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In Night IX of *The Four Zoas*, Urizen begins a movement toward redemption by delivering a speech of repentance. The speech is particularly interesting because Blake at some time made an important revision in the nature of Urizen's remarks. Changing five words in the text, he redirects what was originally a telling rejection of memory. In revising Urizen's opening words—"O that I had never drank the wine nor eat the bread / Of dark mortality nor cast my view into the past"—Blake makes anticipation rather than retrospection the object of his condemnation: "O that I had never drank the wine nor eat the bread / Of dark mortality nor cast my view into futurity" (121:3–4, E 390). Near the end of the speech, Blake’s first version includes this emphatic dismissal of memory:

> Then Go O dark remembrance I will cast thee forth from these Heavens of my brain nor will I look upon remembrance more I cast remembrance away & turn my back upon that void Which I have made for lo remembrance is in this moment

(121:19–22, E 390)

In revising, he carefully went through the speech and replaced "remembrance" in each line with "futurity."

Blake's change of opinion about these lines, whenever it occurred, indicates that he had some difficulty with this crucial moment of repentence. Should Urizen repent of having looked into the past, or into the future? The final version shifts blame from memory to anxiety about the future. As we shall discover, the mental act which the poem originally repents of ultimately returns as a principal redemptive power. But Urizen's or Blake's confusion at this moment serves as a clue to some temporal difficulties in *The Four Zoas*. If there is a single, dominating temporal theme in the poem, it has to do with the persistent significance of what has come before: the future will repeat the past, but only according to how the past is understood. To investigate this theme more carefully, we need to move backward somewhat from the conclusive Night IX, and consider Night VIIa. At this stage of the narrative, Blake made a series of revisions which he considered indispensable to the progress of his epic. But the task of interpreting Night VIIa is made much harder—if more urgent—by textual problems which have perplexed and divided Blake's editors.

The chronology of Nights VIIa and VIIb has received much attention, and lingering uncertainties about this double Night have made production of an FZ text difficult. The controversy over how to treat these two Night VII's has just reached a new stage with the publication of Erdman's 1982 edition, which installs a Night VII radically different from the version he originally presented. In 1965, Erdman used only VIIa in the sequence of Nights, and relegated VIIb to an appendix. Other scholars objected to this treatment of VIIb, maintaining that the poem needs the material in that Night, and gradually refined their ideas about where to put it. Three of them published theories in 1978 which all suggested the same general chronology—that Blake wrote the first part of VIIa, then VIIb, and finally some late additions to VIIa—and proposed new ways of ordering the text. Two of these three proposals called for separating VIIa into two parts and inserting VIIb in between. Erdman in his new edition has adopted one of these proposals, although with some reservations, and thus established a version of Night VII with the old VIIa pulled apart in the middle.

For those who have grown accustomed to the old VIIa, and react with some alarm to its Zoa-like crisis of division, there may be more grounds for objection than mere nostalgia. The following discussion of memory in Night VIIa will eventually offer some interpretive justification for considering VIIa in one piece, even though it appears to have been written in at least two different stages. Whatever its relation to VIIb, Blake clearly concentrated on making VIIa a turning point in developing the apocalypse of Night IX. Twice he "ends" the Night, then decides to reopen it, as if he recognized that the enthusiastic conclusion of the epic still lacked some important preparation. The second and final edition—and perhaps a very late one—begins with a surprising appreciation of memory. In order to understand the powers and dangers of this faculty in *The Four Zoas*, we must consider in some detail how memory works in
Night VIIa.

The obvious ambition of *The Four Zoas* is to find a passage into eternal life, and in Night VIIa Blake forces his poem to study the means of passage as an urgent problem. The Spectre of Urthona twice announces the need for an entry into eternity; in both cases he calls for a backward movement, for a re-passage or return:

For till these terrors planted round the Gates of Eternal life
Are driven away & annihilated we never can repass the Gates

Thou never canst embrace sweet Enitharmon terrible Demon.
Till
Thou art united with thy Spectre Consummat ing by pains & labours
That mortal body & by Self annihilation back returning
To Life Eternal

(85:32–35, E 368)

Those “Gates of Eternal life” modulate into “the Gates of Enitharmon’s heart” (85:13, E 360), and finally into “the Gates of Memory”: “Unbar the Gates of Memory look upon me / Not as another but as they real Self” (85:37–38, E 368). If the gates of memory really deserve comparison with the gates of eternal life, a number of terrors must first be driven away from the concept of memory.

In its search for the one telling cause of human disorder, *The Four Zoas* finds not that explanations are hard to come by, but that they appear in all too plentiful a supply. *The Four Zoas* contains too many versions of the fall of the Ancient Man. Most of them enter the poem as narratives of remembered experience spoken by one of the Zoas or their Emanations; two are delivered by choric groups—“the Demons of the Deep” (14:7–16:12, E 308–09), and some “messengers from Beulah” (21:16–19:5, E 311–12)—and the epic narrator also contributes in his own voice. The final two such narratives occur in Night VIIa, the first given by the Shadow of Enitharmon, the second by the Spectre of Urthona. Studied in relation to the memory-narratives which precede them, and in context with the dramatic situation that surrounds them, these stories of the fall suggest several ways in which memory may be viewed as an obstruction to eternity.

Perhaps the most degraded form of memory in *The Four Zoas* is that which provides the foundation for revenge. Revenge depends upon an act of temporal distortion: a phenomenon of the past is abstracted from the temporal continuum and, frozen into fixed identity, assumes a hyperbolic, preemptive significance. Memory as the tool of revenge establishes the past as a permanent and separate state, and invites a cyclic pattern of human interaction. Enitharmon’s Shadow concludes her account of the fall in Night VIIa with this vengeful message:

Maist find a way to punish Vala in thy fiery South
To bring her down subjected to the rage of my fierce boy

(83:32–34, E 359)

The Shadow’s call for revenge seems a petty gesture, reducing a complex story to a single enemy and a simple solution—but not really a solution, just a moment of relief. She has drawn from her memory a source of injury, Vala, and fixed her with a punishable identity. When we juxtapose this with Enitharmon’s first narrative memory, her “Song of Death” in Night I, the vengeful memory of Enitharmon’s Shadow seems highly suspicious: in that first version, delivered for different purposes, Enitharmon presents herself as being mysteriously inside Vala—“For in the visions of Vala I walked with the mighty Fallen One” (10:15, E 305). The identities of Vala and Enitharmon are not as distinct and separable as the vengeful memory would make them appear.

The Shadow’s call for revenge, on the surface a gesture toward futurity, actually shows how the past can return in concealment. Apparently without knowing it, she repeats a crucial event in the original crisis she has just described. She asks the Spectre to bring down Vala to her “fierce boy,” Orc. The Shadow doesn’t seem to know what Urizen has just discovered in Night VIIa, that Orc is really Luvah. If we take this into account, the Shadow in effect wants to punish Vala by pairing Vala and Luvah. In the crisis story she has just related, the Eternal Man’s fall first becomes apparent when he sees Luvah and Vala as separate forms:

Then behold a wonder to the Eyes
Of the now fallen Man a double form Vala appeared. A Male
And female shuddering pale the Fallen Man recoild
From the Enormity & calld them Luvah & Vala

(83:13–16, E 358)

The Shadow’s plans to punish Vala amount to a recreation of the first scene perceived by the Eternal Man in his fallen state. Her vengeful motives, which come to light after she has finished her story, give us a better idea of what that scene meant to the Eternal Man. His seeing Vala divide into a male and a female might well have originated in a fear of Vala’s power over him, and an attendant feeling of jealousy. This fear expresses itself in a rival male, now seen as a competitor and a threat. Like the Shadow, the Eternal Man must have wanted to punish Vala, and paired Vala and Luvah in order to make that possible. This speculation about the Eternal Man’s motives has not been based on the Shadow’s narrated remembrance of eternity, for there she gave no hint of any motivation; it has come from her repetition of this event, which provides more revealing emotional information. Interpreters of the Zoas need to keep Freud’s 1914 statement in mind: “We may say that the patient does not remember anything of what he has forgotten and repressed, but acts it out. He reproduces it not as a memory but as an action; he repeats it, without, of course,
knowing that he is repeating it.

The Spectre of Urthona answers his shadowy companion by approving of her plan for revenge, although he intends to punish a different victim:

I labour night & day for Los but listen thou my vision
I view futurity in thee I will bring down soft Vala
To the embraces of this terror & I will destroy
That body I created then shall we unite again in bliss

The Spectre also finds it convenient to reduce a difficult question of identity to simple terms. This wish for revenge brings to a conclusion what his narrative has been trying to accomplish, the establishment of Los as a separate and inimical identity. The Spectre's narrative raises so many problems that his final gesture of revenge cannot stand as an acceptable answer; in lines Blake added he begins to complicate the issue of his relationship with Los.

The Spectre's vengefulness creates a suspicious future—"I view futurity in thee"—based on a past that is still obscure. He has just remembered for the Shadow his version of the fall. At the moment when he recounts his own particular catastrophe, the narrative becomes too condensed, his memory too dark. "I was divided in darkness & oblivion," he tells her, offering no more than this brief, passive explanation. When the Spectre calls for revenge against Los at the end of his speech, he reveals more about his self-division by this present action than we could ever get directly from his memory-narrative. As at the end of the Shadow's story, the Spectre's vengeful message repeats more revealingly a crisis which he had remembered only obscurely.

This first discussion of memory has considered it as a prerequisite to revenge, but only in the sense of an immediate, efficient cause. Underneath the simple reductions or distortions necessary for revenge lie more fundamental psychological manipulations. Memory constructs fictions of responsibility and priority which make acts of power (including revenge) possible. The Shadow of Enitharmon wishes to make Luvah responsible for the crisis of the fall:

But Luvah close conferred with Urizen in darksome night
To bind the father & enslave the brethren Nought he knew
Of sweet Eternity the blood flowd round the holy tent & rivn
From its hinges uttering its final groan all Beulah fell
In dark confusion mean time Los was born & Enitharmon
But how I know not then forgetfulness quite wrapt me up
A period nor do I more remember till I stood
Beside Los in the Cavern dark enslavd to vegetative forms
According to the Will of Luvah who assumed the Place
Of the Eternal Man & smote him

The poem as a whole provides some basis for speculation about her motives, if the distinction between Enitharmon and her Shadow can momentarily be set aside. Since the Shadow proceeds directly from Enitharmon, it seems legitimate to consider Enitharmon and her Shadow as sharing a continuous history. In managing her relationship with Los, Enitharmon has found that an alliance with Urizen can be very useful. Enitharmon's "Song of Death" in Night I is really a song about enslavement: in that first narrative memory she successfully oppresses Los with the opinion that he has very little real power. In her fallen state, Enitharmon's main goal is to convince Los of his vegetative enslavement, and when he begins to collapse in despair, to comfort him with the restorative powers at her command. Enitharmon invokes Urizen as her patron, since Urizen stands as the great model for those who wish to acknowledge enslavement, and consider pity the best way to cope with that condition. The narrative version of the fall given in Night VIIa by Enitharmon's Shadow coincides with this Urizenic psychology. She needs an external enemy, Luvah, whose irreparable crime has committed man to slavery, and she has some interest in protecting Urizen from equal partnership in this violation.

If the Shadow creates a fiction of responsibility, the Spectre creates a fiction of priority. The Spectre reveals that he created Los as a temporary stay against oblivion, during the disastrous moments of the fall. From what follows in Night VIIa we have good reason to consider this a highly suspicious claim: the Spectre and Los will
which contradicts the Spectre's first story. It appears that the Spectre, unhappy with being under Los's control, has constructed a memory to reverse this relationship. Yet the Spectre's narrative should not be dismissed quite so simply as wishful fabrication. His account of a sudden plunge down veinlike rivers into darkness and division coincides with many versions of the fall already given, and the emotional force of his crisis commands a certain respect. A crisis of separation stands as the most basic fact for all these narratives of the fall, always attended by some sort of fading, darkness, or forgetfulness. Emerging from the shroud of forgetfulness surrounding her own crisis of division, the Shadow of Enitharmon created a reductive memory to suit the needs of her current situation. Similarly, the Spectre of Urthona traces back to that moment of darkness, and, once on the other side of it, fashions a memory which is useful for the psychological politics of his present state.

So far we have seen memory act as an obstruction to eternity in two related ways. As a tool of revenge, it motivates humans to struggle with a past which they will continually repeat, whether they recognize the repetition or not. It also introduces willful distortions of the past intended to increase present power. There are two other types of obstruction to consider which have different implications. In both of these aspects, memory hinders or weakens rather than empowers its agent.

The first might be called the Beulah fallacy. A narrator falls into the Beulah fallacy when he yearns for what seems to be his earliest memory, a prelapsarian pastoral paradise. He remembers the past as an ideal antithesis to the present troubled or vacant state; he cherishes the memory for what comfort it can afford. Nostalgia always yields pleasure mixed in with its pain of return, because the lost past comes alive with new emotional significance. The easy emotions of sentimental memory poetry come directly from this source. In analyzing such memories, one wants to know whether they represent a longing for a condition which once existed but has been irretrievably lost, or whether this golden age never existed at all except in the nostalgic memory. When Los says to Enitharmon, "I know thee not as once I knew thee in those blessed fields / Where memory wishes to repose among the flocks of Thrmas" (34:39–40, E 323), we may wish to fault him for languishing in a memory of the irretrievable past; but at least Los's memory refers to his experience as a child as the poem has previously described it. When the Spectre of Urthona talks about "the mild fields of happy Eternity," the status of that paradise is not at all clear.

The Spectre said. Thou lovely Vision this delightful Tree Is given us for a Shelter from the tempests of Void & Solid Till once again the morn of ages shall renew upon us To reunite in those mild fields of happy Eternity

The Spectre's remarks seem suspicious from the start, since he cherishes the Tree of Mystery as a "de-lightful" protection; what he needs protection from soon becomes apparent. Lines five and six raise an important question. Does the Spectre mean to say that Urthona and Enitharmon exist in eternity as two or as one? If the phrase "thou & I" can be excused as the only way for the Spectre to express "undivided essence" in a fallen state, the next line still causes problems: "thou my garden of delight & I the spirit in the garden." His memory seems colored with an ineradicable distinction between spirit and matter. The Spectre considers the Tree of Mystery "a shelter from the tempests of void and solid": "void and solid" suggests a separation analogous to spirit and matter, and further implicates the Spectre in a powerfully ordinary metaphysical dualism. Such dualism gave rise to various "mysterious" explanations among philosophers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, whose attempts to analyze the communicability of spirit and matter led to radical skepticism. The Spectre's narrative of his original crisis, in which he describes himself "scorning the frail body" in a "deformed form," reveals that he has considerable trouble with embodiment. The Spectre seems entirely in the grip of a dualistic mystery, even though his speech purports to describe an undivided prior state. This contradiction at the heart of his remembrance suggests that "the mild fields of happy Eternity" may not have been as simple as he wishes to remember.

Another problem arises when the Spectre tells Enitharmon's Shadow, "This thou well rememberest." The memory to which he refers must be the Shadow's narrative just delivered. A glance at her account reveals that the earliest state she can remember happens to be Beulah. "Among the Flowers of Beulah walked the Eternal Man," she begins, and later describes Urizen growing up "in the plains of Beulah" (83:7, E 358). These two pastoral settings constitute the only aspects of the Shadow's memory to which the Spectre might refer when he tells her that she, like him, remembers eternity. The Spectre has put into question his own vision of eternity by equating it with explicit references to Beulah. Wherever it occurs in The Four Zoas, the Beulah fallacy suggests a danger: it tempts one to withdraw from redemptive struggles, and repose in a lulling but incomplete image of eternity.

Nostalgic repose in a lost paradise constitutes one use of memory which brings about a loss of power.
second such aspect of memory ends less in repose than in frustration and torment. When a Zoa remembers what seems an original, ultimate crisis, his mind becomes blocked; in tracing back to a single terrible moment, he arrives at a static configuration of values, which means a visionary impasse. This blocking takes two forms. When consciousness of ruin or loss is accompanied by a sense of free will, the impasse appears as a feeling of guilt; when it is not so accompanied, it takes the form of a victim-complex, the conviction that one is more sinned against than sinning.

The character in *The Four Zoas* most dominated by a sense of guilt is Urizen. Urizen's lament in the dens of Urthona (Night V) expresses this burden in interesting mythological terms. The main source appears to be *Paradise Lost*: Urizen remembers his guilty past in a narrative that brings to mind Satan's jealousy over God's elevation of the Son to special prominence in heaven. Urizen's guilt usually expresses itself in fear, a fear of futurity. Night Vila represents the climax to the story of Urizen and Luvah/Orc. Throughout the poem Urizen has suffered with an obsessive fear of the future; in Night Vila, as he finally confronts the particular object of his fear, the newborn Orc, he finds out that this fear of the future has really been a fear of the past: "Terrified Urizen heard Orc now certain that he was Luvah" (80:43, E 356). At this point in the plot of *The Four Zoas*, the two choices in Urizen's Night IX speech of repentance come together. Futurity now appears as the past happening again.

The scene between Urizen and Orc concludes with Orc's admission of guilt:

I well remember how I stole thy light & it became fire
Consuming. Thou Knowst me now O Urizen Prince of Light
And I know thee is this the triumph this the Godlike State
That lies beyond the bounds of Science in the Grey obscure
(80:39–42, E 356)

Orc's memory traces its way back to an original disruptive event, and at this point the discussion ends—the story of Urizen and Orc has reached a standstill. At this moment of guilty recognition—"Thou Knowst me now . . . and I know thee"—Orc and Urizen believe that they cannot change the determining past. Memory becomes just a means of discovering again the source of the impasse. Urizen's fear of the future now appears to have been a way of masking or hiding from this memory knowledge, which is the more dreadful of the two, since it does not offer the comfort of apparent control.

Orc claims to speak both for himself and for Urizen when he ridicules the failure of their attempt to achieve a "Godlike State / That lies beyond the bounds of Science." We have heard several narratives which attribute the fall to a collaborative effort of usurpation on the part of Urizen and Luvah. Now, for the first time, a motive comes to the surface. One recognizes the other with a cynical admission of mutual failure. The surprise of this climactic scene lies in its demonstration that Urizen and Orc, for all their overt hostility and mutual resistance, actually cooperate with each other. Orc finds himself rising "in peace unbound / From wrath" (80:29–30, E 356) after Urizen's sermon, because Urizen has assimilated him into a vision of a lustful, brutish world of devouring appetites. The static opposition of Urizen and Orc sustains a world in which desire knows itself to be chained, and reason suppresses desire in fear of its chained fury. Locked into their belligerent partnership, the two "guilty" Zoas share both an original crisis and a current torment.

If Urizen and Luvah are the guilty Zoas, Urthona and Tharmas see themselves as their victims. The Spectre of Urthona's narrative in Night VIIa reaches a moment of blocking in his passive account of an original crisis. "I was divided":

descending down I sunk along
The goary tide even to the place of seed & there dividing
I was divided in darkness and oblivion
(84:20–22, E 359)

As in the Shadow of Enitharmon's narrative, which falls into a "dark confusion" of forgetfulness just before her account of birth into vegetative life, the Spectre's memory darkens at the moment of traumatic birth. As the sentence changes from active to passive voice, the remembered scene turns suddenly from day into night. The Spectre's obscure passivity protects him from any feelings of guilt—"Ah poor divided dark Urthona," he laments—but it also leaves him powerless. In order to remedy this impotence, the Spectre finds an oppressor whom he can conveniently blame—Los—and plots revenge.

Thus we return to revenge: the fallen uses of memory have come full circle. As the Spectre's narrative concludes, the only gate of entry into eternity which memory has provided seems most inadequate: "I will destroy / That body I created then shall we unite again in bliss" (84:34–35, E 359). The Spectre makes a hollow-sounding wish for the future, based on a sense of the past which suffers from all the distortions and obstructions we have examined. Night VIIa has wound down to a depressing, static conclusion. But in fact the poem is just reaching the place where Blake found an opportunity to revise it toward redemption. In a late addition, after Blake had "ended" the Night (at 85:22), Los and the Spectre will join in a surprising embrace. As Johnson and Wilkie have suggested, this abrupt reversal cannot be accounted for by any single, determining motivation; "Undeniably, Blake leaves an area of disjunction between despair and recovery, something not spelled out for us."9 Thus warned against naive belief in a total explanation, we can still learn much about
the change by studying what happens to the Spectre during the last passages of the first Night Vila.

Blake first wrote the end of the Spectre's tale as follows:

I view futurity in thee I will bring down soft Vala
To the embraces of this terror & I will destroy
That body I created then shall we unite again in bliss
For till these terrors planted round the Gates of Eternal life
Are driven away & annihilated we never can repass the
Gates

(84:33-42, E 360-61)

But at some point he inserted these lines after "unite again in bliss":

Thou knowest that the Spectre is in Every Man insane brutish
Deformed that I am thus a ravening devouring lust continually
Craving & devouring but my Eyes are always upon thee O lovely
Delusion & I cannot crave for any thing but thee & till
I have thee in my arms & am again united to Los
To be one body & One Spirit with him not so
The spectres of the Dead for I am as the Spectre of the Living

(84:36-40, italicized portion later deleted)

The inserted lines are interesting because they seem to prepare for the union of Los and the Spectre in one obvious and another subtler way. The obvious link is provided by the Spectre's wish to unite with Los. (Blake may have deleted these lines partly because, given the late additions, he no longer considered them necessary.) The subtler way these lines prepare for the union has to do with the last version of obstructive memory discussed above. There, the Spectre saw himself as a victim of Urizen and Orc; in the first three inserted lines, he begins to consider that he must share the guilt for this state of ruin. And thus, as we shall consider shortly, he establishes a theme for his union with Los.

It seems plausible that Blake added these lines in an attempt to figure out his feelings about the Spectre, whose contradictory urges to destroy and to unite make both his relationship with Los and his place in the redemptive plot of The Four Zoas uncertain. Blake had trouble deciding whether to condemn the Spectre or redeem him. The inserted lines (along with some other minor changes) help make the Spectre a more sympathetic character, since he recognizes his own deformity and is alarmed by it. When Blake decides to make substantial additions to Vila introducing the Los-Spectre union, he seems to be carrying on this work of redefining the Spectre. For this reason, Night Vila, whatever the chronological advantages of the new text, still deserves to be considered in its former undivided state. Even if, as seems very likely, Blake wrote the last parts of Vila after the first part of Vila and all of Vili, he was evidently attending to the continuity at hand when he added on to p. 85. In the first added lines, Los embraces the Spectre just after "Enitharmon told the tale / Of Urthona" (85:28-29): this clearly refers to the Spectre's memory-narrative of p. 84, and indicates that the best transition to the late additions, as well as the key to this redemptive plot, lies in the memory work of Vila.12

As mentioned above, the Spectre signals a different use of memory in the lines Blake inserted. When he calls himself "insane brutish / Deformed," "a ravening devouring lust continually / Craving & devouring," he seems to be reinterpreting the story he has just finished remembering. The Spectre in his confession recognizes himself as the essence of deformation. In his tale, his "masculine spirit scorning the frail body" wandered "in this deformed form" as a mental traveler. His perception is founded on an inescapable knowledge of creative failure, and he knows himself a victim of the reality principle, which his "ravening devouring lust" vainly attempts to overcome. The Spectre means many things in different Blakean contexts, but everywhere he represents a deforming power—whether spoiling works of art, relationships, or equanimity—which somehow persists as an integral part of the imaginative process. Blake has trouble deciding what to do with the Spectre, whether to reject him or reform him or accept him as is, but evidently Los needs him if he is to perform the works of eternity.

Los ultimately answers the Spectre's admission of guilt with a confession of his own: "Now I feel the weight of stern repentance. . . . I also tremble at myself & at all my former life" (87:39, 51, E 369). The guilt discovered by Los and the Spectre differs from Urizen's and Orc's obstructive kind in that it will become a dynamic revisionary force rather than a disabling belief that the past cannot be changed. This new sense of memory finally enters the poem when, between their parallel confessions, the Spectre urges Los to join with him as a brother:

Unbar the Gates of Memory look upon me
Not as another but as thy real Self I am thy Spectre
Tho horrible & Ghastly to thine Eyes tho buried beneath
The ruins of the Universe.

(85:37-40, E 368)

Since Los finds this realization immensely inspiring—he begins to feel a "World within / Opening its gates" (86:7-8, E 368)—it now seems that the gates of memory have opened onto eternity. Los recognizes that the Spectre is part of himself. The Spectral vision, with its dangerous knowledge of deformation, constitutes a part of Los's identity which he has heretofore repressed. Los has defended himself against the Spectral component of his identity in order to escape its attendant guilt. As he receives the Spectre into his bosom, Los performs a striking act of memory: in its most important Blakean meaning, to remember means to make in the present an act of judgment about your identity—to recognize what belongs to you, to find or find again what has been forgotten or repressed. Epic remembering is a re-mem-
Freud's idea of repression, originally associated with his studies of amnesic forgetting, gradually takes on a more general meaning. Repression and defense blend together into a single principle of psychological motivation, indispensable to psychoanalytic theory. Freud gives his only explicit definition of the term in a 1915 article: "The essence of repression lies simply in turning something away, and keeping it at a distance, from the conscious." Repression in its more general sense does not stray very far from its original specific meaning. As a forgetting or as a turning away, repression serves to protect the psyche from traumatic memories. When Los unbars his gates of memory, it would appear that he has successfully abandoned his protection, and gained access to a more authentic self.

The theory is enticing, but too simple. Freud sets out to free men from the power of repression, but his work does not clearly affirm that such a project is possible, or even desirable. In its search for primal motivations, psychoanalysis may conduct an interminable struggle with one hypothetical origin after another. The process may succeed only in repeating again and again the constitutive symptoms of neurosis. Even in its most successful performance, psychoanalysis may lead to nothing more than a depressing awareness that humans can gain psychic health only at the expense of some attractive benefits of repression, that Orc and Urizen must remain enemies.

Night VIIa does not conclude as Los opens up the gates of memory and embraces the Spectre. The guilt which he invites in thus remembering himself does not vanish into transcendent bliss. Immediately following the scene of union between Los and the Spectre, Blake introduces an account of the fall according to Genesis and *Paradise Lost*, with Los and Enitharmon as Adam and Eve. Los's great act of memory does not provide a way to circumvent the "Cares and Sorrors and Troubles" (87:27, E 369) that his new identity brings. As the poem lingers around the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, it almost seems as though memory's triumph in this case represents just another defeat for the imagination longing for return to an eternal state. But Los insists that this is not the case. Comforting Enitharmon, he feels an earnest desire "to fabricate embodied semblances in which the dead / May live before us in our palaces and in our gardens of labour" (90:9-10, E 370).

In the passage which follows, Los begins to draw sublime forms, combining in his newly expanded spirit the fires of Orc and the boundary-setting power of Urizen:

So Enitharmon spoke & Los his hands divine inspired began
To modulate his fires studious the loud roaring flames
He vanquished with the strength of Art bending their iron points

And drawing them forth delighted upon the winds of Golgonooza

Los's drawing is an act of judgment, and in the crucial meaning described above, an act of remembrance: as Los outlines the separate forms of Urizen, he decides which aspects of Urizen to recognize as redeemable identity, and which to leave behind as alien and delusive. Los, in effect, remembers that he loves Urizen:

- Starred was Los he found his Enemy Urizen now
- In his hands. he wonderd that he felt love & not hate
- His whole soul loved him he beheld him an infant
- Lovely breadth from Enitharmon he trembled within himself

In his moment of confession, Los "trembles" at himself, and at all his former life. Los's drawing of Urizen constitutes another confessional tremble, another expansion of his identity to embrace a lost relative.

Psychoanalysis in its most depressing form effects a reduction rather than an expansion of human identity. As the slang term suggests, its function is to shrink. Reductive psychoanalysis succeeds only in making the patient aware of a secret debt to the past, over which he can have little or no control. Expansive or Blakean psychoanalysis also depends on memory, but in a different sense. Although the past remains as a signifying power, the patient is not enslaved to an inert set of primal conditions. The act of remembering as re-membering does not passively reproduce what has come before. It constitutes a creative judgment, happening now, in which the past and present mutually inform each other: it makes as much sense to say that the present determines the past as that the past determines the present.

Perhaps the most convincing memories of eternity in *The Four Zoas* occur in two brief statements near the end of Night VIIa. Inviting Los to unite with him, the Spectre says: "Thou didst subdue me in old times by thy Immortal Strength. . . . hear what inspir'd I speak & be silent" (85:39, 42, E 368). Los, poised to begin his drawing, feels that "my fires enlume afresh / Before my face ascending with delight as in ancient times" (90:13-14, E 370). Both memories refer to an eternity much different from Beulah repose, and come to the surface in direct resemblance to the present situation. The ancient past enters the memory only to the extent that the present mind can understand it. As Los performs in the present strong acts of judgment and creation, he can remember the eternal past as a time of imaginative struggle.

2 Erdman textual note, p. 844.


4 In his headnote concerning the new arrangement of the text, Erdman cautions that "Blake might have thought to discard VIIb, but he did not do so; it contains passages needed in The Four Zoas, somewhere. But their disposition remains an editorial problem, with no instructions from the author" (p. 836).

5 According to Erdman, pp. 838–39, the first ending to VIIA would have come after 85:22, where Blake wrote in "End of the Seventh Night." Blake then erased this, and wrote nine additional lines, which introduce the union of Los and the Spectre. Below these he again wrote "The End of the Seventh Night"; only to erase it once more, and add the remaining 157 lines of the Night. The Spectre's speech about "the Gates of Memory" begins this final addition.

6 Interpreters of The Four Zoas have only fairly recently begun to study the many versions of the fall with much consideration for their specific dramatic and psychological contexts. Helen T. McNeil, in "The Formal Art of The Four Zoas" (Erdman and Grant, eds., Blake's Visionary Form: Dramatic [Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1973]), offers a basic interpretive guideline: "The Zoas themselves posit radically different pasts according to the emotions of the present" (p. 385). David Wagenknecht in Blake's Night: William Blake and the Idea of Pastoral (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1973) finds in some of the accounts interesting similarities with earlier Blake poems (he pays particular attention to the Shadow's narrative, which he compares to Tbel and to Visions of the Daughters of Albion). In "The Dialogues as Interpretive Focus in Blake's The Four Zoas" (Philological Quarterly 56 [1977], pp. 221–39), Victoria Myers emphasizes how the dramatic situation contributes to differences in the various tellings, and assumes that "none of the tellings is 'true' (except perhaps the last); rather, each telling adds (and subtracts) various details in the events of the Fall" (p. 230). Johnson and Wilkie in Blake's Four Zoas: The Design of a Dream (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1978) respect the differences among the several renditions in their reading of the poem, and they include an appendix which lists and summarizes ten versions. Leslie Brisman's chapter on Blake in Romantic Origins (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1978) takes the five major accounts and offers intricate psychological readings; his work represents the most intensive investigation along these lines to date. Christine Gallant in Blake and the Assimilation of Chaos (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1978) also makes some use of the different versions, although not as much as one might expect given her approach to Blake.


8 In describing the Beulah fallacy, I do not mean to deny that pastoral imagery can be a source of redemptive power in Blake. David Wagenknecht has treated the subject most thoroughly: in Blake's Night he discusses the poetry in terms of Richard Cody's "idea of pastoral"— that this-worldliness and otherworldliness can be reconciled, and that a truly cultivated man, whatever his intimations of divinity, may find a natural human voice" (quoted in Wagenknecht, p. 12)— and finds in pastoral Beulah a place where "man carries the image of paradise within the careful simplicities of the human heart" (p. 212). My concern is for an oversimplifying process in which the human heart becomes an excuse for sluggish imagination. As Wagenknecht recognizes, any sophisticated notion of pastoral must confront a discrepancy between the ideal proposed and the imagery available for expressing it. When the pastoral looks backwards, and the ideal becomes accessible only through memory as an antithesis to the present state, the Beulah imagery is liable to obstruct rather than stimulate imaginative growth.

9 "The Spectrous Embrace in The Four Zoas VIIa" in Blakean Illustrated Quarterly 46 (Fall 1978), p. 102.

10 Erdman points out that a more obvious reason for deletion is to avoid interference with the other "till" clause of line 41 (textual note, p. 837).

11 In "The Spectre smild & gave her charge over the howling Orc" (85:22, E 360), Blake replaces "smild &" with "terrified," thus making the Spectre less a villain. He similarly changes "sweet" to "dark" in the preceding line (Erdman textual note, p. 837).

12 I do not intend this argument as an urgent call to change The Four Zoas text yet again: I can see the reasons for the new arrangement, and, moreover, can propose no alternative solution for the placement of VIIb. But in showing interpretive reasons for considering VIIa as a whole piece, I hope to make the point that a "finished" text of The Four Zoas may not be possible, and that in depending too heavily on one arrangement we risk obscuring certain interpretive possibilities.

13 Another indication of Blake's difficulties with Spectral material is that he wasn't even sure whether to include in his text the inserted lines of confession ("Thou knowest that the Spectre is in Every Man insane brutish," etc.). As Erdman points out, "Blake's line count on this page, '292 or 297,' indicates a moment when he was undecided whether to keep or drop the five lines" (p. 837). If this moment of indecision came after the late additions, he may have wondered whether they were too harsh a judgment on the character now united with Los; or whether they were in fact necessary to convey how dangerous such a union must be.

14 Peter Madison argues persuasively that when Freud all but abandoned his use of the term "defense" (he used it very sparingly between 1900 and 1926), he endowed "repression" with all the general meanings suggested by the neglected "defense." See Freud's Concept of Repression and Defense: Its Theoretical and Observational Language (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1961).


16 Diana Elaine George in Blake and Fred (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1980) emphasizes the-lusting, power-hungry side of repression rather than the protecting one, and proposes a Blakean translation: "Negation" is Blake's word for 'repression,' and at the root of that repression is a ravaging lust for power, the Spectre that is at bottom utterly devoid of reasonableness" (p. 179). I like the translation, as long as it is understood that repression is not simply the work of the Spectre or Spectral characters, or that it always comes in the service of a lust for power.

17 Blake originally wrote, "... and in our gardens of pleasure" (Erdman, p. 839); the change to "Labour" indicates that the union with the Spectre must not be confused with a strictly Beulah-like world. In this same passage, he also changed the following phrase: "world of life & love" becomes "world of Sacrifice" (90:12): "O lovely Los" becomes "O lovely terrible Los" (90:16); "fabricate sweet forms" becomes "fabricate forms sublime" (90:22).
The Final State of The Four Zoas

BY PAUL MANN

I

In what form did Blake intend to produce The Four Zoas? The question cannot finally be answered, since the surviving evidence is partial, ambiguous and at times contradictory, and Blake’s material plans for the work could have passed through several phases. But despite these difficulties, a number of commentators have speculated on what The Four Zoas might have looked like had it reached production stage. Damon was perhaps the first critic to think that proof “that The Four Zoas was not intended to be given to the public is to be found in the fact that Blake later utilized long passages of it” in Milton and Jerusalem. This is a rather curious proposal: it implies that Blake intended to pirate The Four Zoas for quotations even as he was composing it, as if he had the later books in mind as early as 1797. Bentley states that the poem was eventually to be engraved, presumably in the manner of the illuminated books. Erdman, occupying a sort of middle ground between manuscript and illuminated book, suggests a “unique Illuminated Manuscript.”

My primary purpose in this essay is to offer another alternative, perhaps a modified version of Bentley’s: Blake might have been experimenting with a compromise between his customary copperplate methods and the strictures of commercial publishing, a more conventional means of production which could enable him to reach a wider audience than his copperplate method permitted. Briefly, the theory I will propose is as follows: the Four Zoas manuscript represents an experiment not only in a longer and more complex poetic-prophetic text, but also in a more accessible, reproducible, material format for the prophecy. Layers of revision, in other words, represent stages of both poetic and material intentions. Blake’s main production model was the Edwards-Blake edition of Young’s Night Thoughts, a letterpress text framed in places by engraved designs. This theory would partly justify Blake’s use of Night Thoughts proof sheets in much of the manuscript: he was either testing the possibility of using the Night Thoughts designs directly to frame his own letterpress text, or using those designs as a general model while planning to replace them with new designs; or perhaps, at different stages of composition, he considered doing both. Finally, I will propose that Blake’s commercial plans for The Four Zoas were greatly influenced by his working association with Hayley during the period 1800–1803, and especially by their partnership on an edition of Hayley’s Ballads.

My secondary purpose follows from the first. Our prevailing notion of Blake’s “career” depicts a complete withdrawal from conventional printing and publication. After the suppression of The French Revolution, Blake is believed to have turned away from letterpress printing and toward the forms of illuminated printing with which we are familiar. If, therefore, The Four Zoas was at some stage intended for publication in a more conventional format and distribution to a mass audience, however small that mass might have turned out to be, we would have to revise our sense of Blake’s project as an absolute rejection of normal publishing practice.

Blake’s critique of publishing is familiar, and it is usually described as a radical version of Romantic notions of artistic integrity. The critique can be summarized along two main lines. First, Blake rejected the practice of division of labor. He chose—he was peculiarly suited to choose—to control almost all phases of his book production. By Blake’s time, publishing had grown into a full-scale industry, albeit rather a small one by modern standards, and this growth involved an increasingly compartmentalized distribution of the labor required to produce a book. Materials were contracted from paper mills and type foundries; typesetters, pressmen, binders and miscellaneous laborers had to be employed; and markets had to be developed for the product. The artist was, in a sense, only one among many agents in the institution of book production. One might say that Blake seized the means of production in order to comprehend it on entirely artistic grounds. His rejection of this industrial system is a radical and characteristic claim for author’s rights: the author has the right, even the responsibility, to determine all forms of his work, from first inspiration to final transaction with the reader. Second, Blake rejected the forms of printing which the industry developed. The industry’s continuing search for cheaper and more efficient means of production meant that the product itself had to become simpler and more uniform. One instance of this is the fairly rapid acceptance of standardized roman typefaces in most of Europe; in general, books grew to look more and more
the same. As Morris Eaves has shown, even methods of producing book illustrations became increasingly standardized in order to accommodate industrial progress and, especially, the machinery used to print engravings. Blake's countertechnology involved, as we all know, not only special printing techniques but also methods for individualizing each copy of a given title.

The problem is that this vigorous artistic integrity had serious repercussions. The growth of the publishing industry also involved the growth of an audience increasing defined as a book-buying market, and Blake's rejection of publishing's technology clearly meant a tacit rejection, at least, of publishing's audience as well. In the eighteenth century, the industry had to supply—and, to some degree, create—the demands of an expanding literate populace eager to own books, and whose tastes and interests differed markedly from those of previous generations. Not only the means of production but what was produced had to change: Aristotle and Ovid had to make room for Mrs. Barbauld. The publishing industry grew with its audience; the development of simpler and cheaper formats and the growth of "popular" literature were inextricably interrelated. I do not, of course, mean that Blake was competing with popular literature, but I do wish to point out that it is impossible to understand Blake's critique of publishing purely on the grounds of production. His rejection of the industry's methods and standards necessarily prevented him from reaching much of its audience; he never had the chance to be judged, and probably rejected, by popular standards.

Surely this must have been problematic for a poet with prophetic ambitions, a poet whose work is shot through with addresses to his "readers." By the time of Jerusalem (extant in five copies printed by Blake), the irony of writing addresses "To the Public," "Jews," "Deists" and "Christians" could hardly have been lost on him. And could the author of America: A Prophecy have been immune to the fact that this work would not reach its proper prophetic audience? David James describes America's illuminated printing as a "reversion to an artisanal, precapitalist mode of production . . . . In effect Blake revived for himself the system of patronage whose evils he so bitterly condemned, and by limiting his patrons to the class who had least to gain by a republican revolution he essentially ensured his political ineffectiveness." It is perhaps unfair to blame Blake for the market limitations of the Lambeth books; it is also customary to praise an artist for economic indifference, or even ignorance. Blake probably did not so much reject audience as end up without one, but he might reasonably be expected to have toyed, from time to time, with ways to get one.

II

In 1795, Blake was commissioned by the bookseller and publisher Richard Edwards to produce a large number of designs for a kind of coffee-table edition of Edward Young's popular poem, Night Thoughts. Blake's task was to provide a series of illustrative frames for Young's text; he made some 537 watercolor studies from which forty-three were selected and engraved for the first volume, and the first four Nights were published in 1797. Edwards surely planned a substantial press-run and sale—otherwise the production costs would have been unthinkable—but the project was abandoned after the first volume; the reason usually given is the financial crisis of the same year. Blake was, however, left with a large number of clean sheets supplied by Edwards for the designs, and a number of text-free proofs of the illustrations, and it was on these that he began copying and composing drafts of The Four Zoas.

Although Blake's career as a professional engraver had certainly never made him rich and famous, the decade during which he was working on The Four Zoas was a particularly trying time. Blake's growing reputation as an eccentric and the current exigencies of British life combined to produce the situation of the famous complaint in his August 1799 letter to Cumberland: "For as to Engraving, in which art I cannot reproach myself with any neglect, yet I am laid by in a corner as if I did not Exist, & Since my Young's Night Thoughts have been publish'd, Even Johnson & Fuseli have discarded my Graver" (Letters, p. 32). For reasons such as these, Hayley's offer of work on his Life of Cowper must have seemed particularly timely.

We already know as much about Blake's "three years' Slumber" at Felpham as we will probably ever know, and there is no need to rehearse most of it here, but we do need to consider the relationship with Hayley. "As early as January 10th, 1802 Blake had complained to Butts of his situation, and by July 6th, 1803 he was 'determined to be no longer Pestered with his [Hayley's] Genteel Ignorance & Polite Disapprobation' " (Records, p. 120). Hayley's patronage is known to have been particularly patronizing: the habitual reiteration of "our good," "enthusiastic," "zealous," "indefatigable" and similar epithets for Blake in Hayley's correspondence is a minute particular of his corporeal friendship. Hayley claims to have considered the Ballads project, which I shall describe shortly, as little more than a favor for his poor house- engraver who was laboring so diligently on the Cowper Life and other Hayley projects. Blake must have raged, secretly at least, at this enforced pastime.

Nevertheless, in January 1803, Blake could write to his brother James, in one of his most famous letters:

I am getting before hand in money matters. The Profits arising from Publications are immense, & I now have it in my power to
commence publication with many very formidable works, which I have finish’d & ready. A Book price half a guinea may be got out at the Expense of Ten pounds & its almost certain profits are 500 G. I am only sorry that I did not know the methods of publishing years ago, & this is one of the numerous benefits I have obtain’d by coming here, for I should never have known the nature of Publication unless I had known H. & his connexions & his method of managing. It now would be folly not to venture publishing. (Letters, p. 64)

What exactly does Blake mean by "publishing"? Given the fact that he had already spent the better part of two decades as a professional engraver and had associated with such booksellers as Edwards and Joseph Johnson, the letter's implication of a dawning knowledge is certainly curious. What were Hayley's connections and method of managing? A reference to the Ballads, shortly afterward in this letter, may offer a clue.

Hayley claims, in his preface to the original, 1802 edition of the Ballads:

To amuse the Artist in his [Blake's] patient labour, and to furnish his fancy with a few slight subjects for an inventive pencil, that might afford some variety to his incessant application, without too far interrupting his more serious business (Hayley means the Life of Cowper, not The Four Zoas), I chanced to compose, in hours of exercise and leisure, a few Ballads, upon anecdotes relating to animals, that happened to interest my fancy. They succeeded perfectly as an amusement to my Friend; and led him to execute a few rapid sketches, that several judges of his talent are desirous of converting to his honour and emolument. The favour that two or three Ballads obtained, in a private circle, inclined us to enlarge the number, and to try their success in the world as a periodical publication. (Records, p. 93)

The plan was to publish fifteen ballads, each with three engravings, to be printed in quarto by Seagrave and issued monthly at a price of one half-crown per installment. The work seems to have been intended primarily for subscription; Hayley relied, for example, on his friend and Cowper's cousin, Lady Hesketh, in Bath, to be a "Ballad Monger" (Records, p. 97) and distribute the work among her friends. Lady Hesketh was notably unsympathetic to Blake's work, which might qualify the wisdom of Hayley's connections and method of managing.¹⁵

The project was, as it turned out, a commercial failure. Only four of the proposed fifteen parts appeared. On 26 October 1803, Blake wrote to Hayley that:

I called on Mr. Evans, who gives small hopes of our ballads; he says he has sold but fifteen numbers at the most, and that going on would be a certain loss of almost all the expenses. I then proposed to him to take a part with me in publishing them on a smaller scale, which he declined on account of its being out of his line of business. . . . He advises that some publisher should be spoken to who would purchase the copyright: and, as far as I can judge of the nature of publication, no chance is left to one out of the trade. (Letters, p. 80)

Bentley estimates that, by the time of this letter, "Evans had sold less than £2 worth of Ballads, and the other booksellers presumably had even smaller sales to report" (Records, p. 117). Letters from Lady Hesketh and Samuel Greatheed in July 1802 further attest to the commercial failure of the Ballads (Records, pp. 107–109). Moreover, Blake was responsible for at least part of the expenses of Seagrave's printing bill and the £30 owed for paper—this relative to an apparent total of £15.15s. earned by 1803 for 115 copies sold outside the booksellers. In December of 1804 these debts still weighed on Blake: a letter to Hayley mentions twelve guineas Hayley had lent him to pay Seagrave, and in another letter to Hayley of December 1805 Blake mentions the Seagrave bill again. Bentley concludes that the "Ballads must have been a clear loss to Blake, not even counting his wages for designing, engraving, and printing the engravings" (Records, p. 117). Blake was eventually to succeed in getting another publisher: in 1805 Richard Phillips issued a reduced-size version of five plates, two of which had not appeared in the first edition, but this new edition also failed commercially.

Could this have been the means of publication which Blake claimed to have learned from Hayley? Chronological coincidence and the proximity of "publishing" and mention of the Ballads project in the 1803 letter to James suggest the possibility, at least, that Blake was considering some mix of copperplate engraving and commercial printing, sold largely by subscription and perhaps also in serial format. The failure of the Ballads need not have dissuaded Blake—indeed, given his debts and his feelings about Hayley's poetic sensibility, that failure might have inspired him to gamble again on his own work; and, as Hayley himself wrote to Evans, about the same time as the James letter, Blake "is an excellent creature, but not very fit to manage pecuniary Concerns to his own advantage" (Records, p. 114). Hayley, in other words, did not believe Blake had learned the publishing business as well as Blake believed he had; and, in any case, the failure of one project in a given format does not necessarily imply that another project in the same format has to fail.

I have gathered evidence which could suggest that Blake working on Hayley's ballads and Blake working on The Four Zoas have more than chronological coincidence in common. I wish to insist, again, that this evidence is incomplete and might have nothing whatever to do with The Four Zoas. But before we dismiss the evidence out of hand, we should take a closer look at the nature of the Four Zoas manuscript, and review the main theories about Blake's plans for it.

Let me begin by reiterating the positions taken by Bentley and Erdman. Bentley writes that the "handwriting in the first three Nights is fair, clear, and beautiful, and was surely intended as the model to be copied when the poem was engraved. Blake was surely prepared to reduce the page size considerably in the engravings, for there are only about sixteen lines on each page, and
the more finished drawings are large and clear, with few small details."16 Bentley's attention here is rather selective. In the actual manuscript, in Night I alone, pages 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 21 have upwards of twenty-four lines; pages 14 and 16 have twenty-two each, and page 22 has forty. Bentley arrives at his totals by adding only those lines written in what he calls "Copperplate hand" (illus. 1) and/or "Modified Copperplate hand" (see Bentley's Table IV, "Handwriting," p. 210); in other words, he focuses on an assumed stage of composition and "deletes" revisions, rather as Margoliouth did in his hypothetical resurrection of the Vala ur-text from the manuscript. It is quite possible that Blake's revisions on these pages represent not only poetic decisions but revisions of his intentions for the poem's format. Shifts to what Bentley calls "Usual hand" later on in the manuscript and in revisions could also represent an increasing indifference to the visual appearance of the script, resulting from Blake's sense that the text might not be etched or engraved but printed. Even to call some of the calligraphy of the first three Nights "Copperplate hand" is problematic, in part because this hand lacks the floral flourishes and marginal figures which grace most of the Lambeth books and are still in evidence in the sparser Milton and Jerusalem. Furthermore, when Blake began to use the Night Thoughts proofs and to write consistently in "Usual hand"—beginning on page 43, whatever stage of composition that represents (illus. 2)—line totals begin to correspond more closely to the customary thirty lines per illustrated page of Night Thoughts: page 49 has thirty-one lines, 51 has thirty-three, 53 has twenty-eight, 55 has thirty-two, 59 has twenty-eight (illus. 3) and so on. 

Erdman replies to Bentley by demanding, "why assume the poem to be engraved?":

These are the pages [the first three Nights] Blake began to write only after he was sure the Night Thoughts had failed commercially—whenever that was. He would have known to be absolutely beyond his means the great number and size of copper plates the format of these Nights would require. Perhaps sensing this objection, Bentley continues: "Blake was surely prepared to reduce the page size considerably in the engravings, for there are only about sixteen lines on each page. . . ." But how so? Photographically? The lettering is not designed for reduction by any means: the graphic body, minus upper and lower loops, is as small as the humbler styles of Milton and Jerusalem, i.e., about 1.5 to 2 mm. high. To be prepared for engraving, all Blake needed was a fair copy, legibly mended: see the Songs of Experience in his Notebook. No, the objective of these carefully ruled and "ambitiously" illustrated pages was not to be a model for something else but to be themselves a unique Illuminated Manuscript. It was a sensible notion: he had the paper, could not afford the copper, had sold perhaps only single copies of his last economy-size works in Illuminated Printing (Akhania, Lot) anyway. Later, when he could afford copper for Milton, he used small plates; a decade later for Jerusalem he doubled the size, still modest by comparison with Vala's pages. Are we sure that he ever intended to etch Vala or The Four Zoas? May he not, even as late as 1805, have hoped to bring all his Uh pages and badly mended Cph pages up to the perfection of his model? Bentley finds that Blake may have had over 200 unused blank leaves on hand (p. 161, n. 4). Why bother with anomalous leaves or even Night Thoughts proofs at all, unless a greater aim remained in view?17

Most of Erdman's objections are well-founded—though one should note that eighteenth-century engravers were capable of reducing images through semi-mechanical means—and his own hypothesis is quite plausible. But how does the creation of a "unique Illuminated Manuscript" constitute a "greater aim"? It is hard to believe that Blake, who so strongly desired a wider audience for his work, would have willingly, indeed intentionally, consigned a major work on which he spent ten years to the privacy of a manuscript, a book which could have, at most, one reader at a time. The notion of a prophetic work addressed to a single reader, or to no readers at all, is somewhat ludicrous.

Even if Blake did not have enough unused copper to engrave the whole of The Four Zoas, there were forty-three plates of Night Thoughts already engraved. Bentley's Records lists no surviving accounts for transactions between Edwards and Blake, but Fuseli stated that Blake asked for one hundred guineas for the whole project and settled for the twenty Edwards claimed he could afford to pay (Records, p. 52)—an astonishingly paltry sum for the work involved. One might therefore wonder whether Blake and Edwards had another deal on the side. Blake would certainly have been grateful for the extra paper in tight times, but half a ream of even high-quality stock would hardly seem to make up the difference. Robert Essick has suggested to me that Edwards might have thrown some extra copper into the bargain; perhaps, after Night Thoughts failed, Edwards gave Blake the Night Thoughts plates themselves; we will probably never know for sure. And might Edwards not also have given Blake permission to reuse the Night Thoughts designs for his own poem, especially after the former project had failed?19 Here again we will probably never know. Erdman's theory would certainly remove any copyright considerations, but I do not think it necessarily precludes the possibility that Blake did plan to use the Night Thoughts designs in The Four Zoas, or at least experimented with the idea of doing so. The rest of the text could have been printed without illustration, as Edwards printed Young; or, given the large number of sketches on the proof-free sheets of The Four Zoas, Blake might have been trying to find a way to acquire enough copper for at least a few more designs.

In summary, my hypothesis is as follows:

(1) that The Four Zoas was at some stage considered as a "commercial" publication rather than as an illuminated book in the Lambeth mode or as an extraordinary manuscript;

(2) that Blake planned either to use the Night Thoughts designs more or less directly, or to clean and reuse the plates for more or less different designs;

(3) that he intended, at some stage, to have the text printed, like Night Thoughts, in letterpress;20
(4) that the work was intended for sale by subscription, instead of or as well as through booksellers, and perhaps as a serial publication;

(5) that Blake's abandonment of The Four Zoas, usually rationalized on strictly poetic grounds, might also have been the result of complications in his material plans for the work: continuing debt and the successive commercial failures of the Night Thoughts and both editions of the Ballads could have dissuaded him from pursuing The Four Zoas in this format, and pushed him on toward Milton and Jerusalem and back to the techniques of illuminated printing.21

There are certainly objections to this hypothesis, doubtless many more than have occurred to me. Copyright control of the Night Thoughts designs is a fundamental and insoluble issue. The relative scope of the Ballads and Four Zoas projects could argue against any coincidence, but then ambition was never much of an obstacle for Blake. On the other hand, to have entertained for very long the hope of an extensive audience or subscription network for such a work, and in such difficult economic times, might well have been more than even Blake's optimism and economic naivety could surmount. Most crucially, perhaps, when Blake wrote to James of his growing knowledge of how to manage in the publishing business, he quite likely only meant managing as an engraver. Hayley's dubious tutelage was primarily on this front, and Blake's letters of this period speak often of his design work and very rarely of his writing.22 "Publishing" could therefore have meant, quite simply, reentering the field of design and engraving more actively and profitably. But my hypothesis does seem to address, if not exactly to resolve, a number of issues about Blake's plans for The Four Zoas which tend to be skirted by other theories; and perhaps too the mere possibility that Blake could have devoted a substantial portion of his years of labor on The Four Zoas attempting to develop a more public format for his work might revise our conception of the nature of his poetic isolation and his critique of the publishing industry.

IV

Having hazarded these speculations, it seems proper to offer, as a kind of postscript, or caveat, or metologue, the following observations.

Could the preceding considerations affect editorial practice? If so, I wish to emphasize the fact that the "final state" of The Four Zoas is a manuscript. Any hypothetical reconstruction of what Bentley calls its "composition and growth" seems to me an entirely separate concern. My remarks are not intended to reflect on the work's status as a manuscript so much as on more general notions of a "career" or work-context in which that text or any of Blake's texts might be set; the hypothesis is offered primarily as one means by which to treat the conflict in Blake's project between professed prophetic ambitions and a perceived withdrawal from certain possibilities in normative publishing practice, in respect to both the production of works and a potential audience for them.

Hypothetical portraits of Blake's career are often conscripted into editorial procedures. Bentley's commentary relies heavily on such notions, and the ongoing debate on the probable order of Nights VII would be impossible without them.23 No matter how tentative and conditional the language of these compositional fictions (see above, passim), they regularly determine editorial decisions. Speculation becomes fact in the printed text, and at the same time compositional narratives are often a veil for the narrative of editing itself and its own narrativizing power over the text (no edition of The Four Zoas is as disruptive as the manuscript). Editorial practice is its own concealed "text," existing within a discourse governed by and governing through codes, conventions, ideologies and narrativizing expectations, the effects of which on actual editions have not yet received adequate critical attention either in their own right or as a significant cultural practice. If the critical mediation of texts is increasingly a critical concern—as ideology, as a power organizing the canon and so on—editorial mediation regularly slips through the cracks in our attention. In this light, even if some future consensus grants any validity to my hypothesis, I would hope that the text of The Four Zoas will remain immune to my speculations.

For it is as manuscript that The Four Zoas must be read, and manuscript not in some fiction of completion which one's reading continually tries to approximate: that is, neither as the trace of an interrupted compositional trajectory nor as something to be read as if it were finished. To describe in any detail the directions of this reading, let alone to perform it, falls outside the scope of the present essay. I am certainly not suggesting any reversion to "the poem itself"—The Four Zoas is not entirely a poem, not yet a poem; given its designs it is also more than a poem; and so widely allusive a writer as Blake must be placed within a considerable spectrum of historical and discursive contexts—but I am suggesting a reading which attends to the ontology of the manuscript as much as to its thematics.24 If my speculations in this essay should be kept as separate as possible from editorial incursions into The Four Zoas, it is my hope that these remarks might be of some use in such a reading.

2 G.E. Bentley, Jr., William Blake: Vala, or the Four Zoas:


I first made this suggestion, in greatly abbreviated form, in “Editing The Four Zoas,” Pacific Coast Philology 16 (June 1981), 51.


Ibid., pp. 80–81.


Blake’s professed faith that his sublime allegory would reach future generations of readers is not much of an answer to this situation. Did he foresee our generation poring over Erdman and Keynes? No doubt he would have rejected twentieth-century publishing technology as readily as he rejected that of the eighteenth century. It should, however, be noted that this rather quantitative definition of audience might well be a red herring. Eaves does not address this matter in precisely these terms, but the last chapter of William Blake’s Theory of Art, “Audiences” (pp. 171–204), in describing audience in the intimate terms of “love and friendship,” implies that one-on-one—one artist to even one reader—might in some sense be enough. I would agree that Blakean aesthetics privileges the quality over the quantity of reading, but at the same time a great deal of Blake’s correspondence indicates that he did desire a much wider audience than he achieved in his lifetime.

David James, “Angels out of the Sun: Art, Religion and Politics in Blake’s America,” Studies in Romanticism, 18 (Summer 1979), 236. James’s rhetoric here suggests an almost medieval, two-class society, with Blake’s audience among the aristocracy. But Morton Paley has rightly pointed out, in comments on an earlier draft of my paper, that the middle class played key roles in both the American and French Revolutions, and that Blake’s customers were not kings and dukes but members of the petite bourgeoisie. Still, I think that James’s remark has some bearing: he is describing a system of patronage which itself looks back to pre-revolutionary modes, and a system in which, whatever their class affiliations, Blake’s patrons were not likely to be active participants in revolution.


Blake quotes a 1799 letter from Leigh Hunt’s mother: “The engraving of Pictures is at present but a dull business. The war occasions a scarcity of cash, people in general find it difficult to obtain the necessary comforts of life, and have not surplus of money for elegance.” G. E. Bentley, Jr., Blake Records (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), p. 61. Blake, however, writing to Cumberland in July of the following year, shortly before the move toFelpham, thought that conditions were improving:

I am still employ’d in making Designs & little Pictures with now & then an Engraving & find that in future to live will not be so difficult as it has been. It is very Extraordinary that London in so few years from a City of meer Necessaries or at least a commerce of the lowest order of luxuries should have become a City of Elegance in some degree & that its once stupid inhabitants should enter into an Emulation of Grecian manners. There are now I believe, as many Booksellers as there are Burchers & as many Printshops as of any other trade. We remember when a Print shop was a rare bird in London & I myself remember when I thought my pursuits of Art a kind of criminal dissipation & neglect of the main chance . . . .


since the publication of the Records, E.G. Murray has demonstrated conclusively that this letter was misdated by Blake and was in fact written in January 1803. See “A Suggested Reading of a Blake Letter to Thomas Butts” in Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly, 13 (1979–80), 148–51.

See Records, pp. 79, 101–102, 135. Everyone associated with the Ballads apparently considered it a Blake Charity, including Blake himself. When the Ballads were reissued by Phillips in 1805, Blake wrote to Hayley that “Mr. Phillips objects altogether to the insertion of my Advertisement, calling it an appeal to charity, and says it will hurt the sale of the work . . . .” (Letters, p. 119).

Bentley, Vara, p. 158.


It occurs to me that The Four Zoas might be less of a commentary on Night Thoughts than is ordinarily suspected. Certainly the designs in Night Thoughts “comment” on Young’s text, as Thomas H. Helmstadter, for one, has argued, but their context in Blake’s text is radically altered. Perhaps the Four Zoas designs occupy a kind of catalytic midpoint which gives rise to a text meant not to revise Young, as Milton revises Milton, but entirely to supersede him. See Helmstadter, “Blake’s Night Thoughts: Interpretations of Edward Young,” in The Visionary Hand: Essays for the Study of William Blake’s Art and Aesthetics, ed. Robert N. Essick (Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, 1973), pp. 381–418.

In “The Four Zoas: Intention and Production,” which follows this essay, Essick argues persuasively that the copperplate writing, at least, might represent plans for an intaglio text. In other words, The Four Zoas was either always intended for intaglio or intaglio and letterpress represent different and successive stages of Blake’s production plans.

Other reasons could be added: the possibility that Edwards would not finally consent to the reuse of the Night Thoughts designs; the difficulty of making those designs work effectively in a different poetic context; the deeply unsettling Schofield incident of 1803 and the subsequent return to London; and, in 1805, the “tumult in the London printing industry. By March 9th some 250 pressmen had left their jobs, ‘thereby . . . leaving, on their part, all public and private Business nearly at a stand’” (Records, p. 160). Nor do I wish to exclude imaginative difficulties in and poetic progress “beyond” The Four Zoas.

It is worth noting, however, that Blake’s closest extant letter after the James letter is one dated 25 April 1803, in which Blake tells Butts of his “three years’ Slumber on the banks of the Ocean” and the “long Poem descriptive of those Acts. . . .” Keynes believes this is a reference to Milton, but The Four Zoas seems an equally likely candidate. See Letters, p. 67.

See Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly 12 (Fall 1978). Many of these concluding observations are anticipated in my article in Pacific Coast Philology (see above, n. 4), and they are sketched against a much fuller practical and theoretical background in a lengthy review essay of Erdman’s new The Complete Poems and Prose of William Blake, by the Santa Cruz Blake Study Group, in Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly, 18 (Summer 1984), 4–31.

Bentley’s facsimile has its limitations, not the least of which is that it is out of print, but Erdman and Cettina Magno have promised us a new facsimile from infrared photographs. These facsimile versions could greatly facilitate critical studies of the manuscript’s ontology, and such studies could eventually do much to inform the reading of even print editions.
1. Blake. Vala, or The Four Zoas, page 23. Pen & ink manuscript with ink and pencil drawing, c. 1797–1800? Sheet approx. 42 × 32.5 cm. Courtesy of the British Library.
Unmitting endured the cold hammer.

6. But the strong arm that sent it remem-
The sounding beam; laughing it tore through
That beaten mals; keeping its direction
The cold loins of Urizen dividing.

7. Dire shrieked his invisible Lust:
Deep ground Urizen: stretching his awful how
Ahabia (so name his parted soul.)
He staid on his mountains of Jealousy.
He ground anguish'd & called her Sun,
Kissing her and weeping over her;
Then hid her in darkness in silence:
Jealous the she was invisible.

8. She fell down a faint shadow wandering
In chaos and circling dark Urizen.
As the moon anguish'd circles the earth,
Hopeless, abhor'd: a death-shadow.
Unseen, unodied, unknown.
The mother of Pestilence.

Paul Mann's challenging theory in "The Final State of The Four Zoas" offers an opportunity for others to test their sense of Blake's plans for his long and various manuscript poem. Mann very kindly allowed me to read his essay before publication and accepted my suggestion that I send to this journal a companion piece in the hope that the two articles together will produce more light than would either in isolation. I wish merely to pursue a few lines of speculation that support his basic theory but evolve into a hypothesis about Blake's first plans for his text.

I trust it has become something of a truism that Blake was much concerned with the processes and materials of publication. A man trained to the book and print business of his time who also invented a number of unconventional ways of producing and distributing images could hardly avoid such interests. A corollary proposition is that Blake's works are media specific—that is, his images (whether pictorial or calligraphic) differ in some observable ways because of the different technologies used to produce them. Given the practical exigencies of image production, as well as Blake's insistence on the radical unity of conception and execution, it is reasonable to assume that the preliminary stages in the development of an image may reveal the medium in which Blake intended to produce the final form of that image. I take this to be the perspective, as well as the context in which we are to understand the meaning of "intention," implicit in Mann's essay. I share that perspective and usage, and thus I will also view The Four Zoas manuscript not only as the "text" of a "poem" (i.e., the physical embodiment of an aesthetic experience) but also as a preliminary—perhaps even a mockup—for a subsequent work never executed.

Is The Four Zoas manuscript the signifier of an unrealized intention to produce the poem in some other form? The physical condition of the work as we know it, with its deletions, erasures, marginal insertions, and designs rendered as pencil sketches, immediately suggests as much. Mann has argued cogently that Blake did not intend to create a single illuminated manuscript—either the one we have or another never executed—as an end in itself. Such works are generally produced on commission only, much as Blake was hired by Flaxman, Butts and others to make watercolored illustrations to the works of other poets, but it is difficult even to imagine a late eighteenth-century sponsor for an epic like Vara or The Four Zoas. This does not, of course, allow us to rule out completely the theory that Blake originally planned to create a beautiful illuminated manuscript as his final product and only later allowed it to degenerate into a working draft. Yet, as Mann suggests, Blake's entire career as a publisher indicates a consistent desire to find a wider audience for his poetry than the very limited number of people who could see, read, and be moved by a unique manuscript. From the prospectus of October 1793 to the first chapter of Jerusalem (c. 1804-1820), Blake addressed himself "To the Public" and tried an extraordinary range of media and publication methods to reach them.

The development of Blake's publishing efforts in the mid- and late-1790s provides some sense of the range of media he had available for the publication of his illustrated poetry. In 1795, Blake published The Book of Los and The Book of Ahania (illus. 4). Both have texts etched in intaglio, whereas the other illuminated books were printed from letters etched in relief. The visual differences between intaglio and relief letters are less significant than the considerable changes in production procedures. It is not at all clear why Blake abandoned his own invention, relief etching, which he trumpeted as both a practical and beautiful method of self-publi-

ication in his 1793 prospectus, and returned to a far more conventional medium. The Books of Los and Ahania are also notable for their paucity of interlinear decoration, as in letterpress, even though the intaglio medium would not in itself prohibit the root and vine motifs punctuating The Book of Urizen or even larger and more elaborate designs set anywhere on the page. Clearly, Richard Edwards' 1797 edition of Young's Night Thoughts, with a typographic text surrounded by intaglio designs on slightly less than half the printed pages, bears a special relationship to The Four Zoas. But we should also keep in mind The Book of Los and The Book of Ahania, for they indicate the medium Blake chose for the production of his own poetry published closest in time to the beginning of his labors on Vara or The Four Zoas.

Turning to the manuscript itself, we can immediately see that some pages are written in what Bentley calls a "Copperplate Hand" (illus. 1), others in a related
but "Modified Copperplate Hand," and still others in Blake's usual plain manuscript hand (illus. 2–3, 5–6). Our sense of an important structural distinction between the copperplate and plain hands is reinforced by stab holes indicating that Blake "had once sewed together into one group all the sheets with elegant script [i.e., both copperplate and modified copperplate] and into another group those sheets . . . in his usual [plain] hand." If we now consider the manuscript as a mockup, it is reasonable to begin with the assumption that the three hands may indicate at least two different intentions to publish. In what follows I will also assume that the deletions and marginal additions to pages bearing fine script, as well as designs that intrude into fine text areas (on page 25, for example), were made after the abandonment of whatever intentions for publication the copperplate hand(s) may embody.

Through a process of elimination and the weighing of practical probabilities, we can reach some conclusions about the intentions that may lurk behind those sections of The Four Zoas written in fine script. There would have been no reason to write in such a hand if the method of publication was to be either letterpress or relief etching. A typographic printer must of course select one of the available typefaces—go to the great expense of having a new font cast—regardless of the author's manuscript hand. All that is wanted is a clear script, as in the Tiriel manuscript and large portions of The Four Zoas itself. As for relief etching, that is a direct process in which the forms of the letters are composed directly on the copper. Here again, the manuscript needs to be no more elaborate than a fair copy. Blake may have even avoided that stage of production by moving directly from a finished working draft, of the sort found in his Notebook, to the copperplate because corrections can be made easily on the plate at any time before acid is applied. The one extant mockup for pages in a published illuminated book is a rough pencil sketch with only horizontal lines to indicate the approximate position of the text. There is no extant manuscript for any of the illuminated books with lettering even vaguely like the copperplate hand(s) in The Four Zoas. This negative evidence cannot prove that such manuscripts never existed; but, given the production characteristics of relief etching, there are practical reasons why Blake need not have written such manuscripts. Even if Blake used a transfer method for applying his texts to the surface of the copper (which I very much doubt), the letters would have to be written on specially treated paper in a glutinous, acid-resistant material. No part of The Four Zoas manuscript meets these requirements and it is difficult to conceive how they could be added after writing had begun.

We are left then with intaglio publication of text and illustration. As practiced in Blake's day, intaglio was an indirect process in that the image was generally developed to a fairly high level of completeness and finish in materials—usually pencil, ink, or wash on paper—preliminary to the graphic medium itself. This work was then transfered, often by mechanical or semimechanical means, to the copper. Blake describes a completely mechanical transfer process in his Notebook, but like most it requires an image executed in "black lead pencil" or chalk. In a letter to George Cumberland of 6 December 1795, Blake outlines a soft-wax technique that works very well for transferring an intaglio print to copper for reengraving. Lines printed in intaglio are raised slightly above the surface of the paper, and thus it is possible to make an impression of them in a soft material. The copperplate hand in The Four Zoas is of course in ink on paper, and I suspect that even a soft-wax process would not permit its transfer.

If we must rule out mechanical transfer, the sections of The Four Zoas in copperplate hand could still serve a purpose for an intaglio etcher/engaver. After composing his script with some care on paper, Blake could look at the manuscript in a mirror and copy it backwards onto an etching ground or blank plate, following the manuscript letter-forms as closely as he wished within the limitations set by a nonmechanical method. This two-step process avoids the problems of composing (as distinct from copying) a handsome script backwards on a varnished plate or copper surface. Throughout the manuscript, Blake has consistently limited illustration to the margins and avoided interlinear designs on major pictures set between sections of the text on a single page. This format follows what we find in the intaglio plates of The Book of Los and The Book of Ahania. If the copperplate hand sections of The Four Zoas, before deletions and insertions, are in some sense a mockup for a publication, the most probable technology would seem to be a text etched and/or engraved in intaglio with surrounding intaglio designs. This method of production would allow Blake to produce the entire book using techniques in which he was thoroughly skilled and not require him, as would letterpress, to acquire the services of journeymen with tools and materials he did not himself possess.

Where would Blake acquire enough large copperplates to etch or engrave a poem anywhere near the length of Vala or The Four Zoas? Mann's suggestion that Blake may have acquired the Night Thoughts coppers from Richard Edwards is compelling. It is certainly possible that Blake was paid partly in copper for his labors on Night Thoughts, regardless of who retained the rights to publish the images first etched on the plates. By writing much of his poem on unused leaves of Whatman paper also left over from the Night Thoughts project, Blake insured that the size of his text blocks and accompanying designs would fit with minimal adjust-
ments onto the plates illustrating Young. We need not assume that Blake intended to use the engraved Night Thoughts designs themselves in The Four Zoas. The proofs used in the later parts of the manuscript may be there because of similarities in format—a text panel surrounded by designs—rather than symbolic or thematic conjunctions between Young's poem and Blake's. The presence of proofs from the plate printed on page 73 of Night Thoughts, showing Christ crowned with thorns, on pages 59 (illus. 3), 111, and 115 (illus. 5) of The Four Zoas creates an unusually repetitious sequence of illustrations. It is unlikely that the present arrangement of Night Thoughts designs in the manuscript represents the format for an intended publication of any sort. If Blake did have the Night Thoughts coppers, he could simply scrape and burnish away the designs to Young's poem and etch or engrave new images. The backs of the plates could also be used, as in many of the illuminated books, for a total of eighty-six etchings and/or engravings—a good many more than the thirty-eight pages of The Four Zoas bearing fine script. Or, if one side only was to be used, perhaps it is significant that the number of fine script pages is just five short of the number of Night Thoughts coppers.

Pursuing this line of speculation a bit further, we should even consider the possibility that Blake abandoned the idea of using all the Night Thoughts plates for The Four Zoas between c. 1804 and 1807 and began using them for Milton and Jerusalem. By then the manuscript poem may have grown too long for the forty-three known Night Thoughts coppers, forcing on Blake some alternative publication plans if he had not already made them before extending the poem. Exact comparisons of the sizes of the Night Thoughts, Milton, and Jerusalem plates are not possible because of paper shrinkage and stretching and the unavoidable loss of some copper when a plate is cut and its edges beveled. It is certain, however, that the Night Thoughts plates could have supplied more than enough copper for both illuminated books. If pieces of copper were made from seventeen Night Thoughts plates by cutting along a horizontal line at a point 13.5 to 17 cm. from the top or bottom edge (i.e., just short of the middle of the plate), each of the pieces could be cut into thirds to make three Milton coppers. If all seventeen pieces were cut this way they would provide a total of fifty-one plates for etching on one side. Each of the remaining, slightly larger pieces from these seventeen Night Thoughts plates could be cut in half to yield two Jerusalem coppers each, for a total of sixty-eight pages in the illuminated book if etched recto and verso. This procedure would require no further cutting, except possibly for minor trimming or filing of edges, and would waste very little copper. Other Jerusalem plates could have been cut from the remaining Night Thoughts coppers, although we know that at least plate 96 of the illuminated book was made from a quarter-piece of the "Moore & Co's Advertisement" Blake designed and engraved c. 1797–1798. The presence of the Moore plate in Jerusalem indicates that Blake may have retained possession of similar commercial engravings, clearly executed on commission, and reused them for his own productions. The possibility that Blake could have used Night Thoughts coppers for Milton and Jerusalem lends some (admittedly circumstantial and speculative) support to Mann's theory that Blake might have retained those very plates and once contemplated using them for Vala or The Four Zoas.

The plain-hand portions of The Four Zoas offer even less evidence than pages in copperplate hand concerning methods of publication. The intended medium might have been relief etching (although that still seems unlikely), intaglio etching/engraving, or letterpress. It is most tempting to conclude with Mann that the change from fine scripts to plain might record a change in publishing plans, roughly parallel in chronology to the shift from an unrecoverable poem entitled Vala to an unfinished poem entitled The Four Zoas. The contextual and historical evidence Mann assembles in support of his letterpress hypothesis comes from what is generally taken to be a middle or later period in the development of the manuscript—the years with Hayley, 1800–1803. Blake's work with the provincial printer Joseph Seagrave on a book (the 1802 Ballads) with a typographic text and intaglio illustrations may have suggested a return to that combination of techniques, also used in Edwards' Night Thoughts edition, for the publication of The Four Zoas. Such a change could account for the appearance of Night Thoughts proofs in the plain script pages of the manuscript and the use of their text panels as a mockup for a projected publication with the same format. At this point, Blake could have cut up some of the Night Thoughts coppers for other purposes if the new plans for The Four Zoas required fewer than one design per page of text, again as in Night Thoughts. The first Night Thoughts proof appears on page 43 of the manuscript (illus. 2), immediately following the last page in fine script. If the plain-hand revisions to pages first composed in copperplate script are later revisions, as seems probable, the differences between pages 42 and 43 may record a significant shift in Blake's intentions for publication.

As attractive as Mann's theory—or the combination Mann/Essick theory—may at first seem, the manuscript pages on Night Thoughts proofs exhibit a few recalcitrant features. The number of lines written in the text panels ranges between twenty-eight and fifty-seven (not including pages bearing part-titles or those on which Nights end short of the lower margin), the text begins above the panel on fourteen pages (illus. 6), and extends below it on two (illus. 5). Accommodating marginal additions would cause further dislocations. If these portions of the
manuscript are a letterpress mockup, they form a rather loose one. Blake may have planned to create somewhat larger text panels in a variety of sizes. If the panels were not altered, a sympathetic printer might be able to manage difficulties by shifting the text about as required, although this would probably disrupt some text–design relationships. A minor form of this problem occurred in the production of the 1797 Night Thoughts, with the result that the lines illustrated by the design on page 54 begin on page 53.

The treatment of the Night Thoughts proof on page 137 of The Four Zoas (illus. 6) throws into doubt at least two of our theories. Blake has drawn-in the back of one of the wrestling figures right through the text panel. The text carefully follows the new lower left margin created by the outline of the back. If this drawing was composed as part of the development of The Four Zoas (as distinct from a drawing executed earlier for some other purpose), it strongly suggests that at least this one Night Thoughts design was to be used in Blake's poem. At the same time, the drawing argues against a letterpress text. It would not have been impossible to adjust the left margin of a typographic text according to the pencil line of the back, but such a format would have been highly unusual for an early nineteenth-century letterpress book. An etched or engraved text, however, would have accommodated the drawing without technical difficulties or the violation of printing conventions. On page 72 of the Edwards' Night Thoughts, a figure's head intrudes slightly into the lower right corner of the text panel, but this in no way disrupts normal letterpress margins. In spite of his introduction of printed designs with rigid text panels, Blake's extensions and revisions of The Four Zoas forced the manuscript even further from a recognizable mockup.

At some point Blake must have given up any plans for eventual publication, and perhaps that occurred before he ceased fussing with the manuscript. If this is indeed the case, then the suggestions presented here can be summarized as a three-step process of changing plans for a manuscript reflecting those changes as follows:

1. A manuscript and production mockup for a poem (Vala?) intended for publication of text and designs as intaglio engravings/engravings (i.e., the Book of Loe and Book of Abania format), tentatively dated c. 1796–1800;
2. A manuscript and production mockup for a poem (The Four Zoas?) intended for publication as a letterpress text accompanied by intaglio etched and/or engraved designs surrounding selected pages of text (i.e., the Night Thoughts format), tentatively dated c. 1800–1804;
3. A working manuscript unrelated to any specific publication intentions (i.e., The Four Zoas manuscript as we know it today), tentatively dated c. 1804–1807.

The foregoing has clearly proven only one proposition: it is impossible to prove any theory about Blake's production plans for The Four Zoas. Yet I believe that these companion essays may contribute to a better understanding of the manuscript and the intentions it never completely reveals. Our speculative arguments may have the additional benefit of providing a more comprehensive view of the evolution of Blake's activities as a poet, engraver, and printer from 1796 to 1807.

1. See, for example, Blake's statement that 'Invention depends altogether upon Execution or Organization' in his annotations (c. 1808) to Reynolds' Discourse and similar statements in the Public Address (c. 1811). The best and most recent study of this central principle of Blake's aesthetics is Morris Eaves, William Blake's Theory of Art (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1982), Chap. III.
3. The one exception discovered to date is the title page of The Song of Los (1795), which appears to have been printed planographically. See Essick, William Blake, Printer (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1980), pp. 128–29. This title page, like the evolution of the 1795 color printed drawings, offers further evidence of Blake's movement away from relief etching in the mid-1790s.
4. There are a number of English eighteenth-century books with etched and/or engraved texts, including several illustrated editions of Philip Ayres, Emblems of Love. Several Continental publications of considerable length were completely engraved, including a Virgil in five volumes (The Hague: Henry Justice, 1753–1767) and an edition of Ovid's Metamorphoses in 141 plates (Paris: Basan et LéMire, plates dated 1767–1770).
6. Bentley, Blake Books, p. 455, and Erdman, ed., Poetry and Prose of Blake, p. 816, records pp. 1, 3–8, 17, 23–30 as written in copperplate hand and pp. 15–16, 31–42 in modified copperplate. Erdman, ed., Poetry and Prose of Blake, p. 816, records pp. 1, 3–18, 23–42 as containing all the "fine copperplate script." Thus the only discrepancy is p. 2, the verso of the titlepage, which bears only a pencil sketch and a rough pencil inscription. In what follows, however, I will include that page among the "fine script" sections since it clearly accompanies pages written in that hand.
26 to the copper for etching in white line; see Blake: An Illustrated Quarterly, 16 (1982), 46.


There appears to have been at least one further plate, for a “leaf from Night 5” (presumably illustrated) was offered for sale by the London bookdealer Francis Edwards in a catalogue of c. 1927–1928, item 44 (£26). There may of course have been other plates acquired by Blake or Richard Edwards in contemplation of publishing further Nights of Young’s poem.

We can assume that Jerusalem was etched on both sides of its copperplates because of paired platemark dimensions and the presence of platemakers’ marks. (Many Milton plates can also be paired, but I know of no evidence of platemakers’ marks.)

Bentley, Blake Books, p. 225 n. 2, suggests that the Jerusalem plates could have been made from the text panels of the Night Thoughts coppers. This procedure would have wasted a good deal of copper, leaving large but awkwardly shaped and probably useless fragments.

The telltale fragments of white lines from the Moore engraving were first pointed out and identified by Erdman in “The Suppressed and Altered Passages in Blake’s Jerusalem,” Studies in Bibliography, 17 (1964), 36–37. Other plates in Jerusalem may have been made from other pieces of the Moore copper—or for that matter from any used intaglio plate.

Bentley accepts the usual assumption that the copperplate-hand portions were composed before the plain-hand pages and states that a reversal of this sequence “cannot . . . satisfactorily account for such diverse factors as symbolism, stab holes, corrections, and handwriting” (Blake Books, p. 455 and n. 5). Erdman notes that “on certain copperplate pages a distinctly late style appears in the script, marked by the g which Blake adopted after Nov. 1802” and states that “it is safer to conclude that the copperplate pages range in inception from 1797 to 1803” (Poetry and Prose of Blake, p. 817). Yet even if some of the fine script was written as late as 1803, the sequence of copperplate hand to plain is not thereby upset.

Bentley places page 42 as the last in a group he dates 1797 and page 43 (illus. 2) the first in a group he dates “?1802” (but see Erdman’s statements on the date of the fine script in note 16, above). These are also the last and first pages in groups once separately sewn, as the two distinct patterns of stab-holes indicate (see Bentley, Blake Books, pp. 454–56).
REVIEWS

The Goya painting of Saturn devouring one of his children, which adorns the dust jacket of this book, has always seemed to me somewhat ridiculous. Intriguing as it naturally was to my mind when young, I nevertheless remember even then being unable to relate the giant to the well-developed form he clutches. For me the picture does not offer a Paulsonian moment of grotesque collapse into undifferentiation but rather a comic incongruity or disparity: a scarecrow bogeyman. But in just this way, I hear the book saying, are anxious pre-sentiments of castration, \textit{vagina dentata}, \textit{penis captivus} and the \textit{Devoradora} or devourer-of-men (all from p. 369) repressed.

The painting offers an apt cover for \textit{Representations of Revolution}, whose last chapter—over a fourth of the book—is devoted to Goya and which is loosely framed by references to Pierre Vergniaud's 1793 observation that "The revolution devours its own children." Paulson finds these "the words that reverberated abroad in England and in Spain," for "Vergniaud's words are the most terrible of all those spoken" (24). The chapter on Goya builds to a discussion of the \textit{Saturn}, and "behind the Saturn is more specifically Vergniaud's words describing the real process of the French Revolution" (367). "The real process," as a pervasive substratum of Freudian imagery suggests, involves "the relation of generations" (the sublime, the book wants to suggest, is the coming-to-consciousness of sublimation). So Vergniaud reminds us that "The cannibalistic devouring of the father by his jealous sons . . . becomes [sic] the primal horde (ironic fraternity)" (24). On the other hand, Goya's \textit{Saturn} "does not represent the primal horde but the saturnine Father devouring his sons . . . a turning of the tables on the cannibalistic sacrifice" (377). Thus does the book commit its own act of revolution, that act which (it says) "pulls us back to the very origins of culture . . . the moment when there is no differentiation between devourer and devoured, between parent and child, between artist and object" (384). Such drift toward eliding difference is the hallmark of the grotesque, the "defective twin of the sublime" which is "all in all the dominant aesthetic mode of the period" (379,7).

One example of this aesthetic is presented in Chapter 4, "Blake's Lamb-Tiger." As it is later summed up: "If Burke saw the Revolution as the sublime of terror and Paine saw it as a beautiful pastoral, Blake, by bringing together the two interpretations, the sublime and the beautiful, emphasized the incongruous and unnatural juxtaposition—the tiger that is half-lamb—and so implicitly classified the phenomenon . . . as grotesque . . . " (170). The argument here hinges on what Paulson terms "Blake's central realization of the discrepancy between word and image" (106). In the illustration to "The Tyger," "The tiger no longer burns bright: it has lost its fire and its nocturnal ferocity, its revolutionary figuration" (99). Wellek and Warren's snooty dismissal of Blake's ability to illustrate his poetry—"A grotesque little animal is supposed to illustrate 'Tyger! Tyger! burning bright'!"—is revolutionized. But the point is confused in this rhetorically curious contrast: "We see before us on the page, in the Urizenic words and the Blakean image, the angel's [i.e. Burkean] vision and the reality" (99). Such elisions of difference are scattered throughout the discussion of "Songs of Innocence

and Experience [sic] (the combined work)" (89). 2 Regarding Songs of Innocence, for example, we are told that "there is no significant level of supraliteral meaning" (one wonders what Paulson makes of the two-day-old speaker of "Infant Joy"). The inadequacy of this formulation speaks for itself in the characterization of Songs of Experience ("Blake's most sublimated representation of revolution") which echoes, at least in half, the earlier, non-supraliteral Songs: "children imprisoned in the houses of their parents, in the black coffins of chimneys, sometimes in their black bodies (of slaves), and in the cages of schools" (117). Here we learn that "The School Boy" is a "typical" instance of the collection, "in which Blake opines 'How can the bird [etc. ]'" (117). Such insight into authorial motive leads Paulson to argue that "On a primary level of Blake's intention the tiger exists in relation to the word tiger in its 1790s context" (97). There is, evidently, no difference between "tyger" and "tiger"—hence the easy confidence that "The Tyger starts out as a description of the tiger" (101). (Is there no difference if we say it "starts out as a description of the tyger")? To cap this discussion, we have the proposal that "Blake's literary source in Burke's Philosophical Enquiry and counterrevolutionary polemic" was supplemented by the opening injunction of Horace's Ars poetica against joining opposites like tigers and lambs.

The height of confused differentiation is the note transposing the dates of Rowlandson and Blake (111), not worth mention in itself except for the novel information that "Rowlandson [i.e. Blake] was born 28 November 1756 or 1757—there is some argument as to which it was" (Professor Bentley please note). The wary reader might mark as well that the work by Macpherson is Oithona, not "Oothoon." And it's odd that while Paulson sees The Marriage of Heaven and Hell as connecting "Leviathan and tigers in the vision of the French Revolution conjured by a Burkean angel" (98), he neglects the concrete referential possibilities of the Paris Leviathan appearing (seen from the Greenwich meridian) "to the east, distant about three degrees." The omission of any reference to Blake's overt representation of revolution, The French Revolution, surprises as well.

But if the chapter on Blake will not entirely satisfy readers of this journal, the other chapters present a more engaging story, an instructive reminder of the overwhelming and unprecedented experience the Revolution offered all lookers. The succinct chapter on The Monk, Caleb Williams, and Frankenstein, coming halfway through the book, leads us to agree, more strongly than before, that the popularity of gothic fiction in the 1790s and beyond "was due in part to the widespread anxieties and fears in Europe aroused by the turmoil in France finding a kind of catharsis in tales of darkness, confusion, blood, and horror" (221). And Paulson's detailed sense of the century's aesthetic currents gives us some provocative formulations; discussing Addison and Burke, for example, he finds that "Beauty for both is repose, a comfortable, perhaps enervating status quo, but the sublime projects the mind forward to ultimates, positing a confrontation with power and change that for Burke at any rate is the essence of terror" (69). But for Blake, we might add, such confrontation is "the essence of vision," while such "beauty" is to be seen (and heard!) as "Baal- lah," the sweet and pleasant "Shadow to repose in" (M 31.7).

Paulson's wide knowledge of artistic practice, as well, leads to some intriguing possibilities: commenting on the self-portrait frontispiece to Goya's Caprichos, he notes that "It is difficult not to think of Blake's piper and his bard, who are established before each phase... . The practice goes back to the artist's placing his head on the frontispiece of his folio of prints" (342). One would like to know more about this. The wonderfully illustrated discussions of Rowlandson and Gillray constitute an essential introduction to the popular caricature prints (which Blake felt "ought not to abound so much as they do"). Readers of this journal who take pleasure in Rowlandson will appreciate the footnote in which Paulson shares Jeremy Potter's wicked suggestion that "If Bacon was Shakespeare, might not Blake be Rowlandson?"

The central tension in Representations of Revolution is that while it focuses on "how to represent the unprecedented," its awareness of the history of the sublime and grotesque suggests that "we can perceive as unprecedented only that for which we have already been prepared" (27). Different preparations equal different representations, representations (it would seem) thus "always already" there in the psycho-cultural coding of the artist. The subject isn't "revolutions of representation," the Revolution being (in Matthew Arnold's words), "a great movement of feeling, not... a great movement of mind." As it turns out, then, we here see Wordsworth's Prelude, Burke's Reflections, and Blake's prophetic books "as about the experience of coming to terms with the Revolution, not simply as a representation of the phenomenon itself" (251). And "the phenomenon itself"? the ellipse in the quotation summing up Blake's use of "the tiger that is half-lamb" (para. 3, above) says that Blake thus "implicitly classified the phenomenon, or at least the complex phenomenon that appeared to external observers such as the artist, as grotesque." With such qualification, can we speak of "the phenomenon itself"? and if not, perhaps the truly revolutionary experience is that of coming to terms with one's inability to come to terms, to re-present the phenomenon itself.

We might think of our experience today in representing, even conceiving, the slightly less tumultuous but overwhelming and unprecedented electronic revolution. In one of the more interesting books on the topic,
The Network Revolution, Jacques Vallée tells the story of an early, visionary network project that ended up as merely a fancy, commercial text-editing system. Perhaps it is the author's French heritage that summons up his comment, "Once again, computer technology had devoured its own children" (113). Saturn again appears as the figuration of Revolution—but we might remember that the Greek figure of the original is Cronos, which returns us to the etymology of the temporal *revolutionem* and those sublimely difficult presentations, time and change. But I imagine a book on "representations of time and change (1789–1820)" turning out quite differently than this one.


Reviewed by Morton D. Paley

“The recent emergence of literary scholars as a new audience for art history,” wrote Kester Svendsen in 1961, “has been almost as spectacular as their venture some twenty-five or thirty years ago into the history of ideas. . . .”1 In the subsequent quarter-century this phenomenon has if anything become more pronounced. This is partly because some British artists, most notably Blake, had received insufficient attention from art historians, a situation which happily no longer exists. Another reason, however, was and is that the methods and subject matter of art history are so closely related to those of literary history that there arose, in Svendsen's words, “a special branch of cultural history over which Panofsky may be said to share domain with Lovejoy.” The work of Ronald Paulson has both continued this tradition, as in his *Hogarth* (1971), and extended it, as in *Representations of Revolution* (1983)2 and the two studies under consideration here.

What Paulson has been attempting in his triad of recent books may be described as the application of some recent concerns of literary criticism to the criticism of art. More specifically, he is interested in the work of art as a system of signs, signs which are not to be decoded into supposed verbal meanings but rather to be understood in relation to one another. This view of paintings does not float freely in self-referentiality but ultimately rests upon the model of Freudian dream-work. As Paulson puts it in *Literary Landscape*:

My inference is that the work of art must be taken as the totality of the symptomatic scene in which desire, meaning, and dream come together, in the sense of their joining as a shared social experience (faute de mieux in words). The work of art does not end with the marks on canvas any more than the 'dream' does with the fugitive, essentially lost experience of the dream itself. This model includes, therefore, the phases of creation and revision, as well as analysis, but without losing sign of the intense concentration and enigmatic beauty of the original marks on the canvas.

This approach almost necessarily occasions controversy, and the reviewer's task is complicated by the temptation to indicate agreement or disagreement with a myriad of details in the discussion of individual designs. More useful would be a consideration of what can be learned from Paulson's method, especially with respect to the

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2 Consider this incongruent coordination: "The poem ['The Tyger'] is an expression of anxiety—anxiety transformed into terror and awe, which sums up Blake's analysis of Burke and/or of the Blakean view of the Revolution" (101); or this: "The words censor, the images naively expose, but the words also reveal subtleties denied by the visual image." (108)

manner in which it differs from that of literary historians who seek to translate paintings into verbal statements that are somehow assumed to be their real meanings.

*Book and Painting* is not, as the title might imply, a history of illustration but rather an interpretation of the rise of British painting as an intertwining of literary subjects and pictorial motives. The artist, in Paulson’s view, dispenses with the text in order to render a parallel statement that derives from his own (as ever, fictive) fidelity to nature. This results in “the possibility of the mock-text,” which Paulson finds exemplified equally in Butler’s *Hudibras* and in Hogarth’s illustrations for *Don Quixote*. “What Hogarth does is find a graphic equivalent for Quixote’s delusion . . . in the sweeping baroque forms . . . of heroic painting.” Such an illustrative mode is but a step away from Hogarth’s comic histories, which offer “not an illustration that completes a text but an image that offers a visual substitute, with its own more or less materialized implied verbal text.” In book illustration and especially in illustrations for *Hudibras* and for *Don Quixote* Paulson sees the germ of English narrative art.

Shakespearean subjects obviously require a chapter, and perhaps the most provocative part of it is the analysis of Hogarth’s *Falstaff Examining His Recruits*. A word must be said here about the quality of this and some other reproductions in *Book and Painting*. *Falstaff Examining* is such a dark halftone that the reader simply cannot follow Paulson’s argument about the picture and must go elsewhere (in my case to plate 22 of David Bindman’s *Thames and Hudson Hogarth*) for a clear view. In other instances pictures are crowded together, the most egregious example being pp. 212–13, where reproductions of six subjects by Michelangelo and by Blake are squeezed onto two facing pages. Captions are at times too limited: one might like to know the names of the engravers of the Boydell Shakespeare plates reproduced on pp. 180 and 181. It seems odd that a publisher who cannot provide a well-printed book as this one cannot provide adequate illustrative material for it.

Paulson sees Hogarth’s *Falstaff* not as an affable irregular but as “closer to Blake’s *Urizen*—a judge with the power and the will to send men to their deaths, assuming a blasphemous pose of fiat lux.” The last detail rests on Paulson’s contention that Falstaff’s gesture resembles that of God the Father in the Sistine Chapel. Here the text is not clear, however, on whether or not we are to suppose this to be Hogarth’s conscious intention, and it is also not quite clear whether Hogarth’s audience is imagined as having all of both parts of Henry IV in mind while looking at the picture. Both assumptions would seem to me doubtful, but here two further points need to be made. Blake scholars frequently write of Blake as if he were at any time capable of referring to any detail in any one of his own works, or in Michelangelo’s or Raphael’s or Milton’s, among others. What we normally mean by this is that the artist and to some extent his audience too are supposed to have internalized the salient features of a shared cultural tradition. In the instance of Falstaff’s gesture, it may be regarded as drawing upon a repository of culturally recognizable images to which we all have access. As far as *Henry IV* is concerned, there is surely no reason to think Hogarth was less aware of the brutality of this scene than we are. At the same time Paulson does justice to the fact that this is not merely a satirical image. His Hogarth is “Shakespearean” in his ability to present the world through multiple perspectives rather than from a single moral position.

The Bible in English art once more involves Hogarth, but first comes a contrast between the structure of sacred history presented in Michelangelo’s *Sistine Chapel*—multi-tiered and vertically structured—and the Raphael Cartoons, where the mode of progression is for the most part horizontal. Paulson argues that “the free spatiality of Blake’s paintings” follows the Sistine Chapel model while the main stream of English history painting follows that of the Cartoons (which is not, of course, to deny the importance of Raphael to Blake’s art). Hogarth is discussed as an artist in the tradition of the “Raphael Bible,” presenting temporal action along horizontal lines. At the same time Paulson acknowledges that the Hogarth he is presenting is “very like Blake” in that both present examples of “subversive analogizing” in producing images that at the same time support and undermine official ideology. But isn’t it important to make a distinction here between what seems the genuine ambiguity of some of Hogarth’s designs and the pointedness of Blake’s? In Blake, for example, once we recognize the Wife of Bath as the Whore of Babylon, she is the Whore of Babylon, which is dissimilar to the motion Paulson sees “from either-or distinctions to both-and equations” in Hogarth’s art.

Perhaps the most complex of Paulson’s Hogarthian “both-and equations” is the one he argues for in *Paul Before Felix*. Here the central figure is seen as “the final summation of Hogarth the provincial, advocate of provincial (i.e., English) art,” an interpretation that Paulson sees as reinforced by the signature “William Hogarth, Anglus, pinxit.” The “Shakespearean” quality of multiple perspectives is amply supported by the various expressions of the listeners (in emulation, of course, of the Cartoons). Yet the argument that Paul’s hand is, in John Ireland’s words, “rather improperly placed” in relation to Drusilla, and that this is, in Paulson’s words, Hogarth’s way of indicating “where the source of Felix’s sin lay” is less likely to compel agreement—especially as the placement of the hand does not seem all that improper. The question is similar to that concerning plate 21 of Blake’s *Milton*, where it has been suggested
that more than a hand is not properly placed. Such views seem to me to ignore the nature of our perpetual consciousness of the fictitious nature of pictorial space, which precisely because it involves a two-dimensional field in which three-dimensional events are represented cannot be arbitrarily warped back into two-dimensionality.

Milton is for Paulson the great promulgator of the single moral perspective, but Miltonic subject matter can nevertheless be taken up by the "Shakespearean" artist. With respect to Hogarth's Satan, Sin and Death, Paulson ingeniously points out that the previous depictions, starting with Henry Aldrich's (once thought to be John Medina's) in 1688, placed Satan in the middle, and that it was Hogarth who made Sin the mediatrix, thus turning the situation into a family romance in which father and son prepare to fight around the body of the mother. This composition is later followed, each in his own way, by Fuseli, Barry, Gillray, and Blake, each bringing out some aspect of the Oedipal conflict in the Miltonic situation. In Blake's visual idiom this translates into a battle between Orc and Urizen over Vala, a phenomenon seen not as liberating but as part of a cycle from tyranny to revolution and back again. If such a view does not quite square with Paulson's statement that "Blake assumes the Other's point of view as exclusively as Milton does the deity's," that may be because the generalization applies to the Blake of the Lambeth period while the cyclical view implicit in Satan, Sin, and Death (c. 1800) becomes dominant slightly later.

Paulson sees Blake as an artist in the multi-leveled mode of Michelangelo, building a subversive structure of images in the leaves of his illuminated books. At the same time he embraces the interesting heresy that "the word in Blake's hands is so powerful that it overwhelm (and among other things, may make us regret) the graphic decorations with which he surrounds them." It would be too facile for us merely to cite in opposition the relatively recent dogma of Composite Art, but a book review does not allow scope for adequate discussion of this extremely important subject. What should be observed at this point, at least, is that the illuminated book that engages most of Paulson's attention here is curiously Urizen—the one about which the heretical view would seem hardest to defend, for if anything the powerful designs of Urizen threaten at times to overwhelm the text.

If Paulson's Blake adheres to a reversed Miltonic perspective, Paulson's Fuseli establishes a single perspective of his own, one which is neither the Deity's nor the Other's. Its hallmarks are foreshortening and diminishment, both of which are seen as occurring to males in relation to females, with frequently low views suggesting a child's view of the parent. Such representations are highly charged examples of Burke's sublime of terror, as instanced by Fuseli's Bard, who "is seen from the frog's eye view with which we regarded [Fuseli's] Macbeth." One could extend this argument to help account for Blake's rejection of such Burkean-sublime pictorial situations, for despite the many affinities between Blake and Fuseli, Fuseli's world is one essentially fixed in its structures and regarded with gloomy pessimism, while in Blake's universe energy is always seeking new forms in which to manifest itself.

Book and Picture concludes with a discussion of Turner's Juliet and Her Nurse, one in which Paulson attempts to explain why the Nurse and not Romeo is seen by arguing that Turner characteristically chooses "the moment of doom" for his subject, as in this instance "presaged by the blackness, the earth colors, the sunset of the nurse." Although it's true that once-splendid, now-decayed Venice suggests for Turner now-splendid, to-be-decayed England, this still does not show why, having taken such liberties, Turner could not have worked in both tragic protagonists, as he did in Hero and Leander (admittedly a night scene). Paulson addresses the second frequently asked question about this picture more convincingly, following Jerrold Ziff in positing a conflation of Shakespeare's play with a story that does take place in Venice: that of Giuletta and Marcolini in Samuel Rogers' Italy, illustrated by Turner in 1836. Conflation of this sort is not limited to Juliet and Her Nurse, as Charles Stuckey has brilliantly demonstrated with respect to Masaniello and the Angel, and in his catalogue entry for The Angel Standing in the Sun Turner placed texts from Revelation and Rogers' Voyage of Columbus in sequence. He was indeed a painter for whom "glosses," to use Paulson's term, were of special importance, and this aspect of Turner, as we would expect, bulks large in Literary Landscape.

The multiplicity of paintings discussed in Paulson's study of Turner and Constable makes it necessary for a reviewer to focus on a few examples, and The Angel Standing in the Sun, because of both its own importance and the importance of texts to it, is almost inevitable. Paulson sees Turner's imagination as heliotropic, arguing that even the artist's name is significant in this respect. (If we are tempted to think that such a view is necessarily modern, we should remind ourselves that a hostile critic referred to the artist as over-Turner, and that Turner recalled with pleasure that Tom Girtin's father was a turner by trade.) The sun of course is one of the set subjects of sublimity, going back before Burke to John Dennis, and its overpowering role in Turner's art is so evident as to require no demonstration. In The Angel, Turner represents the text of Revelation but conflates it with Rogers' "The morning march that flashes to the sun,/ The feast of vultures when the day is done." The sun in Turner's painting is presented in all its apocalyptic force, its angel an agent of the destruction of
the captains and the kings of the earth.

Paulson recognizes that works like *The Angel Standing in the Sun* will not yield to a full verbal explication, and at the outset he states that in contrast to his *Emblem and Expression*, verbal meaning "is no longer given a privileged position here." He does nevertheless fruitfully relate literary texts to works of art, as when he sets a passage from *The Mysteries of Udolpho* against *Hannibal Crossing the Alps*, thus continuing the exploration of Turner and the Gothic initiated by Jack Lindsay in *The Sunset Ship*. Paulson is also interested in the landscape tradition Turner inherited from Wilson, Gainsborough and Loutherbourg. However the formal analysis of the first two is too compressed to allow sufficient scope for the argument that "Gainsborough's characteristic curve [is] a long, loose S or pair of intersecting Ss" while in Wilson's middle distances "the C is constantly striving to close itself into an O." More immediately convincing is the contrast between "the secure place Loutherbourg always allows for the viewer" in cataclysmic pictures like the Tate Gallery *Avalanche* and Turner's practice: "Turner puts his viewer in the position of the endangered person himself, leaving him no ground to stand on. Thus we can regard Turner's sublime as the shrinkage of the humans (the historical) to a mere vestige of landscape, or adding them to the landscape as a hold upon history."

Here we can see the transformation of the sublime from its stagelike representation in Loutherbourg to something more immediately related to internal reality. As Paulson puts it, "Turner expressed a new epistemology, one that supposes a powerful reflexivity in the subject; he projected his imagination on a landscape, creating even more than Gainsborough a landscape of the mind."

Perhaps the hardest British artist to discuss in literary terms is Constable, whose enterprise was to reject the analogy of history painting to the literary epic and to become a "natural painter" whose appeal was to the "innocent eye." Even in recognizing this ambition as resting on assumptions as literary as the traditional hierarchy of modes, we can see the fundamental difference in aim between Constable's six-footers and, say, Fuseli's Milton Gallery. Nevertheless, Constable was a writer of lectures and of letters, and Paulson makes use of both to demonstrate "Constable's careful approximation of verbal syntax to graphic structures." More typically, however, the paintings are engaged on a psychological level. "Constable's visual image of a landscape," Paulson suggests, "may have contained a nostalgia for the open field, a desire to escape from demarcation and subdivision into the open field." Structural description is linked to psychoanalytical interpretation centering on Constable's prolonged courtship of Maria Bicknell, their long-deferred union, and Constable's eventual bereavement. With the death of Dr. Rhuddel, who had prevented the marriage, Constable "finds the experiential structure he is about [in 1819] to impose upon his paintings of the Stour Valley: a complex relationship between death, decay, fertilization, spring, and resurrection."

In trying to establish such connections, Paulson is always attentive to the status of the work of art as such. His exposition escapes the occupational hazard of much Freudian criticism, reductionism, just as his prose is free of the obscurantist jargon that disfigures so much contemporary literary theory. The phenomenon cited at the beginning of this review—the incursion of literary scholars into the history of art—continues to produce results of importance to both disciplines.

2. See the review by Nelson Hilton elsewhere in this issue.
Reviewed by David Simpson

Heather Glen’s book consists of close to four hundred pages devoted to an account of the contexts and intrinsic qualities of a relatively brief body of poetry. At its best, it is thus very thorough and well researched. It is packed with references to contemporary writings and documents; time after time I found myself appreciating and enjoying the obvious relevance of the sources and analogues the author brings to bear upon the poems. With some notable exceptions, the distinguished work of David Erdman on the historical identity of Blake’s poetry has not established the ongoing tradition which it deserved to beget, in part perhaps because of Erdman’s intimidating comprehensiveness, but also surely because the trends in Romantic criticism over the last twenty-five years have not favored historical scholarship or political outspokenness. If these trends are changing, as some seem to think, then Glen’s book comes at a timely moment, and it will make a useful contribution to the further investigation of the politics of Romanticism.

Whilst many Blakeans are in principle (and some in practice) fully aware of the importance of Blake’s precursors and contemporaries for a proper understanding of his work, the problems of making some sort of basic sense of his poems have been so daunting that writers like Ronksley, Trusler, Barbauld, Wesley, Watts and others have been insufficiently examined. Glen’s use of such writers indeed suggests that some of the problems of “intrinsic” exposition arise precisely because of an inadequate knowledge of their contexts; “Spring,” for example, can now be posited as part of a genre of rhymes for reading and pronunciation practice (p. 10). *Pigott’s Political Dictionary*, to which Glen refers frequently, is an especially worthy object of attention for students of Romanticism, as is the context for Wordsworth’s poems established by the conventions of the *Monthly Magazine*. Even where Glen’s readings of individual poems are not themselves new (which is much of the time), something is yet added to them by the sheer amount of relevant information she has gathered; if we end up confirming what we already thought, then we do so with a much stronger sense that our hunches are historically credible and relevant to the expectations of their original audiences. Students of Blake will be grateful for this book’s way of increasing the range of texts which their poet might have known and knowingly reacted to; it is thus a serious contribution to the ongoing and difficult attempt to read Blake as a man of his times.

This historical foundation is the great strength of Glen’s book, and at its best it produces a satisfyingly sophisticated blend of critical and historical exposition, as in the fine reading of “A Poison Tree” (pp. 187–98). But Glen’s book is not simply a poem by poem account which changes its perspectives and priorities as the poems seem to demand. It also has a thesis, and a very trenchant one at that. Like most theses that seek to hold together everything they claim to derive from, it has both strengths and weaknesses. It also depends upon assumptions which themselves must be questioned, and whose implications need an airing.

Both Blake and Wordsworth, for Glen, are engaged in questioning and unsettling the received categories of poetic discourse, especially those which had developed for the instruction of children, for the inculcation of moral dogma, and for the expression of outrage at social injustice. For Glen, much of this inherited literature is
overtly or covertly reactionary, taming what is “uncontrollable” by reducing it to the terms of the “dominant culture” (p. 37). She argues convincingly that, seen in this context, both the Songs and the Ballads are highly disconcerting, opting to suspend or complicate the very questions that other writers pretend to answer. Where other writers assuage or comfort, Blake and Wordsworth subvert and interrogate. But Glen’s thesis goes further, as she argues for a crucial difference of kind and degree between their respective techniques of subversion. Blake has access to a Swedenborgian and “underground” tradition, whereas Wordsworth is associated more with the rationalist radicals, the Dissenters, and those who continue to believe in the “customary sense of words” (p. 59).

So far so good. But with the aid of Glen’s chosen literary-critical methods and assumptions, this distinction starts to build itself into an almost Manichean model of the Blake-Wordsworth relation. Ghosts of the old Leavisite “loaded comparison” begin to emerge as one poet’s strengths (Blake’s) are used to argue for the other poet’s weaknesses. Wordsworth’s choice or affiliation is soon seen to condemn him to (at best) the soulless and egotistic language of theoretical egalitarianism (that which Coleridge scorned as speaking of the “benefactor” instead of the “fellow man”). Blake, reciprocally, wallows a little too comfortably for my liking in the warm gaze of an egotistic language of theoretical egalitarianism (that which Wordsworth might have preferred to avoid). Blake, reciprocally, wallows a little too comfortably for my liking in the warm gaze of an egotistic language of theoretical egalitarianism (that which Wordsworth might have preferred to avoid). At least, the Blake of Songs of Innocence does so. For Glen’s argument depends also upon a strong distinction between innocence and experience, with Wordsworth emerging later as one trapped within experience.

First, the innocence-experience crux. In the Songs of Innocence, Glen finds Blake to be in touch with a “real imaginative life” (p. 14), and to demonstrate a “refusal to accept the terms of the dominant culture, either by agreement or opposition” (p. 146–47). He refuses, in other words, both the complacent moralities of the usual children’s poem, and also the strident tone of outright denunciation that typifies the usual gesture of social protest (and which surfaces for Glen in Songs of Experience). The Innocence poems are for Glen the genuinely challenging and radical ones, in that they refuse the alienated, accusatory self-other separation in favor of “an actual experience of a wholly different mode of being” (p. 147). What is meant by this is “a mode of interaction characterized by openness and responsiveness to rather than distortion and domination of the other, by the expression of vulnerability and need, and an answering vindication of the trust implicit in the expression; a mode of interaction in which both self and other achieve their fullest realization and create a mutually satisfying actuality” (p. 345). I shall return in a moment to the implications of this somewhat orgasmic language (nothing wrong with that, of course, except that it is language!). To continue: innocence is typified by responsive play and energy unfixed into obsessive desire. A deep tradition this, and Glen is right to point to it. Experience, on the contrary, is a state in which the self seeks to keep control and to adjudicate all the oppositions. Innocence offers the authentically erotic (in the widest sense), experience only “a failure to project any compelling alternative” (p. 174) to confrontation and despair. The speakers of innocence are integrated, those of experience alienated.

This amounts to an almost absolute distinction between innocence and experience, of the sort which more attention to other criticism, or to Blake’s other work, might have put into question. I at least favor a more interactive view of the two states, in the spirit of the contraries. In particular I find myself looking for a more protean notion of innocence than the one Glen proposes. Are there not various kinds of innocence in the poems collected by Blake under this title? Including perhaps the false innocence of a deluded or sentimental narrator? Which might vary also according as there are adult or child readers? Glen does not discuss “Laughing Song,” “The Blossom,” “The Little Black Boy,” or “The Little Boy lost” and “The Little Boy found” in any detail—all poems in which such questions seem to me to be crucial. But she does devote several pages (pp. 96–102) to “The Chimney Sweeper,” and her account may serve as an example of some of the problems I find with the thesis.

The account of the contemporary debate which this poem addresses is fuller than any I know, and very valuable: Hanway, Southey, Swedenborg and the legacies of the Wilkes riots are tellingly invoked. But Blake’s poetic reaction to the debate is less unambiguously delineated. Glen finds in the child speaker’s lines a “potent immediacy” and a “dynamic vision of present possibility” in which everyday misery is “transfigured” (p. 97). She also admits that there is “an obvious, pathetic irony in the little sweep’s repetition or [of] the precepts of a morality which allows and even justifies suffering such as his” (p. 99). But this insight never colors her reading of the poem, which seeks to legitimate a “potency,” an image of “human potential for unjudging wholeness of vision, for unselfseeking, loving relationship, that is manifestly not actualized by the official structures of the society . . . and which its morality cannot encompass” (p. 102). I cannot see a way of having this both ways. If we perceive the uncomfortable coincidence of the dream with the popular Christian quietism, and admit that it has the effect of making the sweeps work joyfully amidst their miserable situation, how can we at the same time be happy with the “wholeness” of the vision? In transcribing it, might Blake not be dramatizing a state of false consciousness? Is this perhaps what becomes of “innocence” in a state of ideological subjection, wherein
it learns and repeats the homilies which keep it in chains? This seems to be a poem as much about mind-forged (and socially enforced) manacles as about transfiguring and wholesome alternatives.

I have similar reservations about the reading of the first "Holy Thursday" poem (pp. 121–29), which once again offers Glen a "potentiality that is actualized" (p. 129), about the proffered simplicity of "A Cradle Song," and so forth. I am sure that others besides this author and reviewer will continue to disagree over these poems. I want now to discuss the methods and assumptions that make these readings possible, indeed necessary. The ghosts in Glen's machine are those of Leavis, above all, and of Donald Davie's *Articulate Energy*. From the last she takes the habit (not to be simply identified with Davie) of making syntax the dominant and even single carrier of poetic meaning. At times this works well (see the comments on "Ah! Sunflower") and at times not so well. Often, remarks about the syntax are offered as if they self-evidently produce a meaning, without reference to the argument of a poem. The important logic of "The Lamb," for example, does not emerge from an account of its syntax, even if it happens to be coincident with it. I find myself on such occasions thinking of Johnson's remarks in the *Life of Pope*, that "even in such resemblances the mind often governs the ear, and the sounds are estimated by their meaning."

From Leavis, or from the tradition of Leavis, Glen has imbibed far more. Her writing is evidence of a positive cult of "presence" and "actuality," of exactly the sort that so many American (and some British, of whom more later) critics have been busy upsetting for the last ten years or so. Regardless of the ultimate questions about right and wrong, Glen's account is weakened by the way in which it completely fails to take on the challenge of this recent work. Phrases like "the imaginative pressure of experience" (p. 37), the "actual experience of a wholly different mode of being" (p. 147), and the "living actuality which can be created in human relationships" (p. 291), recur throughout the readings of the poems, which are judged according as they stimulate these terms. Hence the "mutually satisfying actuality" that I mocked, somewhat unfairly, earlier. From all of this, I can only beg to differ. Poems are not and never were actual, except as poems, and most critics have long since stopped trying to defend the idea that they should be. For the most part, we are no longer as desperate for the phantasy that poetry is the experience it refers to. Glen demonstrates in this very book that she can write analytical and historical criticism of poetic statements; but when the affirmative fit is upon her, these statements seem to become incarnate before her eyes as real things. Hence her reading of the first two lines of "Holy Thursday":

Suddenly they are there—not merely in the visual details, their clean faces and their coloured clothes, the specificity of "Upon a holy Thursday"—but in the rhythm of the verse, marching hobbled hoy through the streets of London. The suddenness and immediacy is there in the syntax: the unrelated present participle, the shifts of tense between past and present exactly recreate the position of an observer who has begun to offer his impression of the procession in medias res. (p. 121)

No wonder the children are an "overwhelming presence" (p. 123)! The critic has stopped thinking and has started seeing, or hallucinating. No further questions need be asked; the image has turned into the real, and the magic of art has put to sleep the inquiring spirit. To query the point of view of the narrator would simply be to spoil the mood.

I shall not spend time on the view of experience Glen offers, one governed by the model of hysterically alienated speakers unable to relax from their oppositional stances into mutually satisfying actualities. This thesis calls for the same reservations in reverse. It must also be objected that by my reckoning at least twelve, or almost half of the poems in *Experience* are not discussed beyond a mention, and sometimes not even that. But I want now to pass on to the case of Wordsworth, who is, as some readers will already have guessed, destined to be the loser in the competition to "actualize." If fans of this journal are going to have some differences with Glen's book, then the readers of *The Wordsworth Circle* are going to have many more. (Those who are fans of both should try to stay cool.) Wordsworth is sold short in at least two interrelated ways. Much of his sublety is missed because he does not provide the right signals to raise the Leavisite pulse rate; and, perhaps as a result of this, the historical context that is established around him is much less full than that focused on Blake, the favored poet. It must be said that Glen is right to claim that in Wordsworth's writings "the self is fundamentally egocentric," so that "real recognition of others must come as a traumatic self-questioning" (p. 276), if indeed it comes at all. Every reader of Wordsworth must come to terms with this. But Glen cannot carry this insight into useful explanation because it is consistently connected to some moral and imaginative failure in Wordsworth, dismissed once acknowledged by the righteous critic. So Wordsworth has no "effectual sense of actuality" (p. 316), the adult-child relationship in "Anecdote for Fathers" is "not actualized" (p. 245), and "There Was a Boy" lacks a sense that "society is shaped by living human relations" (p. 270). These are not inapt statements, but they should be the beginnings of an inquiry, not its conclusions. The complex terms of Wordsworth's poetic alienation are never explored—nor are their historical contexts. In a book which is often successfully historical in its treatment of Blake, the effect of failing to offer the same richness of context around Wordsworth is to suggest that it is not there, and cannot be found. This is simply not true. Glen's reading of "The Thorn,"
for example, is embarrassingly thin, and yet this ought to be one of the most carefully treated poems in a study which purports to make judgments about Wordsworth's handling of the relation of the individual to the community. The intelligence with which Wordsworth analyses (as opposed to simply perpetrating) the failure of interactive relations is completely missed. To give just one more example, "The Reverie of Poor Susan" is interpreted in apparent good faith (pp. 103–109), but always as the losing half of an account which compares it with "The Chimney Sweeper." Thus Wordsworth never achieves the "particular details of an actual society" (p. 106), and can never compete with Blake's "imaginative pressure" (p. 105). The suspicion that it might be an entirely different kind of poem is never entertained. The very poetic diction of which Glen complains might be thought entirely consonant with the loss of "actuality" which the poem describes. If it is about such loss, why should it provide any "imaginative pressure"?

The point is, of course, that Wordsworth analyzes a different kind of alienation from Blake; it is indeed less hopeful and less energetic, but that does not make it poetically deficient. The terms for such judgments are moral, not technical, but for Glen these are usually the same thing, so that we are browbeaten into accepting each by means of other. Glen's inability to make any sympathetic or complex sense of Wordsworth is not, moreover, coincidental. It is tied up with the hidden agenda in the book, which I must now comment upon, especially for the benefit of American readers who might not otherwise recognize the signals being so vigorously put out.

I began to sense the place of this agenda long before the revealing comment in the conclusion to the book: The poems of Lyrical Ballads offer not so much answers to the questions which confront those who try to think creatively about human possibility today as a revealing articulation of a particular way of confronting them. In many ways, Wordsworth, the Cambridge-educated radical, deeply disillusioned with the course he had seen the French Revolution taking, guiltily aware of the manifest inequalities within his society, wishing at once to transcend its complacently paternalistic attitudes and to affirm a "common humanity" with those from whom he was separated by privilege, may be seen as a prototype of a certain kind of modern left-wing intellectual. (p. 340)

What Wordsworth and the "certain kind of modern left-wing intellectual" fail to achieve is, for Glen, "satisfying relations between people" (p. 340). In the mode of their denunciations and self-preoccupations, both share the "failure to project any compelling alternative" of the speaker of Songs of Experience, with his "millenarian gestures toward total revolution" (p. 175). Of course, many worthwhile books of literary criticism set out to address their own times as well as their apparent topics, and none of us ultimately escapes the famous hermeneutic circles. The distinction to be made, then, is not one between innocence and contamination but between conscious allusion and unconscious or dishonest manipulation. Glen's book is to my mind a disappointment in this respect, in that it shows itself insufficiently conscious of the degree to which its implicit bête noire, the British theoretical Marxist, determines so much of its argument "about" Blake and Wordsworth. There is a famous debate on the British left, one that has been going on for some years and has taken its most public form in E. P. Thompson's attack on Althusser, and (in a reciprocal though not identical way) in Terry Eagleton's criticism of Raymond Williams. Herein, the "Althusser" lobby is portrayed as obsessively preoccupied with "theory," and taken to imply that ideological determination is an all-encompassing patterning of thought within which no authentic perception of a creative alternative is possible. We live within our chains, they infect our imaginations at the deepest level, and no easy recourse to a solution in "experience" can be promised. Against this, the "Thompson" lobby wants to maintain a faith in the authentic consciousness of the common man, who can perceive the truth of his situation, and can act upon it, without fear of simply reproducing the terms of his own repression. The message of Thompson's seminal book, The Making of the English Working Class, is that early nineteenth-century laborers were not prisoners of ideology, and that they knew perfectly well what needed to be done to change their world for the better.

We can see here, then, the same polarity that Glen suggests between the Songs of Innocence on the one hand, and the Songs of Experience and most of Wordsworth on the other. The first is creative, optimistic and "actual"; the second manically oppositional or incapacitated by melancholy self-absorption. We can see also the degree to which Glen is in the grip of a "theory" which she would presumably blush to acknowledge, given that her argument is posited precisely against the restrictions of theory itself. This tactic of avoidance is a fine example of the precise strategy by which, in the aftermath of the "faculty wars" inside the Cambridge English department some three or four years ago, so many of those who regard themselves as solidly "left" in their political credentials ended up (and even started out) siding with the old-guard defense against all that "abstract fancy stuff." It seems to me that the terms of the Thompson-Althusser choice are absurdly extreme; in particular cases, each lobby can find evidence for its case, but no perusal of a large body of data seems to me to suggest that either position can be maintained to the exclusion of the other. People sometimes are and sometimes are not trapped within the framework of ideology, and the issue can only be adjudicated with reference to the particular case. The trouble with Glen's version of the "Thompson" position is that it intellectually short-circuits a whole range of potentially interesting questions and approaches by ref-
ference to a naive notion of "actuality." Glen achieves this condition all too glibly for my tastes, and having achieved it is not inspired to think further, or even to think at all. If Blake does offer, in poems like "The Lamb," the kind of alternative that Glen finds everywhere in Innocence, then he offers it not as an "actualized" experience but as a piece of poetic logic, there to be thought about as well as felt. But I think he also analyzes the refracted perceptions of false consciousness in poems like "The Chimney Sweeper" and "Holy Thursday." There is no unitary notion of "innocence," nor indeed of "experience," in Blake's volume, as we realize if we attend to the poems Glen does not discuss, as well as to alternative readings of those she does. As for Wordsworth, I would argue that there is no poet who does more to explain and analyze the operations of the unconscious within the restrictions of "ideology" and alienation. This is not merely a failure of Wordsworth the poet, it is the precondition and anatomy of his poetic intelligence. The peculiar problem of Wordsworth is indeed that he reproduces both these things; by not always suggesting the dramatic differentiation of poet from speaker, he does suggest that the various misreadings of the world which the poems chronicle are his own. Only a criticism which goes at least as far into the deconstructionist or "theoretical" Marxist methodology as to accept the disintegrated model of subjectivity which those approaches (for quite different reasons) offer can hope to make anything of this aspect of Wordsworth's writings. Glen is a very long way from this point, being committed to a moral-poetic faith in "actual experience" and, more to the point, to a faith in poetry's ability to incarnate such a thing. Glen, like all critics of her kind, never has an answer to the challenge that her experience might not tally with someone else's. The danger of this position is that, given these terms, the other is always dismissed as improperly "human." This criticism commits precisely the gesture of which it accuses its opponents, except more covertly and thus more dangerously.

I realize that in much of the above I have gone somewhat beyond the terms of the standard review essay. Nor shall I make any conciliatory mutterings about the friendship of opposition. The true friendship that Blake invoked is probably best left vague or undefined, though it is unlikely to be found at odds with the exposition of the maximum number of relevant issues. Some of the issues raised in this book do seem to be as "extrinsic" to the Blake-Wordsworth question as they could possibly be. Because they are important issues, however, and not likely to be familiar to some American readers, I have spent some time exploring them. Before concluding, I might make a few points within the "standard" vocabulary. The book will annoy some readers for other reasons than those I have been declaring. It is deficient in point of "etiquette," in that it does not show a very wide awareness of the secondary literature; it is not very sensitive to the composite nature of Blake's art (though the author is conscious of this, and apologizes for it); and it continues to cite from the Keynes edition, despite the obvious superiority of Erdman's textual work. The point of "etiquette" is more an American than a British preoccupation. It does not bother me much at those points where it is made up for by the richness of the historical documentation, as in the best parts of the account of Blake. But in the case of Wordsworth, where the history is skimpier and the premises less sympathetic, some awareness of the work of others might have made Glen's case a bit more sophisticated than it is. The historical material is, in its own way, authoritative, even where the reader might dispute the nature of its exact relation to Blake or Wordsworth. But I must end with a strong word of warning to those readers who acknowledge in themselves a tendency to be beguiled by intimations of actuality.


[Editor's note: Typesetting limitations have necessitated the following modifications to the author's manuscript: The superscript letter in abbreviations such as "M." and "S." have been moved from directly over the period to the right of it. Also, the symbol "?" replaces a caret below the line which indicates an insertion; two such symbols indicate a second set of insertions. "They are recorded here because they indicate important changes of mind by Fuseli—and to indicate something more which the editor could have indicated in his transcripts," the author writes.]
David Weinglass has produced a major work of scholarship, one which will be invaluable to anyone concerned with Romantic art in general, with Fuseli in particular, or with individuals in whose lives he was of major importance, such as William Cowper, Mary Wollstonecraft, Joseph Johnson—and William Blake. The book is not only a marvelous mine of information; it is in some respects a model of what a work like this should be. But it is also idiosyncratic—with idiosyncracies beyond those of its very curious subject—and the reader should be aware of what it contains and what it omits.

The title—The Collected English Letters of Henry Fuseli—is intended to distinguish it from works such as Heinrich Füsslis Briefe edited by Walter Muschg (Basel, 1942) and Hugh Macandrew, "Selected Letters from the Correspondence of Henry Fuseli and William Roscoe of Liverpool," Gazettes des Beaux-Arts, 62 (1963), 204–28, but it is far more than this. For one thing, the 310 "English" letters by Fuseli of 1759–1825 include a few in Italian, French, Latin, and Greek (p. ix), though none in his native language. ("After he returned from Italy in 1779," Fuseli appears to have written only a relative handful of letters in German" [p. ix], but these are not identified.) For another, there are 86 letters here to Fuseli, including some in Italian. For another, there are 210 contemporary letters about Fuseli written by his acquaintances, so that Fuseli's "English Letters" include, paradoxically, his "Posthumous Letters" (1825–31; pp. 489–539). In addition, we are given, most valuably, documents relating to John Knowles's Executorship of Fuseli's estate in 1825–28 (pp. 580–83), and the sale catalogues of Fuseli's Small and very Select Classical Library (1825) and of his Remaining Finished and Unfinished [artistic] Works (1827) (pp. 584–99). Further, the definition of a letter is very elastic, comprehending not only the handwritten messages one would expect but receipts, printed dedicatory epistles, advertisements, and some paragraphs by Fuseli in an edition of Gray which Weinglass "assume[s] . . . were sent . . . in the form of a letter" (p. 208). There is, in short, an enormous mass of valuable information about Fuseli here, probably more than anywhere else except in Gert Schiff's wonderful catalogue raisonné of Johann Heinrich Füssli 1741–1825 (Zürich & München, 1975). In future, anyone concerned with Fuseli in almost any way will have to depend upon Weinglass's extraordinary volume.

Fuseli's character was strongly marked, and he made a vivid personal impression. William Shepherd wrote to his wife in 1797: "Fuseli . . . is certainly one of the most extraordinary men I have ever met with. His learning is extensive and profound. His remarks are original and he has a strength of expression which makes his observations on man and things to a wonderful degree entertaining and interesting" (p. 173). And after Fuseli's death, Godwin wrote: "He could not bear to be eclipsed or put in the back-ground for a moment. He scorned to be less than highest. He was an excellent hater; he hated a dull fellow, as men of wit and talents naturally do; and he hated a brilliant man, because he could not bear a brother near the throne" (p. 509). His oral expression was emphatic and profane, a profanity which his good friend John Flaxman found trying. He once said to Blake,

"How do you get on with Fuseli? I can't stand his foul-mouthed swearing. Does he swear at you?"

Blake: "He does."

Flaxman: "And what do you do?"

Blake: "What do I do? Why—I swear again! and he says astonished, 'ry Blake, you are swearing!' but he leaves off himself!"


But Fuseli's young friend Margaret Patrickson wrote: "There is no giving Fuseli without swearing. Why is it that swearing in him never gave offence? At least, I never heard that it did. In my own opinion, it was accompanied by no profanity of mind. his feelings vented themselves in the most energetic language he could meet with . . . " (p. 519). But in his correspondence there is little of this thunder and lightning—partly, of course, because his letters were kept chiefly by his steady friends whom he did not curse; forty percent of the letters quoted here are from the Roscoe correspondence. His contemporaries regularly remarked on the strong vestiges of German pronunciation which characterized Fuseli's speech even in his last years, but his written English is not only assured and confident, it is strong and elegant; Cowper called him, not unjustly, "a perfect master of our language" (p. 30), and he might have said something similar of Fuseli's German, Greek, Latin, Italian, and French. What his letters lack in the sharpness and volcanic emphasis of his speech, they gain in balance, deftness, and elegance. One must not, of course, pretend that these letters rival those of Cowper and Keats—and Blake—but they are strong and pointed and often graceful—and on occasion they are moving. After the death of Joseph Johnson in 1809, he wrote to an old friend, "If my grief for the loss of my first and best friend were less excessive, I might endeavour to moderate your's" (p. 373). But his generous fund of righteous indignation is more often visible, particularly during the very difficult years when he was trying to accomplish his great Milton project. "Till I had acquired more of that Sublime Philosophy . . . what else Could my Letters Consist of but indignation, Complaint or rage?" (p. 125).

Editorial Method: Weinglass presents a fairly literal transcript of the documents, but he omits deletions or sinks them to footnotes, expands abbreviations such as the ampersand, lowers superscript letters, italicizes titles of books and pictures and quotations in foreign lan-
guages, and silently corrects misprints in texts derived from printed sources. All these alterations are defensible, though they do not represent the most meticulous standards—and some of them are determined not by Weinglass's willing choice but by the defects of his method of printing. More positively Weinglass regularly supplies the address of the letter, its exact postmark (though he does not explain the significance of the postmark), the day of the week, the docket on the letter, where it was printed (he says [p. ix] that only about 130 of these 606 letters have been printed before, even in part), and the collection in which it was found, as well as admirably detailed annotations.

How accurate and reliable is the transcript? I have proofread against reproductions of the manuscripts seven letters (on pp. 163–65, 183, 185, 187–88, 252–53, 365, 409–10) and find that in general Weinglass's transcripts are commendably accurate. Sometimes a letter seems to me to be upper case where he reads lower case, or vice versa; once I read plural ('pictures') where he reads singular (p. 185); the lineation is occasionally and the paragraph indentation once or twice silently simplified; and the amplification of abbreviations is sometimes rather striking—e.g., "Your obedient humble Servant" for "Your obed. h. S" (p. 365). The only serious mistake appears in a letter from Wiliam Roscoe to Fuseli of 24 January 1797 (p. 164) in which the phrase "the Artist [Fuseli] will I am sure furnish me with a treat which I have for some time past longed to enjoy" has unaccountably added to it, after "I am sure," the words "themselves upon the whole with great civility"—a phrase which appears a little later in this letter. Clearly the reiteration of the phrase is due to a defect in the composition of the printed text.

In a work as ambitious as this one, no matter how diligent the editor, there are bound to be omissions. Some which I have noticed are:

**TO JOHN BOYDELL** [for p. 190]

Sunday 17 December 1787[2]

Fuseli presents his Complimen."[2] to M' Boydell: as he is now entirely occupied with his Picture, he naturally seizes on every possible advantage, and in consequence, before he orders the Canvas, wishes To know, whether the height of eight by Six be irrésocably Settled—the Sketch which M' Boydell has Seen, is in the proportion of the Size prescribed—an addition of Six inches more, or nine feet, would undoubtedly add much to the Sublime of the Scene. M.' Boydell will judge whether Some future Local Conformity ought To outweigh the Claim of the Subjects.

N. 100 S.' Martins Lane

Sunday morn. 17th of D.'

1788

**TO F.I. DU ROVERAY** [for p. 194]

Friday 9 May 1800[9]

M.' Fuseli presents his Comp." to M' Du Roveray. and submits it to Him whether the Compound 'iron-sleep' of page 65 in His edition of Gray be not an exception to His assertion on the Last page of the book?" May 9. 1800.

**FROM F.I. DU ROVERAY** [for p. 272]

Thursday 30 June 1803[10]

Sir

When I reflect upon what passed between us at the time of the agreement for the Pictures, I am led to think that you might conclude you was to have the same number to do from the Odyssey as from the Iliad; but I solemnly declare that my own conception of the matter was quite different. I had offered to give you 6 subjects from the Iliad & 6 from the Odyssey: in talking over the matter, I understood that you preferred doing 12 from the Iliad; and, provided you had that number, that you would agree to the terms I proposed— In fact you Soon after Selected the 12 Subjects you wished to undertake, without even mentioning a word of those from the [Iliad del] "Odyssey." It was my intention to have given you a few from the latter poem; but I always considered it optional in me to do it or not; and, when I came to consider the engagements I had made with others, I found it difficult to spare you any, except by way of exchange. This is not the place to examine whether you are alone competent to do them justice; for should my expectation 'in that respect' be deceived, I shall be the 'principal' sufferer: methinks however that you have 'already' a sufficiently large share in my work to have no reason to complain; [besides I had a right[2] to conclude from your manner of expressing yourself respecting our agreement that you regretted having entered into it and would not care to extend it. I shall not dwell upon the suggestion you were pleased to make, del/ again you have more than once expressed yourself as being dissatisfied with the terms[?] of our agreement (altho' the same were more favourable to you than those proposed by yourself for the Milton pictures) and yet you now regret not having twice the number to do— As to the hint you were pleased to throw out 'about my taking advantage of there being no written agreement between us, [further than by observing that I did not expect such an insinuation from you, and del/ again after the dealings we have had together.' I confess that I did not expect so illiberal an insinuation from you. I shall only add: that it is the [more un del] 'less' justifiable, as in the event of such a proof being wanted I should be in your power, not you in mine— Hoping you will do me more justice for the future I remain

Sir

Your Ob h' Ser

F I DuRoveray

30 June 1803

I am still willing to do all in my power to lessen your disappointment; therefore, on your giving up the two subjects already ment.4 from the Iliad, I will endeavour to give you the [four(2) del] five follg from the Odyssey: [but I cannot with any degree of propriety allot you more than 12 subjects altogether; therefore I will however, give you, in return for the two from the Iliad two subjects from the Odyssey which I am sure will be to your liking, viz. del] Viz." Book. 9. Polyphem grooping in his cave for Ulysses & his companions

11. Ulysses in the shades, when the shade of Ajax turns indignant from him

12. Ulysses between Charybdis & Scylla or some other subject from the same book

(16. Ulysses revealing himself to Telemachus del]

21. Penelope weeping over the bow of Ulysses

23. Penelope's transports on recognizing Ulysses.

FROM JOHN STOCKDALE [for p. 314]

Monday 13 May 1805

I am still willing to do all in my power to lessen your disappointment; therefore, on your giving up the two subjects already ment.4 from the Iliad, I will endeavour to give you the [four(2) del] five follg from the Odyssey: [but I cannot with any degree of propriety allot you more than 12 subjects altogether; therefore I will however, give you, in return for the two from the Iliad two subjects from the Odyssey which I am sure will be to your liking, viz. del] Viz." Book. 9. Polyphem grooping in his cave for Ulysses & his companions

11. Ulysses in the shades, when the shade of Ajax turns indignant from him

12. Ulysses between Charybdis & Scylla or some other subject from the same book

(16. Ulysses revealing himself to Telemachus del]

21. Penelope weeping over the bow of Ulysses

23. Penelope's transports on recognizing Ulysses.
[Paraphrase:] Mr. Stockdale hopes that he is perfectly recovered from the effects of his accident and that he can send the biographical sketches [for Pilkington's Dictionary].

TO HARRIET JANE MOORE [for p. 355]\(^1\)

Saturday 22 November 1806

To Harriet Jane Moore
from her friend Henry Fuseli

Nov. 22nd 1806

TO AN UNNAMED CORRESPONDENT [for p. 368]\(^2\)

Friday 7 July 1809

[Paraphrase:] Will you join me and James Moore in going to St Paul's?

TO MRS JAMES MOORE [for p. 472]\(^3\)

Tuesday 11 December 1821

[Paraphrase:] Mr Fuseli regrets that he cannot accept the invitation to meet her and James Moore.

Technical Methods: The work was produced by extremely sophisticated technology. "This book was formatted and copy-set using the IBM Document Composition Facility (Script/VS) in conjunction with the AMDAHL 470/V7 computer. The master was printed on the IBM 3800 Laser printer" (p. vi). I do not pretend to understand what this means, but the results are often unfortunate; such an important book deserved to be handsomely, or at least tolerably, presented, particularly when the cost is $90. The typeface is ugly, and each letter is identical in width, not proportionally spaced, with the "i" much narrower than the "m." Apparently the machinery could not cope with superscript letters, and because of the paucity of the characters on the machine "I have been forced to represent the £ sign by L" (p. xii), which is not very satisfactory. The parasite on Fuseli's letter of 24 January 1797, cited above, seems to have been introduced somewhat lightheartedly by the wilful machinery, and "Through a quirk of IBM's 'SCRIPT' a footnote sometimes appears on the page before the like-numbered passage in the text" (p. xiii), and Weinglass might have remarked with equal justice that a footnote may appear needlessly on a page following the textual reference (e.g., p. 323). The machine apparently cannot break words at the end of the line, so that the spacing is sometimes very distracting—there are seventeen unnecessary spaces in one line on p. 61. Elsewhere there may be a long gap in the line—there is one of about thirty-eight spaces in mid-sentence on p. 56. On the one hand, we should recognize that the only way to get the work into commercial print in these hard times may have been for the editor (and his sponsors) to assume almost all the cost and responsibility for preparing the camera-ready copy. At the same time, a buyer must lament that a work of such importance, initiative, and accomplishment as Weinglass's Collected English Letters of Henry Fuseli should have appeared in a form so far below the dignity, not to mention the elegance, which its editor, its subject, and the lavish scholarship here presented so richly deserve.

In sum, this is an enormously ambitious work presenting a wonderful range of information about one of the most vigorous and controversial painters of his time. In particular, anyone concerned with the life, the times, and the art of William Blake will need to consult it—and should be grateful to Weinglass for his Herculean labors.

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\(^1\) Despite the close biographical connection between Blake and Fuseli—"When Flaxman was taken to Italy [in 1787], Fuseli was giv'n to me for a season" (letter of 12 September 1800)—there is no letter traced between Blake and Fuseli, and there is only one direct reference to Blake in Fuseli's letters (8 May 1792; p. 81), a reference which has been known for a number of years. However, references to Fuseli in Blake's letters are quoted here from time to time.


\(^3\) The work referred to is THE / POEMS / OF / Gray, / A NEW EDITION. / = / ADORNED WITH PLATES. / LONDON: / [Gothic:] Printed by T. Bensley, / Bolt Court, Fleet Street, / FOR / F.J. DU ROVERAY, GREAT ST. HELENS, / AND / SOLD BY / J. WRIGHT, PICCADILLY, / AND T. HURST, PATERNOSTER- \(\ldots\) / 1800. The anonymous editor (i.e., Du Roveray) acknowledges in "Some Account of the Life and Writings of Gray" that "For several of the foregoing observations, the editor is indebted to the friendship and learning of H. Fuseli, Esq. Professor of Painting to the Royal Academy" (p. xiv footnote).
In "Some Sexual Connotations" (Blake 16 [Winter 1982–83], 166–71), I attempted to detail the overt sexual referents in several polysemous, or "multi-stable," textual passages and illustrations. Such referents are significant not only in their own right, proof of Blake's practice of "No Secrecy in Art," but as well for the way in which they are contained in their overdetermined context, since "what is not too Explicit" is "the fittest for Instruction because it rouzes the faculties to act" (letter to Trusler, 25 August 1799). This context includes, as Blake puts it on the titlepage of The Four Zoas, "The torments of Love & Jealousy"; and it includes those torments in their most physical and emotional expression.

As for overt sexual imagery, I am happy to find Brenda Webster's independent suggestion of the Rahab-penis figure in Jerusalem, pl. 75 (Blake's Prophetic Psychology [Athens, Ga.: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1983], p. 286; reproduced in "Some Sexual Connotations," p. 170). But I am ashamed (pudeo!) to have to add another instance, and one, no less, from an illustration accompanying my earlier discussion. Perhaps there is consolation in thinking that the realization of such repression of the signifier is a promise of pleasure to come as we learn to read Blake with fewer inhibitions, in greater polymorphous perversity: with the enjoyment of all his senses. Jerusalem, pl. 85, copy E (illus.), like the other designs discussed in "Some Sexual Connotations," offers a "multi-stable" image as well, since the figure of Los's doubled right leg stands out from its ground as a side-on view of a tumescent penis (foreskin not yet drawn back). The two clusters of grapes might in this case suggest (re-
moved? testicles, or sperm 'removed' by being 'fibred' over to/by Enitharmon: a sort of conceptual representation of intercourse (note how one collateral fibre does branch off toward/from the area of Los's heart). The difficulty in seeing such images—as this addendum witnesses—is that they are, at first, so unexpected. Here the viewer has to be able to enter the image and make some of the connections: to focus on the shaded body of the leg, treating it as one form, to continue the outline of the penis-form through the ankle lines, to disregard the light area of the foot, even to see the upper outline of the left leg as no outline but another fibre (not that difficult if one tries to conceive how, as an outline, it connects to the trunk of the body). The foreskin is marked by the kneecap and the orifice by the small circle, resembling an indentation, across from the top of the lower cluster of grapes. One need only trust the initial impression that there's something oddly emphasized about this (third) leg, that it seems to possess a life and existence of its own. This erection might serve to explain why Los and Enitharmon are so emphatically looking away from each other, not wishing to acknowledge the (pictorially-speaking, anyway) most important thing between them.

Which leads us to a reconsideration of the implied ascetic message of the lines quoted from "My Spectre" in "Some Sexual Connotations," p. 171 (11. 49-52 [erroneously cited as 67-70]; see also Ostriker's remarks in the same issue, p. 161). It now seems to me that a truly "radical" argument might be read as, in effect, "let's forget about 'Love' and get physical—really 'tear up,' 'root up' the 'infernal grove.' Then, having disposed of the lineaments of gratified desire, may we 'return & see / The worlds of happy Eternity.'" The crucial point, what allows the return and vision of the worlds, is the initial mutual agreement. This might explain why the phrase is repeated. Thus the speaker argues, at first:

Till I turn from Female Love
And root up the Infernal Grove
I shall never worthy be
To Step into Eternity  
(41-44)

But it can't be done alone. Eternity, in fact, is nothing but this ongoing process of agreeing, rooting up, and returning. So, the speaker concludes:

Let us agree to give up Love
And root up the infernal grove
Then shall we return & see
The worlds of happy Eternity & Throughout all Eternity
I forgive you you forgive me
As our Dear Redeemer said
This the Wine & this the Bread  
(49-56)

So should all couples consummate "the fleshly bread . . . the nervous wine" (FZ 12.44).

Richardson and Blake

Jean H. Hagstrum

Alicia Ostriker's brisk and "emancipated" view of Clarissa in the Summer, 1984, issue of Blake (pp. 52-53) is no doubt in part intended to make mine seem solemn, priggish, or otherwise old-fashioned. But it is in fact hers which is traditional or conventional, and I myself for many years clung to a version of it. This prejudice—for I now so regard what I once believed—I doubtless inherited from a learned and witty teacher at Yale, who used to wonder aloud whether anyone could possibly learn anything from that middle-class printer with a paunch. But when I came to read Richardson entire, from within, as it were, trying to understand why so many great critics and artists admired Clarissa, I came to see how unfair to Richardson and other great masters of sensibility the usual epithets about tearful, moralistic sentimentalism really were. No doubt the radically revised views of Richardson that have emanated from stream-of-consciousness novelists and from Marxist, Modernist, psychoanalytical, and, yes, even feminist criticism have also helped make Ostriker's judgments seem to me a bit archaic, deeply felt though they surely are. In any case, anyone interested in the context, the details, and the nuances of my position on Clarissa is advised to read my chapter on Richardson in Sex and Sensibility.

What interests the readers of this journal is of course how Blake reacted to Richardson. I do not have the time here—nor did I when I wrote my longish chapter on Blake for my forthcoming book, The Romantic Body (Tennessee, 1986)—to do justice to Blake's encounter with and absorption of a great predecessor. But I must record my view that Ostriker's speculation ("... the novel, and the feminization of culture it represents, would have deeply offended and irritated Blake") is much too simple and could lead to serious misapprehension. We should of course not neglect what Blake himself said. In a letter to Hayley dated 16 July 1804 he wrote: "Richardson has won my heart I will again read Clarissa &c they must be admirable I was too hasty in my perusal of them to perceive all their beauty." I take this to mean that Blake had once read all of Richardson—perhaps back in the 1780s when all the novels were popularly produced in The Novelist's Magazine and when Blake engraved a scene from Grandison after Stothard—and that now, perhaps on the advice of Hayley, he intended to re-read them, having had time so far to look at them only long enough to know that he was once more attracted. We may want to make considerable deduction from Blake's praise, remembering that he was
not always above flattering Hayley’s tastes. We certainly do not want to be guided by a sympathetic judgment as un-nuanced in its way as Ostriker’s witty denigration.

I now refer to a few passages in Richardson’s greatest novel that seem to me to have in them possible seeds of Blakean response—an incomplete survey which I believe does suggest that Blake responded to a great predecessor, not indeed with the admiring revisionary ratios he applied to the greater Milton but with something like their combination of positive, negative, and mixed response. I have the strong sense that Blake honored Richardson in both his favorable and pejorative reactions. Blake, who was so deeply concerned in his Songs of Innocence and of Experience and in closely contemporaneous works with virgins on the edge of experience, seems to have absorbed the sentimental writers’ preoccupation with sexual initiation, and he could scarcely have failed to respond to Clarissa’s melodramatic and forced dash across the frontier of innocence, with all the psychological probing Richardson gives that traumatic experience. Young Lyca in “The Little Girl Lost and Found,” with her deep concern for her mother as she goes into the desert of erotic experience and independence, recalls Clarissa, who in her trials was most of all concerned with “the peace of my mother’s mind” (Everyman ed., I, 61). Clarissa’s firm belief that “prudence . . . ought of itself to be conformed to in everything” (I, 61) might well have provoked the angry Proverb of Hell in The Marriage, but that well-known coupling of a rich ugly old maid and incapacity may be even more indebted—this time directly and without inversion—to the lively Anna Howe’s own response to her cousin. She chides Clarissa for not owning up to her real feelings of attraction for Lovelace and is impatient with “your PRUDE-encies (mind how I spell the word) in a case, that with every person defies all prudence”—(I, 188).

The Blake of Tiriel loathed fear and terror in father-daughter relations, and The Visions of the Daughters of Albion laments the presence of like emotions in heterosexual love. Richardson is equally strong, though not equally frank or overt, in expressing sexuality perverted by fright, when he portrays the loathsome suitor of Clarissa, Solmes, who wanted “fear and terror” in a bride and who, if he could not get love, would strive to perpetuate fear (see I, 284). And Clarissa’s Aunt Hervey argues on behalf of Solmes that “true love was best known by fear and reverence” (I, 372). Such ideas were as odious to Clarissa as they were to Blake: “O my dear,” she wrote to her cousin, “how I hate that man . . . .” (I, 63).

Lovelace must have made the same powerful impression on Blake that he has made on almost everyone who knows Clarissa well. Cut to the quick by Clarissa’s reference to his “unprecedented wickedness,” Richardson’s magnificent Satan writes to a rakish friend: “. . . she has heard that the devil is black; and having a mind to make one of me, brays together, in the mortar of her wild fancy, twenty chimney-sweepers, in order to make one sootier than ordinary rise out of the dirty mass” (IV, 88). In The Marriage (plate 23) an Angel who has turned successively blue, yellow, white, and pink at a Devil’s blasphemies, chides him for insulting the conventional view of Jesus as the revelation of God. The Devil, now really agitated, bursts out: “bray a fool in a morther with wheat, yet shall not his folly be beaten out of him.” Both Richardson’s and Blake’s devils are quoting Proverbs 27:22; but the earlier passage with its black devil, chimney-sweepers, and dismay with conventional piety, to say nothing of the exact coincidence of language and quotation, does produce a notably Blakean ring.

It is not only the Urizenic Solmes and the Orcan Lovelace who adumbrate important moments in Blake. The poet, who came to maturity under impulses from sensibility, strains that never deserted him, is truly sensible (in the French sense) from his early representations of Jane Shore to his later portrayals of the suffering Jerusalem. There is no reason to believe he would have been amused at Clarissa’s sufferings. Even Lovelace is moved by the afflicted girl: “And down on her bosom, like a half-broken-stalked lily, top-heavy with the over-charging dews of the morning, sunk her head, with a sigh that went to my heart” (III, 193). Blake prefers a sturdier flower: “While the Lilly white, shall in Love delight, / Nor a thorn nor a threat stain her beauty bright—” and indeed his ideal woman may in part be a revision of Richardson’s.

But Clarissa’s own flower- and leaf-imagery may have gone deep into Blake’s consciousness, as Mark Kinkhead-Weekes has so penetratingly seen (Samuel Richardson, 1973, p. 237 and n. 1). Clarissa in her agony addresses one of her torn fragments of paper to her destroyer:

Thou pernicious caterpillar, that preyest upon the fair leaf of virgin fame, and poisonest those leaves which thou canst not devour! Thou fell blight, thou eastern blast, thou overspreading dew, that destroyest the early promises of the shining year! . . . .

Thou fretting moth, that corruptest the fairest garment!

Thou eating canker-worm, that preyest upon the opening bud, and turnest the damask rose into livid yellowness! [III, 207]

Blake would no doubt have felt with modern sensibility that all this baroque suffering leading to death was unnecessary. But Clarissa in her agony may have given him an unforgettable image which in word and design became one of his most haunting pages. “O Rose thou art sick.”
Reply to Hagstrum
Alicia Ostriker

One can never be sure about such things, but I hope my opinions on Clarissa are unrelated to snobbery, of the Yale variety or otherwise. When I say that the novel is soft-core pornography, I mean that, like pornography, it creates a closed world in which nothing is important but sex—or, more precisely, sexual dominance. It is of the persecuted-maiden variety so thoroughly elaborated later in Sade's Justine, which uses many of the same plot devices (a useful book on this subject is Angela Carter's The Sadeian Woman and the Ideology of Pornography, Pantheon 1980). It is soft-core because it merely teases, while feeding, the desires and anxieties of its audience. It is an ancestor of soap opera in its conduct of plot-as-ongoing-crisis, the attractive villainy and virtue of its characters, and its exclusive concentration on personal relationships. It is a work of genius in that it is able to sustain, for hundreds of pages, an interest in Clarissa's little curtain of flesh, while maintaining a perfect, pure, moral high-mindedness.

As to the impact of Clarissa on Blake: I have elsewhere presented my views on the complex issue of Blake and sexuality ("Desire Gratified and Ungratified: William Blake and Sexuality," Blake, winter 1982–83). I agree with Hagstrum that Blake (in part) belongs to the Age of Sensibility. Pathos is, as Morton Paley has recently pointed out, one of his chief effects. The persecuted and suffering female recurs significantly throughout his work. Richardson's cankered-flower passage may well have inspired the rhetoric as well as the metaphor of "The Sick Rose." Nevertheless, Blake's letter to Hayley has to my ear the ring of something written under duress, and when we recall the gap between conventional piety and Blakean impiety, it is not hard to understand why.

Where would Richardson and his palpitating audience have been without Moral Virtue? But to Blake Moral Virtue was the result of a pathological failure of the human imagination; in his mid-thirties he was an advocate of free love and considered marriage a sick institution; at no time in his career does he admire sexual purity, much less equate it with sainthood. Clarissa expires in the arms of her bridegroom, Christ, but as an old man Blake was still exploding: "Was Jesus Chaste?" In the area of filial obedience we find the same distinction: Richardson approves submissiveness (even when the parents are monsters), Blake admires rebellion. At no point does Richardson question any of the social and religious institutions Blake spent his life trying to over-

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NEWSLETTER

SONGS SUNG AND RECORDED
Christopher Heppner of McGill University, Montreal, sends us the following announcement:

A new work, Songs of Innocence, by David Patriquin was given its premiere on 28 March, 1984, by the St. Lawrence Choir at Christ Church Cathedral, Montreal. It consists of settings of some of the Songs for women's voices, harp, and flute. The work is now being recorded. Readers interested in acquiring either the score or the recording should write to Donald Patriquin, Faculty of Music, McGill University, 555 Sherbrooke Street West, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H3A 1E3.

TRIANON PRESS FASCIMILES
Julie Fawcus of the Trianon Press would like for Blake scholars to have the first chance to purchase the remaining stock of Blake material published by the Press for the Blake Trust. The stock consists largely of individual pages, incomplete copies, and unbound copies. For a complete list of available fascimiles and prices, please write Julie Fawcus, The Trianon Press, 125 Avenue du Maine, Paris 75014, France.
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