

from their husks" (54:1). The transformation of what "Nations" are—and of what we think they are—is involved as well as the replacing of our dead ideas of sun and moon and stars. The engraving (or Young's "Death! great prophet! all! 'tis time to tread out empire, and to quench the stars") functioned as ironic counterpoint to the text of page 81, but used here it serves as a positive illumination. Tharmas recognizes in this threshing of empire the end of Mystery:

Art thou she that made the nations drunk
with the cup of Religion?
Go down, ye Kings & Councillors & Giant
Warriors! . . .
Go down with horse & Chariots &
Trumpets of hoarse war!

(134:6-9)

The design suggests that getting rid of crowned kings and of sun worship are simultaneous tasks of reorganization.

Page 134

"HIS CROWN OF THORNS FELL FROM HIS HEAD."
AN ILLUSTRATED QUARTERLY
VOLUME 22 NUMBER 4 SPRING 1989

Attempting to be more than Man, We

become less," said Luvh
As he arose from the bright feast drunk
with the wine of ages.

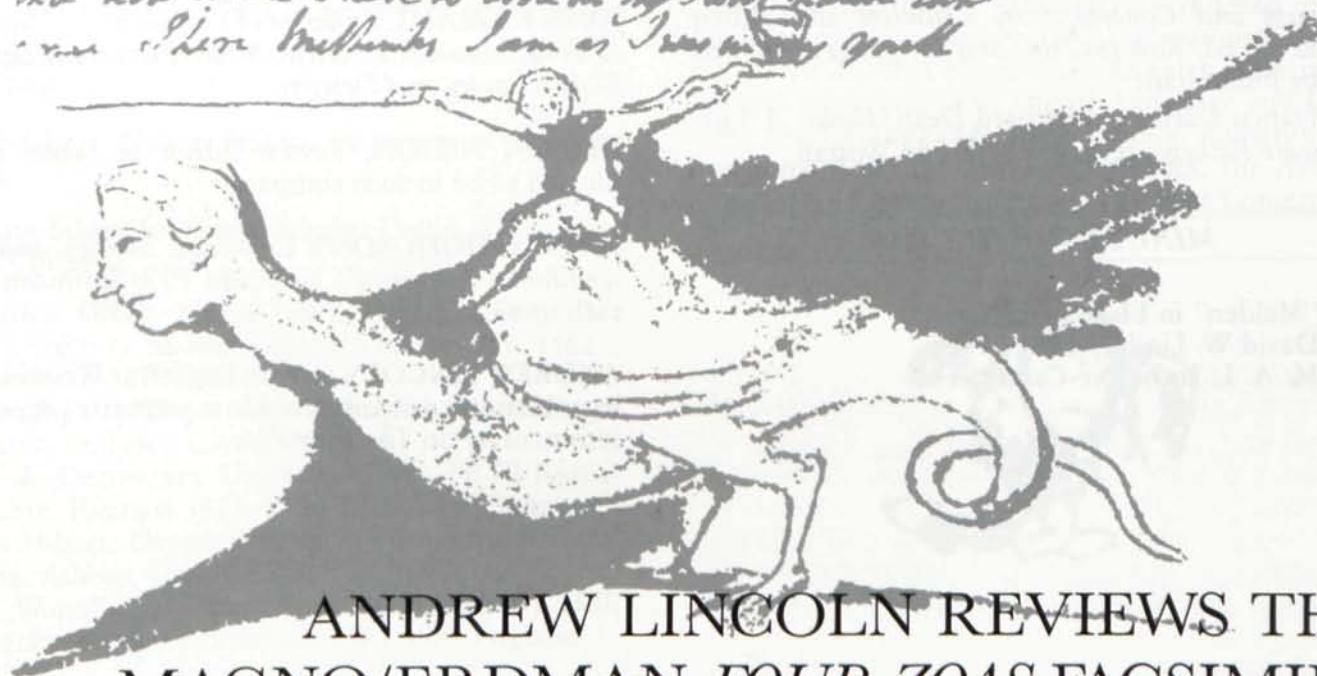
His crown of thorns fell from his head; he
hung his living Lyre
Behind the seat of the Eternal Man & took
his way . . .

. . . to the Vineyards bright.

(135:21-25)

If a Zoa has learned this, for every "Eternal Man," and the Zoa cheerfully leaves the feast (he will be back; his Lyre remains alive) to work as the servant of Man, then the artist is ready to show us that each of these "Four Mighty Ones . . . in every

*line of three. In the icon & the coronary cord of Zozey 630
is clear in his wide sevens & his say that they may way this
is by an African Black for the little death of others
the how come Then so soon as my soul nature law
one when I am I am in you*



ANDREW LINCOLN REVIEWS THE
MAGNO/ERDMAN FOUR ZOAS FACSIMILE

Blake

AN ILLUSTRATED QUARTERLY

VOLUME 22 NUMBER 4 SPRING 1989

CONTENTS

REVIEWS

- 116 Cettina Tramontano Magno and David V. Erdman. *The Four Zoas by William Blake: A Photographic Facsimile of the Manuscript with Commentary on the Illustrations*, reviewed by Andrew Lincoln
- 121 Tadeusz Sławek. *The Outlined Shadow: Phenomenology, Grammatology, Blake*, reviewed by Nelson Hilton
- 122 Lucy Newlyn. *Coleridge, Wordsworth, and the Language of Allusion*, reviewed by John Hodgson
- 124 Morris Eaves and Michael Fischer, eds. *Romanticism and Contemporary Criticism* and Arden Reed, ed. *Romanticism and Language*, reviewed by John Grant
- 133 Francis Curtis and Richard Dean. *Blake: A Software Package*, reviewed by David Worrall

MINUTE PARTICULAR

- 136 "Malden" in Blake's *Jerusalem*
David W. Lindsay and
M. A. L. Locherbie-Cameron



DISCUSSIONS

- 139 Finishing Blake
Paul Mann
- 142 Is There a Poem in This Manuscript?
Peter Otto

POETRY

- 145 LOCK/LUCK by Warren Stevenson

NEWSLETTER

- 146 *Romanticism and Imagination in Australia, Carolinas Symposium on British Studies*

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Managing Editor: Patricia Neill.

Blake / An Illustrated Quarterly is published under the sponsorship of the Department of English, University of Rochester.

Subscriptions are \$18 for institutions, \$15 for individuals. All subscriptions are by the volume (1 year, 4 issues) and begin with the summer issue. Subscription payments received after the summer issue will be applied to the 4 issues of the current volume. Foreign addresses (except Canada and Mexico) require a \$3 per volume postal surcharge for surface mail, a \$10 per volume surcharge for air mail delivery. U.S. currency or international money order necessary. Make checks payable to *Blake / An Illustrated Quarterly*. Address all subscription orders and related communications to Patricia Neill, *Blake*, Department of English, University of Rochester, Rochester, NY 14627, USA.

Many back issues are available at a reduced price. Address Patricia Neill for a list of issues and prices.

Manuscripts are welcome. Send two copies, typed and documented according to the forms suggested in the *MLA Style Sheet*, 2nd ed., to either of the editors: Morris Eaves, Dept. of English, University of Rochester, Rochester, NY 14627; Morton D. Paley, Dept. of English, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720.

International Standard Serial Number: 0006-453x. *Blake / An Illustrated Quarterly* is indexed in the Modern Language Association's International Bibliography, the Modern Humanities Research Association's Annual Bibliography of English Language and Literature, *English Language Notes'* annual Romantic Bibliography, American Humanities Index, the Arts and Humanities Citation Index, and Current Contents.



REVIEWS

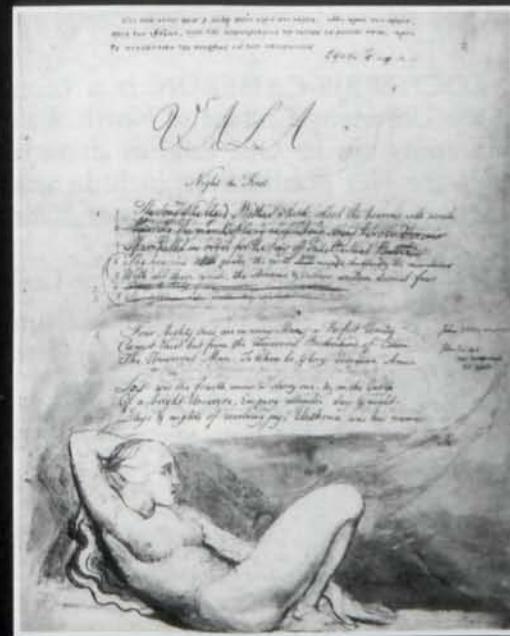
Cettina Tramontano Magno and David V. Erdman. *The Four Zoas by William Blake: A Photographic Facsimile of the Manuscript with Commentary on the Illuminations*. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press; London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1987. 258 pp. \$65/£45.

Reviewed by Andrew Lincoln

This is the second facsimile of *The Four Zoas* manuscript. The first, edited by G. E. Bentley, Jr. (1963), helped to clarify the textual problems in Blake's poem by including a detailed transcription of Blake's revisions.¹ This new facsimile complements the first: there is no transcription of the text as the editors' primary concern is to define and interpret the visual designs. In the manuscript there are more than 80 pages of drawings and several dozen specimens of Blake's engraving. The new facsimile provides the first truly comprehensive examination of these illustrations, and makes an important contribution to our understanding of Blake's technique of "illumination."

The manuscript is reproduced in monochrome, and four pages are also reproduced in color. The prints in this facsimile are smaller than the manuscript leaves, as the editors explain: "Photographs we have seen in full size [i.e., about 12½ x 16½ inches] show less detail in faint places than do the 8 x 10 inch prints, many in infrared photography, obtained for this work, and we were advised to print from them without enlargement, to retain their sharpness of detail." Comparison with the Bentley facsimile shows the wisdom of this decision. Many features that are invisible or barely detectable in Bentley become clearly visible here, including a full-page design (the figure beneath the text on page 16), several individual figures (e.g., the figure rising in the left-hand margin of the title page) and a number of small details (such as the female breasts on the standing figure on page 31). At other points details that were visible in Bentley achieve a new clarity (the reclining figure on page 6; the design at the foot of page 12; the erased areas of the marginal figures on page 26; figures beneath the text of page 132). Sometimes the price of the increased definition is a murky page tone that makes

The Four Zoas by William Blake



*A Photographic Facsimile of the Manuscript with
Commentary on the Illuminations*

CETTINA TRAMONTANO MAGNO
DAVID V. ERDMAN

the text difficult to read (presumably the result of infrared), but the price is worth paying. There are a few places where the reduction leads to a slight (but not significant) loss of detail: drawings on pages 92, 108, 118, 134 and 144 seem, to my eye at least, clearer in Bentley. A hair seems to have got onto the camera lens in the plate of page 75.

The four color plates are disappointing. The manuscript leaves have weathered into a lemon ocher, which becomes darker and more orange in the color prints. As a result color contrasts are flattened: the delicate pink on the shoulder and legs of the figure at the foot of page 5 becomes more difficult to see. I doubt whether any of these plates really justify their cost.

Some photographic prints are supplemented with tracings, and even "enhanced" tracings of problematic details (there are 23 tracings in all). This difficult work has generally been executed with great care. It helps to clarify both large-scale drawings (on pages 16 and 126) and local details (such as the three distinct faces disengaged from a revised sketch on page 17). Some tracings are colored by the editors' guesswork. A tracing of page 22 (previously page 20) isolates loops and curves which in the original appear to be part of a larger sketch,



very faint, that continues under the text and into the left hand margin. The editors construe the isolated portion as "a large grinning figure," but the evidence scarcely supports this construction. A small, indeterminate detail from page 64 has been transformed in tracing, and appears in the commentary over the title *Jester with cap and bells*. The tracing adds dark shading which makes the figure look more definite than it is, and substitutes a dot for a loop, thus creating an "eye." Presumably the tracings were taken from photographic prints; these two might have been checked more carefully against the manuscript.

As the editors explain in their introduction, the arrangement of the leaves in the present binding of the manuscript is the result of editorial judgment, primarily that of the poem's first editors, W. B. Yeats and—especially—Edwin J. Ellis. In this facsimile 24 leaves have been relocated. The changes affect three areas of the manuscript. First, the leaf containing pages 21–22 has been inserted between pages 18 and 19. Second, the two Nights VII have been conflated to follow the narrative sequence given in Erdman's *Complete Poetry and Prose*.² Third, two leaves, pages 113–16, bound at the end of Night VIII have now been inserted between pages 104–05.

There are problems here which don't afflict the editor of a printed text. In more than one instance Blake has divided a page of text into portions, and assigned each portion to a different location. In a printed text such rearrangements can be accommodated with ease. But a manuscript page—and the design that appears on it—can have only one location. In such cases *any* arrangement of the leaves will involve some disruption of the text. One answer to this problem is to reproduce the manuscript in its existing order, as Bentley does, and note the errors and complications in the commentary. But in this facsimile the editors have a special interest in the appearance of the manuscript, and in the relationship among the designs.

Their rearrangement of leaves in Night VIII seems fully justified. The new sequence makes good sense of Blake's instructions on page 104 (calling for the interpolation of text from page 113). And it makes equally good sense of the instruction on page 106 (asking the reader

to "turn back 3 leaves" in order to interpolate the second portion of text on page 113). There is some disruption for the reader here, but Blake's instructions clearly authorize such disruption, and signal the point of dislocation (the two portions of text on page 113 are clearly separated by a line). The arrangement places the fascinating visual sequence of three images of Christ (resurrected, page 114; crucified, page 115; walking on earth, page 116) at the climax of the Night.

The other changes involve textual difficulties that seem less easy to resolve. Pages 19–22 are two added leaves which apparently contain additional material for the end of Night I. From the evidence of the narrative sequence the leaves were almost certainly bound in reverse order, and by placing 21–22 before 19–20 the editors have rectified the error. They assume that these pages follow on from the original ending of Night I on page 18, and that Night II begins on page 23. Those readers who (like me) accept Blake's marginal note indicating that Night II begins on page 9, and who think the text on pages 19–22 may follow 9:33, will still have doubts about the appropriate place of these two leaves.³ But few could doubt that the new arrangement is an improvement, and that it produces a readable text.

Inevitably, the arrangement of the Night(s) now known as VIIa (pages 77–90) and VIIb (pages 91–98) is the most problematic. Blake left clear instructions for the transposition of two parts of the *text* of VIIb, but the instructions (unlike those in Night VIII) appear to assume that the reader will encounter the manuscript *leaves* in their untransposed order.⁴ If the leaves are transposed, page 95 becomes a problem as it contains both the new beginning and the new ending of the Night. Should it appear at the beginning or the end? In either position it will contain an isolated fragment of text. The editors put it at the beginning of VIIb, thus isolating the new ending. The other aspect of the revision, the interpolation of the transposed pages of VIIb between pages 86 and 87 of VIIa, seems even more problematic. The editors' justification is the assumption that Blake's narrative is least disrupted if the transposed VIIb is inserted into VIIa after 85:22. But the textual evidence on which this assumption rests is ambiguous.⁵ And here again, the movement of pages splinters the text, putting lines 85:23–86:14 before VIIb, whereas in the desired textual sequence they follow on from VIIb. The editors claim that "The pictorial suitability of this sequence seems clearly to justify" the arrangement. But in their detailed comments on the visual designs they offer surprisingly little to substantiate the claim. As Blake left no instructions to authorize this interpolation, it may have been wiser to reproduce the existing order of the manuscript (VIIa followed by untransposed VIIb), and to outline the alternative sequence in the commentary. Perhaps one day we shall have a facsimile with loose leaves,

that will allow each reader to make his or her own arrangement of the two Nights VII.

The major effort in this facsimile is directed to the interpretation of the illustrations. Here the authors have wrestled with a formidable task, for the most finished illustrations in the manuscript are the engravings originally designed to illuminate a quite different text, Young's *Night Thoughts*, while the illustrations drawn for Blake's own poem are often no more than tentative sketches. The authors bring to their task an undaunted optimism, an intimate knowledge of the text, and a keen sense of the relationships that appear among different elements of Blake's art. They show very clearly that even those drawings that appear to offer simple and direct illustration of the narrative can be related subtly to the interplay of dramatic perspectives created in the poem. For example, in considering the figure sketched at the foot of page 7, which accompanies the description of the "Mingling" of Enion and the Spectre of Tharmas, they say: "Insofar as we see this 'monster' as a female body, half serpent rather than half fish, we attribute the traditional guile and treachery of the serpent to Eve herself, as a stage of exorcism. Visibly opposed to the sleeping but human spectre on the opposite page, Enion appears to embody the loathed part of himself which Tharmas scorns." The relationship between text and drawings is often far from simple or direct, and in such cases the authors' keen awareness of parallels and patterns within the work as a whole can be very helpful. In the text on page 82, for example, Los laments his inability to enjoy Enitharmon, while his Spectre woos the Shadow of Enitharmon beneath the Tree of Mystery. This is an intensification of error that paradoxically results, as the authors note, in a "progression of the imagination." At the foot of the page Blake drew a female figure who holds or turns a circle in which eight stars are visible. The design doesn't provide a direct illustration of the text. But the authors relate the wheel to other images within the poem—the Circle of Destiny, the "starry wheels" that feel the divine hand in Night IV, the dismal squadrons or Urthona that "o'erwheel" at Urizen's command, the eight eyes of God—and thus tentatively suggest its relationship to the idea that forms of error can serve the scheme of divine providence.

The same awareness of relationships that appear between different aspects of Blake's work informs the discussion of the *Night Thoughts* proofs used in the manuscript. The authors argue that the effect of the proofs on Blake's text and drawings "is usually noticeable, sometimes striking":

Often the design drawn on the page facing an engraved scene mirrors or balances it. A body lying with slightly raised head is matched by a different body in the same position. A spear or dart in the engraving is matched by some weapon in the adjacent drawing. And the text too has its reverberations both ways.

The detailed commentary amply justifies this claim, and gives a vivid sense of Blake's working methods. The authors usually consider with admirable deftness both the original context in Young's poem, and the new context in Blake's. On page 45, for example, in which the resurrected Tharmas laments the loss of his emanation Enion, Blake uses an engraving of Jesus raising Lazarus. The authors note that the design originally illustrated, and transformed, "Young's argument for the unique efficacy of 'the cross.'" Blake changes Young's "symbolic touching to a direct human eye-and-body communication between the despairing Zoa of touch, Tharmas, and an instantly ready Saviour." The inclusion of the engraving here, they suggest, is far from arbitrary. Indeed, as the gesture of Lazarus mirrors the drawing of Tharmas on the facing page (page 44) Blake "must have planned to use this *Night Thoughts* design" when he made the drawing. Moreover the design hints at the conclusion of Blake's poem: "The text gives no hint of the Saviour's presence, but both lovers take steps that could bring him near. Enion repents, forgetting her 'sin' and rebellion; Tharmas recoils from his 'fierce rage' . . ." The authors note that the same print was used again in Night VII (page 97), in which Tharmas again recalls his separation from Enion: "Blake rescues his worthy demon by holding forth the silent promise of Christ's hand." Such comments throw much light on Blake's practice in the poem, and exemplify the kind of attentiveness demanded by this work.



The authors' commitment to the close "reading" of Blake's designs entails a minute attention to detail that is consistently revealing. Their clear descriptions repeatedly point to the presence of features that might be missed even on close scrutiny, and clarify potentially misleading impressions. On page 24, for example, a figure in the left-hand margin looks at first (and second) sight to be a phallus. With the aid of the commentary

we can see that it is in fact "the torso of a female with legs apart but with neither head nor feet." Such difficulties abound in the manuscript, and the authors, building on the work of earlier scholars and frequently surpassing it, have clarified many cloudy areas.

But there are limits to what can be achieved here. It is often extremely difficult, and sometimes impossible, to define the image with certainty (is the figure male, female, young, old, rising, falling—does the vague configuration constitute a figure at all?). The slightest detail *can* have significance, or might be merely incidental, or might even be an illusion created by the unfinished state of the sketch. Is the standing figure at the foot of page 12, for example, "sheathed in protective clothing from head to foot" with "a round helmet resembling a fencing mask" (as the authors suggest), or is the clothing an illusion—simply alternative postures



sketched in? The authors argue that the strongest evidence to resolve such uncertainties may be in the text. But deciding which part of the text (if any) is relevant is not always easy. For example, the authors interpret the drawing at the foot of page 14 in the light of an added passage, the song of war sung at the feast of Los and Enitharmon. Accordingly the three-headed female is seen as "a united committee of outrage." The authors explain: "All seem agreed on the combat demanded by the outstretched right arm with upraised palm." But if

the design is seen in the light of the original copperplate text that survives at the top of the page, in which bright souls of vegetative life "Stretch their immortal hands to smite the gold & silver Wires," the female heads become singers "soft warbling," the outstretched hand reaching to "Wires" visible in the left hand margin. Similarly, at the foot of page 56 an aged seated man holds by the hands or wrists a kneeling youth who stretches towards him. If we interpret this in the light of the last passage inscribed on the page (in which "Limit Was put to Eternal Death") we may, like the authors, see the youth as "cheerful." The commentary explains: "Setting a Limit, he balances his energy against the gripe of one who chooses not to die, transforming mummy into man." But conversely, if we see the drawing in the light of the lines marked to come in at the end of the inscribed text (lines in which Los "became what he beheld") we may see the youth being pulled reluctantly into the power of Urizen. Even where the text appears to offer one clear theme, the visual image may be ambiguous. If we agree that the male and female figures at the foot of page 27 in some sense illuminate the "bondage of the Human form" referred to in the text, should we see, as the authors do, "The body of man . . . dependant on the womb of woman" or should we see woman emerging from the rib of man as a captivating presence?

Faced with such possibilities, definite interpretations and identifications can seem oddly reductive, or merely arbitrary. A willingness to remain in uncertainties and doubts often seems an appropriate response. The reader who is capable of remaining content with half knowledge will at least not confuse definiteness with accuracy. The most significant limitation of the commentary is, paradoxically, the authors' irrepressible reaching after fact and certainty in the grey areas of the manuscript: their attempt to determine the indeterminate. They define the head sketched on pages 21–22 as that of an *old* man, but it could be that of a middle-aged man or even a young man. They claim that in the "social cluster of naked bodies" sketched and partly erased on page 38, Blake is offering an undressed version of the elegantly clothed bodies in an illustration (by Thomas Stothard and Anker Smith) of Pope's *The Rape of the Lock*. I admire their ingenuity here, but find the evidence frail and quite unconvincing. When they say of the cupid on page 112 "He looks old; his hair must be a wig," I feel they must be joking.

The same readiness to offer boldly decisive judgments in areas where the evidence is ambiguous or slight also mars some of the comments on the *Night Thoughts* proofs. The most startling example appears in the comments on page 121, whose uncolored design is reproduced in one of the four color plates. The engraving is marked by a spotted line of stains. In the commentary

the line is related to Blake's reference on the previous page to "That line of blood that stretch'd across the windows of the morning." The authors comment:

the bloody line on the engraved proof can be seen to mark exactly the moment when one sees or does not see the "windows of the morning." If the line was present in the proof, by accident, before Blake wrote on this leaf, it may have inspired his writing. It seems only remotely possible that he put it in to illustrate his text. Either way, he was redeeming the plate "from Error's power."

The caption of the color plate states "streak across chest of reclining figure, dull red." The authors quote in support of their interpretation my own description of the stain as "very dark brown dried blood/rust colour." The word "blood" seems to have encouraged a slide from "very dark brown" to "bloody" and "dull red." If the authors had looked carefully at the manuscript they would presumably have seen that the stains are not red. There are comparable stains on page 117, but these are not mentioned in the commentary. We have no way of knowing how the stains appeared—they might conceivably have arrived after the manuscript had left Blake's possession. The authors' determination to miss no significant detail is admirable, but it does not always redeem them "from Error's power."

The commentary does much to dispel the traditional view that the poem evolved through a chaotic and arbitrary process of composition. It is therefore regrettable that the introduction should lead back to this view by offering a brief history of the manuscript based on untested assumptions rather than on a study of particular revisions. In order to account for the composite nature of the manuscript the authors imagine Blake "working over the text year after year, with increasing doubt that a perfected volume would ever be called for." Accordingly, "as the margins filled up" Blake "resorted to making fair copies on fresh sheets," and "As time passed . . . Blake made revisions with less and less attention to any finished appearance." At this stage "the easiest way to borrow designs from the published *Night Thoughts* (and to save paper) was to coopt the proofs that survived from that labor." This account seems to imply that the text on the proof pages evolved from a continuous process of revision that overran one, or possibly two, previous fair drafts. The surviving evidence makes this seem highly unlikely. Where there are marginal revisions in the manuscript the texture of the revised narrative is relatively fragmented—more fragmented, for example, than the basic text of pages 43–85 (on proof pages), which seems as homogeneous as any part of the poem. The authors' own commentary suggests that Blake was sufficiently concerned about the appearance of the manuscript to choose the *Night Thoughts* proofs with care. The transition from copperplate text to proof text coincides with a major transition within the narrative: the breaking of

the bounds of destiny, the fall from the teleological vision embodied in Urizen's Golden World into the blind materialism of the Caverns of the Grave. Any account of the poem's development should at least take such evidence into consideration. But here the authors do not engage significantly with the manuscript evidence at all.

A project of this complexity will inevitably have weaknesses. But they should be seen in the light of the authors' overall achievement. The writing is crisp and lively, and communicates an infectious excitement. When the commentary grapples with the minute details of Blake's drawings, with alternative interpretations, and with the complex relationships that appear among the constituent parts of Blake's work, it provides a challenging example of the kind of interpretative exercise that Blake's illuminated writings were surely intended to stimulate. In its attempts to determine the indeterminate, to authorize particular readings where the evidence is ambiguous, it will inevitably leave many readers dissenting. But the book provides sufficient detail in its reproductions, descriptions, and comments to allow readers to form their own judgments. It is well indexed, compact enough to be used easily, and—given the quality of its reproduction, and the price of other facsimiles—relatively inexpensive. This is a book that every library should own, and that every reader of Blake will want to have.

¹G. E. Bentley, Jr., ed., *William Blake, "Vala or The Four Zoas": A Facsimile of the Manuscript, A Transcript of the Poem, and a Study of Its Growth and Significance* (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1963).

²David V. Erdman, ed., *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, rev. ed. (New York: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1982).

³See the textual arrangement of Nights I and II in Stevenson, W. H., ed., text by David V. Erdman. *The Poems of William Blake* (London: Longman, 1977).

⁴A note under the Night heading on page 91 reads "This Night begins at line 15 the following comes in at the End."

⁵See the discussion of the textual evidence in *Blake* 12 (1978): 107–39.

Tadeusz Sławek, *The Outlined Shadow: Phenomenology, Grammatology, Blake*. Katowice: Uniwersytet Śląski, 1985. 159 pp., 4 illus., summaries in Polish and Russian.

Reviewed by Nelson Hilton

"Who's speaking?" is a question young readers of the new age routinely address to every bit of writing. Which is to ask, "What's the origin?—where does this text come from?" Except for the happy few who still believe in the fiction of intentionality, such questions go unanswered; but they set the quest in motion, and the journey not the arrival matters. In this context, a striking feature of Blake's work is its (apparent) author's apparent deferral of authority, as in the famous claim to be but "the Secretary the Authors are in Eternity" (letter of 6 July 1803). Still more dramatic is *Jerusalem*'s opening address "To the Public," where the lyric logic seems to be that "I" will print because "I" "hear" the "voice" of "that God from whom [all books are given]", a "voice" that "speaks in thunder and in fire," that is, *speaks in* "Thought" and "desire." As so often in Blake, seemingly firm declarations dissolve into the sliding possibilities set up by the constituent parts. The conclusion of *Jerusalem* offers another telling instance in the opposing readings of "identified": "All Human Forms" . . . what? Became one entity together (*id-ens*)? Or became each itself a unique thing? The thing, one imagines, is to think these things together—no thing at all but a process ("living going forth & returning"). And if "one" manages that, who's thinking?, who's imagining? Moreover, does this "process," the attempt to gain some vision or imagination of "Jerusalem" have any meaning or end?

Tadeusz Sławek's entertaining meditation on such heady issues situates Blake before Heidegger and Derrida, both of whom are seen to incarnate differing implications of Blake's work. While "Blake nostalgically looks back (or rather listens back) to a traditional situation of the Western metaphysics in which a sign is a reflection, a necessary but inadequate representation of the original plenitude," he nonetheless "seems to see the illusive character of his efforts, and thus is on the verge of breaking away" from that tradition, "painfully aware of non-existence of the origin which can haunt his mind, but which cannot make its appearance" (73). Blake's work is thus at the origin in a mythic history of the late-eighteenth-century advent of the modern/postmodern:

TADEUSZ ŚLĄWEK



The Outlined Shadow

Phenomenology · Grammatology · Blake

"Blake marks a moment in the Western thinking which still admitting the necessity of origin, the inexorable character of the liaison between the signifier and the signified, intuited already the difficulty which made the search for the origin a mythic, eternal, neverending procedure" (73).

For Sławek, Heidegger is closer to Blake, which makes Derrida the truer heir. "Heidegger and Blake both speak of the thing unconcealed in its Being ('the entity as it is in itself'), and both underscore the independent character of this occurrence" (90), though Blake "betrays the Heideggerian discourse by allowing the treatment of material objects as mere shadows, 'hindrances' of ideas" (101). These shadows Blake can only outline. Derrida, however, shows a Heidegger-like Blake and the rest of us—trapped and inwoven using signs which finally cannot point beyond themselves (neither to "Being," nor "the entity as it is in itself," nor "Eternity," for example) but only to other signs. As Blake seems to suggest in the opening address "To the Public," mentioned above, God is the giver of "all books" and "the wond'rous art of writing": Divine "speech" is writing itself. "It follows, then, that even

God is a preface, a citation, a spacing, a difference characteristic of writing" (69). While Blake "seems to be afraid of such a semiotic void" (cf. the formulation in the preceding sentence) time and again we stumble on "a somewhat undecisive relationship between speech and writing" (72). Discussing Albion's lament that his soul "is melted away, inwoven within the veil" (*J* 23.4), Sławek observes that "if the veil is the element of life, then what it can display when rent is only more veil." So, even while "desperately clinging to the notion of 'Naked Beauty', to the image of a reality different from the 'Vegetable world', Blake sees a possibility of such a world where the signified is separated from its signifier by a *long detour*, by an endless wandering of signifiers" (116). Following the intriguing ontology of his *Nelson* and *Pitt* presented in *A Descriptive Catalogue*, Blake's compositions are "similar to" some ancient designs "still preserved on rude monuments" but which are themselves only "copies from some stupendous originals now lost" (or, adds Blake's wistful epitome of logocentric nostalgia, "perhaps buried till some happier age"). We do not un-veil, whatever we may re-veal.

Sławek nicely details some of the contra-dictions of Blake's stance, juxtaposing, for instance, the famous assertion "Imitation is Criticism" with the statement of categorical dislike for imitation, "To Imitate I abhor," and finding in Blake three different positions with regard to mimesis. One useful concept for this discussion, announced in the title, is "outline"—which for Blake, Sławek argues, has not only an "aesthetic importance" but also "a marked ontological-existential character" (129). This idea of "outline" leads to a version of the Derridean paradox spelled out in one of Blake's hard and haunting lines: "Truth has bounds. Error none" (*Book of Los* 4.30). Outline entails difference, and the fact of difference cuts through the possibility of transcendental, absolute identifications of value. "Blake in his attempt to retrace the origin of the mark, to move towards the 'wonderful originals', towards the realm of primal unity preceding all differences . . . eventually speaks the language of *outline*, i.e. of difference [sic] . . . But the language of difference, of the outline, is the language of writing" (140–41). This fearful symmetry, we might note, is also perceived by Edward Larrissy, who writes that Blake's "rejection of the unity of Reason is conceived in terms of the unity of the mystic, but it really belongs to difference" ("A Description of Blake: Ideology, Form, Influence," in Francis Barker et al. eds., 1789: *Reading Writing Revolution* [n.p.: University of Essex, 1982] 108). The book leaves us with the thought that "Derrida draws the ultimate conclusion which Blake stops short of," that what Blake would term "Eternal Existence" is "another name for death" (142). From which the reader may draw, extending Sławek's shadowy outline, a rather

more provisional conclusion and then perhaps return to the foolish young man of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*: "but I said, if you please we will commit ourselves to this void, and see whether providence is here also, if you will not I will?"

Given some curiosities in the nature of Polish university publishing, the book cannot be purchased from abroad. The author has sent 10 copies to the *Blake* office for distribution. This is a first-come, first-serve basis; send your request to Patricia Neill, *Blake*, Department of English, University of Rochester, Rochester NY 14627.

Lucy Newlyn. *Coleridge, Wordsworth, and the Language of Allusion*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986. xvii + 214 pp. \$37.00.

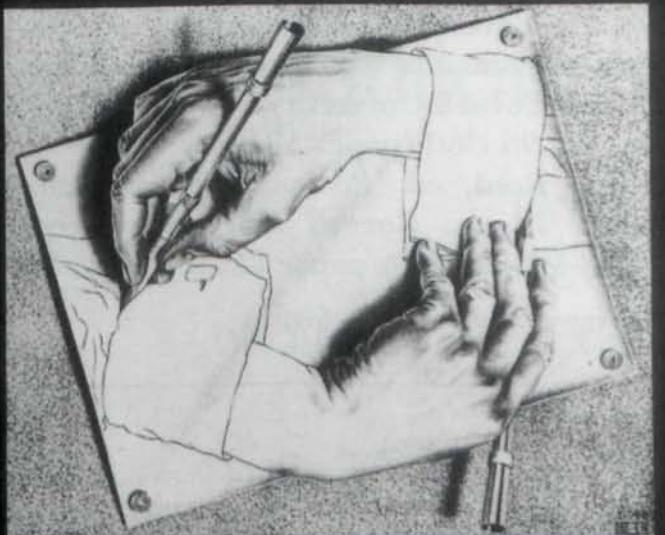
Reviewed by John Hodgson

Coleridge, Wordsworth, and the Language of Allusion is above all a study of a poetic dialogue. The dialogue, of course, is a famous one, and has been often studied, even from this perspective; but Lucy Newlyn's sustained and informed attentiveness to the poets' reciprocal literary allusions in their private and public contexts produces fresh insights which justify this retracing of familiar ground.

Newlyn's thesis is that Wordsworth and Coleridge "mythologized their relationship, presenting themselves as joint labourers even while they were moving apart" (vii). "The key to this interpretation," she suggests, "is in the poets' private language, for it is through allusions to each other that their tacit opposition emerges" (viii). This apparently forthright declaration is actually a bit slippery at several points ("private," "allusions," "tacit"): the allusions Newlyn has in mind are most often the poets' literary allusions to each others' (and their own) texts, and the language these constitute is thus a traditional and to a great degree a public one—not a secret dialogue but an undersong.

Since Newlyn's emphasis falls upon reciprocal, dialectic allusion, and since her interest in allusion itself is *ad hoc* rather than theoretical, "the language of allusion" would seem to promise a larger subject than this book actually engages. Newlyn takes no notice of recent meditations on allusion, such as those by Ziva Ben-Porot and James Chandler, and avoids confronting the ideas of Harold Bloom. Nor does she build on or even note the kind of allusion-study recently pursued in Blake's texts,

LUCY NEWLYN COLERIDGE, WORDSWORTH, AND THE LANGUAGE OF ALLUSION



CLARENDON PRESS
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especially by Robert Gleckner. Readers accustomed to what Gleckner calls Blake's "habitual self-quotation and intracanonical allusiveness" (*Blake's Prelude* 10) will perhaps wonder at Newlyn's characterization of Wordsworth's and Coleridge's "self-echo[es]" as "abnormally pervasive" (ix). More significantly, Newlyn's sense of "the embalming process which allusive language tends increasingly to enact" (163) might have profited from Gleckner's analyses there and in *Blake and Spenser* of how Blake's inversions and subversions of allusive contexts can be vital and progressive in their very contrariety.

Newlyn's emphasis, as she says, "is finally on poetic relationship" (ix), one particular relationship. The field of her analysis stretches from "Lines Left upon a Seat in a Yew Tree" and "This Lime Tree Bower My Prison" in 1797 (in the dialogue between which "one sees, not the consolidation of an old friendship, based on shared assumptions, but the start of a new one, grounded in significant difference," and "sees also, for the first time, an allusive idiom that is conscious of its power" [21]) to "To

William Wordsworth" and "A Complaint" in 1807 (the former ending "with self-deception, but not of a kind that was likely to deceive," the latter marking a conclusive break with the poets' decade-long "habits of poetic reference," their "customary allusive games" [202-04]). Within this period, Newlyn pays particular attention to the "Letter to Sara Hutchinson," "Resolution and Independence," and "Coleridge's Presence in *The Prelude*" (a chapter each), without scanting the other major and minor texts of the poets' dialogue (especially the conversation poems and "Tintern Abbey," "Stanzas written in my Pocket Copy of the Castle of Indolence," "To H. C." and the "Intimations" Ode) or the wealth of supporting evidence in letters and journals. Throughout, her larger argument about Wordsworth's and Coleridge's dialogue shares the characteristics of her sensitivity to their allusions: she sometimes misses, sometimes strains, sometimes fails to pursue; but usually her observations are apt, and her inferences intelligent.

If "the language of allusion" seems to stake a misleadingly large claim for this book's project, the phrase's half-promise is yet symptomatic of a deeper ambivalence: much here suggests that Newlyn has not defined the scope of her argument to her own complete satisfaction. While her thesis traces a dialogue of reciprocal allusion, her attention often turns to other voices. Inconsistently throughout, but with increasing frequency and emphasis as the book proceeds, she notes and pursues Wordsworth's and Coleridge's allusions not only to each other, but to earlier poets as well. While many of her observations are in themselves interesting (though in general Newlyn deals with such allusions less surely than she does with the poets' reciprocal ones), still they are potentially tangential. Newlyn's implicit justification for considering these other allusions is that they make part of the very mythologizing which is her subject, and that in at least some cases (her examples are almost exclusively Miltonic) they constitute "a shared habit" (69), a link between the poets. In practice, however, her emphases seem inconsistent, almost arbitrary. At one extreme, for example, Newlyn's sustained attentiveness to the Wordsworthian and Coleridgean allusions in "The Nightingale" is weakened by her complete disregard of the poem's single most prominent allusion, Coleridge's recurrence to Orsino's affected and self-indulgent line at the opening of *Twelfth Night*: "That strain again!" (1. 90). Surely, in this poem about subjectively colored perception and poetry's "dramatic propriety" (see Coleridge's note to his "Il Penseroso" quotation in line 13), Coleridge's gesture here is significant. At another extreme, Newlyn too insistently relates the "Intimations" ode's seventh stanza to Marvell's "On a Drop of Dew" (151), but ignores the particularly Coleridgean allusion there in the child's play at "A wedding or a festival / A

mourning or a funeral" (cf. "Ours is her wedding-garment, ours her shroud!" in "Dejection"). Certainly Newlyn amply balances such omissions with other strengths: her analysis of "The Nightingale" masterfully sets the poem in its immediately allusive context (which includes "Lines Left upon a Seat in a Yew Tree," "The Ruined Cottage," "Frost at Midnight," "A Night Piece," and many other occasions), and her attention to Marvell's "On a Drop of Dew" significantly enriches our appreciation of Wordsworth's "To H. C." (146-47). There's much scholarly insight here—but also a certain unevenness of vision.

Newlyn's analysis of Coleridge's "Letter to Sara Hutchinson," the early version of "Dejection: An Ode," can serve as a paradigm of this book's strengths and weaknesses. Her reading and contextualizing of the poem's "densely allusive idiom" (61) is informed and often very shrewd. Her observation that repeatedly "Coleridge associates the word 'swimming' with usurpation: the subjugation of normal sense perceptions to the power of 'Joy'" (64), her recognition that behind "the blending of 'Tintern Abbey' and 'Frost at Midnight' in the background of Coleridge's prayer" for Sara lies a still deeper affinity with Spenser's "Epithalamion" (75-76), her suggestion that the gothic excesses of the storm passage are "pervaded . . . by self-echo" (especially to "France: An Ode") and thereby evince a self-conscious humor and "parodic control" (72), her analysis of the complex ironies informing Coleridge's double allusion ("My genial Spirits fail") to "Tintern Abbey" and *Samson Agonistes* (68-69)—these varied insights typify her critical virtues. At the same time, however, she seems to miss not only a few odd trees, but even much of the forest. While perhaps the allusion to Horace and Aesop in "be this Tempest but a Mountain Birth" (*Parturient montes . . .*) is merely incidental, the preceding apostrophe to the wind as "Thou mighty Poet" carries us allusively to a central document in the Wordsworth-Coleridge dialogue ("mighty poets in their misery dead" ["Resolution and Independence"]), and ought to be addressed. If the opening atmosphere of the evening vaguely recalls that of "The Nightingale" (66), surely the very crux of the verse-letter directly engages that earlier conversation poem, responding to the faith that "In nature there is nothing melancholy" with the harsh rejoinder that in nature there is nothing joyful, either. And why, finally, when that "mighty Poet," the wind, modulates its song from gothic frenzy to tender lyric (the "Lucy Gray" allusion) should it also be shifting from a second-rate (deliberately so, Newlyn argues) Coleridgean voice to a first-rate Wordsworthian one? Despite her sense that "Coleridge's anxiety about Wordsworth pervades everything" in this poem (78), Newlyn has remarkably little to say about this, the

poem's most insistent allusion to Wordsworth's poetry. But surely this passage extends the characteristic vicariousness of Coleridge's affirmations to new levels. "We receive but what we give"; is it now only Wordsworth's imagination, then, that Coleridge can give and receive without regret? These lapses, too, are characteristic of *Coleridge, Wordsworth, and the Language of Allusion*.

Morris Eaves and Michael Fischer, eds.

Romanticism and Contemporary Criticism.
Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986. 246
pp. \$29.96 cloth/paper \$8.95.

Arden Reed, ed. *Romanticism and Language*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984. \$38.50 cloth/paper \$12.95.

Reviewed by John E. Grant

These two collections of essays often show how the deconstructionist movement in criticism, with its program of dissipating poetry into "language," effects a rollback of revolutionary romanticism. Despite the revolutionary ambitions of individual theoreticians, the movement they have generated, like many other successful sociological or ideological movements, produces effects opposite from those intended. In overturning "the authority of the text," the deconstructive machine has given us the monopoly of the indefinite. Since some of the ideas held up in these volumes as being particularly illuminating derive from errors of earlier critics, it is evident that would-be devils are only angels of the most recent heaven. Critics of the "language" school wander into crucial misconstruals, intermingled with valuable new perceptions, because they are preoccupied with *words* rather than poems, and thus have no structure of reference for distinguishing among endlessly proliferating meanings.

Moreover, any sense of the work conveyed by the text, if ascertainable at all, is assumed to be less important than what it may signify for a modern reader who usually has some point of view very different from that of the author. Maureen Quilligan has accounted for this mind-set as follows:

In Marxist theory, as well as in all strong modern theories of interpretation, the assumption necessarily is that the text does not, at the surface level, want said what the critic finds in it to say. The critic, by his or her interpretation, brings to light what was repressed from the text's surface!

Romanticism and Contemporary Criticism

EDITED BY

Morris Eaves

and Michael Fischer

CONTRIBUTORS

M. H. Abrams • Stanley Cavell

Northrop Frye • J. Hillis Miller

W. J. T. Mitchell

ROMANTICISM & LANGUAGE



EDITED BY

ARDEN REED

In an interesting elaboration of this point, Edward Pechter finds the motive for this critical strategy in the will to power.² It has often been remarked that Humpty Dumpty expressed this mentality in his credo: "the question is . . . which is to be master—that's all."

But even readers not so zealous to keep ahead of the text have been indoctrinated to expect that the surface meaning is superficial or more or less duplicitous, not to be believed, and in any case not something the author understood well enough to bind the modern reader to the ancient author's delights or despairs. What seems to count is whatever can be attributed to the psychological or (more currently) the political unconsciousness of the author. It is a dimension of significance of which the author was necessarily unaware. Even the unaggressive reader will become preoccupied with something the author failed to say. Proponents of "weak" theories are hardly less affected by such assumptions than proponents of "strong" theories. Many good citizens in the teaching profession now feel that they are morally obliged to expound what the text does not say. If all or even most texts are indeterminate, and if all students de-

serve warm encouragement in their interpretations, then randomness in one's own exposition, together with a receptivity to any forceful comment (except that of the poet), is the mark of having the right attitude of openness. Believers in either "strong" theories or "weak" theories can thus hardly concede any interest to "strong" poems that exhibit determinate form as an essential part of their mode of existence. While some aspects of a strong poem may be held up for display purposes, the things that are said about such poems often grow out of some frame of reference having little to do with that in which the poem was written. On the other hand, libertarians among post-structuralists object that any specifically acknowledged "frame of reference" is arbitrary if not authoritarian. They do not consider that, as in the display of pictures, a frame may serve to feature and focus, not constrict.

Out of the fifteen essays in the two volumes, the only piece primarily concerned with Blake's work occurs in *Romanticism and Contemporary Criticism*: "Visible Language: Blake's Wond'rous Art of Writing," an attempt of the brilliant and resourceful W. J. T. Mitchell

to correlate Blake and Derrida. Although Mitchell suggests that "one could think of this as an essay written about and 'for' Blake and 'against' Derrida (48), the reader is often presented with an uncriticized Derridean kind of mischief that goes dead against what Blake was aiming to say or show, as will be pointed out later in this review.

The essays in Arden Reed's collection, *Romanticism and Language*, attempt deconstructive applications of the generalities of the title to well-known romantic poems. But because such generalities offer amorphous vantage points, most of these essays are peppered with random observations or reflections indicating that the authors have little conception of or interest in poems as poems. They tend to read words of poems in ways that slip in and out of focus because they have no consistent awareness of the identity the words take on as parts of particular poems. These authors defer repeatedly to de Man, one of whose ponderous pronouncements about the indeterminability of "language" is used as one of two epigraphs for the volume. The other epigraph, from the opening of Frye's energetic 1963 English Institute essay, on the vanity of romanticizing, expresses a preference for "actual literary experience," such as can seldom motivate critics, however gifted, who have joined the entourage of de Man. They operate under the presupposition that a poem is a formless construct, a notion that had considerable currency long before deconstruction was named. As Olson and later Hirsch pointed out, on the first page of *Seven Types of Ambiguity* Empson identifies his concern as being the ambiguities in "a piece of language." Empson made free to remark on anything that interested him, but such maneuverings within the ill-delineated area of "language" cannot be revealing about actual poems unless a critic possesses a rare Empsonian ingenuity and resilience that makes him or her entertaining even when wrong. Critics with more limited resources are unable to recoup the losses sure to be experienced when cavorting somewhere between "the great dictionary," tenuous etymologies, and great poems. Lest it be supposed that Empson's way with "language" has no bearing on deconstructionism, it should be noticed that J. Hillis Miller, in *Romanticism and Contemporary Criticism*, declares Empson to be at least one of the "great uncles" of the movement.

Though not all the essays in *Romanticism and Language* are opaque, anyone who sits down to read several of them through will experience the same response Rosemary Ashton reported in *TLS*, 5 July 1985: "I felt distinctly dizzy as I temporarily inhabited the Babel which this collection of essays seems to celebrate." Part of the cause of this vertigo may be that even those contributors who can write well often lack a sense of the varied occasions that prompted words which, in themselves, have

similar purport. The first essay, Susan Wolfson's "The Language of Interpretation in Romantic Poetry: 'A Strong Working of the Mind,'" for instance, fails to distinguish the boundaries of particular poems. Wolfson gets off the mark by eliding a passage in Blake's letter to Trusler on "what is not too Explicit" with Keats's words about "uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts," (22) as though Keats had sought to advocate such troubles. Later, as part of a nine-page discussion of the gloss of the *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, she quotes from Melior's *English Romantic Irony* a comment on the fact that the gloss (when added) "is printed in the outside margin and would thus normally be read before the text of left-hand pages, after the text of right-hand pages," yielding 'a visual emblem' of Coleridge's ambivalence." Such factors are alleged by Wolfson to present "an explicit figure for the ultimate uncertainty of interpretation" (31). Each layer of these comments contains nothing more significant than the mystification of a convention—as if one were to argue that we are given access to the Spanish soul because the question marks are upside down. Thus students who don't understand eighteenth-century conventions of capitalization are led to discover Jesus and Mary in the "Youth" and "Virgin" in Blake's "Ah! Sun-Flower." So far as Coleridge's "ambivalence" is concerned, the text-and-gloss simply constitutes a talking point for what is abundantly obvious on other grounds, rather than being an unconscious betrayal of Coleridge's divided consciousness.

Wolfson also fails to recognize the closure of Coleridge's poem, stating that the "poem leaves open to question whether the newly haunted listener might himself become a haunted purveyor of the Rime's repetitive life . . ." (30), and designating the poem, from the point of view of Coleridge as author, an intolerably "inconclusive tale" (31). But in Coleridge's favorite play, *Hamlet*, when Horatio is exhorted by the dying prince to tell his tale through this harsh world, no one worries overmuch about whether he did as he was bid. Even if some sequel were punctuated with retellings of the tragedy of Hamlet, and that of the Ancient Mariner too, the tale would not be Shakespeare's or Coleridge's complete but open-ended stories, but the reader's, or Tom Stoppard's. Both *Hamlet* and the *Rime* have a form, which means that they are not interminable, nor did Coleridge fail to give the reader a sufficient conclusion when the Wedding Guest arises "a sadder and a wiser man."

Romanticism and Language contains another extended essay on "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," a reprinted piece by the editor, Arden Reed. Reed makes a wide sweep through Coleridge's use of the word "rime," usually in the sense of frost, and manages to relate most occurrences to the primary sense of "Rime."

But Reed's credibility is much diminished by his insistence that the Ancient Mariner sees himself among, and blesses himself along with, the water snakes (190). Reed's concluding declaration that the *Rime* counters "the current of Romantic literature" to "privilege speech," thereby somehow "Subvert[ing] the ideology of the very movement it is always taken to exemplify—which may be what makes it a genuine Romantic poem" also depends on Derridean prestidigitation to say everything and nothing at the same time. Such a maneuver seems particularly unfortunate since Reed can be very acute. He has a rare ability to see through ingrained interpretive errors, such as the assertions of Warren, Beer, Chayes, and others that the crew condemned the shooting of the albatross at a time when the ship was becalmed, although Coleridge plainly states that "the good south wind still blew behind."

Six of the other essays in *Romanticism and Language*, those on Wordsworth or Coleridge by Chase, Bahti, Parker, and Christensen, on Shelley by Ferguson, and on romantic prose by Jacobus, all become entangled in their own exposition. Despite the subtle critical intelligence that Ferguson brings to bear on "Mont Blanc," she utterly mistakes the tone: "although *Mont Blanc* is a sublime poem upon a sublime subject, it projects an air of sociability" (208). And she is bound down by the implications of an inapposite and mistaken allusion: "just as Milton's Eve was once 'stupidly good,' so matter is, in Shelley's account, 'stupidly powerful,' and powerful more because of its stupidity than in spite of it" (211–12). But it is Satan in prospect of Eve, of course, who is "stupidly good" (*Paradise Lost* 9.465)—imagined so because he had previously been so resourceful. This phrase has no bearing on *Mont Blanc*, whose powerful and abiding identity is unchanging. From a human point of view—Shelley's—the wonder inspired by the mountain has nothing to do with its having any quasi-human capacity to be either clever or stupid. Ferguson certainly knows this, but she became ensnared in the web of language and thus fell into comments that have no validity.

The last two pieces in *Romanticism and Language* are more successful: Brisman on "Swinburne and the Language of Shelleyan Love" and Macksey on Keats's "To Autumn." Brisman adroitly expounds a passage of Swinburnean lesbian sadism, and Macksey, despite some local errors, keeps Keats's poem clearly in view. Unlike most recent commentators, Macksey does not maintain that the foreshadowing of winter and death at the end of the poem is the main point. Under the influence of de Man, Macksey does wander from the spirit of Keats in representing the poet as a self-declared "child," quoting the letter of 14–31 October 1818: "I give in to their feelings as though I were refraining from irritating a little child" (275). It is disappointing to have

to point out that Keats is representing his friends, not himself, as an irritable child.

Most of the essays in *Romanticism and Contemporary Criticism* were delivered as papers in 1984–85, at the last moment in American literary studies when an acknowledgement of the New Historicism could have been avoided. One essay, J. Hillis Miller's "On Edge: The Crossways of Contemporary Criticism," which first appeared in 1979, contains a classic deconstructive exposition of "A Slumber Did My Spirit Seal" and is reissued in this volume because it provoked M. H. Abrams's "Construing and Deconstructing," which contains a fuller discussion of the poem and a critique of the premises of Miller's procedures. In response, Miller offers "Postscript: 1984," in which he holds out for his 1979 interpretation, with perhaps slight modifications, against many pages of reasoned critique by Abrams; then, on the basis of a deconstructive maneuver, he declares either that he has triumphed or that he is sure to, at least among judicious readers. There is no hint of the shift expressed in his 1986 MLA presidential address, entitled "The Triumph of Theory, the Resistance to Reading, and the Question of the Material Base,"³ in which he attempted to persuade the audience that Derrida and de Man have always been Marxist at heart, while at the same time constructing an invisible bridge that can carry him over to the latest concern. One of the best features of the volume is its preservation of the lively question-and-answer sessions following the presentations by Miller, Abrams, and the other symposiasts, Frye, Mitchell, and Cavell. In them the essayists—challenged by an acute and well-informed audience—refined their positions and often achieved greater clarity than in the papers themselves.

Although Mitchell does not claim to have done historicist work in his essay, a paper that exhibits a style of thinking common in advanced writing of the 1980s, he takes in some historicist considerations in discussing Blake's relation to printing. And in the discussion session, he alludes to Burke, Said, and Williams, concluding with a paragraph in which he appears to say that he may soon go into serious Marxism, while, however, continuing in the playful Derridean manner.

Mitchell's main interests are apparent in his extensive discussion of Blake's scene of writing, in connection with an interpretation of the tailpiece design for the "Proverbs of Hell" (*The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, plate 10). Here the Devil acts as an interpreter for a writer while another person who holds a poised writing implement looks over toward the other two figures. In his professedly Derridean manner, but with no sign of ironic reservation, Mitchell argues that what we should see in this design is a new kind of imposition in which witless scribes (the one at left being less alert than the

one at right) are accepting the Devil's dubious dictation of infernal graffiti, which are either stale in themselves, because they are unoriginal and ubiquitous down there, or are rendered ineffectual by the Devil's commentary. In a more involved argument Mitchell further declares that the figures in Blake's picture are blasphemously derived from the Prophets, Sybils, and Nudes ("angels") in Michelangelo's Sistine Ceiling—as expounded by the late Edgar Wind. This Michelangelesque standard is supposed to show Blake's viewer that an unreliable encounter with texts is going on. In the end, according to Mitchell, the infernal way of reading and transmitting texts delivers nothing that is really better than the orthodox way. Ironically, though unobserved by Mitchell, such a view turns out to be quite compatible with major pre-deconstructionist interpretations of Erdman and Keynes: that some things in the picture are indeed supposed to be wrong, and that they reflect discredit on the foregoing "Proverbs of Hell." Evidently this history "has been adopted by both parties." But Blake for one does not agree.

The Marriage of Heaven and Hell is the first work of English literature written consciously and deliberately from the point of view of the Devil's Party. It is a satire, not merely a polemic, and thus contains features that complicate or qualify its words and pictures. But this illuminated book contains no invitation to the reader to adopt an adversarial point of view, angelic or other (if that is possible), toward the scenes, sayings, or stories in it. Blake undoubtedly expected that readers would initially resist the infernal point of view, but he indicates that angelic temperaments, be they as involved as Swedenborg's, can only invent mountains, never remove them. A heaven, so long as it is new, is built on "what was stolen from the abyss": energy. The imposture that makes a heaven old is a priestly, angelic fabrication, not the Devil's doing—as the Devil is envisioned by the narrator of the *Marriage*. Plate 3 announces that "the Eternal Hell revives." Any reader who immediately thereafter seeks for signs that hell is expiring even before things get heated up must be of the Angels' party without knowing it.

The crucial considerations in plate 10 are these: Since the design comes immediately after the Proverbs, the scribe at the viewer's left must represent the narrator who collected the Proverbs, and the figure at the viewer's right must represent the illustrator. The scroll that must contain the Proverbs of Hell appears to issue (in almost all copies) from under the robe of the narrator-scribe and then to receive appropriate reinforcement from the revolutionary Devil, who has descended from his seat of authority in his eager commitment to point out a text, such as the penultimate proverb: "Truth can never be told so as to be understood and not be believ'd." Skep-

tics who find solace in Blake's doctrine of contraries, which can be enlisted to support the rational premise that any extreme formulation should be counterbalanced by some moderate alternative, would have to search hard to discover a Proverb of Heaven to counteract that piece of infernal wisdom.

The figure at the viewer's right, probably female, shows by her familiar cross-legged position, with drawing sheet spread across her lap, that she must be an artist rather than another scribe. She eagerly awaits the space on the scroll after the end of the proverbs where the tail-piece to the Proverbs of Hell should appear, at the conclusion of the second main section of the *Marriage*. Indeed, the picture we see on the page of the codex book before us is the design she will have created. This figure can hardly be construed (despite the arguments of Erdman, Keynes, and Mitchell) as a second "scribe," one who is quicker than her dull-witted counterpart on the left, for then she would have no function except as a producer of extra copy. The seventy Proverbs of Hell, as a text, are completed and concluded with "Enough! or Too much," a final flourish that calls for no revisions or afterthoughts, especially those of the sort produced by "mechanical talents" so heavily ridiculed by the narrator on plate 22. But the addition of a pictorial tailpiece is an appropriate conclusion for the words of revolutionary art, involving no pointless supererogation.

The pictorial contrary of the design on plate 10 of the *Marriage* is the title page of *The Book of Urizen*, which is also discussed by Mitchell, though not in relationship to the *Marriage*. The title page of *Urizen*, like plate 10 of *Marriage*, depicts a scribe and both writing and artistic implements—but all misused. This scene of priestly imposition and obfuscation deserves all the opprobrium it has received from commentators, not least because Urizen tries to practice all the arts himself, and bungles them. They are beyond his powers because he also aspires to statecraft and moral authority and lacks the energy of imagination. Although Blake himself did have the necessary energy to excel in both verbal and visual arts, he chose in the *Marriage*, plate 10, to represent the liberty of creation and interpretation as a collective achievement, dependent upon the energetic guidance of the only infernal being actually depicted in the major pictures of the *Marriage*.

As part of his general exposition of the concept of "visible language," with particular reference to Blake's position in the eighteenth-century debate between the conservative-oral tradition of Burke and the democratic-textual innovations of Paine, Mitchell discusses images of writing in two familiar works by Blake. First he maintains that an alleged "sinister" nuance in the "Introduction" to *Innocence* is a commonplace; then he argues, possibly whimsically, that Urizen is supposed to be an ideologue of the left rather than the right.

Mitchell declares that "Blake's encomia on writing are frequently 'stained' by irony," (55) but, while admitting the obvious celebratory view of writing in "Introduction" to *Innocence*, he judges that "no critical reader of this poem . . . has been able to avoid the ironic undertones." The moment of writing is also the moment when the inspired child vanishes:

the hollow reed and the stained water suggest that a kind of emptiness, darkness and loss of innocence accompanies the very attempt to spread the message of innocence. What makes this a song of *innocence*, then, is the speaker's unawareness of these sinister connotations. Indeed, we might say that the most literal version of this innocence is the speaker's blithe assumption that the mere act of writing is equivalent to publication and a universally appreciative readership, a bit of wish-fulfillment that every writer will recognize. The piper . . . is unaware of both the problems and the possibilities of print culture. . . . (55-56)

In fact, despite Mitchell's pronouncement about the "ironic undertones" and "sinister connotations" of staining the water that must occur to any "critical reader," very few who have written well on Blake have thought to express such misgivings. Those hinted at by Gleckner and Hirsch, and expounded by one or two others, were disposed of by Adams in 1963 and Holloway in 1968. Such suspicions were revived by Edward Said in 1975, who proposed the curious argument that the piper is so inept as to try to use the water as paper.⁴ This unfortunate misconstrual was eventually identified and neutralized by Lawrence Lipking.⁵ The only "critical reader" who seems to have reached conclusions about "stain'd" similar to those of Mitchell and who has gone unanswered is Heather Glen in 1983.⁶ Her brand of politicized ironizing may well have seemed plausible to Mitchell, though he does not mention her work.

So far as Mitchell's own attempts to identify something "sinister" in "Introduction" to *Innocence* are concerned, the source of his difficulties appear to be with the word "stain'd." Why the senses of this word sometimes connected elsewhere by Blake with "sin" should distract the reader of this poem would be hard to explain except on the basis of loose deconstructionist "language" theories. As Adams pointed out, Blake's use of "stained" in the first line of his "To Autumn" ought to be enough to vindicate it; Keats's use of the word in the second stanza of "Ode to a Nightingale" offers further reassurance for those not determined to be bloody-minded. As most commentators remind us, "stained" refers to the making of ink and perhaps to watercolors. Had the verse permitted, Blake might have written "tinted" or "colour'd" without appreciable change in meaning.

What, then, shall the "sinister" residue alleged in "stain'd" be called? A smidgen? A trace? For the reader of Blake's poem it is insignificant: nothing worth theorizing about.

Mitchell's criticism has often been animated by a streak of antitheticalism and a Derridean alacrity in discovering some deep counter-signification that underlies or subverts the ostensible sense of a picture or poem. Not entirely unexpected then is his project in this essay to show how often Blake and Derrida are compatible. Despite my misgivings about this project, suspecting that Blake is at most as compatible with Derrida as he is with Voltaire and Rousseau, I attempted to suspend disbelief because I believe that Mitchell is a learned Blakean and has a powerful imagination. But the argument Mitchell puts up about the *Book of Urizen* (56-59), including a full-page reproduction of Morgan Copy B of the title page, is demonstrably wrong.

The old bearded often-blind scribe squatting among books on the title page of *Urizen* is conjectured by Mitchell to represent either "a self-portrait of the artist as a solitary reader" (58) or "a utopian revolutionary reformer" (59) like Rousseau or Condorcet. Since *Urizen* is shown deploying implements of artistic production, one might say that *Urizen* prompts the reader to think of Blake the artist, who unquestionably "printed" the illuminated book. If Blake were known to have affected a Whitmanian beard when he lived in Lambeth, one might think there could be more to the notion. The best evidence that Mitchell can offer for his thesis that *Urizen* is "a utopian revolutionary reformer," is to argue that Blake had a distaste for rationalism of any stripe, left or right, and that the notorious rationalists of the time were on the left. This, together with his activities as a mover and shaker is supposed to identify *Urizen* as a revolutionist! Mitchell does concede that "*Urizen* is no doubt sometimes employed as a figure of English reaction in the late 1790s" (58).

It is not easy to see how this solecism in defense of a paradoxical argument could have gone uncorrected, but a review of the facts will, of course, remind us that *Urizen* was not employed on *any* newly published projects "in the late 1790s" and his *entire* career prior to the appearance of *The First Book of Urizen* in 1794 was as "a figure of English reaction": *Urizen* was first named in *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* and was again named and first appeared in *America*, both dated 1793, and in those works unmistakably functions as the patron of reaction.

Such considerations would suggest that Mitchell simply made several careless mistakes though it is always conceivable that a critic in a Derridean manner assumed by Mitchell might still attempt to salvage some new adventures for *Urizen* in "the late 1790s." There is, to be sure, the manuscript of *Vala*, on which Blake may have been working, and even "Death" in the designs for Young's *Night Thoughts*, who looks like *Urizen*—though he is never called "*Urizen*" and is not consistent-

ly political on one side of the question or the other. The last expedient for discovering Urizen in "the late 1790s" (apart, that is, from cumming's "mr u") would be to appeal to *A Small Book of Designs*, a copy of which contained a color print of the title page of *Urizen* redated "1796" (Butlin Cat 261.1). Perhaps Blake's inscription, added to this print, can stand as the last word on the matter: "Which is the Way / The Right or the Left."

The interaction between J. Hillis Miller and M. H. Abrams during their rematch anent Wordsworth's "A Slumber Did My Spirit Seal" is probably the most interesting feature in *Romanticism and Contemporary Criticism* even though these old antagonists did not actually confront one another in Albuquerque. A 1979 essay by Miller, "On Edge: The Crossways of Contemporary Criticism" evidently led Abrams to respond with an essay entitled "Construing and Deconstructing." Of Miller's original fifteen pages, well over half are primarily addressed to perceived problems in and about Wordsworth's eight-line poem. In Abrams's response some fifteen pages are focused on the poem and what Miller made of it. In "Postscript: 1984" Miller responds unrepentantly in seven pages to Abrams's critique and Abrams added a few pages to his previous comments in his question and answer session. Anyone who had imagined that most of the issues concerning "A Slumber" must have been at least sighted by Bateson and Brooks in their venerable disagreement about the poem, which was so notably reported by Hirsch, is likely to be amazed that Miller and Abrams found so much more to say. Yet once one gets thinking about it, various other reflections arise that none of these champions chose to discuss. I doubt whether, however prompted, anyone else would ever have come up with the hypothetical dilemma proposed by Knapp and Michaels in their well-known 1982 piece entitled "Against Theory": the problem of interpreting the poem if it had somehow been written by waves on the seashore.⁷ Meanwhile Miller had gone farther out and got in deeper.

What Miller presents is an exercise in unbounded association round about the language used in Wordsworth's poem. Like most readers, Miller mentions "Lucy" (though of course she is not named in this poem) but unlike any previous reader, he particularly associates the dead person with Wordsworth's parents—not only his mother, who died in 1778, but also his father, who died in 1783—as well as with more familiar figures such as Dorothy (106). Soon this biographical association leads Miller into such assertions as:

"The speaker of the poem rather than being the opposite of Lucy, male to her female, adult knowledge to her prepubertal innocence, is the displaced representative of both the penetrated and the penetrator, of both Lucy herself and of her unravishing ravisher, nature or death. The speaker was 'sealed,' as she was. Now he knows. . . . Lucy is both the virgin child and the missing mother, that mother

earth that gave birth to the speaker and has abandoned him. . . . The poet himself somehow caused Lucy's death by thinking about it. Thinking recapitulates in reverse mirror image the action of the earthly years in touching, penetrating, possessing, killing, encompassing, turning the other into oneself and therefore being left only with a corpse, an empty sign. . . ." (108)

Miller goes on to archetypal analogies (not described as such, of course): the parents are the sun and moon as somehow (with the aid of a phrase from Stevens) implied in the name "Lucy," that is, "light" (109). There is even analogy: Lucy is the Logos. Presumably the only reason for excluding the Lucys of Dante and Donne is that their colorations were not markedly Freudian.

Abrams offers a summary, but doesn't attempt to reason with the author. Earlier Miller had gone into the metaphysics of the word "thing", not (of course) as an English word, but as a topic to be elucidated by references to Heidegger and Plato (104–5). Abrams did remind us that the girl in the English folksong "Charming Billy" is also repeatedly referred to as "a young thing" and indicates that this might bring us closer to the poem as written (152–53). It is true that the word "thing," especially as applied to women or children, has a rich presence in nineteenth century writing; I have recently noted cases in Blake, Austen, Keats, Dickens, Eliot, and Gilbert, any of which might seem more interesting in relation to Wordsworth than Heidegger's usage. Perhaps we could get a more useful grip on "thing" by noticing how Coleridge used it—of himself—in "Work Without Hope."

But as Abrams points out, Miller and his school take as their purview "the Western tradition generally" and thus "cut themselves free from the limitations of construing the poem as a specific lyric *parole*." (153) Thus, though you can find places where Miller seems to have paid attention to such basic structural features of the poem as the relation between before and after in the two stanzas, in the long run he doesn't care at all for them. He proposes as a paradox that a poem may not have "organic form at all"; but he means that if he discusses a poem at any length it will be to show that it doesn't. Thus he can probably in good conscience declare that those parts of his discourse which Abrams could commend as making some sense as the observations of a good reader were ironically intended, modest proposals—something, indeed, like the bone of sense T. S. Eliot's poetical burglar throws to the watchdog. I think this is a sincere rather than honest account of what prompted Miller's 1979 expatiation round Wordsworth's poem, for his notions of a wirey bounding line are so indefinite that he could not rule out any comments, even commonsensical or plausible ones.

Such a strategy of excess overwhelms any poem, particularly a little one, that has a distinct formal structure but the consolation is that one may, unlike "the

fond maniac" in *The Prelude*, regard such a work as a shell that will not be damaged by the deluge, however formidable and glittering it appears. The poem will eventually surface again, insufficiently elucidated, after the flood of "language" has receded. At that point readers will again see the point that Wordsworth's long-dead parents could have left no ascertainable mark on "A Slumber Did My Spirit Seal" even if William Wordsworth never got over his bereavement—conjuncturally, that is, since there is no evidence to support this theory or that it was ever mixed up in the Lucy complex.

At times Miller hints at underlying scenarios according to which the male speaker in "A Slumber" is expressing or betraying sexist attitudes toward the dead woman in the poem. Those interested in the poem as a determinant form must object that nothing in the words of the poem requires that the speaker be male; the poem could as well be articulated by a woman who had, recently, been bereft of another woman. It is necessary to maintain the specification *recently*, however, because, though some people have been known to have mourned longer than Queen Victoria, the word "now" in the poem insists that the special facts or qualities in question, whatever they may be, have finally (and recently) sunk into the consciousness of the bereft speaker.

Though I would maintain that Miller's persistent appellation of Wordsworth's poem as a "piece of language" and even as a linguistic "emergency" (e.g., 116) to justify his desperate critical measures is more likely to lose the patient-poem than to save it, there are peculiar verbal factors within Wordsworth's eight lines that may not have been encompassed either by his maneuvers or by Abrams's (see 115). It is indeed odd that Wordsworth should write of the slumber of a spirit, which is moreover, sealed. For Miller this is just an obvious case of the ultimate incomprehensibility of all poetry; for Abrams a special case quite different from most poetry. Interestingly, however, Miller paid no attention to the proposal as regards "spirit," which Abrams reports from Hugh Sykes Davies, to the effect that "'she' in the third line refers back to 'spirit' in the first" (145), thus producing a poem "about a trance-state of the speaker's own spirit." This line of inference, which was first proposed in print (I believe) by Robin Skelton a decade before Davies's better-reasoned discussion, is adjudged by Abrams as "not impossible, but extremely unlikely." It is, however, quite different in kind from Miller's expatiations in a verbal universe and probably more worthy of critical regard. In a way Davies was even more concerned with poetic integrity than Abrams or any expounder of "organic form," which Miller so deeply distrusts. One unconsidered reason that the Skelton-Davies theory that "she" is "my spirit" has considerable plausibility is that it makes most sense when "A Slumber" is read apart

from the (other) "Lucy" poems, as it often is represented in selections of just a few of Wordsworth's poems—and as it was in all the poetry collections published in Wordsworth's own lifetime. Thus it is that good students, who have heard nothing of the Skelton-Davies theory (why should they?) will sometimes spontaneously discover the spirit-she correlation that the poem itself certainly permits.

The critical performance of Stanley Cavell entitled "In Quest of the Ordinary: Texts of Recovery" is stylistically the most peculiar in either volume. It seems as though Cavell's aim as a thinker is to carry on past Kant and provide a critique of skepticism:

"My thought is that if, as I take it, skepticism is a place, perhaps the central secular intellectual place, in which the drive to deny the conditions of human existence is enacted; then so long as that denial of the human is essential to what we think of as the human, skepticism cannot, or what I call the threat of skepticism must not, be denied. You might even take it as the mission of philosophy now to preserve rather than to turn aside the scandal of skepticism—as if this preservation is our access to the memory that we are, or meant to be, human, to live with stumbling." (184)

So Cavell stumbles on and on, mixing up all the pronouns so ineptly that it is almost impossible to tell who is supposed to think what. That the author of such hedging prose should have been responsible for no less than eight books, and that these have attracted a following, is astonishing. Yet if the reader perseveres to the end of Cavell's piece he or she may be reassured that Cavell's heart is in the right place: he is on the side of the romantics, especially the American romantics, and against those skeptics. But having been subjected to such an ordeal of language without style I am brought to the verge of saying, "Damn his romantics!" and of drawing my Hume.

Eventually Cavell devotes ten pages to talk about "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" (193–203) but, though here the style is not quite so bad, anyone would rather read Wolfson or Reed in spite of what I "take to be" their errors. A mark of Cavell's rhetorical disorientation is that he keeps talking about "the line" in Coleridge's poem as though it referred to a "line" that Kant either discusses or implies. Unless you happen to pick up a casual reference on page 199 or to read another of Cavell's discussions of the poem elsewhere (not specifically identified in the footnotes), you cannot be sure that he knew that "the line" in Coleridge's poem means the equator. The fact that "the line" was in place in the 1798 version of the poem, before Coleridge knew anything of Kant, ought to have been sufficient to have aborted Cavell's thesis. But Cavell is irrepressible. He does not even have recourse to deconstructive whimsicality in arguing that the mariner shot the albatross because he wanted to get to know the bird better.

What a surprise, then, to hear Cavell perform spontaneously through fourteen pages of question and answer! Suddenly he drops the hedging manner (which is suited only for obfuscation) and speaks quite simply and forthrightly about his purposes in combatting skepticism. The sincerity of his final statement is even quite moving, but there remains the pathos in the demonstrated fact that he will not write in a way that would encourage anyone to give up a debilitating skepticism. The two voices of Stanley Cavell are the opposite of the two that J. K. Stephen detected in Wordsworth's language: neither comes close to sublimity, but the personal one is engaging.

Finally, the contribution of Northrop Frye. When I first read *Fearful Symmetry* in 1949 on the advice of the late Richard Ellmann I had the immediate sense that great criticism was being written in my time. As with *Lord Weary's Castle* (of the same vintage) Frye seemed certain to prove as readable as Arnold and as interesting as Coleridge a century hence. Not everyone saw Frye that way: often those who felt themselves equal to Ransom or Blackmur or Burke were unable to cope with "The Burden of the Valley of Vision." It wasn't for almost a decade thereafter that it became obligatory to understand Frye. Then, after another decade opinion-makers began to declare that Frye was a Christian, and no better than Arnold, and therefore outmoded, though due some respect as an elder statesman. Under questioning, Miller confessed in 1984 that Frye seemed to him some kind of Jungian, for whom "archetypes tend to be thought of as preceding or exceeding any of their embodiments" (123). Or a structural anthropologist who, after gathering a hundred different examples of myth, tries to discern "some original myth of which they are all representative." He declares that this is an "anaclastic illusion" to which Frye "sometimes seems to yield."

Though Frye has often denied that he is in any way a Jungian and imagines instead that all myths are culturally transmitted, Miller's impression that Frye believes in ur-myths is hardly without foundation. In "The Survival of Eros in Poetry" Frye begins with what must be his hundredth retelling of the four main levels of the mental cosmos. Frye would maintain that he had to do so because there were certain to be students and others in the audience who were not conscious of ever having heard of such an organizing scheme. Just as a person cannot get oriented in the physical world without reference to the points of the compass, so a reader cannot find bearings in the literary universe without reference to an hierarchical scheme that starts with the gods at the top. This breeds uneasiness for advanced critical thinkers who believe that literary studies would be better off if they were immediately divested of all the illusions of Coleridge and the compromises of Arnold. The aura of Christianity that still surrounds the figure of Frye, together with his

sometime lack of responsiveness to gender distinctions, have had much to do with his rapid descent from critical eminence during the last generation.

Certainly Frye is not going to ride back into office with the next movement currently assuming power in criticism. New Historicists have decided that Frye has no interest in historical criticism and will thus continue to overlook the fact that the first chapter in *Anatomy of Criticism* is entitled "Historical Criticism," and that it is, at bottom, hardly more schematic than the Marxism of the New Historicism. But Frye's kind of historicism deals with literature as an imaginative product, while that of the New Historicist deals with literature as a class product. Thus when Frye, in "The Survival of Eros in Poetry," writes as follows, he in effect admits that he has not taken out any insurance in his own popularity for the next decade: "Society is much less willing to grant literature or the other arts any degree of inner authority . . . Certain Marxist regimes, such as Stalinist Russia with its 'social realism' and the so-called Gang-of-Four group in China, deny such authority as a matter of dogma. . . ." (24)

The mark that this is no better than newspaper historicizing is not the general point, or even the clichéd, if true, identification of the adversary, but the solecism "social realism." The Stalinist standard was, of course, socialist realism, a very different matter of projecting the correct role models and working to show devotion to the state. It is hard not to feel that this elementary mistake occurred in the writing of this brilliant critic because of what he does, from time to time, acknowledge as comparative dissymmetry with "realism" of any stripe. In the pleasantly vigorous give and take of the long question and answer period at Albuquerque Frye acquitted himself better and more genially than he has often done in the past. Anyone who has the impression that Frye is only interested in classifying, pigeonholing, and categorizing literature will be surprised to discover that he can be as good-natured and appreciative as Charles Lamb. You could not tell it from most of his essay, except for some shrewd and (I believe) new observations about De Quincey, but for all his generalizing and synthetic power, Frye is at bottom a great reader of literary works as they are, from their own point of view. The reason that most of his Blake is still with us is that Frye was not struck dumb by the wonder of "Introduction" to *Experience, Milton*, or even by Blake's books as illuminated.

¹Milton's Spenser: The Politics of Reading (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1983) 29.

²"The New Historicism and its Discontents: Politicizing Renaissance Drama," *PMLA* 102 (1987): 299.

³*PMLA* 102 (1987): 281-91.

⁴*Beginnings: Intention and Method*. (New York: Basic Books, 1975) 227; the passage occurs on pages 205-6 of the Columbia UP, 1985 reprint.

⁵"Life, Death, and Other Theories," *Historical Studies and Literary Criticism*, ed. Jerome J. McGann (U of Wisconsin P, 1985) 190-91.

⁶*Vision and Disenchantment: Blake's Songs & Wordsworth's Lyrical Ballads* (Cambridge UP, 1983) 66-99.

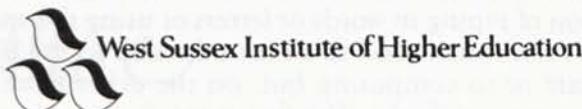
⁷Steven Knapp and Walter Benn Michaels, "Against Theory," *Against Theory*, ed. W. J. T. Mitchell (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1985): 15-16. My point here is that these authors deliberately conceived of a far-fetched set of circumstances in which Wordsworth's poem might conceivably appear in order to illustrate a theoretical point about how it would be transformed thereby. There is nothing wrong with entertaining thoughts about such an hypothetical situation even though it would never occur to any reader trying to construe the poem. In thus employing the term "construe" to express a basic aim of interpretation I am following Abrams, who argues persuasively for the rehabilitation of this venerable standard for criticism. The Knapp-Michaels discussion about Wordsworth's poem, on the other hand, does not pretend to be a construal and thus differs from erroneous or preposterous interpretations, which do.

Francis Curtis and Richard Dean. *Blake: A Software Package*. West Sussex Institute of Higher Education, Bishop Otter College, College Lane, Chichester, West Sussex, England, PO19 4PE, 1987.

Reviewed by David Worrall

The search for new ways of teaching is as essential as keeping up with the latest developments in literary theory; indeed, it might even be said that literary theory necessitates new ways of teaching. *Blake: A Software Package* is not the answer to all of our problems in presenting Blake to undergraduate students previously virtually unacquainted with his work, but it presents an interesting field for further exploration and I found the process of evaluation quite a revealing one.

My students do a fairly traditional English literature program which they take with one other subject such as sociology, history, classical studies, drama, or geography. Blake is a year-two author in a traditional "author"-based course where he is taught after Wordsworth but before "the others." Seminar groups each comprise about eight to ten students who have been reading and discussing, at least, *The Book of Thel*, *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, *Visions of the Daughters of Albion*, and *America*, while lectures will have introduced them to the wider work of Blake. Blake's illuminated books are projected, as complete works, onto the seminar room wall and discussion takes place on that basis. It was within this framework of teaching that I introduced the software package at the end of the course



West Sussex Institute of Higher Education



William Blake

A COMPUTER SOFTWARE PACKAGE

of seminars. The Blake software is easy to load and runs on a BBC microcomputer with 32K of RAM. It is currently the system most widely found in the U.K. for use in schools and in further and higher education.

The title of the program, *Blake: A Software Package*, is rather misleading as it is based entirely on "London" and does not offer an introduction to the rest of the *Songs* let alone Blake's other works. My first impression on using the program was how odd it seemed to go back to the *printed* word (even in electronic form) after looking quite intensively at the combination of Blake's word and image. Perhaps one would need to look forward to a new age of electronics (and a new age of funding) for software which could incorporate high-quality visuals with some sort of enhancement to explore the detail of Blake's between-the-line illuminations. Nevertheless, loading the floppy disc is easy and you soon have another "person" in the seminar room as the T.V. monitor's ice-cold eye awaits appeasement and suggestion.

The program's introductory messages are laid out in colored blocks of text with simple instructions. Using the software via the keyboard is extremely easy, merely a question of typing in words or letters or using the space bar. It's not much good as an introduction to the BBC hardware or to computing but, on the other hand, it quells computer fright. The first menu is the only part of the program that is truly interactive and this simply asks you to "fill in the missing word" so "charter'd" must be correctly contracted and punctuated even if one of the other missing words, "appalls," swallows up the comma at the end of the line if you are to get the CORRECT message. This proved to be quite a good way of seeing how closely students had acclimatized themselves to Blake's writing.

The second phase of the program leads to simple manuscript revisions of "London" which signal obvious points for general discussion: such as why Blake eventually decided "charter'd" rather than "dirty," "mark" rather than "see," "Infants cry of fear" rather than "voice of every child." It's at this level that one realizes that the software package is aimed at schools at least as much, if not more than, institutions of higher education. There is also no further scope for interactivity between student and program after this section. Indeed, the program implicitly reintroduces the tutor so that monitor and program virtually become a colored open text book.

The third phase presents a rather traditional list of "high" literary texts which might provide a literary context for Blake's "London." These include Johnson's "London: A Poem," Swift's "A Description of the Morning," and "A Description of a City Shower," Gay's "Trivia, or the Art of Walking the Streets of London," essays such as Addison's on "The Royal Exchange," Steele's "The Hours of London," and passages from Defoe's *Moll Flanders* and Wordsworth's *The Prelude*. The student then looks these pieces up in the anthologies often available for undergraduate teaching.

The fourth part of the program calls up Wordsworth's "Composed Upon Westminster Bridge" and *The Prelude* (1805) 7.593-598 for further discussion and comparison. The fifth and final part of the program isolates gnomic looking lines from Johnson's "London":

In vain, these Dangers past, your Doors you close,
And hope the balmy Blessings of Repose:
Cruel with Guilt, and daring with Despair,
The midnight Murd'rer bursts the faithless Bar;
Invades the sacred Hour of silent Rest
And leaves, unseen, a Dagger in your Breast. (236-241)

Studying the lines out of their Johnsonian context, on the screen, in the seminar room, it seemed to us that Blake's "Harlots curse" of "plagues" might suggest a similar "venereal disease" reading of Johnson's lines. This is the most sophisticated work we did on the pro-

gram; the compilers have suitably tailored it so that the greatest degree of difficulty of response is reached at the end. The students did find it, at first, slightly unusual to have a T. V. monitor rather than just me on the end of the desk but within a few minutes they were able to accept it as being a neutral object in the room to which one referred as to the printed page. The most noticeable feature of using this software was exactly this, that it became a talking point around which the discussion could, but needn't, circulate.

The major limitation of *Blake: A Software Package* is the tiny capacity of the floppy disc and the BBC computer: there's very little one can do with such a small memory and it seems to rule out searching individual words across, say, the *Songs*, or calling up full, line by line revisions. Given that the lack of a good graphics facility is likely to continue, I still think there are things that unsophisticated computers, and even more unsophisticated computer operators, can do to give an extra dimension to teaching.

For example, it would be good to have a program capable of referring the reader to texts which might be associated with the *Songs* but which are not "high" literature, such as contemporary texts relevant to chimney sweeps, or hymns for children or contemporary newspaper items. All these are difficult to get out of books without having a toppling pile in the seminar room. Gathering together such disparate materials on disc would be a useful aid to teaching. On a more specialized note, it would be good to have in a computer program the various orderings of the *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* with some simple function so that the student could work out Blake's statistical preferences. Again, I believe that this would be a more exciting use of information technology than merely using the program as a televised book.

Blake: A Software Package is neatly produced on screen, easy to read, easy to use (the accompanying handouts are rather dismal in their range of suggestions and presentation although the A5 format lends itself to photocopying as worksheets). It would be good to see Francis Curtis and Richard Dean have the opportunity to edit and publish more powerful programs in the field of Blake and Romantic studies.

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MINUTE PARTICULAR

"Malden" in Blake's *Jerusalem*

David W. Lindsay
M. A. L. Locherbie-Cameron

The role of the druids in the symbolic terminology of Blake's later work has been frequently discussed, and its general significance is now well understood.¹ Northrop Frye and others have shown how the sacrificial rituals of druidism were linked with London Stone and the Tree of Mystery, and have exposed the druidical origins of political tyranny and Newtonian science. Though we are still unclear about Blake's London-Welsh contacts, pictorial and verbal sources for his serpent-temple imagery have been found in antiquarian literature. His presentation of druidism, however, contains many details which remain puzzling, and one of these is the prominence of the name "Malden." *Fearful Symmetry* has nothing to say about Malden and much to say about Stonehenge, but the text of *Jerusalem* names Stonehenge on five occasions and Malden on eight. The connections between Malden and druidism seem worth exploring.

On plate 21, when Albion is lamenting his children's sufferings under the Babylonian tyranny of Hand and Hyle, Malden and Colchester are linked with five British mountains which "Reason in Cruelty" and "Demonstrate in Unbelief," thus tormenting Liverpool and Manchester and causing four London districts to "mourn" and "sicken" for four of Albion's daughters. On plate 27, in the lyrical section of the preface to chapter 2, an eastward movement from Lambeth through Malden to the Euphrates is connected with Albion's sleep, Jerusalem's fall, and the triumph of Satan's druidical religion of human sacrifice. On plate 41[37], Malden and Canterbury are associated with "the delights of cruelty" in another account of Jerusalem's fall and division as an eastward movement. On plate 57, in a passage about the symbolic conflict between "the Fires of the Druid" and the "deep black rethundering Waters / Of the Atlantic," Malden and Colchester are envisaged as the sites of "Druid Altars" and connected with other places where humanity has been sacrificed to a jealous sky-god. On plate 65, when Albion's "Spectre Sons" are tormenting Luvah on the "Stone of Trial," the phrases "over Malden" and "of Canterbury" are awkwardly added to lines from *The Four Zoas*⁷ in order to link those towns with the worship of Vala as war-goddess. On plate 68, within the framework of another sadistic war-song,

"Maldens cove" is related to Stonehenge in a further account of Jerusalem's eastward fall. On plate 90, a passage about the response of Albion's "Giants" to the vehement words of Los connects Malden with the Great Glen and the island of Jura, appearing to suggest that all three possessed stone circles of the type erected by druids and deists. On plate 94, the lament of the newly-awakened England or Britannia envisages Malden as a place whose "Oak Groves," like Stonehenge and London Stone, served as settings for a druidical sacrifice of the Eternal Man to prohibitive morality.

Scholars have agreed in identifying Blake's "Malden" not with Malden in Surrey but with Maldon in Essex, which is referred to as Malden in Cooke's *Topographical and Statistical Description of Essex* (c. 1806-10). Although the phrase "Maldens cove" need not mean that Malden is a coastal town, because Blake elsewhere uses "cove" in archaic and dialectal senses unrelated to the sea,² nonetheless the allusions to "Malden" on plates 21 and 57 connect it with Colchester, and those on plates 27, 41[37] and 68 place it east of London. It is equally clear that Maldon is to be connected in the cosmology of *Jerusalem* with a druidical religion of oak-groves and stone circles, human sacrifice and rational demonstration. Maldon emerges from these texts as a British analogue to Calvary, a place where the values of liberty and the imagination are cruelly subordinated to those of jealousy and war. Many commentators have found it hard to explain, however, why this minor port on the Essex coast should be envisaged as a major center of sacrificial religion. Foster Damon correctly observes that it has "some prehistoric remains" but "no rocking stones or druidic circle." He also claims that Maldon and Colchester were "connected in Blake's mind with naval or military disturbances," but this is an implausible conjecture based on a misinterpretation of the word "demonstrate."³ W. H. Stevenson usefully reminds us that Maldon was "supposed (by Camden and others) to be the site of the Roman Camulodunum"; but in explanation of *Jerusalem* 90:58-66 he can only repeat Damon's statement that the town has "prehistoric remains, but no stone circles."⁴ One might add that it has not in modern times been conspicuously rich in oak forests.

Maldon is best known among modern students of literature as the site of a battle which was celebrated in an Old English heroic poem, and Morton D. Paley has sought to explain Blake's use of the name by reference to this text. He connects the bloody fight on the Blackwater estuary with Blake's phrase about the accumulation of a "black water"; and he asserts that "the heroic Byrhtnoth was killed with a poisoned spear," and that the victorious Vikings "went on to sack London."⁵ Though Blake's anti-militarist ethos is far removed from that of the Old English poem, he might well have interpreted this anni-

hilation of Christian Saxons by pagan Danes as a druidical sacrifice, and readers familiar with *Fearful Symmetry* will have no difficulty in seeing Byrhtnoth as an Anglo-Saxon analogue of Balder, Odin, Absalom, Fuzon, and Christ. Such a connection between *The Battle of Maldon* and Blake's *Jerusalem* is more aesthetically satisfying than historically probable, however, for the Old English poem was scarcely known at the relevant date. When Thomas Hearne produced the first printed text in 1726 in the appendix to a Latin chronicle, he called it "Frag-mentum quoddam historicum de Eadrico etc." and made no reference to Maldon; J. J. Conybeare's translation did not appear until 1826, by which time the whole text of *Jerusalem* had been engraved.⁶ Even the battle commemorated in the Old English poem was not a conspicuous event in Blake's main sources for early British history. Milton's *History of Britain*, for example, dismisses it in a single sentence:

The third year following, under the conduct of *Justin* and *Guthmund* the Son of *Steytan*, they landed and spoiled *Ipswich*, fought with *Britnoth* Duke of the *East Angles* about *Maldon*, where they slew him; the slaughter else had bin equal on both sides.⁷

Rapin's *History of England*, which Blake knew at least by reputation, is no more illuminating. It too reports the battle in one sentence, and although it names "Brittnoth" it does not at this point name Maldon.⁸ For the historians whose work was available to Blake, this routine encounter between Anglo-Saxon and Danish forces could not compete in dramatic interest with the British rebellion which sacked Camulodunum. References to it might catch the attention of readers already interested in Maldon, but there was nothing in the chronicle-derived accounts of the battle that would of itself make the event seem either historically or symbolically important.

A better pointer to the main significance of Maldon for antiquarians of Blake's time is Stevenson's observation that some writers identified it as the site of Camulodunum; and some of the implications of this fact have been explored in a learned and informative article by David Worrall.⁹ Taking up a suggestion made by John Beer,¹⁰ Worrall shows that Blake's interpretation of early British history was significantly influenced by the text and engravings of Aylett Sammes' *Britannia Antiqua Illustrata*.¹¹ He connects Blake's description of Hand with Sammes' account of four Saxon gods, one of whom was "worshipped as Mars"; and he suggests that the overthrow of a false god on plate 94 of *Jerusalem* may recall not only Milton's *Nativity Ode* but also Sammes' report that a Roman statue of Victory was overthrown in Camulodunum at the time of Boadicea's rebellion. Worrall points out that Sammes represents Malden as a "British religious centre" whose chief deities were Heus and Adraste; and he quotes Sammes' conjectures that

"Heus, Mars or Camulus . . . was not only worshipped as a God of War but of Peace also," that "this Camulus" gave his name to "Camulodunum, or Mars-hill, near Malden in Essex," and that the name of Heus was also "given to Bacchus." Sammes further identified Adraste with Venus, thus giving added significance to the ceremonies at her temple in Maldon, where the Britons "sacrificed Prisoners alive" and spent their time "in Feasts and Banquets." This system of multiple identifications would have obvious attractions for Blake, since it allowed him to unite a druidical sacrifice with a Bacchic orgy and to interpret the result as an act of homage to a Urizen-like war-god and a Vala-like love-goddess. Worrall's arguments leave one in no doubt that Blake was familiar with Sammes' work, and that his image of Maldon as a religious center was substantially determined by it.

Sammes' account of Maldon's distinctive place in religious history can be supplemented, however, by reference to works published in Blake's lifetime; among these the writings of Philip Morant (1700–1770) are of particular significance, especially for the connection between Maldon and Colchester. Morant was born in Jersey, but spent most of his life as a clergyman in Essex. In 1738 he became Rector of St.-Mary's-at-the-Walls in Colchester, and in 1748 he published *The History and Antiquities of Colchester*. He was elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries in 1755, and between 1763 and 1768 he produced a richly-illustrated work in two volumes entitled *The History and Antiquities of the County of Essex*. After his wife's death in 1767 he went to live in Battersea with his son-in-law Thomas Astle, the eccentric lawyer whom Erdman in 1954 identified as the "Etruscan Column" of *An Island in the Moon*.¹² Although Morant died two years before Blake began his apprenticeship, he may well have known Blake's master James Basire, who was engraver to the Society of Antiquaries. *The History and Antiquities of Colchester*, which had been revised and incorporated in the larger work, appeared in octavo and duodecimo versions in 1789 and 1810; *The History and Antiquities of the County of Essex* was itself reprinted in 1816.¹³

In the introduction to *The History and Antiquities of the County of Essex*, Morant quotes at length from a dissertation on the county's Roman roads by "the late Smart Lethieullier, Esq." Lethieullier argues that Essex was "fully inhabited in the British times," and that its "vast Forest" was a "proper Habitation" for the Druids; but he explains that the "want of Quarries of Stone" made it impossible for the Britons of this area to "leave such Monuments of themselves here, as . . . at Stonehenge, Rollright, and elsewhere."¹⁴ In his discussion of Colchester, Morant offers a similar picture in support of his claim that there was a town on this site "even in the earliest times." He asserts that the area was "covered

with woods," and points out that "according to J. Caesar, the Strong Towns or fortified Places, of the Britans were only thick Woods, fenced with a ditch and a rampart." He argues that "the Woodiness of this place" was "quite suited and agreeable to the Religion of the ancient Britans," and reminds us that "Woods, especially of Oaks, were the Habitations of the Druids, and their places of religious worship." It was in such woods that "all their Mysteries were transacted, and their Sacrifices offered," and it was there that "their much admired and celebrated Mistletoe grew." As "the Instructors of Youth" they had schools "situated in the midst of pleasant groves," and they also had "little arch'd, round stone-buildings," in one of which a "retir'd and contemplative Druid" might sit "when his Oak would not shelter him from the Weather." Morant acknowledges that the Colchester area has "no remains of Druidical Temples or Altars," but argues that the monuments which once existed "have been demolish'd to make room for other Edifices, or even for the sake of Stones to be employed in building." That the district is now "thinly wooded" does not disturb him, because "great Alterations must have happened in the surface of the Earth in the course of above 2,000 years."

These arguments provide the excuse for a learned footnote about "Druidical Temples and Altars." Morant explains that these are "stupendous and massy stones, either standing single or in circles, or in rows, with others of enormous bulk, set up horizontally." He reports that such monuments exist "at Stoneheng, and Abury, in Wiltshire," and at other sites in Cornwall, Wales, Scotland, Ireland and Jersey; and he asserts that the "true use of them was first discovered by John Aubrey, Esq." For further information he refers "the curious reader" to

the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of London's last edition of Camden's *Britannia*, the Rev. H. Rowland's *Mona antiqua restaurata*, J. Toland's *Postumous Works*, Vol. I, M. Martin's *Description of the Western Islands of Scotland*, The Rev. Ph. Falle's *Account of Jersey*; and especially the learned Dr. W. Stukeley's most curious Works on that Subject.

He does not mention Sammes, however, and he does not suggest that any of these books records druidical monuments on the Essex coast.¹⁵

Morant's description of druidical Essex is immediately followed by his account of the Roman conquest. He rejects Camden's suggestion that Mars was worshipped at Camulodunum under the name of Camulus; but he reports that a temple was erected there in honor of the Emperor Claudius, and that the priests of that temple "behaved with intolerable Insolence towards the natives." Opposing Camden's suggestion that Camulodunum was at Maldon, he argues that Tacitus' praise of the town's site "agrees very well with Colchester," but "doth not by any means agree with Maldon, seated in

one of the most unhealthy corners of the kingdom"; and he cites archaeological evidence to prove that Colchester was the site of "a very considerable Roman Town." On this basis, he proceeds to demolish Camden's etymological arguments:

After all, there is not so great a Necessity of fetching the name of Maldon from Cama- or Camu-lodunum, as Mr. Camden and others have imagined; upon a kind of presumption that it could not so well admit of any other derivation. For it is plainly a Saxon name formed from the two words Mæl a cross, or boundary, and dun a hill. As if you should say Cross-Hill: The occasion of which name, as of many others, is at present unknown.¹⁶

Morant also records the tradition that Helena and her son Constantine were born in Colchester; and he claims that her discovery of the True Cross is commemorated in the arms of Colchester, which show "a Cross between three crowns, or coronets."¹⁷ Morant's long account of the history of Colchester includes a brief reference to the Battle of Maldon, which tells us that the Danes overthrew "Byrthnoth the King's ealdorman" and "remained masters of the field of battle";¹⁸ and the same statements appear in the section about Maldon in his description of the Hundred of Dengey. This section also reports that Maldon "is one of the two ancientest Towns in the County of Essex," that it "stands on an eminence, or side of a hill, south of the river Idumanum, or Blackwater-bay," and that its bay "makes a convenient harbour" from which "the merchants carry on a considerable trade." Here again Morant rejects the notion that Maldon "was the *Colonia-Camulodunum* mentioned in Antonine's Itinerary," and offers an etymology more plausible than Camden's: "The name of it is derived from the two Saxon words Mæl, a cross, and dun, a hill; qu. Cross-hill."¹⁹

In the writings of Philip Morant, then, Blake could have found the name of Maldon associated with druidism, oak forests, stone circles, imperial tyranny, the Roman war-god, a busy harbour, the death of Byrthnoth, and a cross on a hill. Most of that material, including the crucial etymology, was available both in *The History and Antiquities of Colchester*, versions of which appeared in 1748, 1789 and 1810, and in *The History and Antiquities of Essex*, which appeared in 1768 and was reprinted in 1816. The chronology of Blake's *Jerusalem* is a complex and controversial problem,²⁰ but it is obvious that Blake could have encountered Morant's comments on Maldon before he engraved those plates in which the town is mentioned. The large-scale replacement of biblical with British place-names came at a late stage in the development of Blake's mythology, and might still have been in process when the 1810 version of *The History and Antiquities of Colchester* was published; but in any case this material could have reached Blake through an earlier version, or even through the

conversation of antiquaries, booksellers, and engravers. What can hardly be doubted is that Blake's identification of Maldon as a center of sacrificial religion was encouraged by a report that the name of this ancient town alluded to a cross on a hill. Blake had found many passages in the Old Testament which allowed him to equate other biblical mountains with Calvary, and Blake scholarship is familiar with the many variants of that hilltop crucifixion in which Orc howls "time after time" on Mount Atlas. As he moved from biblical to British names, Blake saw analogues to Calvary in the Tyburn execution-place and the Snowdon of Gray's "The Bard"; and he enlisted other British mountains, from Penmaenmawr to "the Rocky Peak of Derbyshire," as equivalents for such places as the mountain-top of Genesis 22 and the Ebal of Deuteronomy 27. It was altogether natural, in this context, that he should attach some importance to a town with druidical and Roman connections whose name was translated by one authority as "Mars-hill" and by another as "Crosshill." When one adds to this the fact that Sammes gave "Hesus" as an alternative name for the war-god to whom sacrifices were made at Maldon,²¹ it becomes clear that the little port on the Essex coast would have for Blake a range of associations which made it a symbol of manifold significance. Maldon took its place, therefore, in Blake's apocalyptic vision of that primeval catastrophe which divided Jerusalem from Albion and released Satan "in all the pomp of War." In the age which "began to turn allegoric and mental signification into corporeal command," the "Oak Groves of Maldon" had been "the Habitations of the Druids, and their places of religious worship." Although the "reasoning historian" might doubt their existence, the stone circles beside "Maldens Cove" had been the "Temples and Altars" where "the Druids golden Knife / Rioted in human gore."²²

¹Ruthven Todd, "William Blake and the Eighteenth-Century Mythologists," in *Tracks in the Snow: Studies in English Science and Art* (London: Grey Walls Press, 1946); Northrop Frye, *Fearful Symmetry: A Study of William Blake* (Princeton NJ: Princeton UP, 1947) 129–32, 397–99; David V. Erdman, *Blake: Prophet against Empire* (Princeton NJ: Princeton UP, 1954) 196–97; Peter F. Fisher, "Blake and the Druids," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 58 (1959): 589–612; A. L. Owen, *The Famous Druids* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962) 224–36; S. Foster Damon, *A Blake Dictionary: The Ideas and Symbols of William Blake* (Providence RI: Brown UP, 1965) 108–10; Glenda Carr, *William Owen Pugh* (Caerdydd: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 1983) 183–91; Morton D. Paley, *The Continuing City: William Blake's Jerusalem* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983) 160–61, 196–97; Dena Taylor, "A Note on William Blake and the Druids of Primrose Hill," *Blake* 17 (1983–84): 104–05.

²See plate c of *America*, line 1, and plate 66 of *Jerusalem*, lines 13 and 57.

³Damon 260.

⁴William Blake, *The Poems*, ed. W. H. Stevenson (London: Longman, 1971) 679, 826–27.

⁵Paley 76, 198.

⁶Thomas Hearne, *Johannis Confratris et Monachi Glastoniensis Chronica sive Historia de Rebus Glastoniensibus*, 2 vols. (Oxonii: e Theatro Sheldoniano, 1726) 2: 570–77; J. J. Conybeare, *Illustrations of Anglo-Saxon Poetry* (London: Harding and Lepard, 1826) lxxvii–xcvi.

⁷John Milton, *Complete Prose Works*, vol. 5, part 1 (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1971) 334–35.

⁸Paul de Rapin-Thoyras, *The History of England*, trans. and continued to the accession of George II, by N. Tindal, with the reign of George II by T. Smollett, 5 vols. (London: John Harrison, 1789) 1: 104.

⁹David Worrall, "Blake's *Jerusalem* and the Visionary History of Britain," *Studies in Romanticism* 16 (1977): 189–216.

¹⁰John Beer, *Blake's Humanism* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1968) 255.

¹¹Aylett Sammes, *Britannia Antiqua Illustrata: or, the Antiquities of Ancient Britain* (London: Tho. Rycroft, 1676).

¹²Erdman 30.

¹³Philip Morant, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Essex*, 2 vols. (London: J. Osborne and others, 1768), rpt. with an introduction by G. H. Martin (Wakefield, West Yorkshire: E. P. Publishing, 1978) 1: v–xviii.

¹⁴Morant 1, 1978 intro, ii.

¹⁵Morant 1, History and Antiquities of Colchester, 11–12.

¹⁶Morant 1, History and Antiquities of Colchester, 13–15.

¹⁷Morant 1, History and Antiquities of Colchester, 28, 34.

¹⁸Morant 1, History and Antiquities of Colchester, 44.

¹⁹Morant 1, The Hundred of Dengey, 327–28.

²⁰Paley 1–7.

²¹Worrall 207.

²²William Blake, *Complete Writings*, ed. Geoffrey Keynes (London: Oxford UP, 1966) 246, 279, 281, 484, 578–79, 650, 689, 706, 742; Morant 1: 12.

DISCUSSIONS

Finishing Blake

Paul Mann

Since Peter Otto's response to the tandem articles written by Robert Essick and myself about Blake's possible production plans for *The Four Zoas* is not precisely an attack, this will not be precisely a defense.¹ I had proposed that at some stage of his work on *The Four Zoas*, Blake toyed more or less seriously with the idea of publishing the poem in letterpress, in a format rather like the *Night Thoughts* edition he did with Edwards. Essick nicely modified this hypothesis by proposing that at some earlier stage Blake seems to have experimented with producing the entire work in intaglio, then directed the project toward letterpress with intaglio etched and/or engraved illustrations, then finally suspended publication plans, though without abandoning work on the

manuscript for some time. Otto has no objection to the first two hypothetical working stages; indeed, they seem hardly to interest him. It is our rather plain and hardly more than descriptive claim that *The Four Zoas* became for Blake "a working manuscript unrelated to any specific production intentions" (Essick 18:219; see also Mann 18:208) that inspires Otto's response, or rather his *swerve*, his shift of the discussion to an entirely different level. The course of this swerve seems to me to exemplify one of the most characteristic moves in Blake studies: the dematerialization of Blake's work.

I should not speak for Essick here, but I will suggest that his extensive studies of Blake's production methods and the conditions of Blake's works provide us with a wealth of materials for a kind of interpretation that still remains largely unexplored, perhaps even by Essick himself: an interpretation in which Blake is no longer primarily a poet(-prophet) or inspired illustrator, nor even precisely a composite artist, as the current compromise has it, but first and foremost someone as committed to working *in* his materials as any sculptor or painter, someone whose work was absolutely identified with his *work*. (The analogy here would be with Rodin, were it not otherwise so imprecise.) For me, the process of seeing *The Four Zoas* as a manuscript in which Blake was not only investigating poetic and graphic possibilities but also his commitments to different material forms and modes of publication, was a process of learning to see the work in the work. I have elsewhere called this double work, this work whose first goal is to manifest and epitomize a kind of work, Blake's "production-aesthetic," a rather clumsy phrase meant to do nothing more than mark his deliberate insistence on the in-sistence of imaginative labor in concrete materials and methods.² But one need hardly take any of this into consideration to see the point of our articles: they are quite straightforward attempts to examine the manuscript's material conditions and to explore the possibilities for publication that those conditions imply; that is, to grasp the manuscript precisely as manuscript, as I emphasized at the end of my article.

But the situation of the manuscript, of any manuscript, is a loaded critical issue. We inhabit an age when theories of displacement and supplementarity, for instance, lend a certain cachet to the romantic fragment or unfinished work. They need no longer be dismissed as failures, as an earlier (by implication: benighted) age would have done. Our notions of poetic unity are less rigorous, more liberal, if they survive at all: now we tend to grant a strange integrity to the fragment and distrust the unity of the masterpiece. It is in this discursive environment that Otto's defense of *The Four Zoas* takes place. His task is to rescue the manuscript from those mechanistic critics (he rounds up the usual suspects,

Frye and Bentley) for whom the manuscript was the mark of a magnificent, even a tragic failure. So much the better that *The Four Zoas* is a work *about* unfinishedness, that there is a nice analogy or perhaps even homology between unfinished work and unfinished world. The work's unfinished state is—what other word is more fitting than this piece of romantic tradecraft?—*organic* to its matter, its theme, its narrative order, its purpose. Otto suspends this argument from a distinction borrowed from Balachandra Rajan:

Incomplete poems are poems which ought to be completed. Unfinished poems are poems which ask not to be finished, which carry within themselves the reasons for arresting or effacing themselves as they do. If an unfinished poem were to be finished it would ideally erase its own significance.³

This, for Otto, is the key to the scriptures. *The Four Zoas* is no longer a failure, an unsightly blemish on the beautiful body of Blake's *oeuvre*; it is no longer unfinished but, so to speak (here writing begins to generate properly Janus-like neologisms:) un/finished. ". . . Blake left his creation myth in an unfinished condition because this was the only form which is appropriate for the effort of a fallen self to recount the origins, history, and regeneration of the world" (146).

We are now in a position to chart the swerve. It tends to occur in the spaces between Otto's paragraphs. Here he is just finishing his surveillance of Essick's three-phase hypothesis:

. . . It is with the status that we ascribe to *The Four Zoas* in the third and final stage of its development that I am concerned.

Discussion of *The Four Zoas* has been dominated by a strong desire to retrieve the outlines of a poem (*Vala*), or potential poem, that lies somewhere behind its pages. This approach assumes that the present poem represents a "major cultural disaster," "a tantalizing and tragic failure," and that it would be irresponsible to suggest "a reversion to 'the poem itself.'" This position is supported by the belief that poems should be unified, coherent, and formally complete. It also draws on the trope that couples incompleteness in the present with completion in some other realm. As a result, the wealth of hypotheses about the possible form of *The Four Zoas* in the "first" and "second" stages of the poem's development is coupled with a relative unanimity of response to the third.

It seems to me that there are cogent thematic and contextual reasons to entertain the possibility at least that when Blake finally stopped working on the manuscript he believed that the form taken by the work was the only one that the subject matter could assume. Or, to phrase this in a less intentionalist idiom: the (unfinished) form of the work embodies the poem's insights about the nature of the fallen world and of fallen perceptions (144).

And he then goes on to explain why it must stay that way.

The swerve is actually rather subtle, at least partly because it is entirely tacit. A metaphysics or poetics of unfinishedness may seem appropriate (in the case of *Four Zoas* criticism, it is certainly an improvement), but it also marks an appropriation of the work as "text." In Otto's argument the movement from work to text, from

material manuscript to dematerialized "poem" is plotted something like this: consideration of the manuscript's material conditions and production "intentions"⁴ are dangerous: they can lead one to confound the unfinished with the failed. (We did nothing of the kind.) Hence these material considerations must be marginalized or left behind: the unfinishedness of the manuscript must become the sign of some greater purpose, some deeper (non-)structure, some truer meaning that can be grasped interpretively. Or rather, first of all, theoretically. Issues of production must always be read into this theory of unfinishedness; *any* attention to the material condition of the manuscript must be contained by the poetics of the unfinished. Now it is unfinishedness that is the "end of the art"; now the manuscript is complete in its incompleteness. Its material chaos is rendered quite literally *ideal*. The urgency with which Otto frames descriptions and speculations about the material work is exemplary of the persistently text-centered orientation of Blake studies.

What this swerve really entails is a movement from the production of a finally unfinished manuscript to the production of a *finished discourse* of unfinishedness. In Otto's argument completion must occur *at some level*— "in some other realm," as he puts it: a realm that turns out to be that of criticism. The critical recounting, the representation of unfinishedness as ideal is meant to rescue the poem-cum-text from its insufficiency, its embarrassing failure. We witness a movement from interpretation to interpretation, from a narrative of failure to a narrative of success, all taking place strictly at the level of discourse *about* the "poem." What is more, the movement from failed manuscript to ideally unfinished text must pass through the dematerialization of the manuscript because there is, in fact, *no inherent reason* why, if the poem was *essentially* unfinished, Blake could not have devised a form for its publication as such. We are faced here with the crudest instance of the fallacy of imitative form—the sort of instance that makes it a fallacy. There is no *necessary* relation, no true marriage between the unfinished text and the unfinished world in the text: for Otto, the condition of the manuscript is merely an image, an ornament, a suggestion, a formal hint for a reading that is, at bottom, in no way dependent upon it. In the end, then, the discourse of unfinishedness *replaces* the unfinished work: it becomes the ideal form of the poem's publication, a solid critical framework on which to hang the manuscript's rags.

The transubstantiation of work into text is most evident in the movement from a notion of Blake working on the manuscript to what Otto calls the "curious fact that the *narrator* is himself an 'effect' of the *story* that he recounts" (144, my emphases). Once Otto replaces artist with narrator and manuscript with story his work is in

a sense complete (so is Blake's); and the machinery of interpretation can take over. Now "the narrator is . . . contained within his own [unfinished] poem," which is contained within a finished and finishing reading of the poem. Otto's point is, in one sense, well taken. In order to complete the narration of the fallen world the fallen narrator would have had to stand outside it, and that is impossible. But what we must mark here is that the "real" narrator of this ideally unfinished text is the critic. Not Blake but Otto. The issue is one of mediation: in order for the poem to enter discourse, for there to be any commentary on it at all, *someone* must stand "outside" it; an outside must somehow be established, an archimedean fulcrum for levering the manuscript into Blake studies must be found. There must be some (tacit; or not so tacit: editorial) means for reproducing the manuscript as text, and critical structures for determining a discourse of unfinishedness. Someone, in short, must finish it. If the "narrator" cannot ethically or logically or epistemologically stand outside then the critic will (tacitly) do it for him. Otto's narrative is generated precisely outside the fallen textual world which, he argues, one cannot rightly stand outside, in relations that must be the products of critical discourse itself but must always conceal this mediating agency behind a rhetoric of unmediated internalization.

So the "story" of unfinishedness is also the story of dematerialization, which is also the story of the manuscript's rematerialization as a narrated narration, a completely unmediated internal world completely mediated by an external observer. We have read this story before: Blake himself tells it in the parable of the Ancient Poets, which today we must come to read as one of many Blakean parables of Blake criticism:

The ancient Poets animated all sensible objects with Gods or Geniuses, calling them by the names and adorning them with the properties of woods, rivers, mountains, lakes, cities, nations, and whatever their enlarged & numerous senses could perceive.

And particularly they studied the genius of each city & country, placing it under its mental deity.

Till a system was formed, which some took advantage of & enslav'd the vulgar by attempting to realize or abstract the mental deities from their objects: thus began Priesthood.

Choosing forms of worship from poetic tales.

And at length they pronounced that the Gods had orderd such things.

Thus men forgot that All deities reside in the human breast.
(E 38)⁵

Like Goliath championing David against Goliath.

It is certainly true that calling *The Four Zoas* a failure was once a trope of dismissal, but the trope of un/finishedness is hardly a solution to the strange and irreducible inaccessibility of the manuscript. Indeed, it amounts to about the same thing. Just as earlier readers of *The Four Zoas* tried "to retrieve a . . . potential poem

that lies somewhere behind its pages," so Otto tries to retrieve an ideally unfinished poem from somewhere behind the manuscript; the difference is that the unfinishedness of earlier critics was "bad" while his is "good." There is a certain identity between these earlier critics and Otto: in either case we end up without the manuscript. But it is precisely the manuscript that is at issue, precisely the manuscript that is least recuperable by either a metaphysics of unity or a metaphysics of incompleteness; it is precisely the manuscript that *has never been read*. If the only way to get rid of the notion of failure is by abandoning the manuscript or recuperating it into some ideal state, then perhaps we must learn to live with the idea of failure. In fact, at the level of (the) work itself, the failure of *The Four Zoas* might be a lot less troubling than it is out here in critical discourse. Perhaps, for Blake, failure might not have been so unthinkable a judgment on a work that at one or more stages of development was clearly intended for publication but never published. What's so terrible about failure? It might be less of a problem for a working artist, for whom in a sense nothing can ever be wasted, than it is for a discourse whose responsibility is always in some part the determination and maintenance of canons. What we have in Otto is one instance of the general attempt to recuperate that failure so that the poem can exhibit a distinctly literary value. What we do not yet have is a way to read *The Four Zoas*.

But whose will be the final statement?

¹Paul Mann, "The Final State of *The Four Zoas*," *Blake* 18 (1985); Robert N. Essick, *The Four Zoas: Intention and Method*, *Blake* 18 (1985): 204–200; Peter Otto, "Final States, Finished Forms, and *The Four Zoas*," *Blake* 20 (1987): 144–47.

²It is easy to dislike writers who use footnotes to advertise their other works, but I promised to be brief here and can only do so by glossing this article thus: See my "Apocalypse and Recuperation: Blake and the Maw of Commerce," *ELH* (Spring 1985): 1–32; and my "Editing *The Four Zoas*," *Pacific Coast Philology* XVI.1 (1981), which may in fact anticipate Otto's argument.

³Otto 144, citing Rajan, *The Form of the Unfinished: English Poetics from Spenser to Pound* (Princeton NJ: Princeton UP, 1985) 14.

⁴Essick defines this word more precisely than Otto: "Given the practical exigencies of image production, as well as Blake's insistence on the radical unity of conception and execution, it is reasonable to assume that the preliminary stages in the development of an image may reveal the medium in which Blake intended to produce the final form of that image" (216).

⁵*The Complete Poetry & Prose of William Blake*, ed. David V. Erdman, newly revised edition (Garden City NY: Anchor Books, 1982).

Is There A Poem in This Manuscript?

Peter Otto

As I happen to agree with the devils that "Opposition is True Friendship," it was with some pleasure that I sat down to read Paul Mann's response to my own response to articles by himself and Robert Essick. One of the pleasures of argument is the transformative force that can sometimes transform devils into angels, Leviathans into Pipers and what is down into what is up. I was fascinated by my own transformation from an Antipodean Blake scholar (one who comes from "down under," as popular geography would have it) to a figure who had somehow attained a prominence from which he was able to keep the "key to the scriptures," undertake the "surveillance" of Essick's hypothesis, assert that what is "must stay that way," and at the same time represent "the central movement of Blake criticism." A metamorphosis indeed!

As these preliminary remarks might suggest, the terms of Mann's response are broadly homologous with those used by Blake in the *Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. The high ground of authority and the dematerialized world of the spirit are claimed by the angels, while the nether world, the world of fact and action, is claimed by the devils. Mann believes that he occupies the world of material fact (he deals with the physical manuscript), while I along with Blake criticism as a whole have imposed my "phantasy" on the poem. It is, however, not the "phantasy," at least not in the first instance, that Mann is concerned about. (In fact, he is ready to affirm that my hypothesis is "in the case of *Four Zoas* criticism . . . certainly an improvement.") What bothers Mann is the swerve that he detects in my reply and in Blake studies as a whole away from the physical material manuscript towards some form of "ideal" text. His later and contradictory assertion that my hypothesis regarding the form of *The Four Zoas* does not assist with the reading of the poem is a conclusion derived from his analysis of that swerve.

In responding to Mann and Essick's illuminating hypothesis regarding Blake's production intentions for *The Four Zoas*, I proposed that we consider *The Four Zoas* in its final state as an unfinished rather than an incomplete poem. In contradistinction to views of the poem that maintain, for example, that Blake abandoned the manuscript because he did not foresee the Peace of Amiens (Erdman) or because of some personal failing (Bentley), I argued that the poem is arrested by forces which are intrinsic to its subject matter. Mann begins his critique of this position by detailing a logical paradox or conundrum.

To produce a "finished discourse of unfinishedness" is, for Mann, to complete the poem on the level of "critical recounting." If this is done, then, he argues, "there is . . . no inherent reason why, if the poem was essentially unfinished, Blake could not have devised a form for its publication as such." He concludes that "the condition of the manuscript is merely an image, an ornament, a suggestion, a formal hint for a reading that is, at bottom, in no way dependent upon it." It is difficult to see the logic in this sequence.

To claim that the fabrication of a "finished discourse of unfinishedness" completes the poem and becomes "the ideal form of the poem's publication" is surely to confuse levels. To explain why a mechanic was unable to build a car because of problems with the way in which that car was first imagined does not (in any sense evident to me) produce a workable car. To discourse about why one has failed to complete a project is not in my experience at least to complete that project.

The recognition of the problems intrinsic to a particular work may, of course, lead one to attempt a very different kind of project. This is a response to the "failure" of *The Four Zoas* which Blake seems to have adopted when he wrote *Milton* and *Jerusalem*. Yet it would clearly be absurd to say that either of these poems was a complete version of *The Four Zoas*. Of course, in elaborating a "finished discourse of unfinishedness" one sets up a contrast between the unfinished poem and the finished discourse, but what is involved here is a difference in object. To attempt to narrate a history of the world, from Fall to Apocalypse, is very different from the attempt to explain why for Blake that narrative could not be completed.

I should hasten to add, however, that if one accepts that there is a broad homology between unfinished poem and fallen world, then Mann is right to point out that in elaborating a "finished discourse of unfinishedness" one is adopting a position outside of the "chaos" of the text that the narrator and the poem's characters are unable to attain. As Mann observes:

The issue is one of mediation: in order for the poem to enter discourse, for there to be any commentary on it at all, someone must stand "outside" it; an outside must somehow be established, an archimedean fulcrum for levering the manuscript into Blake studies must be found.

Levering *The Four Zoas* into Blake criticism may not on all occasions be a reprehensible act; yet even putting this equivocation aside, the issue is not as straightforward as Mann suggests.

A poem that attempts to recount the history of the fallen world (from Fall to Apocalypse) must enclose narrator, author, and critic within its spaces. The forces that ensure that the poem's narrator is unable to oversee a his-

tory of which he is an effect also ensure that the critic is unable to attain a vantage point from which to survey the whole. This puts readers of the poem in a curious position, for to claim to have attained a position from which we are able to "view all things beneath [our] feet" is to assert that we have reached the position denied to Urizen. We must stand outside of the poem to comment on it; but each claim to have reached an outside from which we can see the poem in its entirety is proof that we remain inside the dream. The poem undoes the authority of the reading that at the same time it seems to invite. Even on the level of critical appropriation the poem is therefore unfinished (an observation which is itself subject to the same vicissitudes). Rather than offering "a solid critical framework on which to hang the manuscript's rags," the notion of an "unfinished poem" is itself unstable. This relentless undoing of the reader's position is clearly appropriate for a poem that attempts to wake its readers from the sleep of the fallen world, an observation which has implications for our understanding of Blake's production intentions and even his "production-aesthetic."

At times Mann's concerns about "mediation," and some of the implications of the argument that unfolds from his critique of the critic's position outside of the text, seem to imply rather remarkable conclusions. All reading assumes an ability to adopt (at least provisionally) a position with regard to the text. Insofar as reading is the yoking of the reader's discourse to that of the text¹ it would seem to involve some form of mediation. Does this mean that *The Four Zoas* cannot or should not be read? This possibility is certainly suggested by Mann's reference to "the strange and irreducible inaccessibility of the manuscript." But surely the manuscript is not *that* inaccessible. If this is the price one must pay to keep the manuscript safe from the iniquities of dematerialization, then it is too high.

Mann is, of course, not really opposed to reading the poem; instead he is championing a particular kind of reading. This is to be based on a study of Blake's "production-aesthetic." For Mann, ". . . Blake[s] . . . commitment to different material forms and modes of publication was a process of learning to see the work in the work." Although I have no quarrel with this project (I think it is one of the more interesting of the approaches to *The Four Zoas*), I do find it surprising that this kind of reading should be seen in competition with other ways of reading Blake (Mann mentions "poet-prophet, inspired illustrator . . . [and] composite artist"). I am also skeptical as to whether such an approach is able to avoid a swerve similar to that which Mann traces in Blake criticism. Seeing the work in the work is closely allied to religious metaphors that would seem to bring with them the very swerve that Mann condemns.

It is perhaps not fortuitous that the swerve that is the subject of Mann's reply is located in those most spiritual and disembodied of realms, "the spaces between [my] paragraphs" and the gap between Mann's article and my reply.

These observations are not meant as criticism of a reading that aims to delineate Blake's "production-aesthetic." For me at least, the reading of *The Four Zoas* is only just beginning and at this stage of the process it would in my view be unfortunate to put too rigid a line between *The Four Zoas* as manuscript and as poem, as work and as text. As I suggested in my first response, what is striking about *The Four Zoas* is that it suggests both ". . . a drive towards clarity and completion (telling the whole story) and a residue or excess which must leave this drive short of its goal." Or to phrase this in a more parabolic style: the manuscript implies a poem which in turn implies a manuscript. To drive a wedge between these two dimensions is likely to result in a view of *The Four Zoas* which is less complete than others. This point is well made by the passage that Mann quotes from the *Marriage*.

The parable of the Ancient Poets begins with a description of a world in which there is an interaction between the material and the spiritual, the "natural" and the human worlds. On the one hand the Ancient Poets animate all sensible objects with Gods or Geniuses and so impose their fantasies on the world; but on the other hand these Gods are called by the names and adorned with the properties of things that lie outside the Poets' world. They are adorned with "whatever their enlarged & numerous senses could perceive."² As a parable of Blake criticism, this suggests that in its prelapsarian state there was an interaction between the critics' fantasies (their animation of the inert manuscript) and the force exerted by the manuscript on the critic. Mann argues that in the time that has elapsed since those halcyon days, Blake criticism has drawn apart from the manuscript and has been used to form a system to enslave the vulgar. One could, however, argue that Blake criticism might just as easily be precipitated into this parlous condition if critics were to attempt to quarantine the manuscript from the improprieties of reading. A division of this kind would just as surely involve forgetting that "All deities reside in the human breast."³

In a poem/manuscript such as this—where there is both a drive towards completion and an excess which continually makes that drive fall short of its goal—the dematerialization of the manuscript that occurs in reading is not a problem so long as it is followed by a movement back towards the manuscript. This does not imply that I believe that consideration of the "manuscript's material conditions and production 'intentions' are dangerous." In fact my article was a response that began

from Mann's and Essick's reflections on the manuscript and provided what still seems to me to be a plausible conclusion to their own narrative. At the same time, however, I believe that in certain cases reflection on a manuscript can sometimes be corroborated or extended by a reading of the words contained by that manuscript. At this stage I will persist in thinking that to call *The Four Zoas* an unfinished rather than an incomplete poem does in some small way illuminate the manuscript. It may even provide a fulcrum for levering Blake studies some small distance towards that endlessly fascinating poem/manuscript, *The Four Zoas*.

¹Paul Ricoeur, "What is a Text? Explanation and Interpretation," in *Mythic-Symbolic Language and Philosophical Anthropology*, by David M. Rasmussen (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971) 135–50; 144.

²David V. Erdman, ed., *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, newly rev. ed. (Garden City: Anchor Press, 1982) 38.

³Erdman 38.

POETRY

LOCK/LUCK

(for Barry Lord)

Landing in the rain
at north-of-London Stanstead
taking a gander
seeing the ripoff
car-rental man
holding up my name

Driving the almost
new Renault
sleepy-eyed to Cambridge
stumbling gratefully
into the first B & B,
dreaming of the local ghost

Betimes next morning
noticing the faulty boot-lock,
asking the courteous
B & B man
who tries and almost—
then swears in elegant Spanish

On to Nottingham—
race-riot country—
Byron and Bertie Lawrence—
then southwest to dripping
ripoff Bath
(those thatchy buggers)

Thence to Wells
and fabled Glastonbury—
the ruined Abbey—
the hippies guarding
snake-like, portentous
the Arthurian exhibit
(Vivien, Merlin, Mordred)

Always the faulty boot-lock—
it would open, but you know—
trying not to get uptight.
On to Coleridge country:
standing in the rain
outside the old church
at Ottery St. Mary:
seeing the bride hike her dress
and gulp champagne
just before being transported.

North to Nether Stowey—the Conference—
Coleridge's playful ghost—
baffling the best minds
of Britain with my damned boot-lock—
doubling back on a dare
to Glastonbury, hill of glass—
climbing at long last
the legendary Tor
at 9 a.m.—just the two of us—
being passed twice by the same jogger

Standing on the summit
seeing—was it Cornwall?—the Channel—
being whipped by the bardic wind
feeling somehow purified

Descending expeditiously
retrieving near the base
a non-essential (throwaway)
piece of rubble,
then spontaneously singing
“And did those feet in Ancient Time
Walk upon England's mountains green?
And was the holy Lamb of God
On England's pleasant pastures seen?”

—and so forth and so on, in my serviceable baritone.

Approaching the car
parked at the base of the Tor,
trying to lock the boot-lock
just once more, for the hell of it:
finding the blessed thing
work like a Celtic charm.

Then and thereafter.

Warren Stevenson

NEWSLETTER

ROMANTICISM AND IMAGINATION IN AUSTRALIA

A conference will be held 12-14 July 1989, at the University of Melbourne on "Romanticism and Imagination." A number of keynote speakers are expected. Papers are welcome on all aspects of this theme, from disciplines such as philosophy and history as well as literary theory and literary criticism. Topics of possible interest include: the imagination of particular writers, artists, musicians and architects; imagination and class, gender, or popular culture; the imagination from a historical, political, or philosophical point of view; the nature of the imagination and the way in which it produces, figures, or is itself a product of the real. The organizers would also be interested in papers which discuss the fate of the romantic imagination in Australia.

The organizers point out that at present romantic studies lacks a forum in Australia: there is no conference, journal, or association which has this cultural field as its central concern. The conference will fill the first of these gaps.

Address inquiries and papers to:

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CAROLINAS SYMPOSIUM ON BRITISH STUDIES

The sixteenth annual Carolinas Symposium on British Studies will be held at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte on 21-22 October 1989. The symposium provides an annual forum for scholarly presentations and the exchange of ideas relating to all aspects of British studies, including history, literature, art and architecture, government, dance and music. While the symposium is based in the Southeast, participants are welcome from all parts of the country. The program committee invites proposals for individual papers, full sessions, and panel discussions. A \$250 prize will be awarded for the best paper from among those read at the symposium and submitted to the evaluation committee by the following May, with the possibility of publication in *Albion*. We also invite submissions for the student paper session from both graduate students and undergraduates, with a prize in each category. Proposals or papers should be sent by 15 April 1989 to:

Betty Young
East Campus Library
Duke University
Durham, North Carolina 27708.

All who submit proposals will be notified of the decision of the program committee by early June.



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EA8

freeze. Her legs are still under water, but at her presence,

Joy thrill'd thro all the Furious form of
Tharmas: humanizing,
Mild, he Embrac'd her whom he
sought. . . .

(36-37)

The apocalyptic events that constitute this happy climax are represented by two giant figures drawn right over the text. One, a giant harvester, stands astride the bowed body of Tharmas, with his back toward us (as we see from the inward pointing left foot) and with his elbows raised and his hands wielding what may look like a broad sword (Bentley) but ought to be, according to the text, either a sickle or scythe (1-5) or (more visually convincing) a flail (135:32), the harvest implements wielded in succession (since Times are Ended, the acts can be simultaneous) by Urizen, who still wears at his left side the "bright girdle" from which he sowed the human seed (125:3-4) and who begins now to reap "the wide Universe" (132:7).¹

Above his raised elbows hovers a horizontal human cloud with huddled legs (one foot protrud-



Page 132. Giant Harvester.

ing into the left margin), wide open mouth and eyes, and three darts of lightning that descend not very menacingly toward Enion and Tharmas. This is the Whirlwind that rises at dawn (13-14) and serves as Tharmas' threshing collaborator (134:3, 138:4). In this page the sequence is, first, "a whirlwind . . . in the Center & in the Whirlwind a shriek" (Blake's drawing indicates both whirl and shriek), and then "in the Shriek a rattling of bones," and finally the dolorous groan from which Enion rises in tears to embrace Tharmas humanizing.²

The threshing begins in the text at the end of page 133 and continues in 134. Graphically the scything of humans by "Time" (in the Young engraving; by Urizen now) on page 135 makes the theme most explicit. We can see that the Urizenic figure trampling on crowned kings on page 133 is cooperating both in the action of Los in pulling down the sun (at the start of the Night) and in the action of Tharmas in winnowing "Kings & Counsellors & Giant Warriors" on page 134. (His dart, in page 133, also seems to have been a model for the lightning darts of the Whirlwind here.)

¹The standing giant seems to have a coat with short tails, though just possibly we are meant to see his genitalia from behind. He holds his weapon or implement with two hands; so the object at his waist is probably Urizen's sack of seeds, not a shield.

²For sketches of a similar air-borne giant with emphatic eyes and mouth, see Blake's studies for his "Pestilence: The Death of the First-Born" ca. 1805 (Butlin 443 recto and verso).

Page 133 (NT 20:5E, second state)

"GO DOWN, YE KINGS & COUNSELLORS & GIANT WARRIORS!" (134:7)

In a speech at the harvest Feast, a "golden feast" where "Many Eternal Men sat," the therapy for man's tendency to be a worm is patiently explained. "Man is a Worm . . . Forsaking Brotherhood & Universal love in selfish clay, Folding the pure wings of his mind, seeking the places dark." When he gets sufficiently closed in on himself, "we cast him like a Seed into the Earth . . . every morn We visit him, covering . . . the immortal seed . . . till divided all In families we see our shadows born, & thence we know That Man subsists by Brotherhood & Universal Love. We fall on one another's necks, more closely we embrace, Not for ourselves but for the Eternal family . . ." (11-24).

The morning after this feast, Urizen goes to work with flail in hand on the threshing floor. "And all Nations were threshed out & the stars threshd