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From Sketch to Text in Blake: The Case of The Book of Thel

BY G.E. BENTLEY, JR.

There is a long and honorable prophetic tradition of spiritual dictation, from the Bible through Boehme, Milton, and Swedenborg, in which William Blake clearly participates. According to this tradition, the Lord or Muse "govern[s] . . . my song," as Milton wrote in Paradise Lost Book VII, and Blake wrote, probably of Jerusalem:

I have written this Poem from immediate Dictation twelve or sometimes twenty or thirty lines at a time without Premeditation & even against my Will.

(Letter of 25 April 1803)

Blake was also proud of his graphic consistency:

Reengraved Time after Time[1]
Ever in their Youthful prime
My Designs unchangd remain . . . .

He insisted upon the importance, the inviolability of the firm, bounding outline, and his disciple Samuel Palmer wrote on one of Blake’s sketches that they were the "first inventive lines—from which he was always most careful not to depart." However, impressive though this testimony is from Blake’s disciple and from Blake himself, the evidence of the drawings belies it. He did often alter his "first inventive lines" when he came to etch his designs. I wish to cite some of these developments in his designs for his works in Illuminated Printing, especially for The Book of Thel.

Sometimes the relationship of Blake’s preliminary sketch to the etched and printed version is simple and straightforward, as in the sketch for Jerusalem pl. 26 (illus. 1). The chief graphic differences between this and the printed version are the shading behind the woman to the right and the look of anguish on the face of the man, which is revised in the etching to a baleful look. The most significant alteration in the printed form is the lettering added to identify the woman as Jerusalem and the man as Hand, and the vertical quotation:

Such visions have appeared to me
As I my ordered race have run[1]
Jerusalem is named liberty
Among the sons of Albion[1]

The verse is plainly an afterthought, perhaps inspired by the design itself. Notice that the sketch and the etching face the same way round; unless there was an intermediary reversed sketch, Blake must have copied the design backwards on the copper so that it would print the right way round. The normal engravers’ practice was to make a true size squared version on paper which could be transferred directly to the copper, perhaps by some form of tracing. Blake certainly followed this method with his commercial engravings after the designs of other men, but he seems to have transferred his own designs much more freely to copper, and parts of the Job engravings, at least, were first composed directly on the copper rather than on paper.

The second example, from Jerusalem pl. 51, is a good deal more complex. In the final version as printed, there are three figures who form a kind of Satanic trinity; on one pull they are labeled Vala, Hyle, and Skofield (Vala with the crown and Skofield with the chains). So far as these figures are concerned, the chief differences from the sketch are the flames billowing across the page and the reversal of the whole design. The dramatic difference in the sketch (illus. 2) is in the extraordinarily bestial crawling man with shaggy pelt and electrified hair who appears beside the figure in chains—at our left here, though he would have been at the right in Jerusalem. What are we to make of a Satanic quaternity? Notice also that the design is now the wrong shape for the Jerusalem page—too broad for its height. Clearly one of these almost equally-spaced figures would have to be eliminated, and you can see from the vertical lines to left and right of the figure in chains that the leaf has been folded to try out various possibilities, obscuring first one figure at the left and then two. Perhaps at one point Blake thought of Skofield as a Nebuchadnezzar figure reduced to eating grass like the beasts of the field. Or perhaps the shaggy beast is another giant figure entirely. Whatever his significance, he adds a fascinating dimension to the problem of interpreting Blake’s original intention for Jerusalem pl. 51.

A much more perplexing design is the one which appears in various forms in Tiriel, The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, and Europe, and which begins as a design by
someone else entirely. The design originates in a sketch known as "The Approach of Doom" (illus. 3) by Blake's favorite brother, Robert, who died in his arms in February 1787. It is an undistinguished design, chiefly remarkable for the horror expressed by the figures at left as they gaze at the empty darkness on the right hand side of the page. William Blake's very rough reversed etching after it (illus. 4) is chiefly remarkable for the variety of techniques used to represent shading. The etching is technically fascinating but visually dull.

The visual idea is much more interesting when it is adapted in Blake's eighth design for his manuscript poem *Tiriel* (illus. 5). The huddled group of six or more figures looking left in horror has been reduced to four, the most prominent of whom are a crowned king in a mantle and a black-bearded man at his shoulder. But now we see the cause of their horror; their father Tiriel, surrounded by a garland of five weeping, gesticulating daughters, is cursing his rebellious sons. According to the text,

At the fathers curse
The earth trembled[,] fires belched from yawning clefts
And when the shaking ceast a fog possessst the accursed cline[,]...

The cry was great in Tiriels palace[,] his five daughters ran
And caught him by the garments weeping with cries of bitter wo[.]...

... in the morning Lo an hundred men in ghastly death[,]...
The four daughters stretcht on the marble pavement silent all
falln by the pestilence. . . .

The design clearly echoes the text quite faithfully, and the words make it plain that the threatened horror is the pestilence.

The horrified onlookers appear once more in a design of 1793 labeled “Our end is come” or, in a later version, “Satans holy Trinity[.] The Accuser The Judge & The Executioner” (illus. 6). One copy of it is used as an integral frontispiece to The Marriage of Heaven and Hell. Clearly these flaming bureaucrats see themselves accused and their punishment near. They seem unmistakably the heirs of Tiriel’s sons in the drawing of four years earlier.

There is one final transmogrification of this protean design. Tiriel cursing with his hands outsretched and his daughters at his knees is closely echoed, reversed, in Europe pl. 8 of 1794 (illus. 7). The design seems to represent what the text on pl. 12 calls “Albions Angel, smitten with his own plagues” and about to be “buried beneath the ruins of that hall.” The previous design of Europe makes it plain that what Albion’s Angel fears is the same curse pronounced upon Tiriel’s sons: The Plague (illus. 8). On Europe pl. 7 the bellman tolls his mournful round crying “Bring out your dead,” while beside him men and women drop with the pestilence in the open street.

This progression of a design from a sketch by Robert Blake of about 1786 to Blake’s Tiriel design of 1789, “Our End is come” of 1793, and Europe of 1794 seems to me quite plain. The progression illuminates each design, and responsible criticism of Tiriel, the Marriage, and Europe must take them into account.

One of the most interesting of Blake’s surviving drawings for his works in Illuminated Printing has appeared only very recently. Though it has no known provenance before it was acquired by Ann Caro, its integrity is plain in the nervous, Blake-like lines, and it is attested at the bottom right by his disciple and executor Frederick Tatham. It represents two pages of The Book of Thel of 1789 (illus 9). One is for Thel pl. 6 (illus. 10), which shows the virgin Thel standing with open arms looking upward at the personified “Bright Cloud” as he floats left, while at the foot is the personified worm to whom the cloud has just introduced her. Though

the etched design appears at the top of Part III, it clearly illustrates the words at the end of Part II on the preceding plate. In the sketch (illus. 9), at the right Thel seems to be at the door of a Greek Temple with outspread arms as she looks up at a baby floating down to her; above the baby is a larger vague figure, perhaps a woman, and above and to the right of the woman is a floating horizontal man with his arms raised. I take the man to be the Cloud, the babe to be the Worm, and the woman to be the Lilly.

On the same sketch at the top left is a clear though dim sketch of Thel as she broods above the baby. The vague lines behind her may represent the giant flowers which are plain in the etched text, and below her is the roman numeral III, indicating that this is the headpiece for Part III. The shape of the design is very similar to the printed version (illus. 11), where it is plain that before Thel there is also a nude child playing with the baby.

The really striking thing about this design, or set of designs, however, is what it tells us about the text. Note first that Blake has indicated with lines across the page where the text is to go, below the lefthand design and above that on the right. So far as I know, this is the only Blake sketch for his work in Illuminated Printing which indicates exactly where the text is to appear. One is tempted to remark that there are about eight lines of text in the new drawing and twelve lines of text in the corresponding first plate of Part III in the etched version; perhaps when he made the sketch Blake intended the text to appear in larger characters, with fewer lines to the page. Note also that the brooding Thel serves as the headpiece to Part III in the sketch, whereas this design is the tailpiece to Part III in the etched text. The

But he that loves the lowly pours his oil upon my head,  
And kisses me, and binds his nuptial bands around my breast.  
And says: Thou mother of my children, I have loved thee.  
And I have given thee a crown that none can take away.  
But how this is sweet maid, I know not, and I cannot know,  
I ponder, and I cannot ponder; yet I love and love.

The daughter of beauty wiped her pitying tears with her white veil,  
And said: Alas, I knew not this; and therefore did I weep:  
That God would love a Worm I knew, and punish the evil foot.  
That woful being its helpless form; but that he cherished it  
With milk and oil, I never knew; and therefore did I weep.  
And I complained in the mild air, because I fade away,  
And lay me down in thy cold bed, and leave my shining lot.

Queen of the valest, the matron Clay answered; I heard thy sighs,  
And all thy means flew o'er my roof, but I have called them down:  
Wilt thou O Queen enter my house, its given thee to enter.  
And to return; fear nothing, enter with thy virgin feet.

relationship of the design to the text on the page is a good deal clearer in this sketch (illus. 9) than in the etching (illus. 10). The alteration of position appears to me to have come about because there was no room at the bottom of *Thel* pl. 5 for the design which should have concluded Part II in that place, and therefore it had to go on pl. 6 above the beginning of Part III, where it seems to refer to Part III rather than to Part II.

Yet more interestingly, note that the sketch has set out the two pages as a double-page spread, with one design facing the other. Several of Blake’s early works are printed thus on facing pages—for example, *Songs of Innocence, Visions of the Daughters of Albion, America, and Europe*—but all copies of *The Book of Thel* are printed on only one side of the leaf; in no printed copy do the first and second pages of Part III face each other, as they do in the sketch. Perhaps Blake decided later that the work, now only eight plates long, would be too short if printed on only four leaves. But in this early sketch he clearly planned for the designs to face one another.

Perhaps most interesting of all is the fact that these two designs are in the reverse order in the printed version of *The Book of Thel*. Or at any rate, the brooding Thel is printed just after the only design in which Thel stands with outspread arms. We must decide whether the sketch for this standing Thel is another version of the tailpiece to Part II—in which case the text of the poem must then have been quite different than it is now—or whether this is an entirely different design, one which does not survive in *The Book of Thel* as printed or anywhere else. I rather incline to the latter view; I take the righthand drawing to be a kind of synopsis of the work at its crisis. At this point, Thel has conversed with the Lilly of the valley down by the River Adona, who describes herself as “a watry weed”; with the cloud of air reclinign upon his airy throne; and with the baby earthworm, for whom the clod of clay speaks. They clearly represent the elements of water, air, and earth; and the Lilly-woman, Cloud-man, and Worm-baby seem to be represented in this design. In the final words of Part III,

“Queen of the vales,’ the matron Clay answer’d; ‘I heard thy sighs,
And all thy moans flew o’er my roof, but I have call’d them down:
Wilt thou O Queen enter my house? ’Tis given thee to enter
And to return; fear nothing; enter with thy virgin feet.’”

Thel appears to be on the threshold of the Temple of the Earth, about to enter without fear. She seems to be bidding farewell to her sponsors before she turns her back on water, air, and earth, to enter the fire of experience, to participate in the burning element of life. But if so, this design and idea were abandoned when the spaces left in the etched text required Blake to put the tailpiece of Part II in place of the headpiece of Part III (illus. 10) and alter the headpiece of Part III to its tailpiece (illus. 11).

Why was the design not used? Martin Butlin says the design on the left replaced that on the right, and a new design was substituted on the left “presumably to improve the balance; his new headpiece . . . [for pl. 6] is a lighter, more delicate composition.” David Bindman suggests that “the image of Thel’s house was presumably rejected because its bulk would have broken the delicate rhythm established by the continuity of the appearance of Thel, and the image of the departing cloud in the headpiece of chapter III [*Thel* pl. 6] gives a central place to the idea of transience.”

Still another motive for abandoning the design of Thel on the threshold of the house is that it is difficult to reconcile with the poetic images which follow, with “eternal gates” closed with a “bar,” with a “dewy grave” and “the hollow pit.” Except for clothes, for Thel’s shepherdess’s crook (pl. 2), for a sword and shield (pl. 3), and for reims (pl. 8), the house in this sketch is the only manmade object in the designs to *Thel*, and it alters the context of the poem in a disconcerting way. Like the classical building introduced without textual justifications in the designs for *Tiriel*, it introduces a new motif which, in *Thel*, is distracting and unfortunate.

It has repeatedly been suggested that the last plate of *Thel* (pl. 8) is a late substitution for an earlier one, because its imagery and tone differ strikingly from those in pls. 1–7. I think that the differences on the last plate are deliberately contrived by Blake and are carefully prepared for on the title page and elsewhere. It is at least possible that this penultimate sketch of *Thel* on the threshold was abandoned because the specific textual images which it illustrated had been abandoned.

The clearly sexual metaphors of *The Book of Thel* are insufficiently remarked. The “gentle maid,” the “virgin” Thel (ll. 22, 49) encounters an adult “virgin” Lilly (ll. 28), an adult male Cloud who is the “partner” of the Lilly of the valley (l. 73), and an “infant” worm (l. 76) who is at least metaphorically their offspring. The “golden” Cloud (l. 47) “scatters its bright beauty” (l. 40) in the same way as the golden Spring “scatter[s his] . . . pearls Upon our love-sick land” (“Spring” in *Poetical Sketches*, p. 1), both images deliberately evocative of Zeus’s golden shower descending on Danae. This is expressed by the Cloud in a sexual metaphor which Thel does not understand:

“O maid I tell thee when I pass away,
It is to renfold life, to love, to peace and raptures holy. . . .”

The weeping virgin trembling kneels before the risen sun Till we arise link’d in a golden band.
(ll. 52–53, 56–57)

And when the Cloud leaves Thel, he leaves with her a baby, as in the scene depicted in pl. 6. On the titlepage
Thel observed sexual courtship, and on the last plate the only humans depicted are babies, the product of such courtship. Thel has been shown the mysteries of sexual life, and in this unused design for the end of Part III we see Thel looking up in wonder at the father Cloud, the mother Lilly, and their offspring the infant Worm. All this is shown to Thel on the threshold of the house of Clay. 6

On the last plate, the “deowy grave” picks up images previously used: Thel’s “lamentation falls like morning dew” (l. 5); the cloud “court[s] the fair eyed dew” and unseen descends “upon balmy flowers” (ll. 55, 54) with what the “watry” Lilly calls “morning manna” (ll. 16, 23) (or dew); the worm lies upon a “deowy bed” (l. 74). Thel has asked to be permitted to “sleep the sleep of death” (l. 13) without being “only ... at death the food of worms” (l. 65), to “lay me down in thy cold bed” of clay without leaving “my shining lot” (l. 98). The classical building in the sketch, even if it be a mausoleum, sorts ill with these images of the “deowy grave.”

What in fact happens in the last Part of Thel? Who is Thel, and where does she go? I think some of the answers may help to explain why this last design was not used.

The Mysteries of The Book of Thel: Thel as Moon Myth; Thel as Moon Mistress

Thel is repeatedly associated with the moon and contrasted with the sun; she lives in reflected light, having no light of her own. As the poem opens, she is distinguished from her sisters who are among their “sunny flocks” (l. 1). Thel is the “virgin of the skies” (l. 67), the “daughter of beauty” with a “white veil” (l. 92) who lives “in paleness” (l. 2) and who “fade[s] away like morning beauty from her mortal day” (l. 3) as the moon does when the sun arises. She continually asks why all things “fade” as “I fade away ... and leave my shining lot” (ll. 97, 98), and she believes that “all shall say, ‘Without a use this shining woman liv’d’ ” (l. 64), for Thel is like a faint cloud kindled at the rising sun;
I vanish from my pearly throne, and who shall find my place?
(ll. 36–37)

Thel is presumably like the Clod of Clay who stresses that “My bosom of itself is cold and of itself is dark” (l. 85). These images are consistent with those of Thel as a moon-goddess; or at least she is clothed with the imagery of the moon.

She is different in kind from the benevolent, omnipresent god who manifests himself in the sun. The creatures she encounters say they are “visited from heaven” (l. 19) “each morn” (l. 20) by “he that smiles on all” (l. 19), who promises that they shall “be clothed in light” (l. 23). It is possible that this god is an Apollo-figure who drives the chariot of the sun, for we hear of the “golden springs Where Luvah doth renew his horses” (ll. 49–50).

Thel is permitted “to enter [the house of darkness] And to return” (ll. 101–02). What kind of house is it? It is in a “land unknown” (l. 104), but we are told enough of it to draw some interesting conclusions.

The World Beneath the Flat Earth

Thel has, I believe, descended through the earth and emerged on the other side into a world of darkness. To explain what happens requires a short excursion through Blake’s geography. The crucial concept is that the earth is flat.

After about 1783, Blake seems to have distinguished fairly consistently between “the world of imagination” (“the real & eternal World,” Jerusalem, pl. 77, ¶ 1), which is flat, and “the world of generation,” which is round. As he told Crabb Robinson in 1825, “I do not believe that the world is round. I believe it is quite flat.” 8

In Vala (?1796–?1807), “The Earth spread forth her table wide” (p. 12, l. 35), and in Milton “the earth [is] one infinite plane” (pl. 14, l. 33). In “The Mental Traveller” is an explanation of how the contrary impression arose:

the Eye altering alters all[;]
The Senses roll themselves in fear
And the flat Earth becomes a Ball
(ll. 62–64)

A more elaborate explanation appears in Milton:

every Space that a Man views around his dwelling-place,
Standing on his own roof, or in his garden on a mount
Of twentyfive cubits in height, such space is his Universe:
And on its verges the Sun rises & sets, the Clouds bow
To meet the flat Earth & the sea ...
And if he move his dwelling-place, his heavens also move,
Wher’er he goes ....

Such are the Spaces called Earth & such its dimension:
As to that false appearance which appears to the reasoner
As of a globe rolling thro Voidness, it is a delusion ...

(pl. 28, II. 5–9, 12–16)

If the earth is flat like a pancake (not like a cube), it is possible to penetrate the earth with comparative ease and come out on the other side. This is the explanation of what happens in The French Revolution (1791), in The Marriage of Heaven and Hell (?1790–93)—and in The Book of Thel (1789). In The French Revolution, “the bottoms of the worlds were open’d, and the graves of the arch-angels unseal’d” (l. 301), presumably on the other side of the earth. In The Marriage,

An Angel ... took me ... down the winding
cavern ... till a void boundless as a nether sky
appeard beneath us, & we held by the roots of trees and hung over this immensity... [in] darkness... Beneath us at an immense distance was the sun, black but shining. ... [When the Angel fled,] this appearance was no more, but I found myself sitting on a pleasant bank beside a river by moon light. ...  

This other side of the earth is the land of night and darkness. It is the land, I think, which Thel discovers when she enters the house of clay:

Thel enter'd in & saw the secrets of the land unknown: She saw the couches of the dead, & where the fibrous roots Of every heart on earth infixes deep its restless twists....  

She enters a land of darkness with "valleys dark" (I. 108) where she hears of "destruction," "poison," "ambush," "terror," and "the bed of our desire" (I. 113–22). Terrified at the terrible vision, she "Fled back unhindered till she came into the vales of Har" (I. 124), where she had begun (II. 4, 26). Like the moon, Thel reflects brightness which fades, and she enters shadows and night. The land she finds is, as it were, in the dark of the moon. Like the moon, Thel returns to light and to reflect light. She ceases to appear, as the moon does when it is completely covered by the shadow of the earth, but she continues to exist though obscured. The images of Thel as a moon goddess are consistent throughout the poem. But the verbal images of Thel entering the earth, entering the house of Clay, and discovering "the fibrous roots" on the other side of the earth are not consistent with the classical building on whose threshold Thel stands in the newly discovered drawing.

It may be that the classical building was consistent with images in a draft of Part IV of The Book of Thel which does not survive; or it may be that Blake made this sketch of a classical building and then recognized its incongruity with the present Part IV. In any case, that massive artifact is distracting in Thel's pastoral world, and Blake abandoned it in the etched version of the poem. The chance survival of this sketch tells us a great deal about the way in which Blake conceived of and laid out his poem, about the way he carefully planned the relationships of text with design and of page with page. Perhaps most important, it shows us Blake experimenting with the placing of his designs, devising new motifs for his poem and abandoning false starts.

We are coming to know Blake as a craftsman of engraving, of painting, and of poetry. This unique design demonstrates graphically the craftsmanship with which he merged these arts in his works in Illuminated Printing.

1 Blake Records (1969), p. 198 fn. 5. All quotations are from William Blake's Writings (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978). The Thel sketch was made public so recently that no edition of Blake in print refers to it; the only printed references known to me are in David Bindman, Blake as an artist (1977), pp. 65–64 and pl. 52, and Martin Butlin, William Blake: [Catalogue of an exhibition at the] Tate Gallery (9 March–21 May 1978), p. 4 (including a reproduction). A version of this paper entitled "Editing Blake: From Sketch to Text" was delivered orally at the Modern Language Association meeting on Editing the Romantics in December 1978 in New York.


3 Bindman and Butlin call the human figures floating above Thel her "moans" and "sighs", but they seem to be clearly articulated as previously identified figures: the floating figure with raised arms at the upper right looks strikingly like the woman who represents "the bright Cloud" on pl. 6, the adult floating above Thel seems to be a woman, presumably the Lilly, and the tiny figure descending towards Thel (in a position related to those of the babies in Urizen pls. 2, 20) must be the infant Worm, the only child previously mentioned.

4 Tiriël (1967), pl. I.


6 Bindman speaks of "Thel's house," but I think it is clear that the house is that of Clay. Bindman also calls it "a bulky primitive-classical hut," but I see no implications of a "hut" in this fairly large, airy building.

Once, in Pastoral Sketches (1783), the word Globe is used merely as a neutral synonym for the Earth ("The Couch of Death"), but thereafter "Globe" is used only of the fallen view of the earth. The tyrant Tiriël uses "this globe" as a synonym for "this earth" (Tiriël [1789], ll. 107, 108). Before Urizen fell, there were no "globes of attraction" (Urizen [1794], pl. 3, l. 36), but because of Urizen "Earth congol'd" (America [1793] pl. b, l. 7), and Orc says that in Urizen's universe "Fires inwrap the earthly globe" (America pl. 10, l. 13). In Vala, the fallen world is described as "globes of earth" (p. 123, l. 15); in Milton (1804–[1808]), Los mistakenly says that "The whole extent of the Globe is explored" (pl. 25, l. 18), and in Jerusalem (1804–[1820]), the fallen Moon "became an Opake Globe far distant clad with moony beams" (pl. 49, l. 20). In a picture for The Divine Comedy of the Goddess Fortune are two circles labeled "Celestial Globe Terrestrial Globe" (p. 1341).

7 Blake Records (1969), p. 313. Robinson goes on: "I objected the circumnavig.—We were called to dinner at the moment and I lost the reply."
The word "fourfold" or "four-fold" appears many times in Blake's longer poems, and is clearly one of his favorite expressions. Probably the best-known example occurs in his letter to Thomas Butts:

Now I a fourfold vision see,  
And a fourfold vision is given to me;  
'Tis fourfold in my supreme delight  
And threefold in soft Beulah's night  
And twofold Always. May God us keep  
From Single vision & Newton's sleep!  

The word "fourfold" can be found twice in the 1611 Bible and once in Paradise Lost, but its frequent use by Blake is very striking. Contemporary readers may have detected an echo of Thomas Boston's book Human Nature, in its Four-fold State, a popular work of theology which went through at least two dozen editions in Britain between 1720 and 1800.

Thomas Boston was a Presbyterian clergyman until his death in 1732. He tried to modify the predestinarianism of the Presbyterian Church by proposing that human experience takes place on four distinct levels. A look at these levels or stages will show that they might well have inspired, obliquely, the "fourfold vision" of Blake. The first condition is a "State of Innocence, or Primitive Integrity" which exists only at birth. This is followed by the "State of Nature, or Entire Deprivation," in which the "natural man" can "do nothing but sin." In the third state "The conscience is renewed" (p. 197), and one apparently experiences a "mysterious union" (p. 237), a "mystical union betwixt Christ and Believers" (p. 233).

The last of Boston's four stages is entered at death, when the ungodly see "the dark side of the cloud" while the righteous perceive "the bright side of it, shining on the godly, as they are entering upon their eternal state" (p. 341). This may perhaps partly explain Blake's reference, earlier in the poem cited above, to "my Brother John the evil one / In a black cloud making his mone."

It might at first seem unlikely that Blake would have been influenced by a Presbyterian minister. But Thomas Boston's literate, allusive, and metaphorical style did indeed appeal to people of imagination. Another poet, writing in 1832, notes that

It has been the fashion for a good while past, with a certain class of professed Christians, . . . to sneer at the doctrines of Boston. I decidedly differ from them, and will venture to assert that there are no such fervour and strength of reasoning to be met with in any modern composition, as predominate in his. Let any person take up "The Four-fold State of Man," and peruse seriously and without prejudice one of the divisions, or say only twenty pages at random, and he will join with me. There is even an originality of thought and expression in old Boston which are quite delightful and refreshing.  

2 Boston, Human Nature, in its Four-fold State; or Primitive Integrity, Entire Deprivation, Begun Recovery, and Consummate Happiness or Misery . . . (1720; 15th ed. rev., Glasgow, 1761), p. 109. The names of Boston's states are taken from the table of contents. Subsequent references to this edition are included parenthetically in the text.  
3 "Statistics of Selkirkshire, By Mr. James Hogg, 'the Ettrick Shepherd,' " in Prize-Essays and Transactions of the Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland (Edinburgh, 1832), pp. 303–04.

"Infant Sorrow" and Robert Greene's Menaphon

Greg Crossan

The origins of Blake's Songs of Innocence and of Experience in eighteenth-century children's hymns, nursery rhymes, cradle songs and the like are by now well documented, but cradle songs in particular were a popular Renaissance genre (the lullabies of Dekker and Gascoigne being the best known), and there is a source here for one of the Songs, "Infant Sorrow," that was suggested long ago by Foster Damon but has never, I think, been explored.  

The source is "Sephestias Song to Her Child" from Robert Greene's pastoral romance Menaphon. In particular, the opening lines of Blake's song,

My mother groaned! my father wept.
Into the dangerous world I leapt

recall the opening lines of the last stanza of Greene's:

The wanton smiled, father wept;
Mother cried, babie lept.

The echo here is plain enough, but I want to suggest that there are two ways in which "Sephestias Song" makes a particularly interesting context in which to read "Infant Sorrow."
The first is that “Sephestias Song” as a whole lends support to Norman Nathan’s point that childbirth not only initiates the infant into sorrow but also brings sorrow upon the parents. The stanza just quoted from, for instance, continues thus:

More he crowde, more we cride;  
Nature could not sorowe hide.  
He must goe, he must kiss  
Childe and mother, babie blisse:  
For he left his pretie boy  
Fathers sorowe, fathers joy.  
Weepe not my wanton, smile upon my knee,  
When thou art olde, ther's grief inough for thee.

The last line here, with its warning of what is in store for the child, might almost serve as a motto for the Songs of Experience, but it is the father’s sorrow and joy that dominate the poem. In context, the father’s tears are occasioned by his imminent parting from his son as a result of having been banished from that archetypal domain of innocence, Arcadia. The family has been cast adrift on a stormy sea, and it is after surviving a shipwreck that Sephestia sings this song, in which she recalls the joy of her husband (now presumed drowned) at the birth of a son, and his tears at the prospect of losing him. In short, the sorrow is as much the father’s as the infant’s.

The second point of contextual interest is that Greene goes on to develop the father’s sorrow in an unexpected way. By means of various contrivances, Greene has the child (Pleusidippus) grow up to fall in love with Sephestia (now calling herself Samela) without knowing that she is his mother, and he becomes in due course a rival of his own father (Maximus, alias Melicertus), who in fact survived the wreck and has ended up courting Sephestia without knowing that she is his wife. Greene in his usual fanciful way asks us to accept the proposition that because Sephestia’s identity is concealed she can find herself being wooed by her husband, her son, and even her father (Democles) at the same time. Given that commentators now tend to read “Infant Sorrow,” both in its Songs version and in its longer Notebook version, as a poem which hints at the oedipal conflict between father and son (“Struggling in my father’s hands”), it is interesting that this is precisely what Menaphon builds up to as its climax. Father and son angrily confront each other in single combat, and, in Greene’s phrase, “they fell toughly to blowes.” That fight is eventually stopped by Democles and the two are imprisoned, but all is at length resolved by the timely intervention of a sibyl. Sephestia is reunited with her husband, and her son craves “pardon for the fondnesse of his incestuous affection.” He also apologizes to his father, then marries someone else.

While it seems certain that Blake knew “Sephestias Song,” it may be that he knew little of its context: and yet, considering its appropriateness to his own nascent theme in “Infant Sorrow,” we can perhaps surmise that he sensed in Greene’s lullaby the suggestion of potential oedipal conflict, and carried that suggestion over into his own song. Greene and Blake make, at first sight, an improbable coupling, but in the matter of Blake’s sources we are repeatedly, it seems, like Lyca’s parents on finding an angel in the eyes of a lion, “Filled with deep surprise.”

2 My text is from vol. 6 of The Life and Works of Robert Greene, ed. A.B. Grosart (1881–86; New York: Russell and Russell, 1964), p. 44. The poem may also be found in several anthologies, such as The Oxford Book of English Verse.
4 He is called Maximus at the beginning of the story and Maximus at the end.
6 Menaphon, p. 133.
7 Menaphon, p. 144.
8 For some other out-of-the-way sources of Blake’s Songs see especially chapter 2 of John Holloway’s Blake: The Lyric Poetry (London: Edward Arnold, 1968).
The qualities we now usually call lyrical were first dissociated from any particular genre in Romantic poetry, and Romantic critics tended to assume that lyricality (barely distinguishable from poetry itself) is a real but ineffable quality best expressed in striking metaphors. These notions have proved influential for more than two centuries. Daniel Albright’s *Lyricality in English Literature* may be seen as a post-modernist variation built upon the Romantic themes. The book is subtle and sophisticated, eloquent and often witty; yet if judged as a comprehensive description of the lyric mode it is, like many others in the same tradition, ultimately unsatisfying.

The first chapter explores the fundamental premise that the lyrical is “poetry attempting to supersede its own verbal nature, attempting to lose itself in music” (1). The sign of the lyrical is not any particular form or theme or “manner of imitation”; and yet, since words can never be music, “the ideal lyric . . . cannot be written at all” (22). Thus in texts striving toward the lyrical the representational functions of language begin to break under the pressure. The one true sign of the lyrical is a palpable absence or inadequacy: “Whenever we feel something is missing, whether it is a recognizably human author, or the customary world representation, or simply sense, we are in the domain of the lyrical” (3).

Since the very essence of the lyrical is a drive toward metamorphosis—words into music—Albright conceives of the lyrical as a domain jointly ruled by Ariel and Proteus. Shakespeare’s Ariel is the sprite who playfully (and mendaciously) transforms bones into coral, dead eyes into pearls, sublimes the dull materiality of the lower world into the un- or anti-natural world of song. Ariel is “disengaged, dispassionate, almost contentless creativity, an imagination so engrossed in the continual play of images that it cannot be bothered to attend to the real.” While Ariel transmutes “lower” natural forms into a “higher” stasis, “a man made of coral, the glacial rose” (39), there is another kind of transformation more common in nature, whose god is Proteus. He represents “random mutation within the lower world, change that is conducive to a delirium of identity, a shapeless incoherence” (49). Both of these gods are magicians, Albright writes, who know nothing of mimesis, and either kind of transformation results in a world not familiar, but “rich and strange.” In three subsequent chapters, Albright explores the ways in which the lyric speaker, his subjects, and his world are affected by the powers of lyrical strangeness.

According to this view, lyricality is paradoxically, the least personal of literary modes: “a purely lyrical poem should be read deconstructively, for any personal authority is a tenuous illusion that readily disperses into language, a field of neutral inflexibles, language’s own self-engrossment” (13). The ideal lyric poet is a visionary bard whose myth was most fully articulated by Blake; he so fully participates in his art that he takes the shape of his subjects, and escapes the limitations of his medium. He is the archetypal self for the lyric poet, who always feels backwards toward “a consciousness more synthetic and indiscriminate than his own.” Yet no human being can be a bard, and thus the audience will always recognize that the lyric speaker is consciously or unconsciously posing, opening up a dimension Albright calls “lyrical irony.” For such a poet, the most compelling
subject will be the failure of imagination, the death of
the bard. The bard’s power over his audience is authentic
if limited, epitomized in the rhetorical power of dead
Alonzo transformed into coral. Hence “lyrical ethics” are
best illustrated in the motif Albright calls the “admoni-
tory statue”. “The change from man to statue suggests
a purity, a simplicity, an implacability impossible to a
merely organic creature; the marble is streamlined into
moral perfection, and it loudly or silently compels the
spectator to imitate it” (90).

Chapter three, “Natura Lyrica,” considers the ap-
ppearances of the natural world when refracted in the
lyrical mode. Ideal lyrical nature is, Albright states, a
world “newborn and embryonic, not yet congealed into
particular forms.” He suggests that the bard’s percep-
tions have a kind of manic-depressive rhythm which
reveals itself alternately in an impulse toward perceiving
the sublime everywhere, and a counter-tendency toward
a state of limbo. The sublime is, according to Albright,
“Ariel’s tendency to see the aura of awe infusing pe-
destrian things,” “an aesthetic of indeterminacy... a
willed unfocusing,” so that the poet of the sublime “re-
cognizes the differences dormant in every created thing,
a pensive decomposition of form” (115). Limbo, his
depressive phase, is a Protean vision of nature dissolved
into “prevailing categorilessness” where no margins are
fixed and no forms stable. Satire best presents a lyrical
view of the natural world for it “introduces a disquieting
element of instability into the outer world, manifesting
the spirit of Proteus at his most malevolent.” Satire is
“a kind of digesting machine, which renders increasingly
misshapen versions of its objects—first ape, then pig,
then curd of ass’s milk, then feces...” The logical
extreme of lyrical transformation, then, is utter form-
lessness, chaos, the death of nature.

The human subject in poetry is similarly trans-
formed under the pressure of the lyrical, a tendency
A Albright believes is present from the first in the lyric’s
ancient role as panegyric. In Chapter four, “Lyrical So-
ciety,” the author discusses several genres and aspects of
the lyrical which focus on human beings, yet always
with the effect of transforming them into the non-
anti-human. Wordsworth’s “Essay on Epitaphs,” he ar-
gues, demonstrates that the function of an epitaph is to
present the subject “midway between the heavenly and
the earthly life.” The more extended form of the elegy
also “effects a metamorphosis of its subject from the
human into the superhuman,” “a movement from the
historical self of its subject to some satisfying unhis-
torical or post-historical condition.” Here, too, one sees
the contrary powers of Ariel and Proteus. Elegies ruled
by the former conclude in some benign final image (a
star, a flower), whereas those under the sway of Proteus
tend toward identification of the elegist and his subject,
the living and the dead, the horizontal Protean confusion
of categories.

Women, a favored focus of the lyrical, are also
subject to these two divergent effects. Ariel’s lyricists,
who feel attraction toward their subject, transform her
into “a doll, sheer artifice” (210). The Protean lyricist,
however, celebrates his object’s “resistance to fixity,” and
often expresses revulsion, which may manifest itself in
satire. But both modes of transformation, Albright argues,
constitute a kind of “disfigurement,” a changing of the
natural into the grotesque. In a final section, Albright
considers the status of the personae which tend to
inhabit lyrical poems. These fictions, he says, have
two aspects—perceptual modality and self-conscious-
ness—which the reader may evaluate in determining a
work’s degree of lyricality.

The fifth and final chapter, “Music and Metaphor,”
is the only one explicitly devoted to technique. Here
A Albright discusses the extent to which words may in
fact be musical. In arguing that music is “to a large
degree antithetical to the world we know,” he provides
a different perspective on the proposition that the lyrical
constitutes a violation of language. In its metaphorical
dimension, language most clearly shows the strain of
lyricality, and the pure lyric, language as music, would
be nonsense. Thus the poet who most successfully achieves
musicality “deliberately contrives the ruin of language,
the destruction of denotation and reference so that his
singing will be the purer” (245). In the purest forms of
lyric, then, we see the destruction of the poetic speaker,
the world, society, and even language itself.

A perspective that challenges conventional assumptions
can be indispensable; Albright’s perspective is provocative
in both good and bad senses of the word. His is
an ambitious and wide-ranging work, and it shows a
refreshing independence of thought and method. The
book itself manifests something of Ariel’s playfulness.
More than once the author declares that his purpose is
not to prove, but only to explore his thesis; and to this
end he often eschews the staid world of scholarly con-
tvention. There are no footnotes (there is a bibliography
of works cited) and, more unhappily, only proper names
are indexed. Academic discussions of the lyric (quite
plentiful recently) are virtually ignored: Albright prefers
to rely mostly upon the theoretical statements of prac-
ticing poets.

In spite of some important virtues, however, I sus-
pect that many readers will find the book’s argument
difficult and ultimately unconvincing. Pursuing the basic
assumption that the lyrical is a synchronic mode
which exists to the extent that words are music results
in a view that the lyrical is impersonal, inexpressive,
and ultimately impossible, not so much a quality or a
mode as an unrealizable ideal. This is, in fact, a book
written to support a negative thesis (always a tricky
proposition), though the view that the lyrical is some-
how ineffable is supported by Romantic tradition. More-
over, any poet’s attempts at lyricism, in this light, appear sinister, dangerous, almost psychotic. In forcing language toward the lyrical, he articulates an uncreating word which annihilates everything within its purview—man, nature, language itself. Through his terrible word-magic he intentionally disfigures his beloved; he murders to transform, and feels “a secret glee in the uncanny irrelation of the transfigured creature . . . to its homely source” (162).

Some readers, I should add, may be both stimulated and disinformed by the equally unconventional appearance of certain favorite works when observed through Albright’s lens. Miltonists may not wish to hear that “Lycidas is a spirit of disenchantment, a sober spoilsport,” that at the poem’s end his “transformation is incomplete . . . he is still dripping mud and seaweed onto the celestial floor” (192). Romanticists will want to challenge Albright’s statement that in Wordsworth’s “Essay on Epitaphs” “indiscriminateness, triteness . . . become proofs of sincerity and almost of poetic excellence” (171), or that similes in Shelley’s “To a Skylark” which compare the bird to poet, maiden, glowworm and flower “[cross] the line from the unapprehended relation to the nonrelation,” that they constitute “a lovely absurdity” (249), and thus serve only to demonstrate the impossibility of writing an ideal lyric.

In evaluating the book’s contribution, one should keep in mind the dimension Albright calls “modality of perception.” The author’s sensibility appears to be centered in the early twentieth century, with Pound, Eliot, Years—where, literary historians might argue, the last extremes of Romantic lyricality were beginning to be explored. Starting with these poets’ theory and practices, Albright looks backward, and from this perspective sees intimations of the indeterminacy he senses at the heart of the lyrical mode. Consequently, this critical performance might tentatively be compared to the effect of a minor, contrapunral theme extracted from a rich, complex counterpoint and played as a solo, for the post-Pater vantage point is everything here. And yet the premise that lyricality is language aspiring to the condition of music is, in the long history of the lyric’s evolution, a late and eccentric axiom.

Finally, I was puzzled by another fundamental argumentative strategy that remains implicit but is constantly powerful. The argument depends upon metaphors to convey the essence of the lyrical. Ariel and Proteus are as telling here as Wordsworth’s fountain or Shelley’s glowing coals. In fact Albright virtually identifies the metaphorical and the lyrical when he writes that the latter is “a swerving aside, a lifting at right angles from the usual axis of narrative of logical discourse—the antimimetic principle” (3). (This formulation so closely echoes Jakobson’s distinction between the metamorphic and metonymic—which has also been described as the crucial difference between poetry and prose—that it can hardly be accidental.) And Albright constantly declares this lyrical transformation (metaphorically speaking) to be “magic.” Paradoxically, however, the book’s conception of lyricality assumes the necessary failure of magic, the failure of metaphor. Albright apparently maintains that although the lyric poet’s language continually seeks to enact the transformation of one thing into another (a change which language effects through metaphor), we readers are never deceived; the beloved’s face perversely remains a grotesque, unnatural jumble of pearls, suns, snow, cherries, and golden wires. In other words, Albright’s reader must accept the presiding metaphors of his argument even as he is urged to cultivate a relentless literal-mindedness in response to the poet’s.

This book offers the reader an exciting yet disturbing voyage through a realm of literature which appears, more than ever, rich and strange—and the author seems bent upon practicing what he probes.


Reviewed by Robert F. Gleckner

Christopher Hill, a sort of presiding deus in this book (as well as, apparently, an early reader of its manuscript version), was right: “DiSalvo’s linking of Blake and Marx is brilliantly dashing, and will annoy the orthodox in both camps” (press release by University of Pittsburgh Press). At least I think he’s right, for it is difficult to know precisely what an “orthodox” Blakean or “orthodox” Marxist is, not to say what “brilliantly dashing” means. For purposes of this review, I shall eschew commentary on the relationship of “brilliantly dashing” to its only minimally buried variant, “dashingly brilliant,” and the relevance of both to DiSalvo’s *War of Titans*; and I shall attempt a definition of neither of Hill’s orthodoxies. Instead, whatever her ideological and critical druthers are, and however she defines those druthers, let me grant them to DiSalvo and try to determine not whether they are the “right” druthers but, rather, whether her “approach” to Blake is illuminating or not. To be more specific, is her approach to “Blake’s Critique of
Milton and the Politics of Religion" revelatory significantly beyond what we already know of Milton, Blake, and their extraordinary “friendship” (or “mental fight” par excellence as Blake would consistently define it)?

What is not clear, initially, is that DiSalvo’s book is on The Four Zoas, not on Milton—and hence not really an investigation into the “Blake-Milton” relationship in toto. In fact Milton is given short shrift by DiSalvo (except for some commentary on the Bard’s Song, as is Jerusalem, despite the fact that the latter absorbs much of the matter of The Four Zoas, not to say the historical forces DiSalvo is interested in. And what little she does say of Milton—or, more accurately, the uses to which she puts Milton in pursuit of her thesis—are symptomatic of problems that permeate the entire fabric of the book. For example—and it is, I believe, a fair example of the slipperiness of DiSalvo’s logic and her use of Blake quotations—after quoting the fourth stanza of “And did those feet” (Milton I) we are told that “Blake understood, of course, that images of heavenly warfare had acquired quite opposite meanings,” an understanding that is somehow corroborated by a quotation from The Marriage of Heaven and Hell commenting on the two “histories” of the restraining of desire, Paradise Lost and the Book of Job: “this history has been adopted by both parties”—presumably angels and devils respectively. What this passage has to do with the Milton hymn is not explained; moreover, we are given to understand that the quotation itself refers to “the conquest and fall of Satan” whereas it refers to the history of desire and its restraints, a history that has been interpreted by Milton via the myth or story of Paradise Lost and by the biblical author of Job via that literary work’s myth. Where “conquest” comes into either, not to say into the Milton hymn, is hard to fathom. But then we recall having been told that “images of spiritual warfare provide a justification for . . . political struggle,” and that “the conquering Christ was reinterpreted as the arm of divinely appointed authorities suppressing the demonic revolts of chronically disobedient men” (pp. 26–27). These two sentences, which flank the neat verbal pre­
tidigitation on Milton, The Marriage, and Paradise Lost cited above, enable DiSalvo to shoehorn sundry aspects of Blake into a socio-politico-economic-sexual set of interpretive contexts that all too often do considerable violence to Blake’s poetry—or so stretch it out of shape through interpolation rather than interpretation that it becomes not Milton’s Blake—or Frye’s or Erdman’s or the “orthodox Blakeans”—but a sometimes exciting, finally narrow and warped, DiSalvo’s Blake.

Admittedly, the passage I singled out above is not a major part of the book’s argument. If it were excised, the thesis would remain intact. Yet, the very anonymity of the passage (so to speak) is what bothers me. If there are fudgings of various kinds going on here, what of the presentation of the book’s major ideas? But let me leave that large question aside for a moment in order to address another that is related to the interesting near-
Zoas rather than Paradise Lost (p. 138). Clearly possessing such a consciousness, which DiSalvo regards as "the consummation of a long tradition of plebeian radicalism which had seen Eden as a utopia, lost through social, rather than individual moral degeneration," Blake "anticipates the assessments [of the Fall] later shared by socialist thinkers" (pp. 139–40). One must wonder, in light of that conclusion, what Blake might have written instead of The Four Zoas had he known what history, anthropology, comparative mythology—and DiSalvo—were later to reveal. Probably a manifesto slouching toward Bethlehem to be born.

But to return to Blake's rewriting of Paradise Lost in the Zoas, DiSalvo argues that Blake's self-appointed task necessitated a separation between, on the one hand, "the priestly reading of the Fall as original sin, and a justification of existing oppression as either a punishment for or a consequence of the moral perversity of human nature," and, on the other hand, the "revolutionary...tendencies in Christianity," two "traditions...exasperatingly fused by the Puritan revolutionary." And somehow that idea is relatable to Blake's opening of The Four Zoas with a dramatization of Enlightenment nullifications (largely in Locke and Rousseau) of "the Universal Brotherhood of Eden" as "visions of history based upon amnesia." And then this extraordinary interpretation is "proved" by an expropriation of a brief, unrelated (and irrelevant) passage from page 54 of the Zoas (pp. 140–41). If we are not sufficiently dizzied by this remarkable procedure, The Four Zoas is presented as "offering" a theory of historical stages similar to that proposed by nineteenth-century theorists—in particular Marx and Engels—in which a primitive communist Eden characterized by egalitarian sexual relations is destroyed through the rise of hierarchic class civilizations based upon such institutions as private property, the family, and the state. According to this political theory, the tribal communism of nature-worshiping, mother-right clans gives way to stratified agricultural societies, and then either to slave empires or the 'asiatric mode' with its theocratic bureaucracy. After the fall of these ancient civilizations, new developments would produce in turn feudalism, capitalism, and, presumably, socialism. (p. 141; cf. the other version of this history, on the following page, ending in "a totally fascist Ulro.")

This "teleology of progress" is to be "brought about by development of the forces of production." The idea of a communal Eden diverges from the mythical maternal and/or natural paradises that have historically been employed by ax-grinders of various ilk to obscure the true history of mankind, and these contrarious traditions will be "brought back together" again "only in our own time in a new marriage accomplished by the cross-fertilization of radical—especially Third World—and feminist primitivisms" (p. 142). The mind fairly boggles, and not merely because by the time we hear all this we're nearly halfway through the book.

And so we retreat in an effort to re-orient ourselves to DiSalvo's procedures—somewhat oddly as it turns out, not to the "Critical Introduction" that is Chapter 1 but the "Acknowledgements" in which, in addition to making appropriate bows to literary and historical scholars, DiSalvo gives us a mini-autobiography of her days in the late sixties and early seventies when "we sat in continuous session at a mostly informal, interdisciplinary seminar discussing literature, politics, philosophy, economics, psychology, history, and so forth—determined...not to disband until we had fully comprehended the roots of our culture and the possibilities for reconstructing it"—not to say understanding "the world" and proposing how to change it. From this University of Wisconsin experience, and subsequent immersion in the now defunct Livingston College of Rutgers ("that brief and wonderful experiment in a multicultural, socially concerned educational community where visionary teachers served the intellectual hungers of black and white working-class students"), DiSalvo emerged as, in her own description, a "passionate female Orc.". I do not denigrate in any way this history, and DiSalvo's account of it is in its own way a moving testament. What I do question is the assumption, for it is an assumption, that Orcs of any kind are Blake's ideal readers. Or Milton's.

What her Orcism means for this book, among other things, is the ridiculous charge that the Blake of most, if not all, serious readers to date is increasingly "the frustrated revolutionary brooding bitterly upon the limits of our fallen condition" rather than the "prophet of liberation...who championed 'mental war' against all tyrannies, political and religious" (p. vii). Christopher Hill's "orthodox" Blakean, then, turns out to be all of us. Whoever, specifically, it is that provoked this curious erection of an even curioser straw man remains (or remain) invisible throughout the book but the cannonading against him/them remains no less insistent—and it is the Orcian fusillades that tend to mar what is bright and original and provocative here.

The book proper opens, perhaps predictably, with other straw men, those who (as read by DiSalvo) deny the political significance of Paradise Lost. It is, of course, a goodly unvisionary (if unnamed) company. Only Christopher Hill's Milton and the English Revolution (1978; a date, incidentally, by which DiSalvo says her own book was "largely completed") reads Milton properly. What DiSalvo adds to Hill is an exploration, "through Blake," of the "ideological dimension" of Paradise Lost that "forces us to focus our approach to every issue in it" (my italics), for "there is no society in the world today that is not being defined by its relation to the values and institutions of Milton's England" (pp. 10–11). It is hard not to exclaim, simply, "Wow!" But wows aside, this re-focusing, translated into Blake's efforts in The Four Zoas,
leads DiSalvo to regard the poem as a "survey" of "all of history." Nights I-IV depict the rise and fall of ancient civilization, Night V the appearance of radical Christianity and its subsequent "distortion" under "feudalism," Nights VI-VII the rise of modern England on Miltonic (read "erroneous") foundations; and Night IX the revolutionary future—not merely of Blake's time but ours. If we once recognize this structure of The Four Zoas, we will also be able to see the poem, finally, as a "reconciliation" of Frye and Erdman. DiSalvo is not yet ready to give us an account of that reconciliation, however; she hopes "to write about it in the future." What she does give us, despite her own claim that "any interpretation which reads [Blake] solely as class-conscious materialist . . . leaves something out," is largely Blake as class-conscious materialist. Hence, she has selected "interpreters whose insights are congenial to Blake's own perspective," that is to say, congenial to her perspective on Blake's own perspective. These interpreters include the current "literature on the family and woman's social role"; "women's liberation" which Blake got interested in through his "friend" Mary Wollstonecraft; the mythographic studies of Bachofen, Frazer, and Engels as well as Jane Ellen Harrison, Robert Graves, and Joseph Campbell; since Blake was "influenced by an incipient ethnography," evolutionary anthropologists like Lewis Henry Morgan, Briffault, Vera Gordon Childe, Leslie White, and Eleanor Leacock; and so on (pp. 15-17).

Via these interpreters Blake's "revival" of Milton is seen as signifying "the need of a rising working class to confront and sort out the progressive and oppressive aspects of its legacy from the bourgeois revolution and its Christian traditions." In this sense The Four Zoas (or more broadly Blake's Milton) will "prove to be the enduring form of the Puritan poet's artistic bequest long after his neo-orthodox apologists take their places on the shelves of infrequently circulating books in library basements." And, since "Blake's poetry cannot be comprehended outside its Miltonic context, and Milton is never better comprehended than through his follower" (pp. 44-45), DiSalvo's book will obviously relegate much of Blakean scholarship and criticism (his neo-orthodox apologists who are the same as Hill's orthodox Blakeans) to the dustbin as well.

But I started out by arguing, in effect, that whatever the ideological pudding, the proof of illumination must be in it, as well as evidence of an honest tasting. DiSalvo is not always scrupulous about either, and I shall close this review by citing some of many unproofs and questionable tastings—for the most part without comment since they speak for themselves.

In The Four Zoas 70:21 ff. we have "women marching in burning wastes / Of sand" with "thousands strucken with / Lightnings" and "myriads moping in the stifling vapours." They are, according to DiSalvo, "armies of female wage slaves and their blazing furnaces" in "Manchester, Birmingham, and Leeds" (p. 55). On a related tack, Blake is said to emphasize, like Marx, "a collective, rather than merely individual breakthrough," his epistemology has "class content," and all his life he insisted upon "the influence of class biases on perception" (p. 61). At the same time Blake's "seemingly theological passages become comprehensible only within that tradition of radical Christian incarnationism expounded by Thomas Altizer" (p. 67; my italics). It seems that there are class biases and then there are class biases depending upon which class bias the perception derives from.

Somehow Blake "would have agreed" apparently only "with Marx about the effects of material degradation on human beings." Ergo The Four Zoas is Marxian in that it "traces the effects of human impoverishment and enslavement on the evolution of human consciousness" (p. 68; see also p. 22). No other human is credited with perceiving these effects. As to Los, his "first task" in The Four Zoas is, DiSalvo says, to "Unbar the Gates of Memory" (a phrase in Night VIIa), the result of which will revive a "historical consciousness" (p. 83); but the rest of the passage describes no such revival but rather Los's Spectre urging Los to look on his Spectre "Not as another but as thy real Self who, "inspird," will speak about the renewal of the fourfold universe. And if Los refuses to re-unite with his Spectre, the Spectre warns that "Another body will be prepared / For me & thou annihilate evaporate & be no more / For thou art but a form & organ of life & of thyself / Art nothing being Created Continually by Mercy & Love divine." So much for historical consciousness.

On page 87 of the Zoas, lines 13-21 are purported to dramatize "a fatalistic vision" produced by "a history of scarcity and want in nature" (p. 84), but if one reads those lines carefully, in addition to the preceding and following passages, DiSalvo's claim that the entire passage substantiates her interpretation appears more and more like wish-fulfillment. A page later Enitharmon is said to "feel" that "if the abused masses are not restrained," they "will not redeem us but destroy" (FZ87:60)—though the "abused masses" are nowhere to be found. Still, their "revolution" will be "an orgy of vengeance—fit punishment for such / Hideous offenders." This line, which occurs prior to the one on the abused masses, is now quoted wildly out of context in order to create the package logic of DiSalvo's readings. Three pages later something similar occurs. There Los proposes that he and Enitharmon create a new vision, this one of the dead living on through their creations; in this way they will be able to contribute to later generations "who will build on the sacrifices of those who preceded them." If there are "setbacks" in this effort to serve "the present in its task of liberation," DiSalvo
interprets Blake as regarding those to be surmountable "through an increasing understanding of their roots in insufficiently radicalized institutions and ideologies" (pp. 85–86). I guess that means there weren't enough Orcs around to radicalize these roots, for Los's—and Blake's—vision of history is based on the "class struggle of Orc against Urizen." Yet, the more Orc "radicalizes" institutions and ideologies, the more he risks "mere insurrection" that will "consume itself." If this does not come as a "discovery" to most of us, perhaps we can charge the tone of discovery off to the fact that the book is almost seven years old at publication time.

"The Universal Family & that one Man / They call Jesus the Christ & they in him & he in them / Live in Perfect harmony in Eden the land of life" (FZ 21:1–6) is "the social unity of tribal society . . . ; with social atomization and exploitation" this unity is lost, then forgotten and denied—that is, DiSalvo tells us, misappropriating a passage from The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, "men forgot that All deities reside in the human breast" (p. 170). It's a rather neat way to avoid the issue (here put, tellingly, in the passive) of which came first, "social atomization and exploitation" or men forgetting where deities reside—and to avoid the implications of quoting this particular passage from The Marriage, which has nothing to do with a "Universal Family" or "Jesus the Christ" or "Eden," or "social unity" or tribalism or "social atomization." Similarly, when DiSalvo describes Night IX of The Four Zoas as showing "that along with the rise of property and the family there is a diminution of human science," and that man "undergoes a kind of reversed metamorphosis" (pp. 181–82), the reader would be well advised to have page 133 of The Four Zoas open here, if only to make sure he and DiSalvo are reading the same poem. Indeed the Zoas needs to be opened to virtually each passage she cites in support of her thesis. Other occasions, of particular note, of the need to carefully check Blake's text against DiSalvo's interpretation occur on pages 200, 206–07, 209–11, 217, 222–23, 226, 230, 284, 308, 319–20, and 345.

It is no doubt unnecessary for me to conclude by saying that this is a provocative book. I suppose my capitalistic upbringing made me more prone to be provoked by the sort of reductionism I find almost always in critical approaches such as DiSalvo's. But hostile reader or no, any reader who cares for what Blake wrote ought to be provoked to irritation by biased handling of the evidence—in both Blake and Milton. Too bad, for there is much here that is provocative in the salutary sense, and even I find the core of the book, Chapter 8 on "The Politics of Paradise Lost and The Four Zoas," a rewarding discussion. The fact that it stands very well on its own says something about the superstructure the other chapters form. That superstructure seems to me to result from DiSalvo's inability to see that her sense of Blake's anticipating of Marx's manifesto is not really a very important issue to argue for or against. If Marx picks "up his hammer" and rekindles Los's "furnaces" (as she not very disarmingly puts it on her penultimate page), that "fact" was not only not worth the anarchonistic procedure of her book but was, finally, not very illuminating with respect to Blake and Milton beyond what we already know—even if what we already know is not talked of or written about in DiSalvo's language.

On Blake's Painting of Jesus and the Woman Taken in Adultery

WARREN STEVENSON

The scene, as Blake portrays it, is perfect: the accusers departing discomfited, the woman lissome, bare-breasted her hair dishevelled her face, slightly flushed, resembling Jesus' as a sister her brother.

But what is Jesus drawing as he bends toward the ground? His right hand forms a compass like Newton's or that of the Ancient of Days. Is he having a private joke—perhaps mocking the Old Man's creation of forked Adam, cleft Eve?

The woman stands straight—her wrists bound behind her—with her head slightly bowed her gaze intent on the doodler's hand. She knows there remain only herself and this ironic jester—no more fucking sin.
The audience which Kathleen Raine had in mind when she wrote *The Human Face of God: William Blake and the Book of Job* is made clear in the book's dedication "To those who study Blake for the sake of spiritual knowledge." The book is, therefore, "not primarily a work of scholarship"—as the author points out in the first sentence of the "Introduction." She is not concerned with "what Blake would have called the natural meaning of his work." On the contrary, she tries "to throw some light, for those who take things seriously, on Blake's spiritual meaning." In order to accomplish this she tries to relate Blake's twenty-two Job engravings to (1) the tradition of esoteric philosophy (the Hermetica, Boehme, Swedenborg, Thomas Taylor), and (2) Blake's symbolic language, "grounded . . . in not one but many branches of esoteric tradition." After a short introduction (pp. 9-24) the main body of the work is taken up by a plate-by-plate commentary on the Job engravings (pp. 25-266). Then follow an essay on "Blake's Job and Jung's Job" (pp. 267-98), additional notes on some of the plates (title, plates 2, 3, 5, 6, 13 and 15), bibliography, list of illustrations and index. While there is no conventional footnote apparatus, references to sources are largely given in the text. Thus Raine's book has the outward appearance of a scholarly work without being one.

Her "method" of investigation is based on her familiarity with the symbolic language of esoteric philosophy and on her sympathy for it. But this "method" is very unsystematic, and the question is whether it should be termed "method" at all. It may even be that Raine is against "method," because it is apt to direct thought and thus clip the wings of intellect. The lack of method is made manifest in the discrepancy between the title and the contents of the book. It is not about Blake and the Book of Job; it is a commentary on Blake's set of twenty-two engravings illustrative of the Book of Job. There is no attempt to compare Blake's Job to the Job of the Bible, and Job illustrations by Blake outside the engraved set are rarely mentioned, Job illustrations by other artists not at all. There is nothing about the role of the Book of Job in Western thought, save Jung's interpretation of it. Of the 130 illustrations, 22 are devoted to the set of engravings done by Blake in the mid-1820s at the instigation of John Linnell; of other Job illustrations by Blake 5 are reproduced (or 7, if the frontispiece and pl. 16 of *The Gates of Paradise* count as Job subjects) out of a total of about 100; there are no reproductions of Job subjects by other artists, but there are 4 reproductions of non-Job subjects by such artists; the main part of the reproductions is devoted to works by Blake not illustrative of the Book of Job. This is not necessarily a defect, but it is certainly out of keeping with Raine's subtitle, which clearly indicates a scope much wider than is actually the case, namely *William Blake and the Book of Job*.

The present reviewer, being trained to read and evaluate works of a scholarly nature, does not rightly know how to judge a work which its author denies to be scholarly. I could stretch my sympathy in order to do it, but I do not know if I should, because, despite Raine's assertions to the contrary, I do suspect that her book is a scholarly work after all. Or am I wrong in this?

In order to find out, let me try to read the book (1) as if it were a scholarly work and (2) as if it were not a scholarly work. Scholarship is founded on research, and research begins in the library, and in a good library. Having an idea is not enough for being a scholar; doing research means hard work in order to test your ideas, both for originality and for validity. If Raine were a scholar she would have liked to know what has already been published on Blake's Job before she started writing a new book on the subject, in order to test the originality, the newness, of her ideas.

The author's knowledge of the literature on Blake's Job seems to end at 1924, and is restricted to Joseph Wicksteed's *Blake's Vision of the Book of Job* (1910, second ed. 1924) and the chapter on Blake's Job in S. Foster Damon, *William Blake, His Philosophy and Symbols* (1924, later editions 1947, 1966). It is true that Raine quotes Damon's *Blake's Job* of 1966, but this is just a separate republication of the Job chapter mentioned above, lightly reshuffled. She also refers to Michael Marquise's *The Book of Job Illustrated by William Blake* (New York, 1976), which she calls "a convenient and pleasant working copy." It is a reprint of the Authorized Version of the Book of Job illustrated by Blake, with a short introductory essay.

This will not do for a scholarly work, especially not since Raine, among her acknowledgments, praises the "Blake Trust edition of the engravings" for being so "good it is almost a forgery." This work has not yet appeared—if Raine has seen proofs of the illustrations, some of which were exhibited at the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1978, she should say so. She also thanks the late Sir Geoffrey Keynes for the support she has received from him—but Keynes' and Binyon's publication of Blake's Job illustrations (1935) does not appear in the bibliography, and nothing by Sir Geoffrey on
Blake or his Job is quoted, save the Keynes edition of Blake's writings. Raine has not bothered to check Sir Geoffrey's "Blake's Job on the Stage," Blake Studies (1971) pp. 187–94, or she would hardly have referred to the production of Job: A Masque for Dancing as "Robert Helpmann's ballet (first performed, with Ralph Vaughan Williams' music, in 1930)" (p. 233). Actually, the scenario is by Geoffrey Keynes and Gwen Raverat. Ninette de Valois did the choreography. At the première, in 1931, not 1930, the role of Satan was danced by Anton Dolin, not Helpmann, who danced the role in some later performances. More about the Job ballet is found in Sir Geoffrey's autobiography Gates of Memory (1981), pp. 203–208. Lack of attention to the particulars of bibliography must result in a number of errors. I understand that such errors belong to what Raine would call the "natural" meaning of a text. But since misrepresentations of facts are of no aid to spiritual understanding, they should be avoided in any work, regardless of what its primary aim is.

In her lack of attention to bibliography Raine goes so far as not bothering to read the Book of Job carefully enough to notice the startling differences between the story as told in the Old Testament and as represented in Blake's engravings. She writes: "For while superficially the twenty-two engraved plates faithfully follow the Story of Job as it is told in the Bible, a more careful examination shows that, as Blake himself warns us, "Both read the Bible day & night, / But thou read'st" black where I read white" (p. 9). In pl. 1 Job and his family are shown reading the Lord's Prayer outside their Gothic cathedral, in pl. 5 Job shares his last meal with a beggar, in pl. 11 the God of the Mosaic Law is identified with Satan, in pl. 16 Satan is cast down at the Last Judgment, in pl. 20 Job dictates his autobiography to his daughters, and in pl. 21 Job and his family praise God, singing the song of Moses and the Lamb (Rev. 15:3).

None of these scenes is found in the Book of Job. The non-biblical element in Blake's Job was noticed by Ellis and Yeats in 1893 and by Richard Garnett in 1895. Wicksteed and Damon were aware of it. These early commentators, however, explained it as a result of Blake's "personal" inventiveness. In my own William Blake's Illustrations to the Book of Job (1973), I have tried to show that the non-biblical scenes have a background in the theology, folklore and iconography of the Book of Job; that, according to traditions dating from the early church
to the eighteenth century, Job was a prefiguration of Christ, he was Christian, he was the bishop of a cathedral, he shared his last meal with a beggar, he was a prophet who could foresee the era of the Law would be superseded by that of the Gospel, he witnessed the defeat of Satan in a vision of the Last Judgment, the Book of Job was written by Job’s daughters from their father’s dictation, and Job was the patron saint of musicians and singers. Raine fails to realize that Blake deviates from the text of the Book of Job not only as far as the “spiritual” interpretation of it is concerned; he changes the “natural” story itself. That Raine does not understand this is a serious flaw not only from the scholarly point of view, but also from the point of view of spiritual understanding. She presents us with a distorted Blake, one who hides his own views under a garb of esoteric symbols, while actually he is quite outspoken about the way in which he interprets and corrects Holy Scripture. And in so doing, he has tradition on his side.

What kind of man was Raine’s Blake? He was an anti-materialist, who denied “that matter is the substance and basis of the universe, and that matter exists autonomously outside and apart from the perceiving mind.” He held that “mind, or spirit [is] the living ground and ‘place’ of the universe, including the sensible phenomenon we call ‘nature’” (pp. 11–12). With almost no knowledge of Far Eastern thought “he had to work within the Western esoteric tradition.” He knew “the canon of the European esoteric tradition.” This esoteric literature “excluded as irrelevant within a materialist culture—forms a single coherent continuous tradition, which to discover at all is to discover as a whole” (p. 267). But a canon must consist of particular books, it cannot be just an indeterminate, generalized whole. According to Raine, Blake knew the Eleusinian and Bacchic mysteries and the Neoplatonic and Gnostic teachings as they were published by Thomas Taylor, the Hermetica translated by John Everard in 1650, the works of Jacob Boehme and the writings of Emmanuel Swedenborg. This seems to be all. In which way can this disparate anthology be called a “single coherent continuous tradition”? In other places Raine writes not of one but of several different traditions or systems (p. 12). Paramount for her Blake was “the mystery of the Divine nature of Jesus Christ” (p. 10).

But what did Blake know of these works of the esoteric canon and how far did he agree with them? Which is the relationship between Blake’s intellectual originality and his dependence on tradition? Raine attempts no analysis of such questions. The William Blake I know was interested in Boehme and admired the diagrams illustrating the English translation of his works, but he has not left us any detailed appreciation of Boehme; he disagreed with Swedenborg on several important points, and he hated “mystery” and mystery religions. He loved the Bible and professed himself a Bible Christian. It is true that Blake was interested in Neoplatonism and that he was familiar with the writings of Thomas Taylor—Raine’s Blake and Tradition (1969) is much more conclusive on this point than The Human Face of God. It is also true that Blake was a spiritualist. But I deny that Blake was a Neoplatonist idealist in the proper sense of the word, and I hold that there is a strongly materialist element in his thought.

Of crucial importance in this context is Blake’s view of the incarnation. In the incarnation the word is made flesh, spirit becomes organized in solid matter. Adam and Eve, being made in the likeness of God, and being inspired by him, are incarnations; Christ likewise. And since Adam, Eve and Christ are human beings, man is incarnate spirit. A work of art, as Blake expressly said, is also spirit materialized. He wrote in his Descriptive Catalogue of 1809: “The connoisseurs and artists who have made objections to Mr. B.’s mode of representing spirits with real bodies, would do well to consider that the Venus, the Minerva, the Jupiter, the Apollo, which they admire in Greek statues are all of them representations of spiritual existences, of Gods immortal, to the mortal perishing organ of sight; and yet they are embodied and organized in solid marble” (K 576). Since an icon per definition is founded on the dogma of the incarnation, and itself is an incarnation of spirit, it is right to consider Blake’s pictorial works as essentially iconic—this is what Raine does. But if Blake’s works are iconic, one must conclude that he has done away with the idealist dualism between conception and execution. The material painting, consisting of paint applied to a support, is the spiritual conception; there can be no pictorial conception outside of or apart from the material execution of a picture. The icon is the synthesis of the dialectic antitheses of spirit and matter. It should be noted that Blake did not restrict this way of thinking to the philosophy of art; in The Marriage of Heaven and Hell he denied the dualism of the soul and the body. And what did he mean when he insisted that a body should be given to error? Did he not ask for incarnations of error?

All this is alien to Neoplatonist thinking, which ascribes reality only to the ideas, not to the material reflections of these ideas. In the philosophy of art, Neoplatonists hold that the artistic idea is the only true and perfect work of art, while a material work of art is seen as an imperfect approximation of the so-called “inner picture” or “vision.” Unless we realize that Blake was a Christian and not a Neoplatonist we can never understand what he meant when he contended that the drawn and painted copies he made of his visions were “perfect” (see Public Address, K 594ff.). Raine does not go into these difficulties. Her Blake is one for whom “knowledge is a mode of being, inseparable from the living mind
Unnam'd Forms
Blake and Textuality
NELSON HILTON and THOMAS A. VOGLER
Editors

"A strong and challenging contribution to Blake studies. . . . It will serve as the basic introduction to the application of advanced theory to Blake."—W. J. T. Mitchell

This collection of ground-breaking essays posits that the material traces of Blake's writing are not accidentally related to his poetry and its meanings, but instead show the inevitable materiality in all language-as-writing and are an integral part of whatever artistic meaning can be read in Blake's texts. These essays take seriously the attention that Blake himself paid to the material dimension of his art.

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in which it resides . . . he . . . does not depersonify his knowledge, does not separate the knower from the known . . . he returned to the origins of all spiritual knowledge—the spiritual depths within his own humanity" (p. 11). Thus it is not only difficult to separate Blake's indebtedness to tradition from his originality—it would be impossible, even false to do so. Common scholarly work, tracking down sources, etc., would violate the Blake of Raine and misrepresent him. All right—but if Raine thinks this is true, how can she write: "He [Blake] has been credited with an originality he neither possessed nor would have wished to possess; he has been called 'wild' or even mad for repeating the theology of Plato and Plotinus . . ." (p. 11)? I think that this statement is wrong in itself, but worse is that Raine passes positive judgment on a man of whom she holds that no positive judgments can be passed.

At this point I lose sight of her vision of Blake and of the meaning she ascribes to his Job. Her work is not scholarly—but it is not unscholarly either, because she enters into arguments of a scholarly nature, disagrees with certain "academic commentators" (p. 47, no names are mentioned), uses a scholarly reference system, and formulates and defends certain theses about Blake and the Job. If her work is neither scholarly nor unscholarly, it can hardly be anything but pseudo-scholarly, that is, scholarship of a very shaky kind. I cannot see how such a book could advance either mundane knowledge or spiritual understanding.

While I disagree strongly with Raine's main arguments and with her method of investigation, I find many of her observations on details interesting and in some cases very much to the point. The comment on perfect characters (pl. 1, p. 40) which are worse than imperfect ones and are hated by everybody is illuminating. Her short analysis of the diagrammatic composition in pl. 2 is good, but the Swedenborgian analogy is not very helpful. She is right when she writes that in this plate Job is in the image of God, not God in the image of Job (as, for instance, Wicksteed has argued). Her section on the Swedenborgian correspondences between landscape and Job's state of mind is interesting, although somewhat marred by her sad dualism between spirituality and materialism (pl. 6, p. 81). Her interpretation of the significance of burnt offering (as human sacrifice, p. 263) is startling, and, I think, correct. But there is too little of this, and far too many errors.

Raine's treatment of art-historical minutiae is sloppy, and the captions for the illustrations are eccentric, to say the least. Titles are often pure inventions. Her pl. 55 (f. 14) does not show "Satan with the planetary orbs 'rolling thro' Voidness,' " but Erin in Albion's Tomb. The caption of pl. 62 disregards Blake's own title given in the Descriptive Catalogue, The Angels hovering over the
Body of Jesus in the Sepulchre. Pl. 82 is not of an engraving by Blake, but of an etching by Luigi Schiavonetti after Blake's (lost) drawing of Death's Door. The subject of pl. 106 (Gates of Paradise, 16) is not from the Hermetica; Raine has not noticed that Blake's caption is quoted from Job 17:14—in the Notebook sketch Blake gives the reference and the quotation in full: “I have said to corruption / thou art my father, to the worm thou art my mother & my sister / Job.” In pl. 115 (frontispiece of Gates) Raine again misses the fact that Blake's caption is a quotation from Job 7:17. It is odd that an author who has written a book of over 300 pages subtitled William Blake and the Book of Job should reproduce two Job illustrations by Blake bearing captions (by the artist) quoting Job and not bother to mention the fact that these works do have something to do with the Book of Job. It would be easy to expand the list of such errors but the examples mentioned above may suffice.

To summarize my objections to Raine's book: (1) Raine's view of the relationship between spirit and matter is different from that of Blake. Hers is dualistic, his is dialectic. (2) Since Raine does not separate the knower from the known, she fails to realize that Blake as an object of knowing is separate from herself. Therefore she tends to confuse Blake's ideas with her own and makes Blake a spokesman for Raine. (3) I understand that from Raine's point of view my criticism of her book is not valid. It is the criticism of a materialist for whom the world has an autonomous existence, irrespective of a perceiving mind. I think that Blake is what he is, regardless of what I can perceive or know about him. She thinks that Raine is the “place” of Blake. Such mutually exclusive views can never be reconciled. (4) Blake's engravings are not, for Raine, works of art. They are diagrams illustrating esoteric tenets. Their meaning is explained by collecting passages from Blake's poetical works and from esoteric writings by various authors. The result is juxtaposition more than illumination; very little new light is shed on the designs. (5) Raine's attitude to Blake is sympathetic. She thinks that we should admire Blake and learn from him. Tenets which she likes are attributed to him, but he is denied views not shared by Raine. Thus she distorts him, in a friendly way. Well could Blake exclaim: “God defend me from my Friends!” I would like somebody to write a book about what he hates in Blake. Blake needs an enemy, “for Friendship's sake.” He has been made too perfect a character. And, as even Raine knows, everybody hates a perfect character.

DISCUSSION
with intellectual spears & long winged arrows of thought

Connoisseurship and the Palmer Fakes
Martin Butlin

Raymond Lister, in his review of publications on Blake and his followers, particularly Samuel Palmer, in the fall 1985 issue of Blake (p. 80), has chosen to repeat his accusation that I said of Keating's fake Palms that there was "a considerable case for their being by the artist." The last time he said something of this kind, in his The Paintings of Samuel Palmer (Cambridge University Press, 1985), he did at least include the vital words, "was reported by The Times as saying. . . . " This time he merely gives a reference to The Times of 16 July 1976, leaving the reader, by his use of quotation marks, to assume that this is a verbatim transcript of my own words. He then goes on to assert that this "all goes to show that enthusiasm, even when combined with academic scholarship, is not always supported by perfect connoisseurship," a very happy conclusion for an enthusiastic amateur such as himself. What I did say at the time (and I have no precise recall of my exact words) came as part of a defense of one of those fooled by what was a deliberate attempt to deceive, by means of period frames, a backing of old letters, and a false provenance; I am happy to say that the words attributed to me do not reflect my opinion, then or now, of the actual authenticity of the drawings themselves. In any case it is a pity that Raymond Lister has to return on two further occasions in the course of a not very long review to the Keating scandal. This is to give the affair, and the reviewer's cleverness in not being taken in, far more attention than they deserve.