" from the words that modify it--another instance of misleading editorializing. For "Does he cast them off," 1423, read "does he not cast them off." In Lavater, Blake seems to have written "&c," as E reads it, not "v" as B transcribes it (1374 and note). I tend to side with E (as against B and Keynes) in supposing that the "Admirable" on 1352 is not Blake's, and I agree with him altogether that "No fumbler kisses" (1374) is not in Blake's hand, so far as I've seen it: neither the slant nor the double-s seems characteristic. While Keynes prints both annotations in the Nonesuch edition B refers to, he excludes "No fumbler kisses" and queries "Admirable" in his later Oxford editions.

There are as well a few notes and queries about the printed Blake works. Generally B accepts the changes made in various copies of *Poetical Sketches*, though not the "his" for "her," "Song," 16, 757, which nonetheless seems justified by the context, as in his Notes B seems to allow. The "ere" in *King Edward the Third*, Sc. [iii], 10, 1783, should probably be retained because it makes good sense in the context and is not changed in any of the copies. Whatever sanction Blake's sometime omission of the apostrophe may provide to justify B's "e'er" seems overruled on both bibliographical and interpretive grounds. In the "Descriptive Catalogue," "How should he? he who," 827 note, should probably have been retained in the body of the text for the rhetorical emphasis Blake probably meant to suggest by it. B apparently assumes a printer's error rather than Blake's copy for the semicolon he replaces with a comma on 832 (and note). This semicolon could have had contemporary warrant and is certainly no more anomalous than others B is forced, on principle, to retain in other contexts. A comparable change is made on 851, though, in a rhetorical piece such as this, the semicolon may be apt. Throughout B has a tendency to supply the text with questionmarks which do not, at least in their perfunctory and rational appearance, suggest Blake's practice. The questionmark provided on 845 could better have been an exclamation, while the change from exclamation to questionmark on 848 heavily qualifies the effect Blake seems to have aimed at with his introductory "O." In the "marginalia" to Thornton, Blake offers a suggestive aphorism about his rhetorical practice which may well justify B in retaining in his text disagreements in number which he will (as in the "Descriptive Catalogue" errata list) elsewhere note: "The Greek & Roman Classics is the Antichrist I say Is & not Are as the most expressive & correct too." This clarified use of a rhetorical grammar should probably be kept in mind by editors wending their way through the rational solemnities of Blake's syntax at large. The Thornton marginalia would likely come into clearer perspective with closer study than it seems so far to have received. In a brief glance at it, I note that "but [his] Satans / Will / who is" seems rather to be "but [his will who is] / Satan's who is ..." (1516). In the "French Revolution," the change of "war—living" to "War, living (or "war—living") in line 283 really has no justification and manages to dismantle an effective compound adjective in the process.

B's ordering within and among the texts may have both its problems and its merits. He must of course abrogate the page order of the *Notebook* in order to print "The Vision of the Last Judgment," the "Public Address," and "The Everlasting Gospel" integrated pretty much in the order Blake probably meant for them. But individual pages within the *Notebook* will continue to provide grounds for a reconsideration of a given order. In this version of "I saw a Monk of Charlemaine" Blake might have meant the three stanzas on Voltaire and Gibbon to serve as a kind of integrating refrain or chorus meant to appear at different parts of the poem rather than as variants of each other best placed one after the other, as B has them. The passages seem more to gloss reciprocally or progressively rather than to replace each other, as B suggests (928 note); the 1. 7 change from...
"barons bold" to "Learning rold" would have a valid rhetorical rather than a possible esthetic justification if such an inference were preferred. The marginal placing of the passages may indicate that Blake intended them for distribution here and there within the poem, but as B notes, there is no certain indicator of where, and it may be that any editorial arbitration other than that suggested by B would be a hazardous presumption. Still, it is worth noting that contiguity alone was all the indication Blake relied on to place comparable marginal inserts on pp. 54 and 98. B seems correct in reading the line through "For the tear is an intellectual thing" as a separation rather than deletion line. The lead-in catch phrase, "A tear is an &c," seems to confirm the inference and the order. Another positive use of a comparable phrase appears in the insertion of the "Raphael Sublime" couplets (Notebook p. 39) after "Raphael Sublime &c" p. 1 "Public Address" (1029).

On p. 76, the context and the separating diagonal indicate that "Ishmael is Mahomet" should be placed before, not after, the interpolated "Abel kneels" etc. On p. 81, "at their head" should probably come before "little infants," which in fact the logic of the caret and its insert suggests. "The Aged Woman is Britannica" etc. should likely follow "began," as the final recension of Jerusalem etc. which is deleted in the margin. This does bring about the interesting but not unblakean division of Jerusalem (as the bride of Albion) into the Aged Woman and her daughter. That relatively characteristic anomaly may be preferable to an ordering which would somehow place the Aged Britannica, who is the aged wife, at her own head, since she is one of the references of "their" in "at their head" as B (and E) receive it. I would also suggest, on the same page, that the internal logic of the description would be tighter if "The Aged Figure . . . Oaks of Albion" passage to the right of the emblem were placed after "coming in the Clouds." Blake first describes what is above Noah, then what is around and beneath him, and finally adds the description of the "Aged Figure" who is taking account of the "various figures Risen into the Air." The progression on p. 82 seems to support such an ordering. Blake wrote down the left side of the emblem until he could write across the entire page. I.e., he did not go first to the right of the emblem and then to the bottom of the page. B provides more or less justifiable orderings in the illuminated works which will at times make it a little harder to use his text with the Concordance and with references to the Erdman and Keynes editions. Doubtless certain of his decisions will be queried—whether he has rightly placed the conclusion of the Natural Religion plates, whether in Vala he has correctly ordered 12:26-29—whether indeed a strictly chronological ordering of the canon itself is preferable to, e.g., a thematic approach such as E uses, or to what extent such an ordering can be strict. Personally, I prefer Vala VIIb in context rather than in an appendix, and so prefer B to E in this idea of order from both an esthetic and bibliographical standpoint. At times, however, B's bibliographical assumptions do not seem correct, even when his conclusions may be warranted. E.g., in his discussion of the plate order for MHH (694) B supposes that the order for copy G is only a temporary aberration from a conventional order, used in all clearly authoritative copies other than G and specifically reaffirmed by copy I which must have come after G because of its 1825 watermark. But an 1815 watermark hardly precludes a post 1825 date for what appears on its paper and the fact that Blake numbered the pages may seem to give his authority to the order when only one (perhaps two) copies can be placed in opposition to it. I am not so much denying the consensus likelihood of the order in copy I as I am questioning the assumptions which attempt to establish the order beyond valid argument to the contrary. If B's conjecture that copies G and I were both colored about 1827 is correct—because of their similarity—there may be good reason in that alone to assign equal authority to the copy G ordering, particularly if one also assumes that the G numbering was done at the same time. The question then may be whether the G order is not actually preferable because it represents what may very well be Blake's latest—not simply a late repetition of his earliest—thoughts on ordering. One may then precede to the no doubt dubious but still, in its degree, valid argument from internal evidence: Is there any reason inferable from the text for Blake to have finally preferred the G order? Perhaps worth pondering. But B used the same copy (E) for the copytext and well with B's editorial principles. It is not always clear whether a given description applies to the reproduction, to the copytext (they are not usually the same), or to a representative text which may not be either. For instance, while the copytext does depict a "Black boy" in "Chimney Sweep" (Exp.), the boy in the reproduction is white-faced, while in some variants (such as copy A) his hair looks like Tom Dacre's before it was shorn. As this last suggests, the space used for merely describing what we can see may be—perhaps sometimes is—better used to tell us all we need to know about significant variants. The VDA reproductions and commentary make up a particularly convenient case in point because B used the same copy (E) for the copytext and the designs. While B does discriminate five figures...
in plate 2's rainbow (I can only find four), he does not note the humanoid potential of the two rocks in the lower right. Nor, under Variants, does he note that in copy O, apparently the most worked over and clarified of the copies, the rocks not only take on the human form distinguishable but provide a pictorial reprise of the Theotormon figure of the frontispiece, his head buried in his arm. The other figure, bending over at the waist with hair and arms hanging limply down, would then seem to be Oothoon. Such appearances should be saved, even if they do not appear on representative impressions, particularly since here they indicate the object of the conjuror figure's attentions. He is, in effect (isn't he?), converting the "Human Form Divine" into "Shapeless Rocks." At least the reader should be allowed the possibility of making that inference. In plate 3 under verbal variants, B notes "Three obscured words to the right of Albion" which should probably be assigned instead to plate 2. B should have reported the variant of plate 4 in copy C which shows the spread-winged (or -armed) figure rising up behind the woman dreaming on the cloud. Or, if he felt the variant form apocryphal, he should have noted and explained such an inference. While copy E does suggest the possibility that the woman in plate 8 is wearing a "long skirt," several other perhaps more representative copies suggest the more likely possibility (given the text) that she is covered by bedclothes. Nor does copy E show as clearly as copy O the plate 10 fourth figure that B is uncertain about. Its fingers are well defined in copy O. Presumably this copy--the Robinson copy--is one of the latest. Since, along with another late copy (P), it contains the more clearly humanized and defined figures, couldn't a strong argument be made in favor of preferring it as the basis for deciding on Blake's latest and best pictorial intentions in VDA? Retrospectively, it may indicate what Blake meant to suggest by less obvious symbolic impressions in other copies. (I am myself convinced that plate 7 of copy O defines the contours of Theotormon's hair into a profile of Bromion's head which looks up at Oothoon and effectively illuminates her lament that none but Bromion can hear her words.)

The congenital ambiguity inherited from the originating copper and cloned into the various impressions of a given work may at once defy and justify editorial judgments. As already suggested, such ambiguity can be as much compounded as resolved by the choice of copytext, partly because the elected text may show plate to plate variations in quality that makes an overall reliance on it at best a calculated risk. B states that he "normally" chooses his "copy texts where the etched text is clear, uncoloured, and not clarified by hand," with specific priority given to posthumous copies because they reflect the last state to which Blake brought his copper and can be seen "unaffected by colouring or changes of mind in the process of printing or correcting." Since M 3:21, copies B-D contain the mended copper reading "What" as Blake's latest (some may feel best) choice, B prefers "That" from copy A. Likewise, to have preferred his copytext (and copies C and D) to copy A in M 24:60 would have eliminated a line which to most readers might seem necessary. However, if the pressure of the line is Blake's, it would not seem that his last intention was to omit it. A comparable--or seeming--attempt in copy B at erasing a grammatically unwarranted "s" in "sweets" M 31:46 goes unheeded and unnoted, and, given Blake's rhetorical indifference to such matters, may confirm an apparent suspicion that other hands were at work in mending Blake's impressions to suit another sense of propriety. Kindred mending might have changed M 23:66's "raving" to "roaring" in copy B, another change in his copytext which B notes but overrules. B also retains the clause which joins M 4 and M 5 in copy B, though suggests that it might have been eliminated in the copper for the latest printing in copy D. At times the crucial decision may not be so much what Blake's last intentions were but whether or not they should be accepted as definitive. An ambiguous but well-known case in point involves the restoration of certain words in J 3 which were in the original copper but cannot be justified by an appeal to any copytext impression. B places them in footnotes, along with predictable misgivings about some of E's recoveries in this context. It probably would have benefited the common reader and would not have discomfited the scholar if the deleted words which B accepts appeared (perhaps in italics) in the body of the text, given the enabling if not identical precedent provided by the inclusions in Milton of material later deleted. Perhaps this is the place to suggest that B's recurrent unwillingness to be convinced by E's confidence or certainty about his many recoveries of inferences about lost words will receive varying degrees of support from those who follow the hunt through the texts which these editors have scrutinized to see or not to see what Blake might have written. B's caution may seem to be the ideal complement to E's sometimes hazardous attempts at rescuing the apparently irretrievable from the outer darkness in which Blake either accidentally or purposely left it--particularly when he in turn supplements his caution by noting E's readings of what he finds illegible. The reader will thereby know where the cruxes lie and the scholar may then attempt to resolve them when in the presence of the originals containing them.

A few other problems of copytext may be briefly noted. Given the grammatical idiosyncracies of Blake and his possible precedents—and given his insistence on the exact and exacting cadences of his line—the change from an admittedly troublesome "Why have thou elevate" (J 34:10) to a more easily justified "Why hast thou elevated[?st]" should probably have been made in the footnotes, not in the body of the text. It has no textual authority, and does not seem to correct a scribal (or etching) error. As noted, the inference is, perhaps erroneous pointing may result from the use of a copytext which, in a given instance, is misleading. VDA, 60, does indeed have the dot after "hears" as noted by B, but, from among the several copies I've seen, it appears only in copy E, and may well be a splotch or anomaly peculiar to that impression alone.
The inference is—and it is elsewhere inferable as well—that something is not necessarily better than nothing if it fails to gain representative support. VDA, 99, concludes with a semicolon for E, nothing at all for B, and, in the British Museum Print Room copies, a colon for me, one which I would diminish either to a dot or comma using only the copy E copytext that B apparently relies on. But in this instance there is something there, though B likely overlooked or ignored it because in his copytext he could legitimately suppose that the miniscule and faded dot that imprinted from the copper was in fact a part of the rather flaky smudginess which runs up the margin just to the right of the text. A further inference: the copytext here is neither best nor can it be easily seen as representative. The indicated moral: other impressions must be checked and, where they clearly provide better readings, preferred.

VDA, 165, suggests the need to look around for a "best" text for a given reading when there is some evidence that a specific or even consensus copytext may be at fault. The word "sleep" ending this line is followed by a readily discernible dot in copy E and so B accepts the point as a period. The only copy I've checked which clearly justifies E's colon is copy O because it is only in that copy that the upper dot comes through with any distinction. It is otherwise faded and smudged at best. But since the "p" at the end of "sleep" likewise suffers a noticeable attrition in other copies, the editor doggedly in pursuit of the point Blake made might have been alerted to the need for nosing about for a copy which rounded out a better "p." In copy E the "p" lacks its loop except in the merest impression, and, a comparable mereness barely ghosts in the upper dot of the colon which copy O clearly defines. Admittedly, such pains may seem hardly worth the taking if the instances are supposed isolated. But in the first place they are not, and in the second place—if an editor supposes instead that Blake's pointing does matter in its minutest particular—or even that it may matter—then he must draw very heavily on his reserves of both patience and perspicuity to ferret it out at its best or most likely. VDA, 107, suggests how infinite those reserves may have to be. If one had decided that copy O's clear colon in 167 gave its dots a necessary priority over vacuity in other impressions—or if he had only copy O to rely on—he would place a dot after the "And" in 107, on the grounds that there is ample evidence that Blake's pointing does not abide rational questioning. But, fortunately, copies A and B would be near at hand to provide here a void editorially preferable on every logical ground. In the long run, the problems and the contradictory solutions available for them probably exceed even a theoretic comprehension, much more any set of workable editorial principles.

A significant variant worth noting because it may affect decisions about the relative dates of the Experience copies appears in l. 4 of "The Lilly" in copy B. Whereas in copies A and T, e.g., the word "bright" at the end of the line is etched in with a left-serifed "g" in correspondence with the other g's on the impressions, in B an unserifed "bright" has been written into the text. If this is the only impression containing a variant "g" of this sort, there may be grounds adduced for supposing that it was also the first impression Blake made from the copper. He seems to have rubbed out the foliage encroaching on the line in which he wanted "bright" to appear at an initial attempt to get the space to accommodate it. When he found it he could not do that to his esthetic satisfaction, he put it instead in the position of a catchword below the line. Since in other copies I have seen the marginal foliage is intact on line with "beauty" (nearly touching it in most cases), it would seem that they were made after the initial trial and error of "B" had located the received positioning of "bright" under and to the right of "beauty." On another dating matter, it seems a perverse reading of the evidence to suppose that a "clear postmark date of 28 August" 1799 on a Blake to Trusler letter "must" be a mistake because it contradicts the written date of 23 August. If there is other evidence to support this decision, we would seem to need it. Again, the contradiction between an 18 October 1791 letter and the "7" which makes up "the only really clear part of the postmark" might be suggestively resolved by supposing that the writer (Reveley) misdated the letter by one day. While the facts perhaps cannot be "reconciled" definitively, a reader could be alerted towards a likely inference if he were told whether the illegible "7" might have formed part of a "17." Or he could be kept from that speculation by being told otherwise. Certain other problems of dating—particularly of possible early drafts of early poems—must probably remain forever in the realm of mere speculation, though it is difficult to believe that Blake wrote none of the texts of his illuminated works much earlier than present dating suggests.

A few concluding queries. How likely is it that Blake meant to write "o'er-fired" in Thel, 29, when the word has application only to ceramics (according to the OED), would seem to contradict the sense of its context, and may well be of a piece with non-words like "sendind" (J 88) and "Chastitity" (J 94), which B rightly emends in the text? Admittedly, B's inferable principle in such a retention is in itself unobjectionable, but one may wish that both rational and aesthetic considerations had led him to place "o'er-fired" in the footnote, "o'ertired" in the text. "Angluss" may, as B suggests, refer to Robert Hunt (1051), but there is perhaps better contextual evidence in the Notebook for supposing that it refers instead to the generic "taught" Englishman who is "so used to Journemys undecided bungling that [he] cannot bear the firmness of a Masters Touch." Is it possible to establish in a repeatable way the precise measurements of the plates which B provides as a way of deciding which ones appeared back to back on the same copper? I do not at all call into question the brilliant work of this sort which went into B's classic essay on the masking of America, but do find my own measurements (and Bindman's) sufficiently at odds with B's to create some doubt whether millimeter accuracy is attainable on a level of consensus. Is it perhaps more likely that the enigmatic letters below the text in MJH 6 are "MOH" (with a possible "M" inferable as well from the blur following)-rather than "WHH," as B suggests (79-80)? That rendition would have the relevance of abbreviating the poem's title. Finally, I note a proof-reading error, 684, where
Many readers who ponder these volumes will be variously afflicted with a certain sense of disappointment, tempered, however, with the recollection that, in terms of the editorial purposes and assumptions set forth in his introductory matter, Professor Bentley has fulfilled his promise, if not, altogether, our hopes for a fully serviceable text and textual commentary on Blake’s work. What is certain is that, in a multitude of ways, future editors of reading texts and anthologies are bound to profit from the immense labor which has gone into this edition. And its ultimate review and evaluation will only be made by the next Blake editor who sets himself the prodigious task of thoroughly retracing, in all its minute particulars, the course of many years of devoted application that has led us this far along the road to the establishment and refinement of the Blakean canon. A vast number of these particulars will only come into view and focus because of this edition—a fact that will continue to inspire the positive assessments which it will continue to receive and which it so richly deserves.

1 See my “Thel, Thelphthora, and the Daughters of Albion” (forthcoming in Studies in Romanticism), wherein I demonstrate the derivation of Blake’s title (Θήλα means “female”) from a book advocating polygamy which was published in 1780-81.
Europe, Jerusalem, and Job can be given full size (some of the smaller prints are reproduced as many as eleven to a page), and every print which is larger than this, such as the large color prints, Young's Night Thoughts, and Dante, is reproduced whole in reduced size with the utmost of care. The quality of the photographs and reproductions appears to be fine, and many variants are reproduced. For example, there are three versions of Urizen pl. 1 and Jerusalem pl. 28 and four of Job pl. 16. The plates are arranged straightforwardly in chronological order, with variants gathered after the published version of the work (e.g., America, pls. 1-18, a-c), and the text, as is appropriate for a work aimed at a large audience, is matter of fact and unpretentious. The brief "Introduction: Blake as a graphic artist" (pp. 10-22) has the same merits and attitudes as Mr. Bindman's comprehensive Blake as an artist (1977), and the succinct "Notes to the Plates" (pp. 465-88) are reliably based upon standard Blake scholarship. This is a work which can be recommended with enthusiasm to lovers and students of Blake.

The copies reproduced come from widely separated collections, from Cambridge to Canberra, but the great majority of groups of plates, such as those for The Book of Los, come from the British Museum Print Room and Library (14), with three groups from the Fitzwilliam Museum (Cambridge), two each from the Library of Congress, the Pierpont Morgan Library, and the Huntington Library, and one each from Bodley, The University of Glasgow, and Sir Geoffrey Keynes. The originals seen were chosen for the convenience of the editor, who teaches at the University of London and who made an admirable catalogue of the Fitzwilliam Blake collection, rather than for the convenience of the scholar. Naturally black-and-white plates on coated, cream-colored paper cannot indicate the red, sepia, blue, green, and orange in which the originals of the works in Illuminated Printing are printed, much less their subsequent coloring. However, it would have been desirable to choose uncolored originals instead of the watercolored copies of Europe (B), Songs of Innocence (B), and Songs of Innocence and of Experience (B), for of course much of Blake's delicate or glorious coloring comes out simply muddy and distracting when reproduced in black-and-white. Further, little effort seems to have been made to reproduce copies of works in Illuminated Printing which have apparently not been reproduced before. For another, there are several designs which have not previously been reproduced at all. One of these (no. 8), called "Charity" and distantly related to Jerusalem pl. 46 (no. 525), was acquired by the British Museum Print Room in 1958, and Mr. Bindman is cautiously (and rightly, in my view) "inclined to accept it" as Blake's (p. 467). Another (no. 185), "an experiment in colour-printing" called "An estuary with figures in a boat," is described even more cautiously: "the attribution to Blake cannot be regarded as certain" (p. 473), despite the mysterious inscription on it in an unidentified hand: "By William Blake (Mr Stothard)." It is unlike almost anything else Blake is known to have done, and the inscription is the chief reason for associating it with him. Whether or not we accept the work as Blake's, the visual (or at least black-and-white) evidence is now before us on which to base a decision.

How complete and comprehensive is the collection of Graphic Works presented here? The first problem comes with the word "Graphic," which often means writing or drawing but here means "contemporary engraved or etched or lithographed design or text" (for some of the plates have no design). Mr. Bindman says, "I have set out to reproduce every printed [i.e., contemporary engraved] design by Blake as well as their major variants" (p. 7). Thus, we have Blake's engraving of his own designs and other engravers' copies of Blake's designs, as in Burger's Leonardo, Malkin's A Father's Memoir, and Blair's Grave, and Mr. Bindman has generously thrown in one or two of Blake's engravings after the designs of other men such as that for Bonfycastle's Mensuration--"there is little to..."
distinguish it from such work by Heath and others" (p. 467). The book of course omits designs which Blake copied from elsewhere, such as those for the Portland Vase in Darwin's Botanic Garden, for Gough's Sepulchral Monuments, Vetusta Monumenta, and Stedman's Narrative, even though some of them have important Blakean elements. It omits the plates after Blake's designs in Whitaker's Seraph (1828) and in Hamilton's English School (1831), presumably because they were made by other engravers after Blake died in 1827 and because they were already reproduced in their earlier forms. There are, however, a few plates which appear to belong here on Mr. Bindman's principles but which are missing. Blake's first and third plates for Gay's Fables (1793) are significantly his own, for they incorporate characteristic Blakean elements not in the designs he was copying. The very small design of two old men planting trees in Lavater's Essays on Physiognomy (1788) is probably designed by Blake, though it is signed only "Blake Sc" (see Blake Books [1977], pp. 594, 754), and Varley's Zodiacal Physiognomy (1828) has five designs by Blake copied by Varley and engraved by Linnell, including two of the "Ghost of a Flea"--and two more unpublished engravings after Blake for it are in the collection of Sir Geoffrey Keynes. (Perhaps the Varley plates were excluded because they were not made by Blake for the purpose of being engraved and may be posthumous.) Another "Complete" collection of contemporary printed copies of Blake's designs might legitimately omit a few of these designs and include a few others.

Similarly, the variant states of plates are, of course, far from complete. The reproduction of America pl. 4 (no. 149) lacks the last four lines of text, but there is no reproduction of the complete plate. The America copperplate fragment is reproduced along with a print from it (no. 164a), but the copperplate shows a number of details not visible in the print, such as most of the last line of text. The important proof variants of Night Thoughts Found in Valia are omitted, and there is no reproduction of the important verbal and graphic variants in Urizen pl. 1 ("FIRST" omitted), pl. 6 (two figures omitted in copy D), pl. 15 (two figures added in G), pl. 24 (two figures omitted in D), and pl. 25 (a line omitted in A).

The attraction of this volume to the scholar is largely the same as for the general reader: It collects in one place a vast number of fine reproductions after contemporary engravings from Blake's designs and does so remarkably faithfully and inexpensively. With such riches before us, it is ungenerous to complain. This is a work which all students and lovers of Blake will wish to own.

Reviewed by Bo Ossian Lindberg.

Jack Lindsay first read Blake in 1917-18 when he was in his teens. His world-view was provided by Blake and by Dostoevsky and Shakespeare. In 1927 he published a small but surprisingly informative booklet, William Blake, which saw a second edition in 1929. Lindsay's essay on Blake's meter in the Scholaris Press edition of the Poetical Sketches appeared in the same year. Then, for about forty years, Lindsay published little on Blake (a few reviews and essays), but, as he writes in the foreword to the full-scale biography on Blake which he published in 1978, "through the years I have kept returning to him and seeking to revalue him in terms of the problems thrown up by my own development." And he adds: "I do not write as someone interested in Blake from the outside, but as someone for whom he has been a vitally formative influence throughout life."

Every reader of Lindsay's book should have these words in mind. They explain the author's personal approach to Blake. This emphasis on the applicability of Blake's ideas to the social, political and economical thinking of a man living in the twentieth century is the most attractive feature of Lindsay's book. At the same time it makes the book misleading to any reader not already familiar with Blake. Lindsay stresses what is of interest to him: Blake's political radicalism, his heretical antinomianism, his prophetical revolutionarism, his imaginative humanism, his pre-marxian dialectics and the strong—and by other commentators frequently undervalued—materialistic element in his thought. But Lindsay never takes seriously Blake's definition of himself as a Christian visionary, and he is out of sympathy with Blake's gradual development from political radical to spiritualist mystic. Lindsay's Blake never grows older than forty. Blake's comments on the spiritual world to Crabb Robinson make "painful reading" to him.

Lindsay tolerates religious ideas only so far as they can be used as stand-ins for lampoons against the established econo-political system. As a consequence, he gives us a denaturalized Blake. For this reason Lindsay's book is not a biography in the sense that Gilchrist's and Mona Wilson's books are biographies. It is a specialized investigation of one single question: Why read Blake today?

Oddly enough, although Jack Lindsay is son and pupil of the artist Norman Lindsay, he does not seem to be particularly interested in Blake as a pictorial artist. The most notable defects, also, are found in the sections on Blake's pictorial works. In a way this is understandable. In Blake, Lindsay seeks help to clarify his own view of man as he appears today, formed by history and living under an industrialized capitalist economic system. From this point of view Blake the writer seems more rewarding than Blake the artist. In spite of this I feel that Lindsay's treatment of Blake's artistic achievements is more cavalier than it should be. To substantiate this criticism, I shall give examples of dubious or incomplete statements in Lindsay's book.
The section on the anonymous drawings made at the opening of the coffin of Edward I in 1774 (p. 2) is incorrect. There are two drawings, and King Edward appears twice in each of them. According to Lindsay both drawings are inscribed in a hand resembling that of young Blake, but this is true only of one of them, namely the one showing coffin and corpse strictly from above. The other drawing, made in isometric perspective, differs in style and bears inscriptions in a different hand—I doubt its general inclusion in the oeuvre of Blake.

However that may be, Blake certainly did not get his idea of figures clad in tight-fitting garments from this source, as Lindsay maintains. Such a supposition seems likely only if we confine ourselves to Ayloffe's account of the opening, but is rendered impossible by the drawings themselves, none of which reveals the form of the limbs or the body under the garment. In three of the sketches even the face is only dimly seen through the veil covering it, or not seen at all; only one of the isometric sketches shows the uncovered face.

Much has been written about the tight fitting dresses in Blake's figures. Strictly speaking there are two different kinds of such dresses: body-tights made from fabric, resembling those used by modern dancers, and made visible on the naked body only by their color, a few folds, and by rings around wrists and ankles; and tight-fitting scaly armour. A likely source for the latter has been found by Morton Paley in the English edition of Montfaucon:

The military habit of the Sarmatians is the most extraordinary one we have yet seen. For it's so closely adjusted to their Body from the Neck to the very Sole of the Foot, that all the Motions of the Members and Muscles appear as plainly through it, as if the Body was naked. 'Tis also covered with Scales without the least Interval, even as low as the Hand, and down to the Sole of the Foot.

According to Tacitus the Sarmatian armor was made from leather, with metal scales attached to it. He adds that it was very resistant to blows, but it was also very stiff, restricted the movements of the Sarmatian soldiers, and made it difficult for them to mount their horses.

Several of the Roman Emperors bore the name of Sarmaticus, because they had defeated Sarmatians, notably Trajanus, on whose column at Rome Sarmatians are shown, all clad in tight-fitting scaly armour. A likely source for the latter has been found by Morton Paley in the English edition of Montfaucon:

The existence of an earlier state is supported by several of the color-prints were printed fresh. The date 1780 on the engraving Albion Rose should be treated with more caution than Lindsay allows. The only known state is signed and dated "WB inv 1780." Most commentators, including Lindsay, find this date difficult to reconcile with the mature style of engraving and with the lettering and symbolism of the caption in the lower margin. I agree that the state must be dated after 1800, probably 1804. But unlike Lindsay I believe that an earlier state has existed, the date 1780 being the almost only survivor from the lost first state. The existence of an earlier state is supported by the color-printed versions. All color-prints by Blake which can be dated were done in or about 1795; the Huntington Library copy of Albion Rose is printed on paper watermarked 1794, which indicates a date for the print about 1795—Blake seldom kept large stores of paper, and was in a habit of using paper fresh. Several of the color-prints were printed from the same plates as the engravings. It is therefore possible that the color-printed versions of Albion Rose conceal an earlier state of the engraving. A description of the state was published by Essick in 1980, after the appearance of Lindsay's book.

I also think that the signature on the known
state, "WB inv", is a later addition. It is engraved in a different way from the edge, is not quite on a line with it, and shows no signs of polishing or erasure, while marks of scraping are obvious on the date.

Then comes the question of Blake's technique. Lindsay uncritically reproduces several mistakes by other writers, and is not quite up to date with recent research. This question will have to be dealt with more fully in a separate article, to be published later. The following remarks are only meant as a short abstract.

Lindsay is in error in thinking that Cumberland's method of printing text from etched plates was a stereotype process (p. 31). Cumberland's recipe for it in A New Review with Literary Curiosities and Literary Intelligence, 1784, and his letters describing the process to his brother about the same time, make it clear that Cumberland's plates were done in ordinary etching on a wax-asphaltum-rosin ground, and printed in intaglio.10 Blake's reference to a method for illuminated printing in An Island in the Moon was almost certainly to Cumberland's method, not to Blake's own, contrary to what Lindsay thinks.11 An Island was almost certainly written in the winter of 1784-85, and Blake himself wrote that he invented the stereotype process in 1788.12 Lindsay also neglects Blake's only surviving stereotype plate, a fragment of a cancelled plate for America. As Robert Essick has shown, this plate was step-etched in order to hinder underbiting of the raised lines.13 Since stereotype etching was known before Blake's time,14 his invention was likely to have been of a method for step-etching the plates, and not of "an ink impervious to acid," as Lindsay thinks.15

Lindsay also writes that the reason for Blake's rejection of oil painting was his inability to handle oil paint, an inability which he rationalized by condemning oil as an inferior medium.16 He also says that Blake's alternative to oil painting was the color-printing process.17 In my opinion both statements are incorrect.

In the eighteenth century most artists found oils difficult to handle. For this reason Reynolds, for instance, introduced a variety of binders into his paintings: egg white, gum, wax, mastic dissolved in spirits of turpentine, copaiba balsam, and mequillp (a mixture of mastic dissolved in boiling oil with lead siccative), often with disastrous results.18 It is common knowledge that paintings of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are often in a worse state of preservation than earlier works, due to the heterogenous mixtures used in their composition. For the same reason they are often difficult or impossible to clean and restore.19 Examples abound among the works of even the greatest painters: Chardin, Pilo, Reynolds, Ingres, Delacroix, Corot, Daumier.

The main difficulty in handling oils and achieving a reasonably permanent result is incurred by the drying of the vegetable oils. This process is slow compared with that of aqueous paint. All the oils used in painting dry because of a chemical reaction with atmospheric oxygen; they "burn" dry, and at the same time they increase in weight up to 26%, and also in volume.20 This process is complicated by the metal salts used as pigments. Some of them, containing lead, copper, mangan or cobalt, make the drying faster; others, containing zinc, aluminum, quicksilver or cadmium, slow it down.21 Some combine--to varying degrees--with the fatty acids in the oils, forming soaps, which make the layers increasingly transparent, and cause underlayers to show through.22 Paints containing such pigments must be applied thicker than at first seems necessary.

It therefore becomes very difficult for the artist to calculate the variety of chemical reactions going on in a drying oil painting. Yet, if he intends to achieve any perfection of detail in a work too large to be completed in a single sitting, then he will have to apply several coats of paint, one on top of the other, over a long period of time. It will then be necessary for him to use only rapidly drying pigments in the undercoats (white lead, verdigris, umber, cobalt blue), and reserve the slowly drying pigments for the top layers (zin white, organic dyes precipitated on alum, vermilion, cadmium yellow). He will also have to calculate the drying times of mixtures of rapid and slow driers, such as white lead and vermilion, or cobalt blue and cadmium yellow. Any neglect of the different drying times of different paints will result in over-long waiting for underlayers to dry, will cause solvent action on insufficiently dried layers, sinking in, soil, discoloration, and erratic changes of chroma and light values. It will also, for obvious reasons, produce cracking. A coat rapid in drying applied on top of a coat slow in drying will crack, because the latter will go on combining with oxygen long after the former has ceased to do so; it will swell underneath the already hard layer, and crack and dislocate it. The addition of substances meant to equalize drying speed (driers to slow-drying pigments, retarders to fast-drying pigments) is likely to complicate the processes beyond calculation, and cause more problems than it was meant to solve.

In the middle ages oil painting was known at least from the eleventh century, but for works of high quality aqueous binders were preferred. This was made clear by R. E. Raspe in his A Critical Essay on Oil Painting; proving that the Art of Painting in Oil was known before the pretended discovery of John and Hubert van Eyck; to which are added Theophilus De Arte Pingendi, Eraclius De Artibus Romanorum. And a review of Farinatore's Lumen Animae, London, 1781. Theophilos's work, now known by its authentic title De diversis artibus, is generally dated to the early twelfth century, though Raspe dated it earlier, and it contains an account of how to make linseed oil and how to use it for painting.23 Heraclius (early eleventh century) also mentions oil painting in his third book. Farinatore's Lumen Animae was written in Vienna in the early fourteenth century, and printed in Augsburg, 1477; it contains several quotations from Theophilus, though nothing on oil painting.

Blake is likely to have known this book. When he wrote, in his Descriptive Catalogue, that he would inquire "in another work on Painting . . . who first
forged the silly story and known falsehood, about
John of Bruges [Jan van Eyck] inventing oil colors," he
was probably referring to Raspe's work.Blake's
own treatise on painting having disappeared, we
can only guess about its contents; but if he had
read Raspe he must have known that Theophilos did
not recommend oils for works of high quality, and
complained of the tedious waiting for undercoats to
dry. The "forger" alluded to by Blake must have
been Giorgio Vasari, who was the first writer to
ascribe the invention of oil colors to Jan van
Eyck. Since Blake wrote that "Oil was not used,
except by blundering ignorance, till after Vandyke's
time," he must have thought that the binding medium
employed by the van Eycks was aqueous. He believed
that all the old easel paintings were in "fresco," by
which term he meant "Water Colours," painting with
any aqueous binder. This view was by no means stupid, and was later shared by many
scholars, notably by Doermer, who thought that the
invention of the van Eycks was an emulsion of oil
and resin in egg, which binder could be thinned with
water. Not until 1950, when Paul Coremans restored
The Adoration of the Lamb at Ghent, was it finally
proved that the van Eycks painted in oils.

Oil is also known to yellow in drying. A
paint rich in oil will yellow more than a lean one.
But a lean paint will be too thick to handle. The
addition of a thinner such as spirits of turpentine
would be expedient, but this, if added to top layers,
would greatly increase the dangers of solvent action
on newly dried coats, and also of sinking in and
darkening. The use of resinous solutions, either
as intermediary varnishes between coats, or as
additions to the paints used for top layers, would
increase viscosity and thus hinder the undercoats
from absorbing the medium from the top coat—and
this absorption is the cause of most of the troubles
mentioned above. However, even if resins are slower
in yellowing than the oils, they in the end yellow
more, and they also make the film brittle and thus
increase the risk of cracking, as well as of yellowing.

For this reason the old masters often chose an
aqueous binder for pigments especially likely to be
altered by the yellowing of the oil, such as the
blues. In the Ghent altarpiece by van Eyck, other­
wise painted in oil, the ultramarine mantle of the
Virgin was found to have been painted in gum;33 van
Eyck told Theodore de Mayerne that he often painted
his blues with an aqueous binder, and he also knew
how to make gum adhere to an oily surface by means
of juice of garlic, and how to make such a paint
waterproof by passing a varnish over it.

The old masters understood the problems created
by oily vehicles and knew how to solve them, but
with the rise of Academies, which taught no mean
handicrafts, and the simultaneous decline of workshop
education for artists, the old rules were soon for­
gotten, and the oil painters found themselves
entangled in difficulties. Oil had become a
hindrance to free and easy execution and a danger to
the preservation of pictures, or, as Blake wrote,
a fetter to genius and a dungeon to art.

The easiest way out of these difficulties
would be to paint alla prima, never or seldom having
to add any paint on top of a layer already completed.
Not surprisingly, this method became more and more
dominant during the nineteenth century. In the hands
of the impressionists it led to a sketchy manner,
but it is possible to paint a large, detailed
painting alla prima, completing it piece by piece,
as in Van Gogh. This method was used by Caspar David
Friedrich, Adolf von Menzel, Wilhelm Leibl, William
Holman Hunt and, in his early works, by J. E.
Millais.7 Such a mode of painting, of course,
makes the calculation of the effect of the whole
difficult. Extensive retouching afterwards is often
found necessary, and thus the advantages of the
method are lost.

Blake’s easy way out was to discard oil alto­
gether, and to use an aqueous paint instead. He
seems to have had a good reason to do so. Such
paints dry uniformly with the evaporation of water,
and the painter may disregard the differences in
drying times which cause such problems in oil
painting. Aqueous paints do not yellow either.

To this purpose Blake adopted carpenter’s glue,
dissolved in warm water. Admittedly he used the
same binder for his color-prints, some of which he
marked "fresco." But since he seems to have
experimented with color-printing only for a short
time about 1795, it can hardly be described as
Blake’s "alternative" to oil painting, as Lindsay
calls it. Glue as a painting medium was recommended
by Vitruvius,34 and also by Cennino Cennini.35 It
was used by Raphael for his cartoons, now at the
Victoria and Albert Museum.36 It is a sound tech­
nique, but one has to remember that a painting in
glue should never be varnished with the varnishes
commonly employed for giving a protective top coat
to oil paintings. Oil or any thin varnish will
turn such a picture yellow, as Catherine Blake told
Lord Egremont in a letter recently published by
Bentley.37 The composition of Blake's own varnish
is not known, but Catherine and Tatham described it
as "white" (i.e. colorless), hard and of Blake's
own making. Blake could have used either egg
white or bee's wax, though the latter could not
properly be called "hard," or a composition of resin
and wax viscous enough not to penetrate into the
paint.

Caution in varnishing is especially important
if the distemper or glue painting contains white
pigments consisting of whiting, i.e., chalk. Oily
or resinous varnishes will be absorbed by the chalk,
which makes it transparent and brown, like putty
(Blake used that word36) -- and the putty commonly used
for fastening window glass is nothing but linseed
oil and chalk. Blake knew this; he adopted whit­
ch or chalk, and wrote that oil painting "has compelled
the use of that destroyer of color, white lead."38
He was right. White lead was the only white pigment
in general use in his day that would not absorb oil,
and thus remain white and opaque when mixed with an
oily vehicle.

I am sure that the chief cause of the darkening
of many of Blake's paintings in glue is inexpert
varnishing after Blake's time.8 For this reason I
do not believe, as Lindsay does (p. 129), that Blake
was influenced by Rembrandt; the Rembrandtesque brown chiaroscuro in some of Blake's "temperas" was produced, not by Blake himself, but by unskilled varnishers of the mid nineteenth century.

Since Blake knew that "the nature of gum was to crack" if applied in thick, opaque layers, it is obvious that he used the glue precisely in order to be able to paint thick, and to cover underlayers with more or less opaque top coats. Glue would have given him no advantages in painting traditional, transparent watercolors on paper. For this reason I think that he employed the ordinary gum (either gum arabic or gum tragacanth) for normal watercolor drawings. Gum can be applied cold, which is a great advantage, while the glue-water has to be used warm; otherwise it would gelatinize to an unmanageable jelly.

According to J. T. Smith Blake knew that top layers in glue painting should be "more dilute" than the ground layers, which is true--the reverse would produce cracking and flaking. Blake also said that glue was less sensitive to changes in atmospheric moisture than gum. This means that he must have added a hardener to the glue. The addition of alum to glue in order to make it more water-resistant and less hygroscopic was ordinary workshop practice in Blake's day.

All this shows that Blake's technique was rational and sound. I only have doubts about his invention of the "Portable Fresco," which he described as "a Wall on Canvas or Wood." A thick ground of whiting and glue on canvas is extremely apt to crack, as Linell remarked. Blake himself seems to have noticed this, for in the 1820s he began to use very thin grounds.

Minor suggestions and corrections.

Lindsay's book is, on the whole, carefully proof-read. It is odd, however, that personal names are often found in an incorrect form: Scamuzzi for Scamozzi (p. 16), Behman for Behmen (p. 40), Schönbauer for Schongauer (p. 171), Beatrizat for Beatrizeat (p. 8), Wootlett for Woollett (p. 213, fn.; Lindsay has silently reproduced Blake's misspelling of the name in the "Public Address"). Once even the sex of an unfortunate artist is changed, as in Antonina de Messina for Antonello da Messina (p. 171).

Sometimes Lindsay's handling of source material is careless. The story of William's and Catherine's courtship (p. 481) is quoted from Tatham and Lindsay adds that he must have based his account on what Catherine herself told him. But Tatham's biographical sketch is written on paper watermarked 183(2?), and the same story appears, partly verbatim, in J. T. Smith, 1828 (Smith quotes "a friend"), and in Cunningham, 1830. There is, of course, a possibility that the friend Smith quoted was indeed Tatham, but this should not be taken for granted.

Lindsay seems to believe (p. 33) that the two states of the engraving Job are two separate plates.

The reference on p. 34 f. to W. Meredith's "Commonplace Book" is unsatisfactory, and the book is not in the bibliography. In general, Lindsay's notes and bibliography seem to have been written more for the convenience of the author than for that of the reader. The foreshortenings are cumbersome, and misspellings occur, such as N. D. Paley for Morton D. Paley, and Acta Academiae Absensis (lovely!) for Acta Academiae Absoensis.

Misprints in references to and quotations from Blake's writings may occasionally cause confusion. On p. 212 Lindsay makes Blake say that his art was that of "Dürer and the engravers." This is rather pointless. What Blake wrote in his "Public Address" was that his technique of engraving was that of "Alb Durers Histories & the old Engravers," meaning, as the context shows, sixteenth century engraving as opposed to that of the eighteenth century print industry.

It is not clear why Lindsay, on p. 225, calls "The Everlasting Gospel" "The Everlasting Mercy," but many of his remarks earlier on the contents of the poems are just and sound. Yet he goes too far when he says that the poem "shows no concern for the texts of the New Testament." Actually it consists mainly of allusions to it and quotations from it. Admittedly Blake's interpretation of Christ's teaching differs from that of most Christian congregations, but that does not necessarily mean that they are without foundation in the Bible. It should be observed, also, that the most outrageous interpretation of Christ's teaching and character is put into the mouth of Caiphas.

The quotation on p. 49 f., "Each man ...," is given in an incorrect form, and on p. 140 "then" is substituted for "thus" in a quote from the "Notebook." And why, indeed, does Lindsay identify Blake's Jesus in the 1790s with Theotormon? In the Song of Los Blake wrote: "And Jesus ... receiv'd A Gospel from wretched Theotormon." The two characters are clearly separate here.

On p. 131 Lindsay quotes the annotation "Blake Dim'd with Superstition" on Blake's letter to Trusler of 23 August 1799 as if it were by Trusler, although it is, according to Keynes, in George Cumberland's hand.

On p. 213 Lindsay quotes Blake's remark "Models are difficult - enslave one." He misunderstands imaginative art when he criticizes Blake for never asking "if the conception should not be strong enough to stand up against nature." This is exactly what Blake demanded of art, and the reason why he rejected working from models. If a work of art is copied from nature, and thus is dependent on it, how can it stand up against it? If someone really wants to be imaginative, he certainly has to sacrifice some of the charms of nature.

On p. 141 Lindsay uncritically reproduces an error of editing on the part of Bentley, "Blake Records," p. 83, when he quotes the quadrains by Hayley, in which the author invokes his dead son to inspire Blake and steady "his Failing Brother's Hand & Eyes or temper his eccentric Soul." As Bentley carefully points out, the manuscript clearly has "Foiling." According to the OED this word means...
"Baffling, disappointing." In my view "foiling" makes excellent sense in this context, and I can see no need for the substitution "falling."

Is Blake's accusation that Hayley despised his designs "completely untrue" as Lindsay writes on p. 156? Already the quatrains quoted above show that Hayley did not find Blake's hand and eye quite to his taste, or his eccentricity tempered enough. It is quite clear that he tried to instruct Blake and correct his engraving, and he asked him to alter the expression of the mouth in the engraving after Flaxman's medallion of Thomas Hayley, to give the impression of "gay juvenility." Blake obeyed, and produced an awkward dab at the corner of the mouth. Hayley did not defend Blake against those who criticized him; instead he tried to excuse him, as his letters to Lady Hesketh show.61 The main cause of tension between Blake and many of his friends, including Hayley, was that they tried to curb his imagination, for which they had no use, and make him a portrait painter, a reproductive engraver, and an illustrator of literary works (such as Hayley's), which Blake knew were inferior to his own poems. No wonder that Blake got annoyed, and could not be as grateful as he tried to be, or as his friends thought he ought to be.

I do not believe, either, that Scolfield's accusation against Blake "bears every mark of truth" (p. 160). Indeed Blake would have been likely to damn the king and call his soldiers slaves but in this case there were too many witnesses who, despite threats by Scolfield and his companion, testified that they had heard no seditious words spoken--and Scolfield's only witness was proved not to have been present at all, but asleep in a stable, and only to have come out after the witnesses had gathered at the stable door.

Blake's later accusation against Hayley for having "hired" Scolfield to "bereave" Blake's life,62 was, of course, groundless and inexcusable, as shown by Hayley's exemplary conduct at the time of trial.

Such suspicions can be explained only by the paranoid sense of persecution which Blake developed around 1806-1809; I agree with Lindsay so far that I believe Blake was not in his right mind from about 1806 to about 1818, during which time he quarrelled with most of his friends and lived in isolation for long periods of time.

Moreover, the "Long Poem" describing Blake's "Spiritual Acts of [his] three Years' Slumber on the banks of the Ocean" comprising "an immense number of Verses on One Grand Theme" and written "from immediate Dictation" (letter to Butts 25 April 1803) is certainly the lost manuscript of Jerusalem. It consisted of twenty-four books, but one cannot be sure if these books were as long as the four eventually printed. Note that chapter 1 originally ended at pl. 14. Jerusalem, as we know it today, could well be a compact version, edited on the basis of the entire manuscript, which must have been completed at Felpham, since the engraving of it was begun at South Molton Street in 1804. In the preface to the printed version Blake refers to his "three years slumber on the banks of the Ocean," and says that "this Verse" was "dictated" to him. And the poem begins: "Of the Sleep of Ulro! and of the passage through / Eternal Death! and of the waking to Eternal Life. / This theme calls me in sleep night after night, & every morn / Awakes me at sun-rise." All this is in agreement with what Blake told Butts in his letter; therefore the two works are the same. The letter cannot refer to the The Four Zoas, dated on the title-page 1797, although this manuscript was revised and added to later, probably at Felpham.

However, Milton should not be excluded from consideration on account of its shortness. The printed two books, comprising about 1600 lines, are only a fragment of the twelve books planned, as shown by the title, where "12" has been changed to "2." The manuscript could have had as many as 9600 lines. It is indeed possible that Milton and Jerusalem are editions of portions of one single manuscript, as long as the Iliad or the Odyssey. According to Henry Crabb Robinson, Blake had "six or seven mss. as long as Homer" and "20 tragedies as long as Macbeth." Here the problem is in distinguishing existing manuscripts at least one of which was seen by Crabb Robinson, from other works only produced in the spiritual world.63 Merely because Blake sometimes composed verses which he did not bother to write down, one should not suppose--as Lindsay does--that none of Blake's lost works were ever written down on paper. There must at least have been manuscripts for the printed works, but not one of them has survived.

Since we know that Tatham burned several of Blake's manuscripts, it is reasonable to suppose that he was responsible for the destruction of most, if not all, of the lost works.64 We also have every reason to believe that the lost six books of The French Revolution were actually written by 1791, as Blake himself explicitly stated.65 When Lindsay thinks that Blake's lost works never existed in writing, he seems to have been misled by his own thesis that Blake "published" his works mainly for the spirits. On p. 235 he adds that Blake needed to believe in angels and devils "as a projection of the missing audience which he feels to be potentially present." This is a possible explanation, especially in view of some of Blake's remarks to Crabb Robinson, but I wonder if an entirely different explanation is not even more probable: because Blake believed in angels and devils, his lack of a fit audience was less severely felt. Thus, what Lindsay thinks is the cause, in my opinion is the effect.

On the whole, Lindsay is not in sympathy with the "spiritual" side of Blake. It is true that most educated people today do not believe in spirits, and consequently Blake's belief in spirits means little to us. If we otherwise sympathize with Blake, as Lindsay does, we are inclined to hope that the spirits did not mean very much to Blake either. But I am quite sure that they did. Blake believed in the existence of angels and devils; they were as real to him as Leonid Bresnyn or Jane Fonda are real to us. I do not think it is possible to understand Blake unless this fact is recognized.

Notwithstanding Lindsay's lack of interest in the spirits, his section on Blake's visions is sound
Dates and imprints on engravings should be treated with caution. Especially in commercial engraving it was often found convenient to use a date different from that of actual publication, if, for instance, publication was delayed beyond the date planned when the engravings were executed. Thus they cannot be used to estimate how fast an engraver was in completing his plates, especially since engravers were in the habit of putting the same date on different engravings meant for the same publication, even if the engravings were finished at different times. Yet Lindsay does this on p. 227. Incidentally, the same caution applies to dates in engravings. The dates on Whatman papers generally agree with the date when the sheets were formed on the molds, but other papermakers sometimes used old molds with watermark dates, without bothering to change the date.71

Erdman's opinion about the "irony" in Nelson and Pitt is quoted on p. 204, the argument being that these paintings, far from being apothecaries of Pitt and Nelson, are really concealed lampoons against them. Lindsay says that Blake, if Erdman is right, managed to conceal his real feelings completely, and suspects that Blake, anxious for state support, deliberately posed as a patriotic propagandist for the war against France. If he is right in this—and I agree that Lindsay's view is more reasonable than Erdman's—then these paintings were meant to be what Blake himself called them, grand apothecaries of the real heroes of the nation. It is clear from the vehement attack in The Examiner that contemporaries thought that Blake supported the war policy. If this is so, Erdman's interpretation is correct. In these works Blake meant to celebrate the heroes of the British nation. The only relevant question that remains is whether Blake was honest or not in painting these apothecaries. Had his opinions about France changed, or was he merely trying to make himself acceptable to those in power? I am glad to see that Lindsay asks this straightforward question, but I am not sure that I agree with his answer that Blake deliberately lied in the hope of getting a government commission.

It has to be observed that England, which in the 1790s had been an accomplice in the crusade against the French republic, now waged a war on the Napoleonic empire. After 1804 Napoleon fitted Blake's description of "a Tyrant crowning," and at least after that date—or perhaps already from 1799 when Napoleon abolished the democratic institutions in France and declared himself First Consul—Pitt and Nelson could be seen in a new light, as angels pleased to perform the divine command to crush that tyrant. Blake's exalted hopes in the peace negotiations of 1801-180212 had already come to nought in 1803, when the French conquered the formerly British Hannover. In 1804 Napoleon caused the Spanish declaration of war on Britain. The war of 1805 was clearly provoked by the French, who in 1803 had already planned an invasion of England. The only witness who, in 1803, had heard William and Catherine Blake volunteer to cut throats with Napoleon, was the proven liar John Scolfield.

In a letter to Hayley 28 May 1804 Blake criticized the French for idolizing Bonaparte, and in 1815 Cumberland wrote that "Blake says he is fearful they will make too great a Man of Napoleon and enable him to come to this country."73 That Blake condemned the British attack on Copenhagen in 180724 does not mean that he thought the war against Napoleon unjustified. He could well have disliked the government's organized graft in selling army commissions, and yet deemed resistance to the French imperialism necessary. If we today condemn the British colonization of India, or the allied bombardment of Dresden in the second world war, it does not mean that we think that Britain and France should never have resisted Hitler.

Lindsay quotes Keynes' suggestion that the vision of The Ghost of the Flea (1819) was based on an engraving of a flea in Hooke's Micrographia.66 I cannot see much resemblance. However, if one examines the background monsters in Blake's illustrations of 1797-98 of Gray's Poems, no. 18 for the Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College,57 one is immediately struck by the resemblance of one of them to the Ghost of a Flea. Thus, in 1819, Blake saw a vision of his own illustration of one of the "murderous band" that stand in ambush around the playing children "to seize their prey": one of the "monsters of human fate / And black Misfortune's baleful train." This agrees very well with Jaensch's definition of one of the main types of eidetic vision, namely that which consists of "modified after-images."

Titles, dates and descriptions of Blake's pictorial works are sometimes wrong. The date of the color-print Elohim Creating Adam should be 1795 (p. 80). Lindsay is wrong when he says (p. 100) that the color-print God Judging Adam is lost; there are copies at the Tate, at the Metropolitan Museum in New York and at the Philadelphia Museum of Art.60 As Butlin has shown, the Tate Gallery copy bears the inscription "God Judging Adam" (under the mount).58 This work was mistakenly given the title "Elijah in the Fiery Chariot" by W. M. Rossetti in 1863, yet Lindsay still thinks that a work with that title exists. To add to the confusion Lindsay has invented one more subject which never existed, called by him "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College J* of human fate / And black Misfortune's baleful train." This agrees very well with Jaensch's definition of one of the main types of eidetic vision, namely that which consists of "modified after-images."

On p. 54, n., The Book of Enoch is listed among the sources for That, but it is unlikely that Blake knew anything about the book before 1789, although he illustrated the first English translation of it, which appeared in 1821.70 The lithograph Enoch, 1807, was based on the short text on Enoch in Genesis 5:24.

Why does Lindsay say (p. 68) that the old blind and lame man in Jerusalem pl. 84 is led to an open door? He is led into a square with two churches in the background, one resembling Westminster Abbey, the doors of which are shut, the other resembling St. Paul's, the doors of which are not shown. Moreover, I cannot see any "inkhorn at his side."

If we today condemn the British colonization of India, or the allied bombardment of Dresden in the second world war, it does not mean that we think that Britain and France should never have resisted Hitler.
I can understand that many commentators find it hard to agree that the author of Jerusalem could ever have found the British war against Napoleon justified. Notice the song of the Spectre Sons of Albion in Jerusalem pl. 65: "We were carried away in thousands from London... compell'd to fight under the iron whips / Of our captains, fearing our officers more than the enemy" (K 700). But is not this point here that war is the natural result of industrialization and the alienation and oppression of the workers, "that they may grind / And polish brass & iron hour after hour, laborious task, / Kept ignorant of its use: that they may spend the days of wisdom / In sorrowful drudgery to obtain a scanty pittance of bread, / In ignorance to view a small portion and think that All"? And is not all this the result of natural philosophy advocated by Bacon, Newton and Locke, and also by Voltaire and Rousseau, the inspirers of British capitalism and of the bourgeois revolution in France and its child Napoleon? Certainly capitalism is a universal state, in the world and in the soul.

Perhaps even Erdman would agree with me so far, that the war is the evil means to overthrow war, and that Nelson and Pitt in this apocalyptic sense perform the divine command. Yet I feel there is more to it; Pitt and Nelson are not the senseless tools of a superior will; they are, as Blake says, "pleased to perform the Almighty's orders" (italics mine). They seem to know exactly what they are doing.

On p. 246 Jack Lindsay uncritically reproduces H. H. Gilchrist's technically improbable account (pub. 1887, based on a recent interview with George Richmond), of how James Deville took a plaster cast of Blake's head. According to Richmond, this was the first cast Deville made, and Blake's mouth is said to have been given an uncharacteristic look of severity because he suffered much pain through the plaster pulling out a quantity of his hair. This pulling out, however, could only have occurred when the mold was being removed from Blake's face, after the plaster had hardened. No expression of pain at that stage could have left any impression on the plaster. The making of the mold was described somewhat differently by Herbert P. Horne, also in 1887 and also after a conversation with Richmond: "Much of the forced expression of the nostrils and more particularly of the mouth is due to the discomfort which the taking of the cast involved, many of Blake's hairs adhering to the plaster until quite recently." There is a hint here that Richmond made two separate statements which were innocently joined together by the interviewers, and particularly by H. H. Gilchrist. Richmond, being a painter, was certainly familiar with the technique of making casts from nature, so I think that he must have told his interviewers something like the following: that Blake's mouth was distorted, because he found it unpleasant to have his face covered with wet plaster, which, when it begins to harden, gets very warm; that his nostrils were abnormally dilated, because he had to breathe through tubes inserted into them, otherwise he would have died from suffocation under the wet plaster; that these two circumstances accounted for the look of severity; that a number of Blake's hairs stuck to the mold when it was removed from his face, after having hardened; and that some of the hairs which had stuck to the mold afterwards became attached to the cast, when the cast was made from the mold.

When Richmond said that this was the first cast Deville took he was almost certainly mistaken. The National Portrait Gallery cast is inscribed: "A. 66 / PUBD AUG. 1, 1823. I DEVILL [sic!] / 17 Strand, London." If the mold was also made about this date, it could hardly have been Deville's first work, since he, according to J. T. Smith, "when a young man was employed by Mr. Nollekens to make casts from moulds." Deville was born in 1776; would the devoted phrenologist really have delayed the making of his first mold until he was about 47, although he was familiar with the taking of casts from molds since his youth? It is indeed possible that the mold was made much earlier than the National Portrait Gallery cast; Richmond, who owned the undated cast now at the Fitzwilliam, said that Blake was about 50 when the mold was made. That would suggest a date around 1807, when Deville was 31.

Unfortunately, the "A. 66" on the National Portrait Gallery cast must reasonably refer to Blake's age when the mold was made. It is true that he was 65, not 66, in August 1823, but the error could be explained by assuming that Deville knew the year but not the day of his birth.

At present the evidence is hopelessly contradictory. Personally, I would rather trust Deville's inscription than the Richmond interviews. Richmond met Blake in the spring of 1825, when he was 16; in 1807 he was not born, and in 1823 he did not yet know Blake.

On p. 268 Lindsay throws doubt on Richmond's "edifying tale" of Blake's death because he "in a letter three days later says nothing of having been in at the death." In his letter 15 August 1827 to Samuel Palmer, Richmond wrote: "Just before he died His Countenance became fair--His eyes brighten'd and He burst out in Singing of the things he Saw in Heaven[,] In truth He Died like a Saint as a person who was standing by Him Observed." This is an eyewitness account. That Richmond did not expressly say "I was there at the death" is only natural, because at that time no one suspected that he was not. Later H. H. Gilchrist, quoting Richmond himself, wrote that "George Richmond... closed the poet's eyes and kissed William Blake in death." Jack Lindsay is often careless in the handling of sources, and sometimes seems to twist the evidence deliberately in order to discredit "edifying tales spread about by the Ancients," and make Blake less offensively "Christian." I think it is because Lindsay is basically in sympathy with Blake that he tries to play down his "spiritual side"--would he not have been an even grander fellow, had he been an atheist? There is still every reason for Blake to implore God to protect him from his friends.

1 See Martin Butlin, William Blake, exhibition catalogue (Tate Gallery, 1976), nos. 6-7; Geoffrey Keynes, Blake Studies (Oxford, 1971), pp. 17 ff., repr. pls. 9, 10.

2 Morton D. Paley, "Wonderful Originals"--Blake and Antique


5 Above, n. 4.

6 See the figure of Heliodorus in The Expulsion of Heliodorus, the rider in the middle foreground of Leo the Great and Attilla, and Heliodorus in the middle foreground of The Battle of Petra. For the cartoons, see the figure in foreground left of The Death of Anias, repr. John White, The Raphael Cartoons (Victoria and Albert Museum, 1972), p. 4; see also pl. 13.

7 Kenney, Blake Studies, p. 28, pl. 14.


9 As far as I am aware no one has yet made a systematic investigation of watermarks on paper used by Blake, or systematically compared dated watermarks with the accepted dates of Blake's works on paper. The rule seems to be that whenever Blake needed a considerable amount of paper, he bought it fresh. His 537 watercolors for Young were begun in 1795, and the engravings from them were executed in 1796 and 1797; the only dated watermarks are 1796. The color-prints dated 1795 also have watermarks 1794. The first copies of Jerusalem, completed in 1819, have watermarks 1818 and 1819. But notice that many of the Dante watercolors of 1824-27 were done on paper watermarked "WESLAR 1796."


11 Lindsay, p. 31. Cf. K 62. The ms. is in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. For a facsimile, see Groar Malmqvist, William Blake En 3 på månaden (Stockholm, 1979); text, Swedish translation and facsimile of the ms.


14 A stereotype process is described in anon., Valuable Secrets Concerning Arts and Trades, London 1758, ch. 1. This work, translated from the French, had seen seven English editions by 1810.

15 Lindsay, p. 32. This supposition is an unacknowledged quotation from Bentley, Blake Records (Oxford, 1969), p. 32 n. 1. It is wrong. Stoppers have been known as long as etching has been practiced. Their composition differs and I cannot here attempt any hypothetical reconstruction of the composition of Blake's stoppers. See also Blake Records, p. 460 n. 1.

16 Lindsay, p. 38.

17 Lindsay, p. 38.

18 A Collection of memoranda by Reynolds, listing the different binders, pigments and protective varnishes used for many of his works, is printed by Charles Lock Eastlake, Materials for a History of Oil Painting I (London, 1847); Dover reprint under the title Methods & Materials of Painting (New York, 1960), pp. 539-44.


20 The great pioneer works on the drying of oils are by Alexander Eibner, Sonntag und Reibildung an trockenhenden Olfarbenmischungen und auf Ölbildern (Munich, 1920); Über fette Öle (Munich, 1922); Entwickelung und Verkostung der Tusellmeierei (Munich, 1928), esp. ch. 7; "The Yellowing of Oil Files and Its Prevention," Print and Varnish Production Manager, 13 (1935), 7-11. See also Rutherford J. Gettens and George L. Stout, Painting Materials & A Short Dicylogaphia (New York, 1942); Dover reprint (New York, 1966), pp. 36-46; George L. Stout, The Care of Pictures (New York, 1948); Dover reprint (New York, 1975), pp. 11-12; and Ruhemann, The Cleaning of Paintings, pp. 101, 114, 243-44, 388-89.

21 Stout, The Care of Pictures, p. 40.

22 Saponification changes the refractive index of the film.

23 Theophilos Presbyter, De discriae artibus, ch. 20 (The making of linseed oil), ch. 21 (The making of a varnish by boiling sandarac in linseed oil), ch. 25-26 (How to grind colors in oil or gum, and how to apply them), ch. 24, 27 (How to paint in oils on metal foil). For a modern edition, see C. R. Dodwell, Theophilos de Discretae artibus (London, 1961). An error in Dodwell's translation of chapter 25, headed "De coloribus oleo et gymi teremendis" (p. 24), should be pointed out. Theophilos refers to pigments which can be ground either with linseed oil or gum, not with an emulsion of oil in a solution of gum in water, as Dodwell mistakenly believes, since he translates "gummies" as "this [drying] medium" (the brackets are Dodwell's) or "medium." It should be "gum." Also, a long discussion of ms. and former editions, see Dodwell, pp. liv-lxix.

26 Devar. Cat. 2, K 565.

27 A work by Blake describing his technical inventions in art certainly existed, and was close to publication in 1809, though it disappeared later. For the first time in Blake's letter to Butts 10 Jan. 1802 (K 812), and again in his letter to Cumberland 19 Dec. 1808 (K 865), where he says that he has begun to print it, and has a proof, Blake's letter is referred to again in his advertisement for the 1809 exhibition (K 561). It cannot be identical with the Descriptive Catalogue, for it is mentioned in it (K 565). Cumberland refers to it in two notes 1807, and in a letter to Blake 18 Dec. 1808 he volunteers to "prepare it for the Press" (Blake Records, pp. 187, 188, 211 f.; see also p. 211 n. 1).

28 Theophilos, De discriae artibus, ch. 25: "because each time that you apply a colour, you cannot apply another over it until the first has dried. On figures this is a particularly long and tedious process." (Dodwell's translation in his ed. of Theophilos, p. 24). I agree with Dodwell's translation of "imagines" as "figures," not "pictures." Notice also that Raspe, A Critical Essay on Oil Painting (1781) describes a ground of glue and chalk similar to that used by Blake, and says that it is found underlying the colors on Egyptian mummy-cases, and is common in medieval painting (pp. 22, 25). The making of a hide glue identical with the carpenter's glue of more recent times is described by Theophrastus Paracelsus in ch. 18, and the laying of a ground of glue and chalk (or, alternatively, of burnt gypsum) in ch. 19. Blake could have got his recipe for the chalk ground from this source. Cf. also my n. 23.


30 Devar. Cat. 2, K 566.

31 For Blake's definition of fresco as watercolors, see K 561, 563, 577. For this reason Blake wrote that there was "no difference between Rafael's Cartoons and his frescos" (K 584). It is hardly necessary to point out that Blake's use of the term "fresco" is idiosyncratic.

32 Max Doerner, The Materials of the Artist (London, 1976), pp. 329-36, with a summary on pp. 335-36. The first English edition (translation by Eugen Neuhaus) was 1934, the first German edition 1921. The passage on van Eyck is similar in all editions I have seen.


34 Alexander Eibner, Entwickelung und Verkostung der Malerei, p. 175 and Appendix E. This was known already to Leonardo, who wrote that resin varnishes "col lungo tempo pigliano vn ciero

33 Above, n. 31.

34 Theodore Turquet de Mayerne, Pictoria Sculptura & quae subalternum artium, 1620 (the ms. was begun at that date), p. 153, BM Sloane MS 2052; ed. Ernst Berger in Beiträge zur Geschichte der Malerei, IV (Munich, 1901), pp. 336-38.

35 The rules could be summarized thus: make undercoats strong in binding, rapid in drying, hard and lean. Make top coats weak in binding, slow in drying, soft, fat. The old masters knew which binders and which pigments were suitable for undercoats, which for top coats; which pigments were compatible with which binders, and which pigments could not be mixed with each other. The "secret" of their success was not something that could be kept in a bottle; it was the result of knowledge, training and skill. See Cennini's Introduction to his list of pigments (ch. 35, Milanesi ed., p. 49): "let us come to the grinding of colours, showing you which colours are the finest, and the coarsest, and the worst; which one wants to be ground or worked up little, or into which one much; which one wants one binder, which one wants another; and just as they differ in their colours, so they do in the natures of their binders, and in the grinding, and in the washing against the mixture of verdigris and white lead, and in ch. 117 (p. 97) he says that the lower layers in gessoing ought to be stronger in binding, "because the gesso grosso [undercoat] is your foundation for everything."

36 K 566.

37 The alla prima technique of the pre-raphaelites is described by William Holman Hunt, Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (1905-06), I, 276. For the technique of the Germans, see Kurt Weihle, Werkstoffe und Techniken der Malerei (Ravensburg, 1967), pp. 662-66, repr. of an unfinished alla prima painting by Adolph von Menzel, 8585.06.03.1 (original destroyed in World War II).

38 The Metropolitan Museum (New York) copy of God Judging Adam is signed "Fresco. WBlake inv." and the Victoria and Albert Museum copy of Naomi "Fresco WBlake." This shows that Tatham was wrong when he supposed the color-prints were printed in oil (Blake Records, pp. 33 f.; Gilchrist, 1942, p. 366). Note that, according to John Linnell, the account of the printing process was inaccurate (Blake Records, p. 34 n. 1).

39 None of the large color-prints bears any date other than 1795; some are printed on paper watermarked 1794, but many are undated. In one copy of the color-printed Small Book of Designs the date of the title of Urania, 1794, has been changed to 1796. See Bentley, Blake Books (Oxford, 1977), the sections on the illuminated works, which show that color-prints were made whenever they can be dated with any certainty, were printed 1794-96.


41 Cennino Cennini, Il Libro dell'arte o Trattato della pittura, ch. 109, recommends "colla di caravella," made from goat's muzzles, hoofs and clipplings of skin, as a binder for pigments. "In temperar colori," and also for carpenter's work "attaccar legni, far liuti," and as a binder for grounds "temperar gessi"—see Tambroni ed. (1821), pp. 94-95; Milanesi ed. (1859; 1975), p. 92. Blake is known to have read Linnell's copy of the Tambroni ed. see Blake Records, p. 33 n. 3, where Cennini's name is misspelled "Cennini."


43 Ruhemann, The Cleaning of Paintings, pp. 269-70.


45 Blake Records, p. 517, and above, n. 44.

46 "It [oil] turns every permanent white to a yellow and brown putty," 566. Note the force of the word "permanent." Blake did not consider white lead a permanent white because, unprotected by an oily vehicle, it is known to blacken.

47 K 566. Further proof that Blake did not use white lead is given by Tatham: "he has touched the lights with white compound of whiting & glue, of which material he laid the ground of his panel" (Blake Records, p. 515). Whiting (chalk) is, of course, much more permanent than white lead, if an oil-free and resin-free vehicle is used; but if such a painting is varnished, the whites are instantly killed.

48 Consider the large color-prints: those that have been varnished (for instance Small Picture, in the Tate) are as bright as the "frescos" of Belzoni and Pitt, while the unvarnished ones are in a perfect condition.

49 According to Tatham, confirmed by J. T. Smith, Blake Records, pp. 517, 472.

50 Blake Records, p. 472.

51 Blake Records, p. 472.


53 Advertisement of Exhibition 1809, K 560.

54 Blake Records, p. 33 n. 3.

55 See Court Ugozino (c. 1826, Keynes Coll.), The Body of Abel Found by Adam and Eve (c. 1826, Tate), The Burlington Magazine (signed and dated 1821, on thin chalk ground on paper), The Faerie Quene (c. 1825, National Trust, Petworth House), by Martin Butlin, William Blake, Tate Gallery exhib. cat. (1978), nos. 312, 313, 307, 310.

56 See Blake Records, pp. 517, 459, 481.

57 Notebook, p. 51 (K 592).

58 K 246.

59 Keynes, Blake Studies, p. 252.

60 Blake Records, pp. 65 f., 69-71, repr. pl. 11.

61 Blake Records, pp. 105 f., 162, 163 f.

62 K 544.

63 Robinson wrote to Dorothy Wordsworth 16 Feb. 1826 that Blake's " MSS. are immense in quantity" (Blake Records, p. 324). He must have seen at least one of them 18 Feb. 1826 when he wrote in his diary: "I inquired abt. his writings—['I have written more than Voltaire or Rousseau—Six or Seven epic poems as long as Homer and 20 Tragedies as long as Macbeth.'] He showed me his Version (for so it may be called) of Genesis—as understood by a Christian Visionary—in which in [the del.] a style resembles the Bible—The spirit is given[] he read a passage at random[] It was striking" (Blake Records, p. 322). Cunningham, also, wrote that Blake "has left volumes of verse, amounting, it is said, to nearly an hundred, prepared for the press" (Blake Records, p. 506).

64 See Bentley, Blake Books, pp. 479-84, and Blake Records, p. 414 n. 3.

65 "The remaining Books of this Poem are Finished, and will be published in their Order," says the advertisement of the French Revolution, and Blake and Johnson had no reason to lie (K 134).

66 Reppr. Keynes, Blake Studies, pl. 33.


68 Butlin, William Blake, exhib. cat. 1978, nos. 87-89.


is tempting to believe that Daville used this text as a reference in 1823.


77 John Thomas Smith, Nollekens and His Times (1828), p. 371.

78 Blake Records, pp. 346-47.

79 H. H. Gilchrist, Anne Gilchrist, p. 258. The interview must have been after 1882 when Linnell died, Samuel Palmer having died in 1881, since Gilchrist says that Richmond at that time was the only living man who had seen William Blake.
CONFERENCE: BLAKE & CRITICISM

Nelson Hilton reports that the proposal for the "Conference on Blake and Criticism" has been filed with the National Endowment for the Humanities, and its decision is expected by 1 March. Should funding be approved, the conference is scheduled for 12-14 November 1981, at the University of California, Santa Cruz. The conference would offer sessions on (1) Blake and the Critical Tradition, (2) Blake and New Literary History, (3) Blake, Feminism, Psychoanalysis, (4) Blake, Textuality, and Deconstruction, and (5) Blake, his Audience, and the Future of the Humanities. Along with the outstanding selection of scholars who have already agreed to participate, the conference would seek additional papers for each session, but particularly for (3) and (5). Some financial assistance should be available to national and/or foreign participants who would otherwise be unable to attend. Anyone interested is invited to contact him (Dept. of English, UGA, Athens, Ga. 30602).

MLA 1980

The 1980 Special Session on "Blake and the Eighteenth Century" will meet from 8:30 to 9:45 on the morning of 30 December (Cottonwood A, Hyatt Hotel). The program will include Jim S. Borck on "London and Jerusalem," Leo Damrosch on "Blake and the Recovery of the Lyric," Tom Vogler on "Unlocking Blake's Crystal Cabinet," Morris Eaves on "Classical Line and Romantic Identity," and a response by Stephen Carr.

CORRECTION

An announcement about a special Blake issue of 10 appeared in the Fall 1980 issue of Blake Quarterly. The deadline for submissions was given as 15 February 1980. The correct deadline is 15 February 1981. Please pass the word along to anyone you know who might be interested in contributing to this project.

BACK ISSUES

The shelves of Blake's editorial offices are stacked with back issues. We would like to remind our readers that either an original or xerox copy of every issue is available. The remaining original copies are $3.00 each. The out of print issues can be xeroxed for $5.00 each. Please see the insert in this issue for further details.