

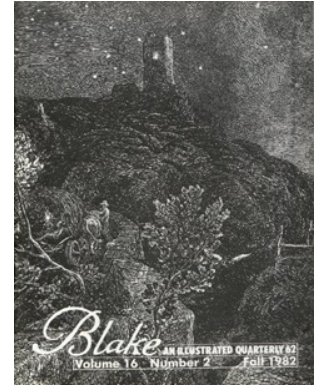
AN ILLUSTRATED QUARTERLY BLAKE

R E V I E W

John E. Grant, Edward J. Rose, and Michael J. Tolley, eds., David V. Erdman, co-ordinating ed., William Blake's Designs for Edward Young's 'Night Thoughts': A Complete Edition

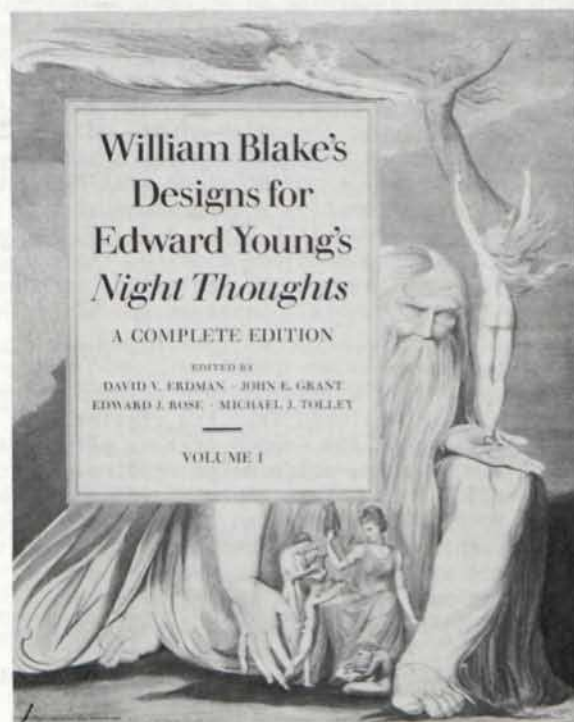
Detlef W. Dörrbecker

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John E. Grant, Edward J. Rose, and Michael J. Tolley, eds., David V. Erdman, co-ordinating ed. **William Blake's Designs for Edward Young's 'Night Thoughts': A Complete Edition.** Two Volumes. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980. \$365/£150 the set.

Reviewed by Detlef W. Dörrbecker



Life, Death, and Immortality

"Young was fortunate. He seems almost the only poet who has had his mere metaphors illustrated and made corporeal."¹ --Blake enthusiasts are fond of the idea that Young's *Night Thoughts* are remembered today mostly on account of their having been illustrated by their worshipped hero. It is to be questioned, however, whether Blake himself would be remembered today had he left behind nothing but this particular series of watercolors and engravings which, with respect to quantity, is his largest.

Few of Blake's nineteenth-century commentators had direct access to the 537 watercolor drawings, and thus could only judge the artist's *Night Thoughts* designs (*NT*) from the forty-three engravings in Edwards' edition of 1797. These were criticized as being "somewhat uninteresting." "In Blake's conceptions it is a hit or a miss," and, Gilchrist continues, "the miss is a wide one," especially if it comes to the illustrations for Young's poem. "There is a monotony of subject, of treatment, of handling the graver even. . . . There is little or no individuality in his faces, if more in his forms. Typical forms and faces, abstract impersonations, are used to express his meaning. Everything,--figures, landscape, costume, accessory,--is reduced to its elemental shape, its simplest guise. . . ."² Thus the *NT* designs prompted one of the harshest critiques of Blake's artistic output in Gilchrist's biography. Nowadays, few would subscribe to the normative aesthetics which loom large behind such nineteenth-century views; and yet, even the most

cautious value judgments, based on a critical and intimate knowledge of Blake's entire work as a visual artist and taking only his own creative possibilities as a standard, will necessarily have to admit certain deficiencies--of which monotonous reduplication isn't the least--that prevent the *NT* watercolors from ranking high among Blake's masterpieces.³

This and the sheer number of the designs may explain why the *NT* illustrations had to wait for reproduction longer than any other of Blake's works. The need for a complete edition of these watercolors which represent approximately a fifth of the artist's surviving designs, was first advocated in Hershel Margoliouth's pioneering article of 1954: "How can the large company of students of Blake function adequately when [by 1954] 457 drawings, most of his work for a year and a half of the prime of his life, have never been reproduced?"⁴ Little happened, and in 1969 Morton Paley still had to complain that the *NT* designs "have remained the least known as well as the largest of Blake's sets of designs," for which "no detailed consideration of their symbolism, thematic structure, and meaning has yet been published."⁵ Then, in the same year, readers of the second edition of Erdman's *Prophet Against Empire* were informed that "only in the late 1960's did extensive scholarly study of the Blake water colors begin, as Clarendon Press undertook to publish a multi-volume edition of the whole series (with commentary by John Grant, Michael Tolley, and

Edward Rose).⁶ Research for this edition had started as early as 1963-1964 (see p. x), but even the photographic reproductions, now under review, had to wait for their publication yet another ten years following Erdman's announcement. It is only natural if with this elapse of time the highest possible expectations were raised.

These great expectations, I am afraid, are not fulfilled by the two enormous folio-sized volumes now published. Besides a foreword by Erdman who acted as coordinating editor, the first volume contains an introduction of some eighty pages, a bibliographic checklist of previous studies of the *NT* illustrations, and reproductions 1-263. These are followed in the second volume by reproductions from *NT* 264-537, and thus the modern edition exactly reflects the arrangement of the original water colors which were bound accordingly in two volumes for their first owner, the book dealer and publisher Richard Edwards. To the 537 halftone reproductions are added in the second volume a selection of seventy-eight designs which are reproduced in color, as well as eight specimen color plates from colored copies of the engravings; also reproduced are sixty-two proofs and the 1797 edition in its entirety (vii+95+[2]pp.).

The Monochrome Plates

I take it for granted that, with a total of 801 plates (including figures in the text, which are all connected with Blake's *NT*), and presenting for the first time all the known materials related to one of Blake's major commissions, including the reproductions of virtually hundreds of designs which have hitherto not been accessible except to students at the British Museum Print Room, the importance and value of such an edition is self-evident to anyone who is seriously interested in Blake's work. This is merely the quantitative aspect, however. The reproductions being the *raison d'être* and, no doubt, the reason for so high a retail price of these volumes, it is their quality which has to be considered first.

Each of the 537 monochrome plates measures c. 29.5 x 22.7 cm.; this still means a reduction by approximately 30% from the originals (c. 42 x 32.5 cm.). The latter were executed on Whatman drawing paper which supplied the water colorist with an almost absolute, though unbleached, white for his ground. Its effect might have been imitated in the reproductions if a similar make of printing paper as, e.g., that used for the plates in Keynes' *Blake Studies*, had been decided upon.⁷ Alas, it was not, and the choice of a somewhat creamy, toned paper for the printing of the pictures marks the second step away from the originals. The consequences of this decision for a printing paper which adds to the reproductions a color of its own are felt most strongly where the color plates are concerned. The black and white reproductions, however, may seem satisfactory at first sight. Only when compared with the originals or even with the results that were achieved in the 1927 facsimile does it become evident how much detail is lost in them.⁸ Equally important is the fact that there is no uniformity of tonal values in the monochrome reproductions.⁹

Similar if not identical washes of a bright blue which in the watercolors have been employed to indicate the sunlit sky, reproduce as a faint gray--that is, just as one would expect--in the majority of the plates (see e.g. reprod. from *NT* 7, 11, 17, 21, etc.). Then there are instances, however, where a similar cerulean blue or a light gray wash in the original design becomes, in the reproduction, approaching night or sometimes even a complete darkness (see e.g. reprod. from *NT* 146, 154, 169, 175, 207, 227, 236, 238, 242, etc.). What is reproduced by equally compact areas in the halftone screen is thus not necessarily in keeping with areas of corresponding brightness or darkness in the watercolors. In general, the contrast between light and dark areas is much stronger in the black and white reproductions than in the designs themselves, and much detail gets lost together with Blake's richer modulation of colors.¹⁰ This certainly need not be. The ten years this publication has been in preparation surely would have allowed for the production of a more homogeneous set of photographs and its adequate printing. Apart from these strictures--and especially if compared with the color plates--the monochrome reproductions of *NT* 1-537 serve their major purpose well enough. They will act as a valuable aid to memory for all those who have seen the originals, and--as a "simile" of the "figures, landscape, costume, accessory" of Blake's designs--they will allow for iconographic research as well as, say, for a study of recurrent motifs among Blake's figures.

It is this main section of the edition which also comes closest to keeping up with its claim to be "a necessary response to the wide and increasing modern interest in all of Blake's works and to the exacting inclusiveness of a critical scholarship which demands easy access and frequent reference to the artist's entire *oeuvre*" (p. vii). And indeed, as regards "easy access," the Clarendon edition has one real advantage even over the originals at the British Museum. The latter are mounted in an annoying and disadvantageous manner between heavy perspex screens which, however, proved to be necessary for their protection. Also, it takes approximately a week to go through the whole series box by box at the Print Room, and this does not allow for careful examination of more than a small portion of the watercolors. Usually students are asked to have only one box on their table at a time, and in consequence it becomes extremely wearisome to both staff and visitor if one wants to compare a design from Night VIII with another from Night II, and so on. For a wide range of possible questions such comparison has been enormously facilitated by the publication of the *Complete Edition*.

The Color Plates

In the same large format as the monochrome plates, almost 15% of the watercolors are reproduced for a second time in "full colour." For all those who once had a chance to study the originals, this will be the most disappointing part of the present publication. Many readers are likely to disagree with me if I say that ten high-quality color plates, equal to those in Keynes's 1927 edition, would have

done more for our understanding of Blake's coloring in the *NT* series than such a "large proportion of full-colour plates" (p. vii) of a more than questionable standard. It is indeed much easier to demonstrate the range of possibilities in color composition that Blake made use of in this series by a large number of examples. But what--except misleading--are all these examples good for if only a small portion of the seventy-eight color reproductions gives at least a fair impression of what the originals look like? And yet this is an idle question. We will have to work with the edition as it is, and all that is to be done *post festum* is to list the major discrepancies between the original designs and their reproductions. This may serve as a warning and--at best--as a corrective for those who are forced to base their judgment on what is to be gleaned from the present publication.

Technically speaking, Blake's *NT* designs are basically pen and ink drawings which have been tinted with watercolors. These are merely added to outline drawings, indicating once more that color is certainly not at the structural and conceptual center of Blake's artistic work. Yet secondary importance remains importance still, and it is evident even from such miserable reproductions that the coloring is essential for elucidating the idea which is captured in the drawing.

The range of colors used by Blake for his *NT* illustrations is in itself restricted. First there is a dominance of bright blues, yellows and greens for the early Nights. Though rose color is frequently employed, genuine red is relatively rare except for being used in the carnation. From Night VII onwards, Blake's palette darkens considerably; there are stronger contrasts between light and dark areas in the designs which now also include much larger quantities of red.¹¹ Parts of the picture area are often left untouched so that the white of the paper may figure as clouds in a sky background or may represent light. Due to the toned paper employed for their printing, this white has mostly been lost in the color reproductions. There it is often transferred into a smudgy pink or ochre, giving the impression of heavy foxing or of some strange underpainting which is alien to the originals (see reprod. from *NT* 151). Blake's gray and black here tend to reproduce as a dark and dense brown, or are changed to a pale or a dark umber (see reprod. from *NT* 78, 125, 156, 166, 284, 324, 344, 410, 415, 446, 466). Gray may even be deformed into a dark mauve (see reprod. from *NT* 34). The flesh colors, male and female, either lose most of their vivid aspects (see reprod. from *NT* 6, 156, etc.), or, to the contrary, show too much of pink (see reprod. from *NT* 117). The brilliance and intensity of the varied hues of green have suffered most; they are lost almost completely in the reproduction from *NT* 30, they are much darkened in the reproduction from *NT* 111, or they are boiled down and reduced to a common denominator as in the reproductions from *NT* 6, 24, 36, 78, 143, 158, 234, 296, 430, and 442. Brown--though of subordinate importance, if present at all in the watercolors--often gains dominance in the reproductions (for examples of the introduction of brown which is absent from the original design and for a brownish overall tinge akin to a nine-

teenth-century gallery varnish, see reprod. from *NT* 17, 68, 312, 338, 378, 410, 446). The bright, translucent washes of blue and yellow are strongly affected by the color of the "ground," the creamy tinge of the printing paper; they lose much of their brilliance and depth, and in some places in the reproductions yellow or blue are omitted altogether (see especially reprod. from *NT* 34, 91, 143, 345, 408). Yellow may reproduce as an almost golden brown, as beige or ochre (see reprod. from *NT* 111 and 284); that the more specific and often used quality of lemon loses its tendency towards bright green, but may gain a tendency towards yolk of egg, gold, or orange is to be seen in other examples (see reprod. from *NT* 6, 135, 170, 203, 287, 408). Blake's reds, ranging from carmine and cinnabar to salmon color, participate in the general loss of intensity and variety of hues which sadly characterizes the color plates. They reproduce too dark and dense, and they are thus brought close to a reddish brown which is lacking from the originals (see reprod. from *NT* 107, 125, 156, 345).

If just one color comes off wrong from a reproduction, this causes a distortion in the whole of the color composition which is unmendable. So in the end we are left with only a small porportion of full-color plates that actually meet with the requirements of a critical scholarship. (For the few good ones see reprod. from *NT* 87, 164, 170 [good for the greens], 339, 352, 361, 471.) And it is no real consolation that the remaining plates in the second volume are those which are the most satisfactory. At approximately 70% of the original size they reproduce the proofs, the finished engravings, and the complete text of the printed edition of 1797. The originals in this case being in a monochrome medium themselves, the reproduction must have caused comparatively few problems for the printer.

The Introductory Essay

Until the publication of the volumes of commentary, the scholarly apparatus of the *Complete Edition* of Blake's *NT* illustrations is limited to the captions, a foreword, and an introductory essay. The captions identify the watercolors by their standardized numbers (*NT* 1-537).¹² They also cite the page number for the respective Night, and the numbers of the lines which were illustrated by Blake. A set of symbols serves to distinguish the markings of lines, and if a design has been engraved for the 1797 edition, a reference to the engraving is included as well. Erdman's foreword, dated August 1977, is interesting mostly as an advertisement for the forthcoming volumes of commentary. Readers are told that the "purpose and uses of a commentary will be made manifest when it appears," and are asked (in 1977, or in 1980?) their "patience for another year or two" (p. vii). There can be no arguing about that. The coordinating editor's claim, however, "that commentary is even more necessary for the apparently simple pictures than for those where difficulty and irony insistently confront us" (p. viii), is a paradox which in due time will have to be put to the proof.

Finally, there is the introduction which--apart from offering a valid and useful compilation of all the external sources and data connected with Blake's *NT* project--makes an independent contribution to our knowledge of the history and development of these designs. In the first of the five chapters of this essay, the editors describe the "Occasion" which led to the production of the watercolors. They deal with the neglect of Young's poem and Blake's illustrations in twentieth-century scholarship, and claim that today Young may be rehabilitated if only read through these illuminations of his poetry (see p. 3). Then, quoting from the Farington Diary, Ann Flaxman's letters, the Prospectus, and the Advertisement for the 1797 edition, the outward circumstances of Edwards's commission are described.¹³ Though there is some truly Blakean bias, and even some twisting of the evidence,¹⁴ these pages are on the whole a sound recapitulation of all that is presently known about the history of the production of the watercolors, and of Blake's relations with Edwards. For the first time, the editors offer a balanced account of the publisher's role and his "personal enthusiasm for the project" (p. 5). Richard Edwards emerges almost triumphantly as a sort of anti-Cromek, and this view is more convincing to me than Bentley's earlier stance, who could see in the Advertisement nothing but "a strange piece of puffing."¹⁵

As regards the "Reception of the Engraved Edition," it remains conjectural whether or not it really "had a considerable sale" (p. 7). The authors themselves think it "probable" that the print run was limited to no more than 200 copies, and even if these were actually sold within the next ten years, it is rather an exaggeration to say the sale had been "considerable."¹⁶ The following pages are occupied by an account of the history and ownerships of the watercolors from the time of their completion onwards (pp. 7-8). The editors' sources for these paragraphs have been printed previously in *Blake Records* and Keynes's *Blake Studies*.

Though including sections on the "Completion of the Series" and "A Frontispiece for Each Volume," the chapter on the "Preparation and Production" of the 537 watercolors is merely 3 1/2 pages long (pp. 10-13). These contain information on the Whatman drawing paper which was employed by the artist, on the inlaying and framing of the pages of Young's text, on the masking of the latter before application of the colors, on the markings of lines which were to serve as a starting point for the illustrations, on Blake's processes from underdrawing to coloring, and on the *pentimenti* and the problem of the preliminary sketches. Grant, Rose, and Tolley assume the possibility that at least some of the water colors were finished "only while [Blake was] making the plates," and that "he may easily be supposed to have given the final touches to some of them [i.e. the water color designs] only in order to perfect them as a complete series" (p. 11) even after any view of publishing a sequel to the 1797 edition of *Nights I-IV* had ceased to exist. This I believe to be particularly important because previously the *NT* water colors have often been considered as mere preparatory drawings for the engravings. For their first owner, however, they may well have held the status of an independent and self-sufficient work

of art. The engravings then, which were to publish only a selection of the entire series of designs (be it 150, or even 200 plates), would have to be placed rather with the large reproductive engravings after the paintings from Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery, or those initially planned by Fuseli for his Milton Gallery,¹⁷ than to be considered the sole and *prima causa* for Blake's sequence of the 537 water colors. There was of course a strong economic interest behind all the Gallery schemes of the day. The point I want to make, however, is that this economic interest in the 1790s was ideologically linked with the idea of establishing a British school of history painting, and that both Blake and Edwards may have thought of the *NT* designs as their personal contribution to its realization. To prepare a series of engravings, pencil drawings or monochrome wash drawings would have been completely sufficient, and there certainly would have been no need for mounting the pages of a precious copy of Young's *NT* which later was said to have been the author's own (see pp. 8 and 9). The careful outlining and coloring of these designs then may well accord to an additional, or rather the first part of Edwards' commission, comparable only to that from Flaxman for the similar Gray series.¹⁸ This view is also corroborated by what the authors have to report about the reception of the watercolors which in "any event. . . indicates considerable respect on Edwards's part for both the poetry of Young, and the drawings of Blake" (p. 11).¹⁹

Speculations about the designing and the function of *NT* 1 (31E) and about Edwards' printing schedule (pp. 12-13) lead on to the next section. This is devoted to the "Engravings," and here we learn about the difficulties with correct positioning of the plates and overprinting of the text panels in the 1797 edition (pp. 13-14), problems which in a few cases even made a "cropping of figures" unavoidable, "as in 3E (*NT* 14), for example" (p. 14). The penciled page numbers on some of the so-called "private proofs" from the collection of Philip Hofer are interpreted as an unsuccessful attempt to cope with those problems caused by "the tight economy of space required by the printed pages of text" (p. 14). Then, the often complicated development of the forty-three designs that were engraved for the edition of 1797 is presented in a "Table of Engraved Designs" (pp. 17-35). With the private proofs included which "only now [have been] made available for study" (p. 15), this account of all the variant states supplements and up-dates Easson and Essick's bibliographical notes for the same set of engravings.²⁰ The publication of the Hofer private proofs with their remarks certainly adds a new facet to what we know about Blake as print maker, and it is only in a few cases that the usefulness of this "Table" may be lessened by some minor descriptive errors.²¹

The chapter on "The Frontispieces" (*NT* 1 and 264) opens with a consideration of "the symbolic dramatic effect achieved by the placing of the vision of the Rising Christ in the fourth title-page of the engraved edition" (p. 35). Then, the title pages supplied for each of the four *Nights* in the 1797 edition are discussed as a sequence of designs, one relating to the others. From the following interpretation of the function of *NT* 1 and *NT* 264

we can get a foretaste of what is to be expected from the commentary. "One of the purposes of our commentary will be to make explicit some of the tensions of interpretation and contradiction that play in the reader-viewer's response to Young's 'parson'd' pages and Blake's visionary pictures. Practically speaking, the question will generally be how and in what ways the designs, singly and cumulatively, manage simultaneously (or with lapses) to be faithful to the text of Young and true to the poetic and prophetic genius of Blake" (p. 39). This question has a venerable tradition in the history of Blake scholarship; it was much the same sort of question which--*grosso modo*--was central in Wicksteed's studies of the *Job* illustrations, in Roe's interpretations of Blake's Dante, and in many of the more recent studies of Blake's response to Milton. Ultimately, it might be traced back to Blake himself, notably to his *Milton: A Poem* (where, however, it resulted in poetry, not criticism). The task which Professors Rose, Tolley, and Grant have set themselves, will certainly require a method to proceed with the utmost caution against over-interpretation, and it is to be hoped that they will remain aware of their own warning against the dangers of mere "theorizing about . . . intended symbolism[s]" (p. 17). The present writer, however, already feels at a loss if he is supposed to judge the critical value of euphoria--as in the following statements about the resurrection scene in NT 264: "Instead of fixing the reader with the direct eye of Truth [a reference to NT 156 (43E)], his [i.e. Christ's] upcast eyes direct the viewer to the above which is within, the home of intelligible meaning. The overcast is opened, not by effort, but by an explosion that is a celebration. The outstretched hands that need no longer push the clouds apart [as in NT 1 (31E)], by the piercing light that replaces darkness in all directions; opened and made one. The hands simultaneously display to doubters the proof that Jesus *is* the human family; as he suffered for all, he can offer the infinite expanse to all, and even prepare to offer the handclasp of Friendship. Blake never quite depicts this moment of fraternity . . ." (pp. 38-39). Such free flow of pseudo-Blakean associations (or should I say "illuminations"?)--which, if only translated into less ecstatic phrasing, are truisms as relevant for a painting of the resurrection by, for example, Sebastiano Ricci as for Blake's NT 264--must be controlled by a more modest inspection of those levels of pictorial meaning which are closer to the graphic surface of the illustrations and closer to the eye of their beholder.²²

In general, it seems problematic to me, for instance, to "explain" a design in NT by reference to some similarity in the artist's much later illuminations in *Jerusalem*. Blake was certainly convinced that the full meaning of one of his pictures was to be discovered without reference to his other productions (outside a given series), much less to those which had not yet been executed. His claim to unity in a (single) work of art ought to be taken seriously when attempting an interpretation, and it does assign to all comparisons a rather limited significance. Blake's pictorial language is based--and this is especially true of the NT designs²³--on a restricted "alphabet" of human postures. These,

however, allow for an almost unlimited number of combinations. While we can see that one and the same gesture is used throughout Blake's *oeuvre*, and often with the most contradictory implications, it is the combinations which count for an adequate understanding because only they determine the meaning of the otherwise isolated letters of this alphabet. A comparison, then, which takes into account just one element of a picture, for example the gesture of the outspread arms, remains arbitrary and inconclusive--it leads nowhere.²⁴

Pages 39-51 describe and reproduce eleven "drawings" which "at least bear a closer resemblance to particular *Night Thoughts* designs than they do to other finished Blake pictures" (p. 39). The water-color copy of NT 11, painted on a printed leaf of vellum (Henry E. Huntington Library; fig. 1, p. 41), is now no longer ascribed to Blake, and much doubt is cast on the authenticity of the drawing of "Timon" which is related to NT 115 (Yale University Library; fig. 5, pp. 43-45).²⁵ The faint iconographic connection between the emblem drawing on page 42 of the *Notebook* and NT 26 is described as the relation between a "basic design" and its "considerable amplification" (p. 41; fig. 2). With this drawing included, it is surprising that no mention is made, for example, of the resemblance between the design for NT 61 and the emblem drawing on page 17 of the *Notebook*, both representing the encounter of a youthful traveler with Death, who is waiting for him--once as a shrouded skeleton, and then as the usual white-bearded figure in NT--in a doorway. Figure 3 reproduces the fifth plate from "Series a" of *There is No Natural Religion*. Though one may be surprised to find a relief etching among what is said to be a group of "Drawings,"²⁶ no one will fail to recognize its connection with NT 27 (7E). But readers will probably wonder why, for example, the similar connection between the second plate of "The Little Black Boy" and NT 378 is omitted from this list. Next comes a labored interpretation of the supposed symbolic content of the amalgamation of the two superimposed pencil drawings on the sheet which is reproduced as figure 4 (Victoria and Albert Museum). This shows the back-view of a figure with arms raised at acute angles which has been drawn over a faint, yet more elaborate drawing of a seated female looking to the right. The latter bears some resemblance to "Night" in NT 103, and the figure seen from behind is connected by the editors with Christ as he appears in NT 127. The distinct stylistic differences between the first and rather finished drawing--which appears to be a *pentimento* that Blake did not care to erase before using the same sheet of paper for the second time--and the rough sketch which he drew over it at an apparently much faster speed are passed over without mentioning. It is of course difficult to calculate the lapse of time between the first and the re-use of the paper; it should have been noted, however, that stylistically the superimposed figure is much closer to the design on the verso of the sheet ("An Angel Taking a Huge Stride among the Stars") than to the underlying drawing of "Night."²⁷ This might have warned against an interpretation which to me appears to be a misconstruction of Blake's workshop practice. If the authors say that this combination of the two "states" of the drawing suggests "that

the first picture was meant to be blocked out" (p. 42) by the second, if they elaborate on this fascinating, but rather too brainy idea by asserting that "Christ in the second drawing would be intervening to stop Night from telling all she has learned" (p. 43), they are guilty of exactly that sort of "theorizing about [the] intended symbolism" (p. 17) which they had promised to refrain from.²⁸

The discussion of the "Timon" drawing at Yale (fig. 5) is interesting mostly for the "rule" it serves to establish; "as a rule Blake's successive versions of a subject are superior, in invention at least, to their predecessors" (p. 45).²⁹ But what about the exceptions to the rule? To give just one example, one may say that Blake's "Nebuchadnezzar" in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* is--if isolated from its context in the illuminated book--inferior to its successor, the large color print of c. 1795; so far the editors' rule is easily verified. And yet, if one looks at NT 299, the third version of the same subject, I cannot accept the idea that "in invention at least" this has to be considered the superior treatment. Again, when comparing NT 117 (32E) with the so-called "Nimrod" drawing (Nelson Gallery/Atkins Museum of Fine Arts; fig. 6), the editors' criteria for artistic quality prove to be disputable. There certainly ought to be some definition of "progression" (p. 46) in art, and a design ought first to be properly described before one assigns to it a higher or a lower rank.³⁰ Otherwise we will end up with possibly inspired but nonetheless apodictical statements which are useless for the "critical scholarship" that this publication is supposed to facilitate. The authors' zeal for their "rule" must underlie their comparison of NT 196 to a related drawing from the Cleveland Museum of Art (fig. 7). The arguments which are supplied for judging the water color the "superior" design border on the ridiculous. How can the lack of detail and precision in NT 196 be seriously understood as a gain over the pencil drawing "in visual and symbolic statement" (p. 47)? Professors Rose, Grant, Tolley observe for themselves that NT 196 is a mirror-image of the drawing, and though they offer no explanation for this reversal they remain in the affirmative about its being "most evidently a preliminary drawing" (p. 47). Their statement about the artist's "broadening [of] the symbolic application" in the watercolor by means of what is called "small revisions" (p. 47) seems a mystification of Blake's art and of his methods of designing, quite contrary to what he had to say about them himself. The Cleveland drawing is definitely superior to NT 196 in delineation and modeling, and it is certainly the more convincing, though less *outré*, variant of the subject. But regardless whether one accepts this view of the drawing's superiority over NT 196, or prefers to think of it as the preliminary and, "in consequence," the inferior design, this cannot supply a decisive clue for the exact dating of the drawing as the authors believe.

The chapter ends with a consideration of some early sketches--including the four versions of "The Warring Angels"--which were employed for the composition of NT 372, 452, and 510 (see figs. 9-11). Though some speculations about "Blake's conjectural repertoire portfolio" (p. 50, see also pp. 48 and

51) are brought forward with ever-growing confidence in its former existence, the overall result of this search for "Preliminary and Related Drawings" is a negative one. Even if all the designs that are represented in this listing are accepted as preparatory for designs among the NT watercolors, their quantitative disproportion would still confirm what the editors let us know beforehand: "Almost no evidence survives of preliminary sketches or drawings; yet he [i.e. Blake] may well have made and discarded many" (p. 10). Of course we cannot know how many of Blake's preparatory sketches have been lost; however, the numerous erasures and corrections in the underdrawing of the water colors and, in fact, the very weakness of the drawing itself which is to be seen rather often even in the finished designs (see, e.g., the legs of the spinning-wheel table in NT 294) seem to indicate that he did not invest the same amount of work in the conception and execution of this enormous and--due to the fixed format and the repetition of much subject matter in the poem itself--necessarily tiresome series as he did in his best work.³¹

The remaining pages of the introduction are entirely concerned with the intricacies of the colored version of the engravings and include a new census of twenty-two of the known examples.³² Based on a first-hand examination of all these colored copies, this account supersedes the earlier compilations of Moss and Bentley.³³ Whereas in c. 1942 Moss still devoted much speculation to the identity of the colorists (preferably Blake or his wife), Grant, Rose, and Tolley set this straight by pointing out that any statement "as to when or by whom a particular copy was coloured must be regarded as inferential rather than factual" (p. 53), though they do not exclude the possibility that Blake colored one or more model copies.³⁴ The authors describe and distinguish three basic schemes or "types" of coloring (see p. 53), with fifteen copies belonging to the first, six to the second, and just one copy to the third type (which--until further copies with similar coloring happen to turn up--cannot be considered as a proper "type," but rather has to be regarded as a unique exception³⁵). The most important distinction between the three groups is that the figure of Death in plate 1E wears a white robe in copies of type I, a green robe in copies of type II, and a gray robe in the type-III copy. A further subdivision of the second group is based not on a particular difference in coloring, but on the observation that, for two of the copies, an earlier state of plate 11E, and, for the four remaining copies in this group as well as all the other colored copies, a later state has been used. There is, in any case, "a caution against assuming that the family characteristics [of the three types] are self evident" (p. 54). A list of thirteen "Major Variations" follows (pp. 54-55), and three of these--the two states of plate 11, the J C ligature which the editors have discovered in several of the colored copies, and the so-called "grotesque" coloring of some of the designs in the first group--are discussed at length on the succeeding pages. All the empirical information presented in this section is new, yet so far these observations rather serve to introduce "further complication" (p. 57) than to clarify the matter. This, of course, is

not to be blamed on the editors, who deserve our admiration for their close scrutiny of the copies.

The "Need for a New Census" of the colored copies, its coding system, and the reasons for the particular sequence of copies which is chosen here are explained on pages 60-62. The identification of each copy by the combination of roman and arabic numerals is meant as a source of information in itself.³⁶ The three "types" of coloring are referred to by the roman numerals I-III, and while the capital letters A and B mark the subdivision of type II, the arabic numerals attempt to group various copies according to some other characteristics they have in common.³⁷ This system has certain advantages over the alphabetization of copies which is so well known from the bibliographies of Sir Geoffrey Keynes and G. E. Bentley, Jr. A designation like "IIB-3" will translate to the initiated as "Green Death type of coloring: plate 11 in final state: Explanation sheet following front matter," whereas "Copy H" carries none of these data. I am afraid, however, that when more copies come to light and need to be fitted in, this advantage of the new coding system will soon be lost. For example, there simply is no room for another copy of the White Death type, with the explanations following page [96] in the copy's proper place, that is between Copy I-7 (which is the last of the White Death group with the explanations bound at the end of the book) and Copy I-8 (which is the first copy of the same group that has the explanations following the advertisement). The introduction of capital letters following the arabic numerals will be necessary in this case, and beside the growing complicatedness of the copy designation there is a limit to even that sort of rationalization (imagine a sequence like I-6, I-6A, I-6B, I-6AA, etc.). So in ten years' time all this fuss about a new system of copy identifications will probably appear as much ado about nothing.

While the two untraced copies from Bentley's list (Copies G and T) are excluded from the new census--which is keyed to color schemes and does not allow for the insertion of copies which are not available for inspection--four previously unknown colored copies of the edition of 1797 have here been fully documented for the first time (Copies I-7, I-10, I-15, III-1).³⁸ To establish the provenances of some of the copies must have been extremely difficult. This is illustrated by the fact that no less than three copies (I-7, I-12, I-14) are said to have belonged, at one time or the other, to just one collector, A. Edward Newton.³⁹ Though--in the authors' own words--"there are likely to be errors" (p. 62) in the lists of ownerships which they provide, they have dealt admirably with this task. Also, the minute descriptions of the bindings, page sizes, and collations which are supplied for each copy leave nothing to be desired. Like the table of engraved designs, this census is another piece of competent work.

At the end of the introductory essay readers will find a "Checklist of Studies and Reproductions" with short commentaries for many of the ninety-six entries (pp. 72-84). A classed bibliography like this, arranged chronologically, is useful primarily

because it reflects something of the history of the reception of the *NT* illustrations in Blake criticism. This checklist, like all such lists, does not really include "every" relevant "published study" as the compilers claim (see p. 72). But just the same the list certainly does facilitate research on Blake's *NT*, as I have found myself when preparing this review.

At this point, and before an attempt is made to sum up the results, a word on book production may be in order. A large format type face which is as legible as it is well designed has been employed for the printing of the text, and the lavish layout of the introduction leaves those beautiful wide margins to which we are no longer accustomed. The disastrous effect of the creamy paper for pictorial printing has been noted above, but the same paper is excellent for the text. Misprints are few, and only the binding of these volumes might not have been designed for such heavy stuff.⁴⁰ Clarendon Press has possibly been the most active and important publisher for Blake books in recent years, and it hardly needs to be mentioned that they have produced books which show both "the full elaboration of colour-printing" and the "accuracy [of] fine-screen offset lithography" in plain black and white.⁴¹ All the same it is to be regretted that the results achieved in the quality of reproduction for the first complete edition of William Blake's *NT* will not figure as a page of glory in the annals of this distinguished firm.

The Complaint

The introductory essay, as a whole, does not really introduce the reader to the 537 watercolors which--thus at least I suspected--are its designated object. Instead, the essay rather serves to trace the development of the forty-three engravings for Young's *NT*. Though the basic information on the outward circumstances of the production of the water color designs, on their subsequent history, and on their preservation is all there, a curious disproportion caused most of the text to be occupied with bibliographic material relating to the engraved version of the designs.⁴² Though no doubt much is added here to our knowledge, it is a bit of a disappointment if, after all these years of study on the editors' side, and after all these years of waiting on the side of their Blakean audience, we are still left with the more important questions concerning the iconology, style, and aesthetic achievement of this series of illustrations. By the time the commentary appears in print, all this may eventually be forgotten, and yet I maintain that much of what has now been published under the misleading title of an introduction would have made a splendid appendix. It offers answers to the sort of chalcographic questions which the student of the water color designs and the general reader are likely to ask not in the first but in the last place.

That this edition will nevertheless become a tool of major importance for the study of Blake's art and its symbolic meaning is beyond doubt, and I hope that the very copiousness of my notes on both text and plates of the *Complete Edition* will convey

something of this importance. At the same time I firmly believe that an irretrievable chance has been wasted as regards the overall quality, the potential usefulness, and the reliability of this tool. The editors deserve our gratitude for finally making available to a larger public these riches which were formerly hidden away in the unwieldy boxes at the British Museum Print Room. Yet gratitude is mingled with resentment for the editors' and publisher's sheer carelessness. As has been demonstrated above, it is hard to believe that any serious and responsible attempt has been made to properly check the proofs of the reproductions against the originals while seeing these volumes through the press.⁴³ Even today their production has been very costly; it is self-evident that in all likelihood a publication project of this scope for the *NT* series will not likely be possible again for at least half a century. During this time Blake scholars will have to work with this edition or none at all, and I cannot do otherwise than blame those who did not see to it that libraries and prospective private buyers get the very best that is to be achieved with modern printing techniques. More than 180 years after the initial publication of Edwards's selection from the complete series, Blake's illustrations for Edward Young's *Night Thoughts* remain ill-fated, and this to an extent they certainly do not deserve.⁴⁴

⁸ In the Clarendon edition one almost has to know beforehand about, for example, the presence of the frightened and the sleeping warrior in the resurrection scene of *NT* 264; otherwise one will be at pains to interpret the fragmentary traces of their outlines in the monochrome reproduction. The same design in Geoffrey Keynes, ed., *William Blake: Illustrations to Young's 'Night Thoughts'* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, for the Fogg Museum of Art, 1927) has all the detail reproduced to perfection. Yet of course the Fogg publication as well as the set of five plates from the *NT* water colors included in Keynes' *Blake Studies* (pls. 15-19) were reproduced by the collotype process, a printing technique which progress has by now almost put beyond price for publishers and their customers.

⁹ I take it for granted that the editors did not attempt to create an independent work of art, but wanted to supply us with the most reliable "copy" that is possible; consequently I hope that no one will refer me to what Blake had to say about uniformity and "intermeasurability," or to Morris Eaves' excellent article on the "Artistic Machine" (*PMLA*, 92 [1977], 903-27).

¹⁰ The example of *NT* 264 has been quoted above; for further evidence I may refer to Lorenzo-Belshazzar's left arm in *NT* 60, which in the reproduction is almost lost from sight under heavy blackish shading; this, as well as the upper part of the warning spirit's left arm, are shaded with a gray wash but are perfectly clear in the original water color. Because of this kind of unreliability the reproductions--if not checked against the originals--may easily lend themselves to over-interpretation. *NT* 154 illustrates the lines "Till One [i.e. Death] calls Him, who varies not his Call, / But holds him [i.e. Earth's happiest Man] fast, in Chains of Darkness bound." Blake shows the Urizenic figure of Death, crouching behind his chained victim. On the basis of the reproduction one might feel tempted to describe the setting of this scene as a cave, similar to those in *Gates* 3, or *Urizen* 9--the watercolor, however, simply has unmodulated gray washes for a background screen which do not indicate any sort of measurable space or recession at all.

¹¹ On p. 10 of the introduction the editors observe that there "are no great differences in style from *Night* the First to *Night* the Ninth; the increasing frequency of stronger hues in the later *Nights* seems calculatedly dramatic."

¹² This system of identification has been in general use from the late 1960s onwards; it now has also been adopted for the brief entries for each design in Martin Butlin, *The Paintings and Drawings of William Blake*, vol. 1 (New Haven, Conn. and London: Yale University Press, for the Paul Mellon Center for Studies in British Art, 1981), no. 330, pp. 178-253. The system for numbering the water colors and the engravings, each by a series straight through from *NT* 1 to *NT* 537, and from 1E to 43E, and their combined use in references like *NT* 1(31E), or 31E(*NT* 1) respectively, is explained on p. xv.

¹³ No new documentary evidence seems to have surfaced; thus, these pages had to repeat the information which was previously available from Sir Geoffrey Keynes's authoritative essay in his *Blake Studies*, pp. 50-58, and from Bentley's *Blake Records*, passim. The letters from Ann Flaxman, however, previously believed to have been written some time in 1797, are now convincingly predicated c. "16 March 1796" (see p. 4 and p. 85, n. 4).

¹⁴ The motive here seems to be simply to put Blake in the most favorable light when, e.g., Farington is scorned as "an unsuccessful painter," just because he "was an unsympathetic witness" (p. 4) who did not appreciate Blake's work. As secretary to the Royal Academy Farington was socially much more successful than Blake himself, and some arguments concerning Farington's paintings are required to justify such a rash verdict which--in any case--will remain an unnecessary idiosyncrasy and rather out of place in this context. Also, we cannot know whether or not "Farington made nonsense of what must have been an effort by Fuseli to explain what was [positively] special about Blake's use of imagination" (p. 4). It must not; after all, Fuseli on the very same occasion is reported saying that "Blake has something of madness abt. him." This sentence, however, is not quoted by Grant, Rose, and Tolley. See *The Diary of Joseph Farington*, ed. Kenneth Garlick and Angus D. Macintyre, vol. 2 (New Haven, Conn. and London: Yale University Press, for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 1978), p. 589. There is another "probable" conjecture concerning Fuseli on p. 9, and again, the editors' evidence is somewhat shallow.

¹⁵ Bentley, *Blake Records*, p. 57. See also p. 87, n. 13 in the present publication, where Bentley's reading of Edwards's text is correctly criticized as being "rather selective."

¹ [Edward Bulwer-Lytton], "Conversation with an Ambitious Student in Ill Health," *New Monthly Magazine*, 29 (1830), 519; here quoted from the reprint in G. E. Bentley, Jr., ed., *Blake Records* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), p. 402.

² Alexander Gilchrist, *Life of William Blake*, vol. 1 (London and Cambridge: Macmillan, 1863), pp. 140, 143, and 141; 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1880 [which in vol. 2 adds Shields' important descriptions of the *NT* water colors]), pp. 137, 140; 4th ed., ed. Ruthven Todd (London and New York: J. M. Dent and E. P. Dutton, 1942), pp. 117, 120, and 117-18. Whereas Gilchrist also had many things to say in favor of the designs, William Bell Scott simply found them "so completely inferior [to the *Grave* illustrations] that they had no attractions." See the *Autobiographical Notes of the Life of William Bell Scott*, ed. W. Minto, vol. 1 (London, 1892), p. 21, here quoted from *Blake Records*, p. 193.

³ Bindman's discussion of the series in his *Blake as an Artist* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1977), pp. 109-12, represents an attempt to weigh fairly Blake's achievement against the "staleness and repetition" which are considered as an "inevitable" effect of the very nature of Edwards's commission.

⁴ Hershel M. Margoliouth, "Blake's Drawings for Young's 'Night Thoughts'," *The Review of English Studies*, n.s. 5 (1954), 54.

⁵ Morton D. Paley, "Blake's 'Night Thoughts': An Exploration of the Fallen World," in *William Blake: Essays for S. Foster Damon*, ed. Alvin H. Rosenfeld (Providence, R. I.: Brown University Press, 1969), p. 133.

⁶ David V. Erdman, *Blake: Prophet Against Empire*, 2nd rev. ed. (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1969), p. 287, n. 14. Other early announcements of the *NT* edition include the same author's "Blake 1757-1827," in *English Poetry: Select Bibliographical Guides*, ed. A. E. Dyson (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 147, and John E. Grant, "Envisioning the First 'Night Thoughts'," in *Blake's Visionary Forms Dramatic*, ed. David V. Erdman and John E. Grant (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1970), p. 304, n. 2.

⁷ See Geoffrey Keynes, *Blake Studies*, 2nd enl. ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971). It needs no stressing, I suppose, that the use of glossy coated paper would have produced even worse results; also, the choice of paper may well have been dictated by the economics of modern book production outside the control of the editors.

¹⁶ I ought to point out, however, that the first printing of Flaxman's *Hesiod* in 1817 had also been limited to 200 copies only, and that eighteen of these were still unsold in 1838. See G. E. Bentley, Jr., *The Early Engravings of Flaxman's Classical Designs: A Bibliographical Study* (New York: NYPL, 1964), pp. 54-56.

¹⁷ For Fuseli's plan to have his Milton paintings published in a series of engravings which were to be executed by Sharpe and Bartolozzi, see Gert Schiff, *Johann Heinrich Füssli's Milton-Galerie* (Zurich and Stuttgart: Fretz & Wasmuth, 1963), pp. 12-13.

¹⁸ The water colors for Blake's *Job* and Dante illustrations are no counter-evidence. Though both eventually resulted in a series of engravings, it has to be remembered that the first set of paintings for *Job* had been executed without any view toward their publication, and that the Dante watercolors differ markedly from the NT designs in both their often sketchlike style of drawing and their often unfinished coloring.

¹⁹ Though David Erdman describes the series as a "vast gallery of illuminative art" (p. vii), and though the editors seem to be aware of some sort of connection between the NT designs and the various Shakespeare and Milton galleries (see p. 7), they prefer the view that the "decision to prepare the watercolours as a self-sufficient *opus*" (p. 12) was an afterthought and dates from a later period than the original commission.

²⁰ See Roger R. Easson and Robert N. Essick, *William Blake: Book Illustrator*, vol. 1 (Normal, Ill.: American Blake Foundation, 1972), pp. 15-27. Professors Rose, Tolley, and Grant also relied largely on Easson and Essick's account of the printing process (see pp. 88, n. 29 and 89, n. 43); with respect to the size of the printing paper the information in G. E. Bentley, Jr., "Young's 'Night Thoughts'" (London: R. Edwards, 1977): *A New Unillustrated State*, *Blake*, 14 (1980), 35, will now have to be taken into consideration.

²¹ Thus, I see simply parallel lines, but no "cross-hatching in the shadow below Death's toes" (p. 19) in 4E; and it is certainly wrong to describe the king "under the outstretched foot of Death" in NT 20 as having been "decapitated" (p. 19). In the watercolor the figure's head is merely seen foreshortened and from below so that only the outline of the king's chin shows; much the same contour is employed for a second time in NT 20 for the head of the other king who is seen from above. Obviously, Blake made use of the device of counter-, or mirror-images, a practice well known from Quattrocento paintings (see, e.g., the archers in the 1475 San Sebastiano altarpiece at the National Gallery in London [inv. no. 292], which is traditionally attributed to Antonio and Piero del Pollaiuolo). Blake's departure from his water color design in the final engraving (5E) does not "reflect an inclination toward less provocative designs" (p. 13), but rather an attempt to make his image more easily recognizable in all its details. The editors' fantastic interpretation of the water color proves that he was right in this decision.

²² One such modest consideration--which in fact I expect from Tolley's future comments on the watercolor--would have been a reference to the typological connection between the self-sacrifice of Samson in the Old and of Christ in the New Testament while discussing the final design (NT 537) in the context of the Christologic frontispieces (NT 1 and NT 264). This would seem more relevant to an understanding of Blake's meaning than the *aperçu* phrase about Samson's broken pillars which "can now represent the conventional fame on which Blake [involuntarily!] turned his back" (p. 39).

²³ See the introductory quotation from Gilchrist's *Life*, which, I think, is not without some justification.

²⁴ For an example, see pp. 90, n. 58 and 47 (fig. 8) where NT 264 is compared with the last plate in *All Religions are One*, probably just because the latter design is considered as an early appearance of the motif of the outspread arms in Blake's *oeuvre*.

²⁵ Martin Butlin, too, "finds it very difficult to see Blake's hand" in both these works; see Butlin, vol. 1, nos. 334 and 785, pp. 254-55 and 542-43.

²⁶ Another relief etching is reproduced as fig. 8: plate 10 from *All Religions are One*, which is said to be the model for NT 264; see note 24, above.

²⁷ See Butlin, vol. 1, no. 820r&v, pp. 591-92.

²⁸ An uneraser *pentimento* is by definition a phenomenon which indicates that the respective drawing is not a finished, self-contained work of art; on the contrary, such drawings document various stages in the development of one or possibly various *conceits* all at a time. The authors allot symbolic weight to what appears to me an accidental concurrence of sketches, and it becomes clear at this point how much Blake studies would profit from a consideration of such stimulating new approaches toward descriptive and terminological precision and a critical understanding of the act of drawing as Alexander Perrig's *Michelangelo Studien I: Michelangelo und die Zeichnungswissenschaft--Ein methodologischer Versuch* (Frankfurt am Main and Bern: Peter & Herbert Lang, 1976 ["Kunstwissenschaftliche Studien," vol. 1]).

²⁹ In passing it ought to be mentioned that Blake claimed the unity of vision and execution for his works; this unity is not respected by the authors who are, it seems, ready to isolate what they call "invention" from the execution of a design.

³⁰ The "mighty hunter" in Blake's "Let Loose the Dogs of War" is said to be "looking back . . . to cheer on his untethered single reserve dog" (p. 45). Indeed, the figure is looking back, but definitely not downwards at the second dog which appears in the lower right corner of the design--the cheering is clearly directed at someone whom we cannot see because he is not represented in the drawing as we now have it. Following the direction of the crowned hunter's line of sight one will find, however, that the drawing appears to have been trimmed before mounting at least at the right margin where today the edge of the paper is cutting through Nimrod's left foot and through the second of the bloodhounds. By means of the false description of the direction of the hunter's cheering the actual incompleteness of the design is in effect converted into a self-sufficient image. The consequences of a possible later trimming and the necessity for a reconstruction of the original composition thus pass unnoticed because of the rash and prejudiced manner in which the editors discharged their duty of examining closely what is actually to be seen on the material surface of the drawing.

³¹ The chapter on the preliminary designs is followed by a discussion of two "Derivative or Possibly Derivative Designs" which had been mentioned in Gilchrist's *Life*. Both are justly dismissed as bearing no, or only a "dubious," relationship with the NT series (see pp. 51-52).

³² On p. 53 twenty-three copies are said to be known while the census lists only twenty-two of them. This discrepancy is due to the then untraced Gaisford copy (Moss-Bentley, Copy G); see also note 38, below.

³³ See W. E. Moss, "The Coloured Copies of Blake's 'Night Thoughts,'" *Blake Newsletter*, 2 (1968), 19-23; G. E. Bentley, Jr., "A Census of Coloured Copies of Young's 'Night Thoughts' (1797)," *Blake Newsletter*, 2 (1968), 41-45; G. E. Bentley, Jr., *Blake Books* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), no. 515, pp. 642-46, with another copy (I) added in Bentley's "Supplement to 'Blake Books'," *Blake*, 11 (1977-78), 150.

³⁴ "If one were to suppose that quality of colour were the surest evidence of Blake's own responsibility for the tinting of a particular copy," (p. 55) Professors Grant, Rose, and Tolley would vote for their Copies I-1, I-15, and IIB-1 as the most likely candidates (see pp. 54, 60-61, and the color specimen in vol. 2). In the case of Copy IIB-1 (Moss-Bentley, Copy B) this means that they agree with Moss's connoisseur belief which is said to have been based on "faith [rather] than evidence" (p. 61), and, in a different context, is quoted as providing "a clear example of the limitations of impressionistic scholarship" (p. 4)! Yet another paragraph does at least allow for "the possibility that Blake himself had no responsibility for any of these [coloring] schemes" (p. 60).

³⁵ "Type III, is quite likely to have been done by some possessor of an uncoloured copy for his own enjoyment, or as a forgery" (p. 60; see also p. 62).

³⁶ This coding system is reminiscent of Nancy Bogen's census in her edition of *TheL* (in which Professor Erdman also took a hand). Whereas for Bogen the roman numerals served to designate various stages of textual revision, they are here employed to differentiate between the three coloring schemes. See William Blake, *The Book of TheL, A Facsimile and a Critical Text*, ed. Nancy W. Bogen (Providence, R. I. and New York: Brown University Press and NYPL, 1971), pp. 53-55.

³⁷ Thus, copies with the Explanation sheet bound between the Advertisement and 1E follow those where it is bound at the end of the book; the "earliness of provenance that could be established" (p. 61) serves as another criterion for the grouping.

³⁸ Most probably, however, one will have to identify Bentley's untraced Copy T with Copy I-7 of the new census. The latter was "perhaps acquired by A. Edward Newton" (p. 65) before it passed through the hands of Mrs. George E. Edmunds to the Detroit Institute of Arts in January 1927, and Copy T is "untraced" since it was sold from the library of A. Edward Newton in May 1926. Bentley quotes the sale catalogue as stating that in this copy the "text has been ruled throughout" (Anderson Galleries, 29 May 1926, lot 25; see Bentley, suppl. 1977-78, p. 150). This is in keeping with the "most distinctive feature" of the Detroit copy, viz. "that the text on all the pages has been framed, not very neatly, in single or double lines of unpleasing violet ink Titles are single, double or triple overlined and underlined" (p. 65). For references to the Moss-Bentley Copy G see pp. 53, 61, and 92, n. 81, in the present edition; this copy has now been located in the collection of the Lutheran Church in America by Thomas V. Lange, and has been placed as copy I-12A in the 1980 census (see "A Rediscovered Colored Copy of Young's 'Night Thoughts,'" *Blake*, 15 [1981-1982], 134-36).

³⁹ Today, there are three copies, one of each type of coloring, at Harvard, and with two copies each the Paul Mellon collection, the Rosenwald collection, and the Pierpont Morgan Library also provide the opportunity to study different copies side by side (see p. 62).

⁴⁰ After only a few days of (careful) use my copy showed cracking in the front joints. The following typographical errors ought to be corrected:

- p. 4, l. 31: read 24 June, instead of 23 June;
- p. 11, l. 19 and passim: read Table of Engraved Designs, instead of Table of Designs;
- p. 30, l. 37: read Fig. 6, instead of Fig. 7;
- p. 31, l. 11: read 33. NT 119, instead of 33. 119;
- p. 63, l. 2: while Richard Edwards was born in 1768, his and his elder brothers' father, William Edwards, probably was not born in the same year;
- p. 73, l. 14 (2): read pp. 401-2, instead of pp. 401-3;
- p. 73, l. 17 (3): read i. 139-44, instead of i. 139-40;
- p. 79, l. 13 (43): my copy of Lister's biography gives 1968, not 1969 as the year of publication;
- p. 87, n. 20: even from the reproduction it is evident that the transcription must read "WA White/28 March 19 []/of M.J. Perry," not just "M.P.";
- p. 90, n. 55: read 1516, instead of 1616; Grünewald was a contemporary of Raphael and Dürer, not Rubens or Rembrandt.

⁴¹ Nicolas Barker, *The Oxford University Press and the Spread of Learning 1478-1978: An Illustrated History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), p. 56.

⁴² Whereas there are only about twenty-one pages concerning the water colors and the supposedly preparatory drawings, some forty-five pages deal exclusively with the printed version and its colored copies.

⁴³ It is not that I expected a Trianon Press facsimile of so large a number of designs, not even at \$365. How much closer one can get to the original colors with the ordinary offset processes and at a moderate price is to be seen in various cheap volumes with reproductions from Blake's work such as the Dover *Innocence*, the OUP *Songs and Marriage*, and especially the sixteen color plates in the 1972 Gray exhibition handbook. See William Blake, *Songs of Innocence* (New York, N. Y.: Dover Publications, 1971); *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, ed. Geoffrey Keynes (London: Oxford University Press, 1970); *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, ed. Geoffrey Keynes (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1975); and Geoffrey Keynes, *William Blake's Water-Colour Designs for the Poems of Thomas Gray* (London: Methuen, 1972). The plates for three of these books have of course been printed by Trianon Press, but in six-, seven- and eight-color offset, without the stencil coloring by hand which is known from the genuine facsimiles produced for the Blake Trust.

⁴⁴ Many years ago, when this journal was still known as the *Newsletter*, one of the editors of the book now under review entered a discussion with the following "intellectual spears": "Dialogue is difficult, even with disputants who are thoroughly conversant with the issues and evidence, if their overriding concern is to vindicate themselves rather than to correct error whatever its origin. Strenuous encounter magnifies the danger, but mildness is no more reliable guarantee against indulgence in selfhood. Correspondents of the *Blake Newsletter* must believe that a number of essential truths in Blake's art can be identified and that assertions about them can be evaluated. When the question at issue has a markedly empirical dimension a scholar must be prepared to lay out all his evidence for inspection. Most Blakeists would agree with these principles, at least in theory." (John E. Grant, "Mother of Invention, Father in Drag, or Observations on the Methodology that Brought About these Deplorable Conditions and What Then is to be Done," *Blake Newsletter*, 2 [1968], 29). My review of the *Complete Edition* of Blake's NT illustrations is controversial, but I have tried to adhere to Grant's principles and to lay out the evidence as far as even a long review article allows for that. And I surely hope that readers will find I have done so not merely in theory, but in practice.

