

Blake

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The Printings of Blake's Dante Engravings

By Robert N. Essick

As readers of the annual sales reports in this journal may have noticed, complete sets of Blake's engraved illustrations to Dante's *Inferno* have consistently fetched over \$30,000 at auctions during the last few years. As a consequence of this high value, dealers have become increasingly interested in ways of ascribing a particular set of the seven plates to a specific press run since the earliest impressions would command the highest prices. In response to requests for information on this matter, as well as a desire to demonstrate how economic imperatives influence the study of printed images as much as their making, I began to study various sets of the Dante plates to correlate their physical characteristics with the known dates of printing. Since there are records of only three print runs in the nineteenth century, the problem seemed easily solvable. But the situation is far more complicated than I had anticipated, as the following report will demonstrate.

The documentary record of printings is less complete, and its interpretation by scholars less accurate, than one would wish. The first to offer any information on the subject were Bentley and Nurmi, who in their 1964 *Blake Bibliography* quote from pertinent documents in the Joan Linnell Ivimy collection. Since John Linnell had commissioned the Dante illustrations from Blake in 1824, and since the copperplates remained in the Linnell family's possession until their sale to Lessing J. Rosenwald in 1937, these records have considerable authority. In a "List of John Linnell Senior's Letters and Papers," John Linnell, Jr., wrote that the Dante plates "have been printed at two dates, after a few proofs by Blake—[John]. Linnell^{sen}. in 1 [series]—(at Bayswater[?]) had India proofs taken (all disposed of)[.] soon

after J. Ls death (J. L. jnr)—had 50 copies (india on drawing paper) printed by Holdgate."¹ This statement provides crucial information: there were only two printings, laid India paper (or *chine appliqué*) was used for both, and Holdgate Bros. printed the second issue of 50 impressions "soon" after Linnell's death in 1882. We are not informed, however, about the date, printer, and press run of the first printing.² Fortunately, other records in the Ivimy collection fill in these gaps. Two receipts from the plate printers Dixon & Ross, No. 4 St. James's Place, indicate that £2.15s. was paid by Linnell on 26 September 1838 for "25 of each of 7 Plates Dante India," and a further £1.10s. on 2 October 1838 for "95 Imp^s. of 7 Plts. Dante India."³ These receipts make it clear that there were actually two early press runs. That they were paid for only a week apart, and may have been performed even closer in time, accounts for the younger Linnell's reference to nineteenth-century printings at only "two dates," a habit continued by modern scholars but one that I will abandon here. As for the third printing, a draft of a letter from John Linnell, Jr., to the London book dealer Bernard Quaritch, dated 6 May 1892 states that the Dante "proofs" (i.e., impressions from the 1838 printings) had been "disposed of" and that the family was "about to obtain a few more copies of proofs—similar to the former ones." Bentley and Nurmi reasonably conclude that "the second [i.e., third] commercial printing of the Dante plates was therefore about 1892" (89).

The letter actually sent by the younger John Linnell to Quaritch has never been located, but in October 1989 Arthur Freeman discovered a letter from another Linnell son, William, in the archives of Bernard Quaritch,

Ltd. The references to both the Job and Dante engravings make this previously unrecorded letter worth printing in full:

May 18th. 92

The Avenue
76 Fulham Road
SW

Dear Mr Quaritch

I waited a few days before sending you the five sets of Job you ordered—thinking I might send the Dante same time—but my brother James whom I saw yesterday tells me that there is a hitch in getting the Dante printed because the man whom my father employed & whom we wish to do it now *is ill*, though he is expected soon to recover—I told my brother that I would undertake to get it done safely & as well by some others—but in the country they are I think too conservative & slow coach—however I will have my man bring up the 10 sets of Job either tomorrow or Friday—I was about writing fathers to bring me 5 sets tomorrow but if they cannot look out the 10 in time he will bring them up Friday. With regard to the printing of the Dante it occurs to me that perhaps you might know who is the best copperplate printer in London and if you know that he is also thoroughly trustworthy (supposing we left the plates in his hand for a time) I think we might save time.—of course I should give the printer precise instructions as to the style of printing, etc.

With regard to the *Papers* which you alluded to in a previous letter—have you any suggestions to make as to *the particular kind*?

I rather think that Whatmans drawing paper is the nearest in quality and appearance to the old prints. I mean India on Whatman. So at present I cannot say any definite time when the Dante will be ready—but I will endeavour to get on as fast as I can make my brother James move on—he being Co Trustee we must go together.

Yours dearly and very truly
William Linnell

Several details in this letter are significant. Since the elder Linnell died in 1882, "writing father[']s" for more Job impressions must refer to his home at Redstone Wood, Redhill, Surrey, which John Linnell, Jr., probably inherited as the eldest son. Surprisingly, there is no direct reference to John Jr. (born 1821), for the letter is written as though William (born 1826) and James (born 1823) had sole responsibility for the reprinting of the Dante plates.⁴ William's request for advice on finding a printer for the plates opens up the possibility that Holdgate was chosen on Quaritch's recommendation. In his draft letter of 6 May, John Jr. notes that the restrikes should be "similar" to the 1838 impressions. William's letter stresses this desire to imitate the earlier printings and alerts us to the possibility that impressions on Whatman paper are from the c. 1892 printing.

The 1838 receipts, quoted above, are unambiguous as to the number of impressions (25) taken from "each of 7 Plates" in the first printing; but the record of the second printing, paid for

on 2 October, leaves the precise number in doubt. Did Dixon & Ross pull 95 impressions of *each* of the seven plates, thereby producing 95 complete sets, or a *total* of 95, thereby yielding 13 Dante sets plus four extra prints? The former might seem the more likely, in spite of the absence of the word "each," since the first receipt records the number of sets rather than the total number of impressions. At least this would appear to be the reasoning behind Sir Geoffrey Keynes's statement, in his revised *Blake Studies* of 1971 and again in the Blake Trust facsimile of the Dante engravings (1978), that a total of 120 sets were printed in 1838 (i.e., the 25 paid for on 26 September plus 95 paid 2 October).⁵ This figure has been frequently repeated by dealers and auction houses and seems to have been widely accepted as an indisputable fact. But one detail in the 1838 receipts should give us pause. If 25 sets cost £2.15s. on 26 September, why would 95 cost only slightly more than half that amount six days later?

Bentley provides answers to the questions surrounding the 1838 press runs in his *Blake Books* of 1977. He prints therein the following transcription made by Iain Bain from the daybooks (i.e., business records) of Dixon & Ross:

Wednesday 26 September 1838
Mr Linnell 25 of each of 7 plts Dante Ind[ia]
87 1/2 Sh[heets]. of th[ick. pl[ate]d
Col[ombier] [i.e. 2 pulls per sheet]
25 [sheets] of India [7 pulls per sheet]
Saturday Sept^r 29th 1838
Mr Linnell 95 Imp^{ns} of 7 plts Dante India
[i.e. 13 4/7 sets]
47 Shts of Plt. Col. [2 pulls per sheet]
13 4/7 [sheets] of India [7 pulls per
sheet]⁶

This daybook apparently records the actual printing, as distinct from the billing dates, and thus the two press runs occurred only three days apart. As Bentley's bracketed interjections indicate, these two printings yielded 38 sets (and four additional impressions), not the proverbial 120. His accurate figure is crucial in shaping expectations about extant suites of the engravings. If the larger number had been produced, then we could expect that most extant sets were printed in 1838 since only 50 were produced c. 1892. But we now know that well over half of the 88 documented nineteenth-century impressions on laid India were printed c. 1892. Given the additional 54 years in which the 1838 impressions could have been destroyed or lost, we can expect most extant suites to consist of c. 1892 impressions.

Both 1838 press runs recorded in the Dixon & Ross daybook used "Col[ombier]" paper. This apparent reference to the venerable French papermaker was probably the basis for Keynes's assertion that all 1838 impressions are on "French Colombyer paper."⁷ However, by the late eighteenth century, "Colombyer" was regularly used in reference to a sheet *size*, not a specific manufacturer or country of origin.⁸ The Colombyer produced by Whatman, whose paper Blake used for many of



1. Dante engravings plate 6, "The Pit of Disease: The Falsifiers." Image 24.1 x 34 cm., plate-mark 27.7 x 35.6 cm. Pre-publication proof, probably printed by Blake. British Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings.

his illuminated books and the Job engravings, measures 34 1/2 x 23 1/2 inches (87.6 x 59.7 cm.).⁹ Further, the Dixon & Ross daybooks show that the firm acquired five quires of Colmbier-size paper in 1835 from S. Tipper & Co., agents for Whatman.¹⁰ Thus, there is no reason to assume that any 1838 impressions were printed on a paper of French manufacture. A French paper may have been used, but I have yet to find a Dante set, or any record of a set, definitely printed on such a paper.

Armed with the documentary record surveyed above, we can now turn to extant suites of the Dante engravings. Our concern should focus on the quality of the impressions, particularly as this shows various amounts of wear indicative of printing sequences, and the paper on which they are printed. Handwritten inscriptions and provenance information can also supplement the primary physical evidence.

We can begin by setting aside the easily-identifiable impressions pulled in this century. In 1953-55, Rosenwald had sets printed on heavy, dead-white wove paper with a surprisingly bold, pebble-grain surface. The plates had to be printed with considerable pressure in order to smooth the paper sufficiently to register fine lines. In a complete suite of these restrikes in the Huntington Library, San Marino, California, each sheet measures 35.5 x 50.5 cm. and is inscribed in pencil, lower right, "Impression taken from the copper plate in my collection 1953-4[.] Lessing J Rosenwald 4/19/55." One sheet shows a watermark ("MADE IN ENGLAND [space of approx. 15 cm.] LINEN FIBRE"); another bears a few fragments of these letters. A set in the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, has the watermark on four sheets, plus a countermark ("UNBLEACHED ARNOLD") on the remaining three, and is inscribed on each plate, "Impression taken from the plate in my collection in 1955[.] Lessing J. Rosenwald 1/20/60."¹¹ I suspect, but cannot confirm, that all these restrikes bear some



2. Dante engravings plate 3, "The Baffled Devils Fighting." India paper laid on wove, image 24.1 x 33.4 cm., plate-mark 27.9 x 35.6 cm. Formerly Essick collection.

version of the pencil inscription. The dates following the signature apparently record the time of inscription and presentation, not printing. Keynes, *Blake Studies*, notes that "twenty sets, with three extra prints of the first plate" (229) were produced in this reprinting. He records the same number of sets, without reference to the extra pulls of plate 1, in *Blake's Illustrations of Dante* (3). Todd, *Blake's Dante Plates* (see note 13), states that Rosenwald wrote him, "on August 22 [1968?], that to the best of his recollection, 25 sets were pulled in 1955" (4). Fortunately, the differing statements about the date and number printed do not hinder the recognition of the c. 1954 impressions on the basis of the pencil inscriptions and paper. Some plates yielded fairly decent impressions in this printing, but others are weak and flat. Plate 3, "The Baffled Devils Fighting," is little better than a pale ghost in the Huntington set.¹²

Rosenwald commissioned a further printing of 25 sets in 1968.¹³ These were pulled by Harry Hoehn, who thoroughly cleaned the copperplates, on Japanese "Kochi," a laid paper, with

one set on "German copper-plate" (Todd 5). The Kochi paper (or "Koji," the name of a papermaking district, not a specific manufacturer) is fairly thick but soft, with a much smoother surface than the pebble-grain paper used c. 1954. In a letter dated 29 July 1968 to Ruthven Todd, Rosenwald stated that he inscribed each impression in pencil, "Printed by Harry Hoehn 7/68 . . . Restrike from a plate in my collection . . . Lessing J. Rosenwald" (Todd 6). A 1968 suite on thick wove paper (apparently the "German copper-plate") in the Rosenwald Collection, National Gallery of Art, Washington, lacks the reference to Hoehn but is inscribed on each plate, lower right just beneath the image, "A restrike from the copperplate in my collection August 1968[.] Lessing J Rosenwald" (see illus. 5). This set, with a sheet size approximately 36.5 x 45 cm., also bears a light pencil inscription lower in the right corner on all but plate 4, "printer's proof 7/68," written by Ruth Fine, Curator of the Rosenwald Collection. According to Gott (see note 11), the 1968 set in the National Gallery of Victoria



3. Detail of illus. 2.

bears Rosenwald's inscription plus a separate pencil note: "21/25 [i.e., impression 21 of a total of 25] Hoehn imp [19]68." Another such set, described as printed on "Koji" paper, was offered at Sotheby's New York on 22 June 1977, lot 43A, but brought only \$400. Other 1968 sets on Kochi paper are in the National Gallery of Art, Washington (sheets 38.1 x 45.7 cm.), the British Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings, the Tate Gallery, and the collection of G. E. Bentley, Jr.

In his essays, Todd is forthrightly critical of the c. 1954 impressions but praises the 1968 restrikes. He states that the latter are "more brilliant and show far more detail than any" others he had ever seen (6). Keynes is far more restrained, pointing out that "whether the result obtained [in 1968] with rather heavy inking (on dead-white Chinese [*sic*] paper) compares favourably with the first printing . . . is a matter of individual taste and judgement" (*Blake's Illustrations of Dante* [3]). As a comparison between the nineteenth-century impressions of plate 3 (illus. 2

and 4) and a 1968 print (illus. 5) reproduced here will indicate, the heavy inking was only partially successful in bringing out the fine lines, such as those defining the mountain ridges and clouds top right, and had the unfortunate consequence of obscuring the distinctions between individual lines in densely engraved areas on the fighting devils and in the fiery lake lower left. This latter effect violates the linearist aesthetic implicit in the engraving style Blake deployed in his Dante plates. In my view, the 1968 restrikes are greatly inferior to all the nineteenth-century impressions I have seen. But no matter what one's opinions may be about the two twentieth-century printings, they offer no problems in identification.

The very earliest impressions of the Dante plates can also be recognized easily. In his memorandum quoted earlier, John Linnell, Jr., mentions that "a few proofs" were pulled "by Blake" himself. In this context, the word "proofs" might mean nothing more than "impressions," but at least some

of them represent states earlier than those found in the 1838 and all subsequent printings. The identification of these earliest extant Dante prints rests simply on their states. I describe below the few proof-state impressions I have been able to locate.

Pl. 1, "The Circle of the Lustful: Francesca da Rimini ('The Whirlwind of Lovers')." Princeton University Art Museum, Princeton, New Jersey. Lacking many lines of shading and radiance, the drypoint inscription in reverse letters lower right ("The Whirlwind of Lovers from Dantes Inferno Canto V"), the hands of the couple in the sphere upper right, and the inverted head between the whirlwind and the waves just left of the peninsula on which Dante lies. The heads of the two figures in the top left corner are re-cut in slightly different positions in the published state. Darkly but crudely inked. Reproduced Keynes, *Blake's Illustrations of Dante*. Laurence Binyon, *The Engraved Designs of William Blake* (London: Ernest Benn, 1926), lists an even earlier state in which the "forms of the lovers are hardly more than outlines" and "there is a white patch in the river-bank under Virgil's figure" (76). This was probably one of the unstated number of "proofs in early states" Binyon notes as then belonging "to Mrs. Sydney Morse" (76), but I have not been able to locate an impression of it. The other Morse proofs were probably those for pls. 2, 6-7 (described below), accessioned 13 July 1929 by the British Museum.¹⁴ There were no Dante plates in the auction of the Sydney Morse collection, Christie's, 26 July 1929.

Pl. 2, "Ciampolo the Barrator Tormented by the Devils." British Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings, accession no. 1929.7.13.273. Some of the spiky wings around the devils on the right lack hatching strokes. A little more hatching appears on the upper thigh of the front-most seated figure on the right. This work appears to have been burnished away in the published state to create a highlight.

Pl. 4, "The Six-Footed Serpent Attacking Agnolo Brunelleschi." Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, bequeathed by T. H. Riches in 1935 and accessioned 1950. Printed in dark sepia and lacking hatching strokes on the serpent's wings, the chest, stomach, and left hip of the man (Brunelleschi) in the serpent's grasp, on the upper left thigh of the man on the right and on the stomach of his companion (second figure from the right), on the robe worn by Dante (left-most figure), on the ground beneath his

feet, lower left, and in the landscape background to the left of Dante's right upper arm and to the right of Virgil's hands. Brunelleschi's left thigh bears some hatching that was burnished away in the published state to create a highlight. The spiky vegetation below and to the left of Brunelleschi's right foot has been burnished away on its left side in the published state. The lower reaches of the rock above and to the left of this vegetation have also been removed. Reproduced Keynes, *Blake's Illustrations of Dante*.

Pl. 6, "The Pit of Disease: The Falsifiers." British Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings, accession no. 1929.7.13.276 (illus. 1). Three figures in the lower left corner are incomplete; two are only scratched in outline. The figure on all fours just to the right and the supine figure above lack some shading strokes. The densely packed lines in the sky, just to the right of the arch of stony figures on the left, lack a few strokes. The faces of Dante and Virgil, upper left, are incomplete. This proof state may also lack some cloud lines top right, but the abraded surface of the print in this area leaves the matter indeterminable.

Pl. 7, "Dante Striking Against Bocca degli Abati." Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, bequeathed by Philip Hofer in 1984. Virgil's left hand is raised to his face rather than to his chest (published state). Lacking many shading lines on the standing figures, particularly Virgil, the crosshatching on Abati's right shoulder and a few lines around his mouth, and the tears on the cheeks of the old man on the left side of the column of figures on the right. Reproduced Keynes, *Blake's Illustrations of Dante*. A later proof state in the British Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings, lacks only the finishing strokes defining the hands of the standing figures and a few lines on their clothing (accession no. 1929.7.13.277).

In *Blake Studies*, Keynes states that lot 179 in the Linnell sale at Christie's, 15 March 1918, contained a "set of early proofs, probably those made by Blake himself" (229). Although Keynes may have inspected this lot (sold to Colnaghi for £26.5s.), he offers no evidence for this claim, which on the face of it seems unlikely. The auction catalogue describes this lot as "India Proof Impressions, before all letters, loosely inserted in an oblong folio vol., boards." None of the traced working proofs are on laid India,



4. Dante engravings plate 3. India paper laid on wove. Lessing J. Rosenwald Collection, National Gallery of Art, Washington.

whereas all the nineteenth-century impressions recorded in the Linnell family papers and the Dixon & Ross daybook are. Even in their final states, none of the plates bears any letters (signature, imprint, title below the image), except for the easily-overlooked scratched inscription in reverse within the design on plate 1. The next lot (180) is described as "Five Similar Sets" (£22.1s. to Maggs, a price perhaps influenced by the condition of the prints), and the next lot is also called "Five Similar Sets" (£31.10s. to Riches). Thus, nothing in the catalogue clearly separates the "Proof Impressions" from those which were almost certainly in final states. In this context, "Proof" probably means nothing more than "early." The mere fact that all these lots were sold by the Linnell family is of no significance in determining states or printing dates in the nineteenth century. In recent years, dealers and auction houses have sometimes trumpeted the claim that a Dante set on laid India paper is "from the Linnell Family," or something to that

effect. They can never go wrong with this assertion about India-paper impressions, for *all* originally belonged to the Linnells.

The next impressions to be pulled after Blake's own working proofs are probably those printed directly on laid paper (not to be confused with India paper laid on wove) showing clear wire and chain lines, the latter approximately 3.7 cm. apart. Such a set was sold from the Doheny Memorial Library at Christie's New York, 21 February 1989, lot 1713, plate 2 illustrated in the auction catalogue (sold to the New York dealer Donald Heald for \$60,500). Part of a watermark, or countermark, "A & D," is present in plate 3. The heavy foxing of most impressions in this set cannot mask the fact that these are superb impressions that justify the record price. All major engraved lines are dark, rich, and precise, while the drypoint sketching lines yet to be cut with the graver are delicately yet fully printed. Each plate in this suite reveals its superiority over all India-paper impressions I have seen.

Much of this excellence is the result of expert inking and wiping of the plates' surfaces, but the quality of these impressions also indicates that the copperplates had not begun to show any effects of wear. The clarity with which each line is printed, even in densely-engraved passages, without any blurring of the boundaries between lines, suggests that the edges of each incision were still sharp and had not yet rounded to a gradual slope. This rounding can begin to occur after as few as ten impressions have been pulled from a copperplate. This initial wear is probably caused both by running the plates through the rolling press and by the inking process, for the craftsman must wipe the surface of an intaglio copperplate with dozens of strokes of his hand in preparation for taking a single impression.

As Thomas Lange has reminded me, another fine set on laid paper, also nastily foxed, is in the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York. A mixed group, with plate 1 on India laid on wove, lacking plate 4, and plates 2-3, 5-7 on laid paper, was sold in London at Christie's, 29 June 1989, lot 13, plate 2 illustrated in the auction catalogue (£24,200 to the London print dealer William Weston). From this group I have seen only plate 3; but the auction catalogue reports that plates 6 and 7, both on the laid stock, show "part of a watermark [or countermark?] A & D."¹⁵ Weston tells me that these impressions were foxed badly enough to require careful cleaning; clearly, this laid paper has an inherent tendency to become stained in this way. Yet, in my view, they are the most desirable impressions of the published states.

The existence of the laid-paper prints is more than a little disconcerting. Blake used wove paper for almost all his illuminated books and original separate plates he printed himself.¹⁶ Linnell consistently favored India paper laid on wove and probably influenced Blake's choice of those papers for some of his late intaglio graphics, including the

"proof" issue of the Job illustrations in 1826. The documentary record of Dante printings makes no mention of laid-paper impressions. Indeed, that record would seem to exclude them, for all the press runs noted by John Linnell, Jr., and the Dixon & Ross daybook specify India paper. The laid-paper impressions suggest an unrecorded press run early in the history of the Dante plates. And if there was one such printing, might there have been others? I have no clear evidence of any further printings, but the mere possibility gives one pause before making bold statements about the total number of Dante impressions and their dates.

The quality of the laid-paper impressions indicates a printing date before the first India paper pulls of 26 September 1838. It is unlikely that they were printed by Blake himself. He left all seven Dante plates unfinished at his death in 1827, and there would have been no reason to print fine sets of the plates while there was any hope of developing them to a more complete state. Blake's own working proofs, listed above, show areas of careless inking, as is often the case when a printmaker is taking impressions merely to check his progress. Perhaps the laid-paper impressions were taken by Dixon & Ross, or some other plate printer, just prior to the first recorded printing as a way of showing Linnell how expertly they could perform the task. This speculation, however, does not explain why at least two full sets, plus at least a third impression of plates 2-3, 5-7, were printed. The mysteries surrounding these beautiful laid-paper impressions only enhance their desirability.

We are now left with a variety of India-paper impressions, printed in two press runs in 1838 and one c. 1892—if we can still trust the completeness of the documentary record. How can these be sorted out and ascribed to the printing in which each was produced? Detailed comparisons of printing quality (never fully captured by photographs) and paper types (at best only hinted at

by photos) are hindered by the wide dispersal of the Dante sets. The largest group I have found in one place is in the Huntington Library, but its four complete copies, plus one set in my collection, provide only a small sampling of the whole number extant. Visual memory, propped up by photos, must serve in such circumstances, in spite of their obvious limitations. The dimensions and thicknesses of backing papers can also be useful, but these too have their limits. Only untrimmed sheets can tell us what the original (and presumably uniform) sheet size was. The thickness of the same hand-made stock, even when produced in the same mold, can vary by measurable amounts. Even a single sheet can yield measurements that vary as much as 25%, depending on where one places the micrometer or paper gauge. All that follows should be understood in light of these caveats.

Among the dozen or more India-paper suites I have seen over the years, I have found a surprising uniformity in the quality of the impressions. The Linnell family was too successful, as far as my research is concerned, in replicating the 1838 impressions in 1892. There are of course small differences, but these can be accounted for by differences in inking of the sort that can occur within a single press run. Fortunately, one plate escapes this frustrating uniformity. Its special qualities require some background explanation.

Blake executed the Dante plates in a combination of drypoint, used mostly for preliminary sketching of outlines, and pure engraving without etching. In the latter technique, the tool is pushed through the metal to create V-shaped incisions. The metal removed takes the form of thin, curling wires. These are removed from each line as the engraver works over the plate. A drypoint needle creates a very different by-product. As the craftsman drags the needle across the metal surface, it leaves behind a "burr" on one or both sides of the furrow, much like the wake behind a

speedboat. This burr will catch and hold ink, even after the printer has wiped the surface of the metal clean, and its presence will register in impressions from the plate as a slight fuzziness or striations along the margins of drypoint lines. The burr, however, wears off the plate very quickly, and thus can serve as a useful (albeit approximate) index of the relative printing dates of two impressions if at least one shows some burr. That is, an impression with rich burr will probably be earlier than one with only a little, and this second impression earlier than one with none at all.

All the Dante plates show evidence of drypoint sketching, but only one shows any clear evidence of burr even in the early laid-paper impressions. Blake's friend George Cumberland held that "the very early impressions of ancient [meaning early Italian] Prints in general" are not "the best, as they partake of *the remainders of the Burrs*, . . . but the best are those clear impressions which came early afterwards, when the Printer's hand had entirely destroyed that Burr, and well polished the plate at the same time."¹⁷ The graphic style of the Dante plates owes much to Italian Renaissance prints, particularly those by Andrea Mantegna and his circle.¹⁸ If Blake shared Cumberland's opinions about such prints and made them a part of his own linearist, anti-chiaroscuro aesthetic, then he may have purposely removed burr as he worked. The one exception is plate 3, arguably the least developed in the series. Some impressions, including Heald's on laid paper, show rich burr in the swirling lines lower right (illus. 2), on Dante and Virgil, in the landscape to the right, and on the seated figures center right (illus. 3). Just to the left of Dante and Virgil is a cluster of drypoint scratches that barely penetrated the copper except at their upper terminations. These are unrelated to the composition and are probably an unavoidable consequence of Blake having tested his drypoint needle. Like the burr, these

shallow lines could be removed easily. If not erased, they would slowly wear off the plate during inking. Impressions without burr, and with only the slightest evidence of the scratched lines left of Virgil and Dante (illus. 4), are probably later than those showing both these features (illus. 2). The alterations over time in the condition of plate 3 are confirmed by the twentieth-century impressions, all of which show no evidence of either burr or the scratched lines (illus. 5), and by the present appearance of the copperplate (illus. 6).

The burr on plate 3 can serve as a rough indication of the relative chronology of impressions from that plate and, by extension, the chronology of its companions in the same suite—assuming that the suite is uniform as to paper, ink color, etc. Before applying this rule of thumb to the India-paper impressions, a cautionary note must be sounded. Burr records wear that occurs *during* inking and printing, not the gaps *between* print runs. All burr can be eliminated, gradually but completely, in the course of a single printing or retained through the early pulls of the next, no matter how many years pass between the two operations. It is highly unlikely for the very last fragments of burr to appear in the last impression of a press run, and thus for the first impression without burr to correspond precisely with the first pull of the next printing. Further, the wiping of the plate during the inking process will affect the amount of burr indicated in an impression. For example, the Weston impression of plate 3 on laid paper shows considerably less burr than the Heald impression on the same paper, even though both were very probably pulled in the same early press run. The direction in which the craftsman moves his hand for the final time over the burr areas will influence the amount of ink they retain. And we cannot assume that commercial plate printers of the last century took conscious measures to preserve evidence of burr or the test marks left of Dante

and Virgil. Thus, slight variations in the amount of burr serve as a poor index of printing chronology. Only large-scale differences, such as those indicated by illus. 2 and 4, are very useful, and even then we must allow for the possibility that a few early pulls show no burr and a few later ones reveal its continued presence. We can have the most confidence in chronologies suggested by burr when supported by other types of evidence.

The Heald impression of plate 3 printed directly on laid paper shows the richest burr I have seen. But India-paper impressions laid on to a wove, hard surface, card-like paper, .46 mm. thick and without a watermark, show almost as much burr and reveal the test marks left of Dante and Virgil just as clearly. One such impression—the only one I have been able to compare directly with others—is in a complete set, with all plates on the same backing paper, in the Huntington Library (call no. 57438).¹⁹ This paper is so dense and thick that, when held to a backing light, it is completely opaque. In the Huntington set, bound in late nineteenth- or early twentieth-century full leather by Riviere & Son, the backing sheets measure 40.5 x 57.5 cm. (i.e., a little less than a half-sheet of Colom-bier) with all edges gilt. Another such set, formerly in the collection of Sir Geoffrey Keynes,²⁰ is beautifully reproduced full-size in his *Blake's Illustrations of Dante*. Its backing sheets measure 40.2 x 56.1 cm. Approximately the same dimensions are found in the only other thick-paper set I have located, now in the Kerrison Preston Blake Library, Westminster City Library, London.²¹ Both the Keynes and Preston sets are bound in green cloth with "BLAKE'S DANTE" stamped in gilt on the front cover and the letterpress Dante label, printed by Linnell for the 1838 issue, pasted to the inside front cover. This is probably the original binding in which such suites were issued.²²

The conclusion, based on the presence of the burr, that these thick-paper

sets are early impressions can be refined further by documentary evidence that such prints were pulled in the first press run of 26 September 1838. One easily-overlooked detail in the Dixon & Ross daybook, quoted earlier, is particularly significant. The backing paper of the first printing is listed as "th[ick]," whereas no such adjective modifies the same "pl[at[e] Col[ombier]" used for the second printing (29 September). Keynes reports that the Dante set sold from the collection of the Marquis of Crewe at Sotheby's, 8 May 1943, lot 312 (£68 to the London dealer Francis Edwards), was "similar" to his thick-paper suite (*Blake's Illustrations of Dante* [2]) and was bound in the same green cloth stamped in gilt (*Blake Studies* 228). This Crewe copy, now untraced, bore an inscription on a flyleaf: "A few copies may be had of Mr. Chance, 28 London Street, Fitzroy Square, W, Artists Proofs £3.13.6. only 25 copies printed" (Bentley, *Blake Books* 545). The Preston set contains a clipping, pasted to the inside front cover, from an unidentified dealer's catalogue that similarly claims that the impressions are "Artist's Proofs, only 25 copies printed." These statements further associate the prints on India paper laid on thick wove with the first press run. To call them "Artist's Proofs" is certainly misleading, particularly since the artist had been dead for eleven years when they were printed, but the casual and self-serving use of the word "proof" is hardly unique in the annals of print selling (see my earlier comments on the 1918 Linnell sale). In this context, the term means, if it means anything at all, that these impressions are from the first press run. The connection with "Mr. Chance" and the number of "copies printed" are even more significant. In a letter dated 30 December 1856 (Ivimey collection), James H. Chance wrote as follows to his uncle, John Linnell: "I received the case quite safe with the 2[?] sets[?] of Dante & Two proofs of Emmaus[?] which are very beautiful (yesterday), and possibly I may be able to do something with them amongst my connexion. The Dante



5. Dante engravings plate 3, restrike of 1968. Lessing J. Rosenwald Collection, National Gallery of Art, Washington.



6. Dante engravings plate 3, Blake's original copperplate. Lessing J. Rosenwald Collection, National Gallery of Art, Washington.

& Blake I have entirely on my own speculation being partial to them and if I can do any thing with them I shall be happy to enter into some agreements for 25 Copies. . . .²³ Whether Chance carried out these plans is not known, but the inscription in the Crewe set indicates that he sold at least one of the so-called "Artist's Proofs" printed on India laid on thick wove in the 26 September press run of 25 sets. Perhaps the Crewe and Preston sets are the two Chance notes he had already received.

It would be most convenient if we were now left with India-paper impressions on only two types of backing papers that could be ascribed confidently to the second (29 September 1838) and third (c. 1892) printings of the Dante plates. But the life of a chalcographer is rarely that simple, and what I have found instead is a bewildering variety of just off-white wove backing papers. All measure between .25 and .34 mm. in thickness and are only semi-opaque when held to a backing light. These characteristics are useful in distinguishing such prints from the thick-paper (.46 mm.) impressions, but the range of only .09 mm. in thickness is insufficient for making clear discriminations among India-paper impressions on the thinner backing papers. Sheet sizes are of no help in separating out 1838 and c. 1892 impressions since no India-paper print I have measured is larger than the half-sheets (about 48 x 59.7 cm.) into which the Colombier-size paper was cut for both 1838 press runs. Here again, the success the Linnells had in matching the earlier prints in their c. 1892 restrikes thwarts the modern investigator.

Fortunately, some of the India-paper sets on the thinner backing papers can be identified on the basis of watermarks. I list below those I know of, with a few other particulars added.

1. "1822" followed at a considerable distance by "II [followed by an illegible letter fragment cut off]," with a countermark of "S & [cut off]." This paper is at the lower end of the range of thicknesses, is more

pliable, and has a smoother and softer surface texture than all others listed here. A complete and uniform set is in the Huntington Library (call no. 57437), pl. 3 with the watermark fragment of letters, pls. 1, 3-7 with the date, and pls. 1, 4-7 with the countermark fragment. Sheets 44.5 x 59 cm., deckle edges right and bottom, minor foxing. A mixed group of nine impressions of the seven Dante plates in the Rosenwald Collection, National Gallery of Art, Washington, shows the "1822" watermark in pl. 2 only. Pl. 3 in the Huntington set shows considerable burr, roughly equivalent to that found in the impression reproduced here as illus. 2.

2. Fragment of an italic capital "N," the remainder trimmed off. Found in pls. 1 and 3 of a complete (and apparently uniform) set in the Huntington Library (call no. 283403). Sheets 39.5 x 54.4 cm., one or two edges with deckle, the India paper (but not the backing paper) evenly browned on pl. 2. Pl. 3 shows no burr lower right and only very slight burr on Dante and Virgil. Only ghosts of Blake's test scratches remain. The same amounts of burr and the scratches left of Dante and Virgil appear in a uniform set in my collection, sheets 39 x 54 cm., one or two deckle edges, the India paper of pls. 2 and 5 evenly browned, showing fragments of the "N" watermark on pls. 1, 5, and 6. A fragment of this watermark is reported to be in a set offered by Serendipity Books, Berkeley, California, December 1979, catalogue 39, item P 128, for \$13,000 (untraced). The dealer's catalogue claims that there is more burr on this set than in the set owned by Mrs. Landon K. Thorne (now in the Pierpont Morgan Library), which also contains fragments of the "N" watermark.

3. Letters, perhaps three or four, so poorly formed and densely packed together that they are illegible. Found in pls. 1 and 3 of a complete (and apparently uniform) set sold from the collection of The Garden Ltd., formed by Haven O'More, Sotheby's New York, 10 November 1989, lot 168 (\$41,250 to Donald Heald). Sheets 39.7 x 54 cm., no burr on pl. 3.

4. "*J. Whatman Turkey Mills.*" Various reported in the following auction catalogues as present in complete sets: Sotheby's London, 7 March 1985, lot 200, with a reproduction of pl. 3 showing no burr lower right but with fragments of the scratches left of Dante and Virgil as in illus. 4 (£23,100, untraced); Sotheby's London, 27 June 1986, lot 747 (£24,200, untraced); Sotheby's London, 27 June 1988, lot 168 (£24,200, untraced); Sotheby's London, 27 June 1989, lot 226, sold from the "Property

of a Member of the Linnell Family" (£38,500, untraced). Some of these may be resales of the same set, but it seems unlikely that they all represent only a single set.

The information recorded above allows us to draw a few conclusions. More than one backing paper must have been used in the second printing of 1838 and/or in the c. 1892 press run—assuming that there was no unrecorded printing in addition to the fine early pulls on laid paper (described earlier). It seems unlikely that the 1822 paper (no. 1, above) would have been used c. 1892, and even a little surprising that it would have been available in any quantity in 1838 (although the papermaker may have retained the 1822 mark in later years). Perhaps the uneconomical size of the second recorded printing of 1838—only 13 sets—and the four extra pulls (what commercial use would they have had?) were dictated by a limited amount of this 1822 paper. Of course this hypothesis assumes, rather rashly, that no other backing paper was used in the 1838 second printing. The presence of burr on the only impression located of plate 3 printed on this paper buttresses the conclusion that it was used in 1838.

All other backing papers listed here, nos. 2-4, are remarkably similar, at least to my eyes and fingers, as to color, texture, and density. William Linnell's statement, in his recently discovered letter to Quaritch quoted earlier, that he preferred Whatman paper for the c. 1892 impressions does not insure that it was actually used; but this letter does lend support to the evidence of the burr (or lack thereof) on at least one impression of plate 3 indicating that sets on Whatman were pulled c. 1892. Circumstantial evidence, cited and interpreted (probably by Richard Godfrey) in Sotheby's 27 June 1986 catalogue, further tips the scales toward 1892. The set sold in lot 747, with one backing sheet showing part of the Whatman watermark, was the suite Keynes acquired from "the last [nineteenth-century] printing of the plates" during a visit to the Linnell family home at Redhill.²⁴

Only two backing papers remain, nos. 2 and 3 above. The rule of thumb based on the amount of burr in plate 3, combined with the weight of numbers (only 13 complete sets produced in the second printing of 1838, but 50 in c. 1892), leads me to conclude that both types of paper signify the c. 1892 printing. However, the impression of plate 3 reproduced here, illus. 2-3, showing almost as much burr as the thick-paper pulls of the first printing, is on a backing sheet of unwatermarked paper which I cannot distinguish from my set with the "N" watermark.²⁵ I can only conclude from this that either a paper in addition to the "1822" variety was used in the second printing of 1838, or the copperplate of plate 3 retained considerable burr after 1838 and this shows up in the first few pulls of c. 1892. If the latter is the case, as seems the more likely of the two possibilities, then the rule of burr cannot be used to discriminate in all cases between the second and third press runs.

In spite of its length, the foregoing is little better than an interim report. It concludes with the spectacle of a Blake nut imitating plate 10 of *The Gates of Paradise* ("Help! Help!"). It would be good to find more sets with the 1822 watermark, and more impressions of plate 3 with burr on any sort of backing paper. An impression on Whatman paper showing rich burr would force major revisions in the history concocted here. So let me offer my services as a Dante Clearinghouse and invite interested readers to send me information about Dante engravings they have inspected. Working together, we should at least be able to complicate matters further.

I am indebted to Ruth Fine and Greg Jecmen of the National Gallery of Art, Washington, Arthur Freeman, and Thomas V. Lange for their help with the research reported in this essay.

¹G. E. Bentley, Jr., and Martin K. Nurmi, *A Blake Bibliography* (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1964) 89. The interpolations in brackets are from Bentley and Nurmi.

²The senior Linnell lived at 38 Porchester Terrace, Bayswater, from 1828 to 1851, and thus his son's comment that the Dante plates were printed "at Bayswater" (i.e., while the family lived there) is not very helpful in fixing a date.

³Bentley and Nurmi 89. For information on Dixon & Ross (founded 1833) and its successor firm, see Iain Bain, "Thomas Ross & Son, Copper- and Steel-plate Printers since 1833," *Journal of the Printing Historical Society* no. 2 (1966): 3-22, and Tony Dyson, "The Ross Records: 1833 to 1900," *Journal of the Printing Historical Society* no. 12 (1977-78): 52-67.

⁴All information about the Linnell family is taken from Alfred T. Story, *The Life of John Linnell*, 2 vols. (London: Bentley and Son, 1892), based in large part on the elder Linnell's manuscript autobiography, and Katharine Crouan, *John Linnell: A Centennial Exhibition* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1982). I have not been able to find the death dates of any of the Linnell brothers. Presumably John Jr. was still alive in 1892, if Bentley and Nurmi and Keynes (see note 5) are correct in ascribing the draft letter in the Ivimy collection to his hand.

⁵Keynes, "A Note on the Later History of the Dante Engravings," *Blake Studies: Essays on His Life and Work*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971) 228-29 (the first publication of this "Note"); *Blake's Illustrations of Dante* (London: Trianon Press for the Blake Trust, 1978) [2]. In the 1978 volume, Keynes states that "one hundred sets" were printed c. 1892 ([2]), but gives no documentary evidence for this number, twice as large as the figure recorded by John Linnell, Jr. I assume that Keynes is simply mistaken on this point. Todd, in his essay on the twentieth-century restrikes (see note 13), repeats Keynes's figure for the c. 1892 printing and claims that "170 sets" were printed in 1838 (p. 4 in the last version of Todd's essay). Todd cites Bentley and Nurmi (88-89) as the authority for this latter number, but they say nothing about the number of impressions pulled in 1838 other than quoting the receipts. I take Todd's "170" to be another error.

⁶G. E. Bentley, Jr., *Blake Books* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977) 545. Except for "[sheets]", used here in the place of ditto marks in the original, the bracketed interpolations are Bentley's.

⁷*Blake's Illustrations of Dante* [2]. In *Blake Studies*, Keynes calls the backing

sheets for the laid India "(French) Colom-bier plate paper" (228).

⁸See E. J. Labarre, *A Dictionary of Paper and Paper-Making Terms* (Amsterdam: Swets & Zeitlinger, 1937) 54.

⁹See Whatman's mold sizes recorded in Thomas Balston, *James Whatman Father & Son* (London: Methuen, 1957) 61. Labarre 54 gives the same dimensions as the standard for Colom-bier.

¹⁰Bain 7.

¹¹According to Ted Gott, "Eternity in an Hour: The Prints of William Blake," in Martin Butlin and Gott, *William Blake in the Collection of the National Gallery of Victoria* (Melbourne: National Gallery of Victoria, 1989) 187-88.

¹²I take the titles for each plate from those given the corresponding water colors in Martin Butlin, *The Paintings and Drawings of William Blake* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1981).

¹³Information about the 1968 printing is taken from Ruthven Todd, "Blake's Dante Plates," *Times Literary Supplement* (29 August 1968): 928, and its two revisions: "Blake's Dante Plates—Revised Version," *Book Collecting & Library Monthly* no. 6 (October 1968): 164-71, and *Blake's Dante Plates, Reprinted, with Additions, from the October 1968 Issue of Book Collecting & Library Monthly* (n.p., n.d.). All references to Todd are to the final version. The complete 1968 set in the National Gallery of Victoria is reproduced in Gott, figs. 50a-g.

¹⁴Bentley, *Blake Books* 546, records "proofs of each [Dante plate] in the BMPP," but I have been able to locate only the three described here. The handlist of the British Museum collection in *Blake Newsletter* 5 (1972): 236, lists "Five Dante trial proofs" of pls. 2 (two impressions), 4, 6-7, accession nos. 1929.7.13.273-77, but two of these (pl. 2, no. 274, and pl. 4, no. 275) are in their published states.

¹⁵I am unable to identify this watermark, but it may have been produced by John Dickinson at the Apsley Mill he acquired in 1809—see W. A. Churchill, *Watermarks in Paper* (Amsterdam: Hertzberger & Co., 1925) 48.

¹⁶The only exceptions known to me are copy L of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* ("A Song of Liberty" only, printed as a pamphlet of two leaves), the unique first-state impression of "Joseph of Arimathea Among the Rocks of Albion" (Fitzwilliam Museum), perhaps printed in the 1770s when Blake as still an apprentice, and the unique impression of "Charity" (British Museum).

¹⁷Cumberland, *An Essay on the Utility of Collecting the Best Works of the Ancient*

Engravers of the Italian School (London: Payne and Foss et al., 1827) 20.

¹⁸See Robert N. Essick, *William Blake Printmaker* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1980) 250-54. Cumberland showed Blake the manuscript of his *Essay* in November 1823 (G. E. Bentley, Jr., *Blake Records* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969] 279).

¹⁹This suite is wrongly described as "probably the restrikes of ca. 1892" in Robert N. Essick, *The Works of William Blake in the Huntington Collections* (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1985) 209. All such sets are similarly (and wrongly) characterized in Sotheby's New York auction catalogue of 9-10 November 1989, lot 168.

²⁰This set was not part of Keynes's bequest to the Fitzwilliam Museum. According to J. J. Hall, Under-Librarian in the Rare Book Department, Cambridge University Library, the set cannot be located in the Keynes Collection there.

²¹Very well reproduced, with enlarged details from each plate, in David Bindman, assisted by Deirdre Toomey, *The Complete Graphic Works of William Blake* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978) pls. 647-53. This may be the same as the set which Keynes describes as similar to his own and "until recently, in the possession of the Linnell family" (*Blake's Illustrations of Dante* [2]).

²²This is also the conclusion stated independently about each of these copies in Kerrison Preston, *Notes for a Catalogue of the Blake Library at the Georgian House Merstham* (Cambridge: Golden Head Press, 1960) 10, and [Keynes], *Bibliotheca Bibliographica: A Catalogue of the Library Formed by Geoffrey Keynes* (London: Trianon Press, 1964) 65.

²³Bentley, *Blake Books* 545. "Emmaus" very probably refers to Linnell's line and mezzotint print of his own painting, "The Journey to Emmaus," dated 17 June 1839

in the imprint. "Dante & Blake" is a bit odd; perhaps Chance meant "Dante by Blake."

²⁴Keynes, *Blake's Illustrations of Dante* [2]. I cannot confirm the claim in Sotheby's catalogue that this visit was in 1912, but in *The Gates of Memory* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981) 103, Keynes notes that he acquired a Dante set during one of his two visits to Redhill "before 1914."

²⁵A Dante set on laid India with very similar amounts of burr in pl. 3, now in a British private collection, was sold the property of D. R. Bollard (John Linnell's great-grandson) at Sotheby's London, 14 November 1980, lot 295, in poor (but probably repairable) condition (£5100). I have no information about its backing paper, but all seven plates are reproduced in *The Print in England 1790-1930: Catalogue of an Exhibition First Shown at the Fitzwilliam Museum 12 March to 5 May 1985* (Cambridge: Fitzwilliam Museum, 1985) 54-60.

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MINUTE PARTICULARS

New Voice on Blake

Bruce E. Graver

In editing Wordsworth's Chaucer modernizations for the Cornell Wordsworth, I came across a manuscript containing a significant piece of Blake criticism. The manuscript is a fair copy review of *Chaucer Modernized*, 20 pages long, clearly ready for publication but apparently never published; it is preserved in the Wordsworth Library, boxed with Wordsworth's other papers having to do with Thomas Powell and the *Chaucer Modernized* volume. *Chaucer Modernized* itself, published late in 1840, was a volume of modernizations of Chaucer's verse organized and edited by Powell and R. H. Horne, and containing contributions from such authors as Leigh Hunt and Elizabeth Barrett. It included two works of Wordsworth: his version of the pseudo-Chaucerian "Cuckoo and the Nightingale," and his extract from *Troilus and Criseyde*.

The author of the manuscript review is a person of sound literary judgment, who possesses a thorough knowledge of Middle English and has read carefully the commentary in Tyrwhitt's edition of Chaucer's poems. We can surmise that he is a lawyer, for besides references to Blackstone's *Commentaries* and trade and tariff regulations, he draws on an extensive knowledge of English law and the organization of the Inns of Court to illuminate several passages of Chaucer's verse. It is also significant that he claims to know Wordsworth personally. He disapproves of the *Chaucer Modernized* project, but directs his opprobrium at the contributions of Horne and Powell, not at Wordsworth himself. Horne, the reviewer writes, "cannot even construe

old poetry, still less paraphrase it."¹ And he considers Powell even less competent. For Wordsworth's contributions, he has the highest praise. He urges him to complete his version of *Troilus*: "It will be an amusement to his honored age, feeble only in eyesight, to dictate his translation to his amiable lady." And of "The Cuckoo and the Nightingale," he writes: "We bow to the Master! We only wish he had reserved it for his own next volume of Poems, and not buried it in this dunghill."

At the very end of the review, after discussing each contributor's efforts, the reviewer turns, as if out of the blue, to the subject of William Blake.

Have any of our readers ever seen the print of the Canterbury pilgrims by William Blake, the mad artist, whose biography may be read in Mr. Allan Cunningham's *Lives*? He painted it, he says, before Mr. Stothard's picture on the same subject, and nearly thirty years ago he exhibited it publicly, in opposition to that elegant composition. Mr. Stothard's picture is *Chaucer Modernized*—the horses all barbs, from the Elgin Marbles, and the riders, refined and softened, in stage-dresses. Mr. Blake's picture is Chaucer in the old rough verse—"in his habit as he lived"—bad in drawing, but true and vivid in expression. His horses are wooden toys, and his dogs pigs; but the individual character is in every human face, and look and dress. Mr. Blake understood Chaucer, like Mr. Wordsworth, profoundly. Mr. Stothard read him like Mr. Horne, superficially. Together with his Exhibition, Mr. Blake gave you, for your shilling, a printed description of his Picture, in contrast with Mr. Stothard's. This contained a little madness about painting, and a great deal of abuse of Mr. Stothard; but it was prefaced by some Observations on Chaucer's Poem, of so striking and original a kind, that, as the pamphlet is now as good as MS. (few people being in the habit of preserving their Exhibition Catalogues) we shall conclude this article by quoting them:

At this point, the reviewer indicates, by writing "the characters _____ happy", that he wishes to include a lengthy quotation from Blake's *Descriptive Catalogue*—the entire description of the Canterbury Pilgrims, beginning on page 9 of the catalogue and ending on page 25. The review

ends with this remark: "Poor William Blake! He was certainly a man of a genius kindred to that of Chaucer."

This passage is remarkable not so much for the information it conveys—most of that is derived from Allan Cunningham's biography of Blake—as for the reviewer's lively interest in Blake and rare appreciation of his critical acumen. Although he accepts the usual characterization of Blake as a "mad artist," he is not interested in perpetuating what Bentley calls "titillating rumors of the mad painter's visions," as was the rule among contemporary literary journalists.² Rather, he expresses admiration for Blake's understanding and champions his interpretation of Chaucer. In quoting at tremendous length from the *Descriptive Catalogue* (which, along with a copy of Blake's "Canterbury Pilgrims," he apparently owned), he effectively sets Blake up as the interpreter of Chaucer that Horne was not. Also noteworthy is the analogy he draws between the roughness of Blake's drawing and the roughness of Wordsworth's deliberately archaic modernizations. He considers their rough crudeness truer to the genius of Chaucer than the "softened stage dresses" of Stothard on the one hand, and Horne on the other. Because of these remarkable opinions, the identity of this reviewer should be of interest to scholars of Blake and Wordsworth alike.

The candidate that comes first to mind is Henry Crabb Robinson. Robinson, of course, knew both Blake and Wordsworth, attended and wrote about Blake's 1809-10 exhibition, owned four copies of the *Descriptive Catalogue*, one of which he gave to Charles Lamb, and purchased two copies of the "Canterbury Pilgrims."³ He was also a lawyer. But the arguments against his authorship are substantial. First, the reviewer speaks of the admission price to the 1809 exhibition as being one shilling. This is both inaccurate—the price was half a crown (2s.6d)—and does not square with what Robinson himself wrote in his *Reminiscences* ten years

later: "a half crown was demanded of the Visitor for which he had also a Catalogue. . . ."4 Second, there is a problem with the spelling of the name of Blake's rival, Stothard. In his *Reminiscences*, Robinson spelled this name inconsistently, either as Stodart or Stodard. The reviewer, however, spells it correctly all five times. Third, whereas the reviewer depends on Cunningham for his account of the Stothard incident, Robinson gives a different version that is more sympathetic to Stothard, whom he calls "an amiable and excellent man."⁵ Finally, and most convincingly, the handwriting in the manuscript is not Robinson's. The review itself may have been the work of a copyist, but traces of the author's handwriting survive; they are found on clippings from the *Chaucer Modernized* volume that have been pasted into the review. On these clippings, the author has written pencil corrections of Horne and Powell's translations. These corrections do not match Robinson's hand at all.

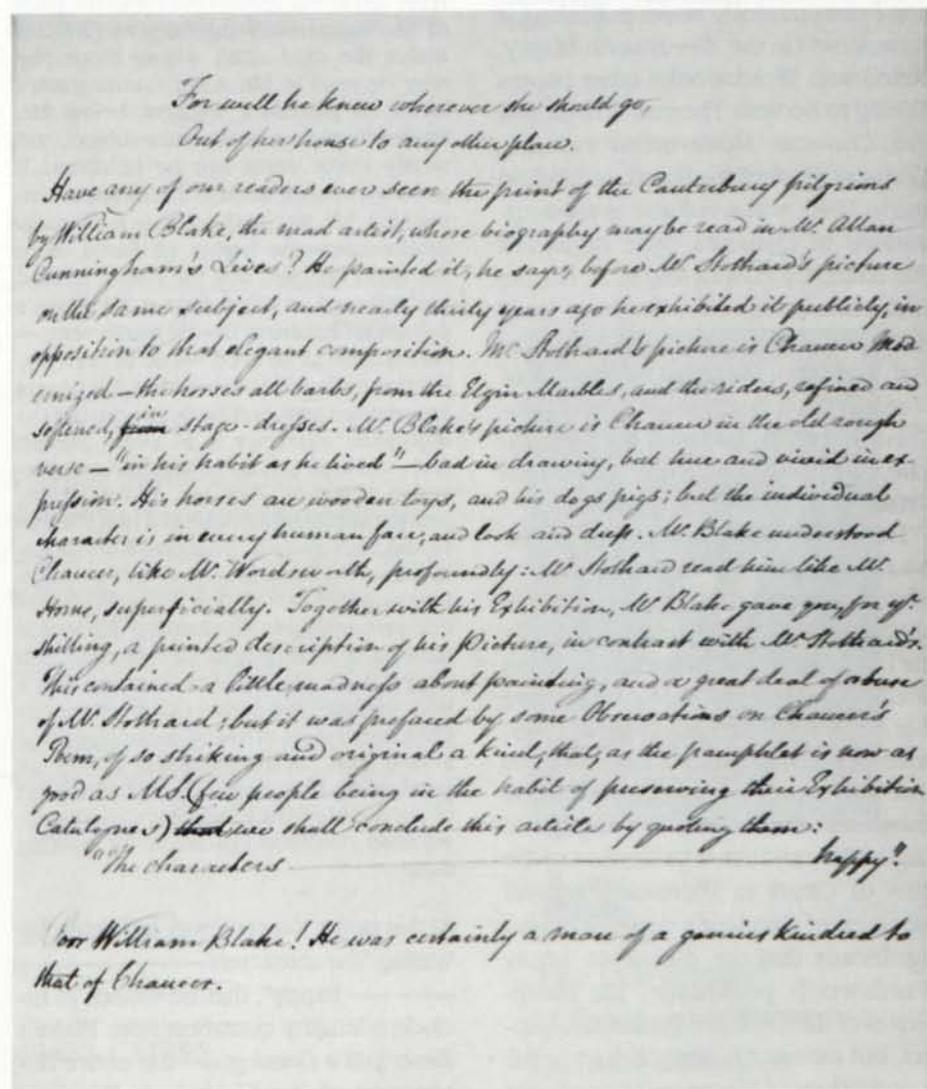
Crabb Robinson's diaries help to reveal the reviewer's identity. On 8 January 1828, Robinson records a visit he made to Blake's widow in the company of Barron Field, a lawyer and a correspondent of Wordsworth.

Walked with Field to Mrs Blake The poor old lady was more affected than I exp^d yet she spoke of her husband as dying like an angel. She is the housekeeper of Linnell the painter & engraver—And at present her Services must well pay for her board—A few of her husbands works are all her property—We found that Job is Linnells property and the print of Chaucers pilgrimage hers—Therefore Field bought a proof and I two prints—@ 2- guas each—I mean one for Lamb⁶

This means that Field, like Robinson and Lamb, owned a copy of Blake's "Canterbury Pilgrims," which makes him the only other person among Wordsworth's acquaintance whom we know to have possessed one. And it would have been natural for Robinson to give him a copy of the catalogue too, to go with the proof.

Barron Field's character and circle of acquaintance are in accord with the profile I have suggested for the author. Field, a lawyer, had published an analysis of Blackstone's *Commentaries* in 1811, and as Chief Justice of Gibraltar until 1841, would have been familiar with the kinds of trade and tariff regulations discussed in the review. Moreover, Field had long been associated with major literary figures. He was a schoolmate of Leigh Hunt at Christ's Church Hospital, and as a young man wrote reviews for Hunt's *Reflector* and published poems in the *Examiner*. Field met Wordsworth as early as 1812, and Robinson and Lamb were lifelong

friends.⁷ In fact, he is mentioned in two of the Elia essays, including "Distant Correspondents," which is addressed entirely to Field, who was then living in Australia. His friendship with Lamb is especially significant because he echoes Lamb's opinion about Blake's Chaucer criticism: "Lamb," recalled Robinson, ". . . declared that Blake's description [of the Canterbury pilgrims] was the finest criticism he had ever read of Chaucer's poem."⁸ Wordsworthians know Field primarily as the author of a memoir of the poet, completed in 1840 but not published because of Wordsworth's objections, and there survives a series of letters between the two, in which



Courtesy of the Wordsworth Trust, Dove Cottage, Grasmere.

Field criticized the ways Wordsworth had revised his poems and urged him (often successfully) to change them back. Field, in fact, kept an annotated copy of Wordsworth's collected poems, in which he recorded all of the poet's alterations in the published versions of his poetry,⁹ and he joked with Wordsworth about having "the honour to be your Editor. 'The *fifteenth* Edition, with Notes by Barron Field.'" ¹⁰ Furthermore, a comparison of handwritings confirms Field's authorship.

Fortunately, we can trace Field's interest in the *Chaucer Modernized* volume with some exactness. In the early months of 1840, shortly after completing his memoir of Wordsworth, Field visited England and called at Rydal Mount. No doubt the main subject discussed during the visit was the memoir, whose publication Wordsworth had resisted. But Wordsworth was also preparing to publish his modernizations of Chaucer in Horne and Powell's volume and had a long discussion with Field about doing so. In a paragraph added to the memoir after 1841, Field tells how

the Poet . . . read to me . . . his Lines of hearing the Cuckoo at the Monastery of San Francisco d'Assisi, and his modernization of Chaucer's Cuckow & Nightingale. . . . [I]n illustration of the latter he referred to the part the Crow plays in the Manceple's Tale, and praised the father-poet's dramatic skill and courage, in making the Manceple, whose only object in life was to be a trusty domestic, draw this moral alone from the story:—

My sone, beware, and be non
auctour newe
Of tidings, whether they ben
false or trewe:
Wher so thou come, amonges
high or lowe,
Kepe well thy tonge, and
thinke upon the Crowe.

He wished that the delicacy of modern ears would allow him to translate the whole of this Tale, and dwelt with rapture upon the remorse of Phoebus for having slain his adulterous wife. . . .

Field then tells how Wordsworth "threw his Cuckow and Nightingale into a bad collection of pieces entitled '*Chaucer Modernized*.'" ¹¹ These remarks correspond closely to two passages in the review. In the first paragraph, Field writes that "Mr. Wordsworth . . . is so warm an admirer of ["The Manceple's Tale"], that we have heard him lament the impossibility of translating the whole." Then, at the end of his discussion of Leigh Hunt's "emasculated" version of the tale, we find the following:

[T]he Tale is well done, with a proper sense of what we once heard Mr. Wordsworth call the great poet's dramatic skill and courage, in making the Manceple, whose only object in life was to be a trusty domestic, draw this moral alone from the Tale, passing by all the crime, rashness & misery of the tragedy, as if they were things that would happen in the best-regulated families, and that servants should see all and say nothing.

What Field seems not to have known, or perhaps to have suppressed, is that Wordsworth *had* modernized "The Manceple's Tale," and had originally offered it to Thomas Powell for publication in *Chaucer Modernized*. He withdrew the offer, however, after family and friends complained about the tale's bawdiness.¹² In any case, it is clear that Field was interested in this project, and in Wordsworth's questionable alliance with Horne and Powell, well before the volume was published. His review may even have been written as a kind of public reminder to Wordsworth to be more selective in his literary associations.¹³

Two problems remain. First, why was the review never published? Second, why was Field so interested in promoting Blake's reputation that he would drag him by the heels into a review like this? And about both problems we can only speculate. *Chaucer Modernized* appeared in time for the Christmas trade in 1840 and was reviewed in three periodicals: *Monthly Magazine*, on 5 January, *The Athaenum*, on 6 February,

and *Church of England Quarterly Review* in April.¹⁴ The first and third of these reviews were favorable, although J. A. Grimes in *Monthly Magazine* points out several errors in Horne's translation of the "General Prologue." But Henry Chorley in the *Athaenum*, although kind to Wordsworth and Hunt, called Horne's efforts a "counterfeit presentment," called attention to several of the same faulty passages that Field did, and complained that "Father Chaucer [has been] reduced to sickly weakness and effeminacy."¹⁵ Field himself was not in England at this time: he was in Gibraltar until autumn, then returned to England to take up permanent residence for the first time in over a decade.¹⁶ He may have written the review abroad, but probably wrote it after his return, and it is likely that publishers considered it somewhat repetitive and rather old news. Deprived of a public forum, Field may then have given the review to Wordsworth, as both a token of appreciation and as a quiet reminder about associating himself with dubious literary enterprises.¹⁷ But since the manuscript, which is still in its original blue cover, lacks a presentation autograph, it seems unlikely that Wordsworth ever saw it. Probably the review found its way into the Dove Cottage Papers sometime after Field's death in 1846.¹⁸

Why Field should go so far out of his way to call our attention to Blake is an even more intriguing question. Field did not attend the 1809 Blake exhibition—he apparently had never heard of Blake before 1813—so unlike Crabb Robinson he would not have seen the original painting of the Canterbury Pilgrims, nor any of the other impressive artworks on display.¹⁹ Nor did Field, to our knowledge, ever meet Blake; his only direct contact seems to have been with Catherine Blake in 1828. Yet the print and catalogue he owned, his reading of Cunningham's biography, and his conversations about Blake with Robinson and Lamb impressed him

deeply. Field's review thus serves to underscore how often Blake was a subject of discussion among members of the Wordsworth circle, and how much we owe to figures like Charles Lamb and Henry Crabb Robinson for helping to preserve the reputation of William Blake.

Research for this paper was made possible by grants from the American Council of Learned Societies and the National Endowment for the Humanities. I am grateful to both for their assistance. I am also grateful to Jonathan Wordsworth and the Trustees of the Wordsworth Trust for permission to quote from the Dove Cottage Papers. Finally, I wish to thank Alexander Gourlay, Mark L. Reed, and Joseph Viscomi for their generous advice, without which the paper could not have been written.

¹ An amusing account of Horne's difficulties in translating Chaucer may be found in Ann Blainey, *The Farthing Poet: A Biography of Richard Hengist Horne, 1802-1884, A Lesser Literary Lion* (London: Longman's, 1968) 115.

² G.E. Bentley, ed., *Blake: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975) 220.

³ See Robinson's *Reminiscence* of Blake in G.E. Bentley, Jr., *Blake Records* (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1969) 537-38.

⁴ Bentley, *Blake Records* 537.

⁵ Bentley, *Blake Records* 537-38.

⁶ Bentley, *Blake Records* 362.

⁷ See Geoffrey Little's biographical introduction to his edition of Field's *Memoirs of Wordsworth* (Sydney: Sydney UP, 1975) 7-17.

⁸ Bentley, *Blake Records* 538.

⁹ This copy can be found in the Wordsworth Library in Grasmere.

¹⁰ Barron Field to Wordsworth, 10 April 1828, published in Little 133. The manuscript is in the Wordsworth Library.

¹¹ Little 49.

¹² Wordsworth initially offered "The Mantic's Tale" to Powell in a letter dated "[late 1839]" by Alan Hill. Objections were raised by Edward Quillinan and, perhaps, Isabella Fenwick, and in a letter of 1 May 1840, Wordsworth withdrew his offer. See *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth*, ed. Alan Hill, 7 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1982) 6: 755-56, 7: 35, 39, 71.

¹³ Field's suspicions of Powell were later borne out in ways he could not have predicted. Powell was discovered to have supported himself by embezzlement and forgery; he faked insanity to avoid prison, and spent the rest of his days in New York. See Blainey 114.

¹⁴ These reviews are all listed in N. S. Bauer, *William Wordsworth: A Reference Guide to British Criticism, 1793-1899* (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1978) 133-35.

¹⁵ *The Athaenum* (6 February 1841): 107-08. Blainey 105, 115, notes that Chorley was a perennial enemy of Horne.

¹⁶ Little 51.

¹⁷ Field had the opportunity to give Wordsworth the review (providing he had finished it by then) in September 1841 when he spent time in the Lake District (Little 51). Field also tells of helping Wordsworth write an article on Talfourd's copyright bill at this time.

¹⁸ Shortly after Wordsworth's death, as materials for Christopher Wordsworth, Jr.'s memoir of the poet were being collected, there was correspondence between Robinson and Edward Quillinan about Barron Field's papers. It seems possible that Robinson or Edward Quillinan may have had access to them, so perhaps at that time the review passed into the hands of the Wordsworth family. See *The Correspondence of Henry Crabb Robinson with the Wordsworth Circle*, ed. Edith Morley, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1927) 2: 738-39.

¹⁹ According to Bentley, *Blake Records* 231, "Crabb Robinson wrote in his Diary for Tuesday, January 12th, 1813: 'In the Eveng at Coleridge's lecture. And then at home. Mrs. Kenny[,] Barnes & Barron Field there—The usual gossiping chat—F & B. both interested by Blake's poems of whom they knew nothing before[.]—'"

John Clerk, Esq.

David Groves

In Robert Cromek's 1808 edition of Robert Blair's *Grave*, with designs by Blake, the name of "John Clerk, Esq." appears in the list of sixteen Edinburgh subscribers to the volume.¹ No Blake scholar has yet identified this intriguing figure, or discussed his wide influence in artistic, literary, and social circles. Perhaps none of Blake's first readers were as paradoxical, irascible, immoral, or influential as John Clerk. Clerk (1757-1832) is now such a forgotten figure, however, that few if any modern readers will know of him.² In his time, Clerk was famous as an Edinburgh lawyer and judge, and an art collector.

It was almost certainly Blake's designs, rather than Blair's poem, which led the 50-year-old lawyer to subscribe to *The Grave*. Clerk had studied as an artist in his youth. He had little interest in poetry, but for many years he continued to paint and draw in his spare moments. Several of his drawings appeared in the *Scots Magazine*, and elsewhere.³ Presumably Clerk found pleasure in Blake's designs to *The Grave*; in any event, the book was still in his library when he died.⁴

With a personality like "crystallised vinegar," Clerk was notorious for his atheism, self-righteousness, and "drollery": "It was impossible that he could be wrong because he acknowledged no judge in heaven or earth but John Clerk."⁵ Something of his legendary abrasiveness may be gauged from an episode involving his friend Henry Raeburn the painter, when they were both students:

One day John [Clerk] asked [Raeburn] to go and dine with him in his garret [above Parliament Square in Edinburgh]; On going into his room the landlady came in and put on the table John's ordinary dinner—four herrings and three potatoes—John got up in a terrible rage and chucked the two plates out of the window and turned about to the astonished landlady and said What for ye bitch did ye no bring aucht herrings and sax tawties . . .⁶

In later years, Clerk was wealthy and titled; he became "Lord Eldin," and a judge, in 1823. Although a bachelor, he had several children by different women. Once, accosted by two laborers who demanded money on the grounds that he was their father, Clerk "grinningly drew out his purse" and said, "Weel, there's five pounds; and never let me see your ugly mugs again."⁷

Despite his arrogance towards women, children, and the lower classes, Clerk was a prominent reform politician. He was a friend of the critic and politician Francis Jeffrey, and sometimes joined Jeffrey in public demonstrations.⁸ But he was far removed from the sober rationalism of Jeffrey and his circle. All reports agree that Clerk's temper and emotionality rendered him "not qualified for the duties of a judge." Even after his promotion to the bench, Clerk led a scandalous, "Rabelaisian" existence, sometimes "riding down openly in his carriage to his mistress . . . or sitting carousing with the thief Maccoul."⁹

Clerk's judgments in court became increasingly erratic, until public outrage forced his resignation in 1828. His final years were shrouded by some unnamed disease. He became "ungovernably insane"¹⁰ and "quite imbecile."¹¹ Perhaps, in his last lucid moments, John Clerk reflected on the theme of Blair's *Grave*, and its accompanying designs by Blake.

Admittedly these details tell us nothing about William Blake. But they may help readers to appreciate the diversity of Blake's original audience, and to perceive more fully the social context in which Blake sold his work. They may also counteract slightly the common assumption that Blake's work received little attention in contemporary Scotland.

¹ See Robert N. Essick and Morton D. Paley, *Robert Blair's The Grave, Illustrated by William Blake; A Study with Facsimile* (London: Scolar, 1982). The list of subscribers is unpaginated.

² Clerk receives a brief mention in the *Dictionary of National Biography*; his name does not seem to appear in any other twentieth-century work.

³ The last of Clerk's drawings for the *Scots Magazine*. "Craig Crook Castle," was "Engraved by [Robert] Scott," and appeared as the frontispiece in April 1810 [n.p.]; for information on Robert Scott, the engraver with a "mania for Blake," who considered the 1808 *Grave* to be one of the "two greatest books" in his library, see *Autobiographical Notes of the Life of William Bell Scott*, ed. W. Minto, 2 vols. (London: Osgood, McIlvaine, 1892) 1: 68, and my note on "Blake, *The Grave*, and Edinburgh Literary Society" in *Blake* 24 (1990): 35-36. A satirical sketch by John Clerk, "The Three Legal Devotees," may be found in John Kay, *A Series of Original Portraits and Caricature Etchings*, ed. H. Paton, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: Black, 1877) 1: plate 119 (attributed to Clerk in the text, 2: 439-40). In suggesting that Clerk "had little interest in poetry," I have relied on the evidence of the *Catalogue* of his library, cited in note 4 below.

⁴ See anon., *Catalogue of the Library of the Late John Clerk of Eldin . . . which will be sold by Auction, by Mr C. B. Tait, . . . On Monday, January 21 1833, and Nine following Days* (Edinburgh: Tait, 1833) 56. Item 1382 in the catalogue is described as "Blake's Illustration [sic] of Blair's *Grave*, 13 plates, engraved by Schiavonetti." In addition to listing the books in Clerk's library, this catalogue shows that he possessed many original paintings and draw-

ings attributed to Rembrandt, Holbein, Van Dyck, Rubens, Correggio, Salvator Rosa, Breughel, Titian, Tintoretto, Raeburn, and others. It is not known who purchased Clerk's copy of *The Grave*, or what price it fetched.

⁵ John Heiton, *The Castes of Edinburgh*, 3rd. ed. (Edinburgh: Nimmo, 1861) 56, 57, 57n. Only the third edition of Heiton's book contains these (and many other) stories about Clerk.

⁶ James White, citing his conversation with Raeburn, in a letter to Allan Cunningham, 29 March 1831, National Library of Scotland MS 832, ff 28-29; cited by permission of the Trustees of the NLS. "Aucht" and "sax" are Scots terms for "eight" and "six." This excerpt has not previously appeared in print; Cunningham gives a drastically bowdlerized version in his *Lives of the Most Eminent British Painters* (5: 210). I have included this quotation partly to show that Clerk adhered to Scottish ways and the Scots language; he was not Anglicized. Clerk's lodgings above Parliament Square would have placed him near the center of Edinburgh's legal and literary establishment.

⁷ The two men's mothers were sisters; "The reader has only to count the kin," comments Heiton, "to understand the morality of [Clerk], who was received into the best society" (Heiton 57n).

⁸ For information on Clerk's political and literary connections, see Henry Cockburn, *Memorials of his Time* (Edinburgh: Black, 1856) 407-08, and John Gibson Lockhart, *Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk*, 3 vols. (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1819) 2: 43-52. For an account of a Reform meeting at which Francis Jeffrey and John Clerk shared the stage, see anon., "Celebration of Mr Fox's Birth Day," *The Scotsman* 15 Jan. 1823: 33-36.

⁹ Heiton 57-58, *passim*. I have not been able to identify "the thief Maccoul."

¹⁰ Robert P. Gillies, *Recollections of Sir Walter Scott, Bart.* (London: Fraser, 1837) 284. Gillies is citing his conversation with Scott at Abbotsford in 1829.

¹¹ George Thomson, letter to the painter Thomas Stothard, 7 July 1832, National Library of Scotland MS 685, f 88; cited by permission.

 REVIEWS

David Fuller. *Blake's Heroic Argument*. London, New York, Sydney: Croom Helm in association with Methuen, 1988. xv + 297 pp. 16 illus. \$67.50 US/\$85 Canada.

Reviewed by Brian Wilkie

From time to time—perhaps every ten years or so—a need arises in Blake criticism for a comprehensive survey of his works, written for new but serious students of Blake. Ideally, such books reflect recently emerging emphases or issues in Blake scholarship and interpretation while preserving whatever in older criticism still commands broad assent. The authorial voice can be individual and distinctive (like that of J. Middleton Murry, for example, or Harold Bloom), but neither the core of the content nor very much of the interpretative detail ought to be strongly eccentric. The kind of book I am describing ought also, typically, to be a general study not obviously informed by too obsessive an argumentative thesis or limited by a highly specialized critical method—feminist, psychological, Marxist, deconstructionist, or the like.

This is the bill that, more than any other, David Fuller's *Blake's Heroic Argument* fits, however roughly. (The author apparently intended something different, about which more in a moment.) The book consists of four chapters. The first is on Blake's works earlier than *The Four Zoas*. The second is on the *Zoas* and *Milton*, though very little is on *Milton*; Fuller invites us (289-90), in lieu of more detailed treatment of that poem, to read a substantial essay

*Blake's heroic
argument*

DAVID FULLER

CROOM HELM
London • New York • Sydney

of his in the volume *An Infinite Complexity* (ed. J. R. Watson, Edinburgh UP, 1983). (For sixty-seven and a half U.S. dollars, the batteries, one feels, might have been included.) The third chapter is on *Jerusalem*. Within each of these chapters, the organization is chronological and linear, treating the poems in historical order and, especially with the long epics, reading them straight through, from beginning to middle to end. This organization, obviously, enhances the value of Fuller's book as an enchiridion for beginning students. The fourth chapter, which makes up about one-fifth of the book, is not concerned directly with Blake; rather, it is in part personal self-revelation by Fuller, in part a plea for reforms in the practice of criticism and in the process of education. The goal of these reforms is to foster greater personal involvement in the processes of learning and interpreting, thus freeing students and critics to invest their individual values and experiences in their readings of Blake and, indeed, of all creative literature. The same goal accounts for the autobiographical element in this final chapter, which is designed to make explicit the personal

orientations that, Fuller would have us recognize, underlie his interpretations of Blake in the foregoing chapters.

One of the more puzzling of several puzzling things about Fuller's book is his apparent belief that he has interpreted Blake in a way highly flavored by his particular values and beliefs. *Blake's Heroic Argument* has, if anything, a little less than its share either of controversial readings of Blake or of novelty in critical approach—a fact wherein, as I have implied, lies much of the book's value to a certain kind of reader. I don't mean that Fuller says nothing fresh or controversial about Blake. I feel sure that many Blakeans will share my discomfort at hearing Blake described as a relativist (88, 135)—though even that term seems, in context, to be a slip of the pen intended to mean something like "open to change and development." Among matters that Fuller treats more convincingly and, if not always originally at least freshly, are Blake's understanding of implicit and explicit symbolism in literature (21-25); the kind and degree of Blake's platonism and uniplatonism (37-41); the tortured psychology of Theotormon in *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* (43-44); Blake's mythological method and the dynamic of growth in the myth he personally created (57-64); the importance of rhythm in Blake's verse (90-93, including a wonderfully effective visual re-shaping of a passage from Blake, bringing out its elaborate parallelisms); some good analyses, passim, of Blake's pictures, in the *Four Zoas* manuscript, in the illuminated poems, and elsewhere; a convincing parallel between the Los-Enitharmon-Orc triangle and the Vulcan-Venus-Mars story (118, 289); Blake's high valuation of comedy (172-73); the motif of friendship in *Jerusalem* (176-77); the relationship of Los to his Spectre in *Jerusalem* (177-80); Blake's relationship to eighteenth-century ways of understanding and defining "enthusiasm" (180-81); the importance for Blake of the Judgment-of-Paris

myth (204); and a number of striking points in the final chapter—for example, the application to doctrinaire adherents of literary theory of their own familiar argument, vis-à-vis those who resist them, about the conditioning power of hidden psychological dynamics (254). A book that does all these things is, patently, worth something to veteran Blakeans as well as to novice readers.

These interesting and useful pauses for synoptic comment are effectively placed in Fuller's otherwise step-by-step progress through Blake's works. But most of them are brief, and together they bulk much smaller than the rather orthodox, and often familiar, matter of which Fuller's commentary largely consists. Certainly there is nothing novel in his fundamental premises that Blake is a poet of ideas, that his meaning resides both in minute particulars and in the total form or impact of his visions, and that content and form are inseparable (xii-xiii, 1). What, then, makes Fuller believe that his views of Blake are so novel or special that he must spend several dozen pages elaborating the personal experience that has made him, for example, a "libertarian socialist" (256)? It is true that throughout Fuller's book he occasionally expresses such political values, in passing, along with mildly rebellious religious ones, but otherwise I find little or no sign of a distinctive, informing personal vision, and even his rather moderate political leftism can hardly be considered unusual in the context of Blake criticism over the last few decades. The tone of Fuller's approach to Blake may owe something to the atmosphere and values of the late 1960s (the period when, he says, he first read Blake, xi), but much the same anti-establishment tone had informed many books on Blake for at least a decade before that epoch and has, in different veins, continued to do so thereafter. The discomfort Fuller occasionally confesses with apparently sexist elements in Blake's work, and

his insistence that Blake's myth and values are developmental rather than serenely monolithic, are reminders that he writes in the 1980s, but they are very pale reflections indeed of the more outspoken critical attempts, since the late 1970s, to de-idealize Blake in these respects.

The most glaring defect of Fuller's book is this insensitivity to both the tradition and the recent currents of Blake scholarship and criticism, an insensitivity so glaring as to seem, sometimes, almost willful. Scholarly spleen—like charity in at least one respect—begins at home, and so I'll begin with Fuller's treatment of *Blake's Four Zoas: The Design of a Dream*, by Mary Lynn Johnson and me. This treatment consists of half of a single fleeting reference (95 and note) to the tendency of critics—Alicia Ostriker too—to allegorize Blake. Now, it has been proved by several interpreters of the *Zoas*, since our book appeared in 1978, that the poem can be discussed intelligently and incisively without much if any recourse to Wilkie and Johnson. But that does not describe what happens in the Fuller book; his 75-page commentary on the poem is not substantially different from ours, and a number of his detailed remarks on it are very similar indeed. Moreover, the allegorical approach, in which the *Zoas* are human faculties, is only one of four used in Wilkie-Johnson, and the other three approaches, which treat the poem as an intricate structure, as an almost realistic novel or drama of character, and as a potent myth inviting deeply personal response, are very close to the approach Fuller himself claims to be taking and to be encouraging in other critics and readers. Even Fuller's impatience with ideological translation of Blake's myth seems disingenuous, since in a number of places he seems to be doing that very thing himself. Apparently it's all right to do so as long as one confesses to self-contradiction: "[Our] primary awareness of the characters is not concerned with what they

represent but with who they are—but Blake is also here [in Night 1 of *The Four Zoas*] writing a psychological allegory. Mental life is seen as attempting to dominate the workings of the passionate faculty, and vice versa, and their conflict corrupts the imagination. Or . . . one aspect of the emotional life, Vala, demands too exclusive an attention . . ." (99). Other ideological translations appear on pages 32, 103, 118, 120, 127, 133, 139-40, and 161. Why, then, so short and contemptuous shrift for the likes of Ostriker and Wilkie-Johnson?

The same kind of need to misrepresent appears in Fuller's remarks on Nelson Hilton's book *Literal Imagination: Blake's Vision of Words* (1983), where Fuller quite wrongly implies that Hilton's attribution of elaborate wordplay to Blake is an invitation to admire the indefinite and blurred. It requires considerable perverse ingenuity, I think, to misread Hilton in this way, since Hilton argues—and shows—that Blake's writing is *literal*—a multivocal interplay of very definite meanings, not "an indefinite possibility of suggestion and association" (287). I don't see how the literal can be indefinite. Would Fuller call the polyphonic—i.e., multivocal—lines of the *St. Matthew Passion* an exercise in blurred ambiguity? In the same league with the treatment of Hilton is Fuller's anger with John E. Grant for inferring, from the *Four Zoas* illustrations, that "the pursuit of natural happiness tends to lead insensibly toward a quest for the unnatural." This, says Fuller, is "Uri-zen's view of sexuality, not Blake's" (288-89; cf. Grant, "Visions in *Vala*," in Stuart Curran and Joseph Anthony Witreich, Jr., eds., *Blake's Sublime Allegory*, U of Wisconsin P, 1973 [194]). Surely Fuller has misconstrued Grant here, out of temporary blindness to Blake's special sense of the word *natural*, which almost certainly is the sense in which Grant is using the word. I fail to see how anyone who has read

much of Grant's work on Blake can make Fuller's accusation.

As for the giants of Blake interpretation, Fuller is sometimes a little cavalier with Kathleen Raine (220 and note) and David V. Erdman (291), and perhaps a little careless with Erdman, failing to credit him with identifying the "boring screws" and "hollow globes" of *The Four Zoas* Night 8 as, respectively, tools of naval warfare and shrapnel (141; cf. Erdman, *Blake: Prophet Against Empire*, rev. ed., 1969 [398]). For the most part, however, Fuller's quarrels with Raine and Erdman are conducted according to legitimate canons of intellectual dissent.

The situation with Northrop Frye is more complicated and puzzling. Despite occasional bows to him, Frye is virtually a *bête noire* for Fuller. Plenty of Blakeans today resist Frye's ideas and influence, and the lines of such opposition can be meaningfully drawn. But Fuller's antipathy is harder to define or explain. The main bone of contention seems to be Frye's desire, expressed in the *Anatomy of Criticism*, to detach literature from value judgments about life. But, even granted that this is what Frye called for in that book, surely it does not describe his critical practice in general, or in his main work on Blake, *Fearful Symmetry*. There, on the contrary, Frye could more cogently be faulted for the opposite: for blending his voice polemically with Blake's. The "Case against Locke," for example, that constitutes the first chapter of *Fearful Symmetry* is one of the most impassioned pieces of criticism produced by an academic writer in recent decades. I should have thought that the unusually pungent Frye would be considered a prime model of the kind of investment of personality in criticism that Fuller advocates. Perhaps Fuller has allowed his opposition (263 ff.) to principles announced in the *Anatomy of Criticism* to color unduly his view of Frye's Blake criticism, so that Frye becomes a kind of morally disengaged aesthete (282). Fuller's oppo-

sition to Frye's comparative mythologizing—his alleged tendency, for example, to lose sight of Blake's Orc in a more universalized "Orc cycle"—is understandable but would be more so if Fuller did not at times attribute the same kind of synoptic mythic imagination to Blake, who, Fuller tells us, "praised Jacob Bryant's *A New System, or Analysis of Ancient Mythology* (1774-76) because . . . it has at its heart a comparative approach to the understanding of mythology which he accepted" in the *Descriptive Catalogue* (61). The hostility to Frye in Fuller's book seems in excess of what, given Fuller's own critical principles, the situation warrants. He seems more interested, for example, in arguing that what Frye calls the "Orc cycle" is a misnomer for the revolution-reaction pattern in Blake's myth than in denying that the pattern is there (67-68, 286).

In *Blake's Heroic Argument* Fuller once refers to university professors of literature as "paid interpreters" (22), and again, later, as persons "paid to speak and promote speech" (252). After awakening from a brief, not entirely unpleasant fantasy of my colleagues and myself as fatcats, I began to wonder who was getting the sixty-seven and a half to eighty-five North American dollars being charged for each copy of this book, and what we have a right to expect for that price. At the very least, I suggest, a well-produced book. Instead, though, we get what is probably the most sloppily produced book I have ever reviewed. In the broadest terms, this statement applies to the book's whole plan; the senior editor who handled the project and the expert Blake referees who, I presume, were consulted, ought to have told Fuller that the long concluding chapter, with its call for personal involvement and unconventionality of approach, does not jibe with the rather orthodox content and method in the discussion of Blake in the body of the book. If not such persons, a good copy editor ought to have coached Fuller in punctuation,

sparing the reader the irritation of re-reading and re-construing so many sentences, of which this is one specimen: "Because of the mutually creating and reinforcing relationship between the inner and outer worlds in Blake's view his poetry, like a Dantean allegory, often engages with both at once" (58) and this is another: "Blake's myth has analogies with all these mythologies as well as with the Christian in most cases though only analogies with Christian myth are explicitly drawn" (61). But, indeed, the proofreading of the book has been so unreliable that resorts to a conjectural text are sometimes necessary: "Milton had begun the process of transformation between *The Faerie Queene* and *The Prelude*, not only in the directly personal passages of *Paradise Lost* but also in that the poem's central characters and its basic issues of the nature of true freedom and the proper limits of knowledge and of obedience which can be seen as dramatisations of Milton's own subjectivity" (60). That non-sentence can be turned into either of two different sentences—parsable, however shaky—but only surgically, by deleting either the *that* or the *which*. Take your choice. This puzzling-out of sentences can get fatiguing.

Someone should have had a part in the production process who knew how to spell *Warren* (the American Revolutionary hero; page 283 reads "Watten"), *dissension* (110), Joseph Priestley's last name (199), Stuart Curran's last name (288), *cumbrous* (122), and *Gethsemane* (214). Someone on the team ought to have known that the Immaculate Conception refers to Mary's birth from her mother, not the birth of Jesus from Mary (203). Someone ought to have ruled out round parentheses inside round parentheses, or, better still, have rectified sentence constructions so that that confusing oddity did not come into play in the first place. Someone should have taken care that there be an adequate index, or, having failed to do so, should have avoided flaunting

the deficiency: "Only the more extended discussions of characters and locations of Blake's mythology are referenced" (294). Someone ought to have known that a table of contents is not an index and that therefore, by the conventions of book publishing, heads listed in the contents should actually occur on the identified pages of the book. Someone ought to have asked Fuller to supply Night numbers of *The*

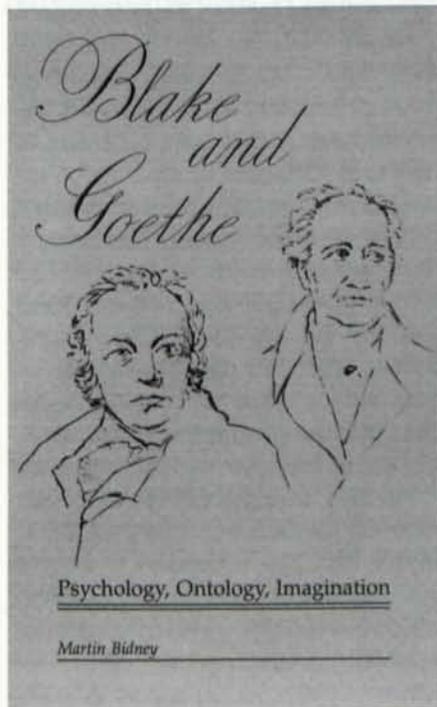
Four Zoas rather than merely MS page numbers. Someone ought to have remembered to tell us how we are to distinguish references to plates of Blake's illuminated works from references to the sixteen plates of Fuller's book. (Roman vs. italic, I think, but that's an inference.)

These annoyances of format distract us from what we might otherwise recognize more clearly: that Fuller's book,

up to a point, serves a legitimate purpose and that, at his best, he writes a supple and expressive prose, certainly better than in many current academic books. The main trouble with this book is not in its sloppy texture but in the author's basic misjudgment of the relation between what the book is and what he seems to have intended it to be.

Martin Bidney. *Blake and Goethe: Psychology, Ontology, Imagination*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1988. xvi + 184 pp. \$24.

Reviewed by Stuart Atkins



Concisely formulated and meticulously documented, this comparative study should be of equal interest to students of romanticism and of German literature in the Age of Goethe. It is, moreover, an impressive work of scholarship that does credit both to its author and to its publisher at a time when books by university scholars treating foreign language materials and appearing under the auspices of university presses are often painful to read because of inaccurate citations, inexact quotations, frequent mistranslations, and obviously insouciant editing.

As critical analysis in the Jungian tradition of Maud Bodkin's *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry*, Bidney's monograph persuasively demonstrates—to some extent by definition, since it treats the archetypal—strikingly similar elements of thought and form in selected texts of Blake and Goethe. Because a "spiritual kinship" (xii) can be discerned in the shared interest of both writers in neo-Platonic and later hermetic materials, Bidney is persuaded that they are very similar "Romantic poet-thinkers" (xi). In Goethe's and Blake's writings it is indeed possible to find "Shared Ideas and Myths" (title of Bidney's first chapter), some of which—like the pairs "Selving" and "Unselving" or "negation" and "contrariety"—are constants, while others are to be found in Goethe only in early works or in ones using motifs typical of his early writing but without their original positive value or importance. The most obvious example of "re-use" would be the anacreontic motifs in

West-östlicher Divan, his last large poem-cycle, and of "changed value," the folkloristic-supernatural elements in *Faust*. Beginning with Goethe's conversion to classicism, as the writing of the drama progressed these supernatural elements were used with ever greater irony and ever more directly satiric, often anti-romantic, intention (e.g., in "Witch's Kitchen," usually dated 1788—with its mocking of superstition—and in many later scenes through act 4 of *Part II*, written in 1831, with its jibes at the cult of medievalism). Although Bidney's premise of a basically romantic Goethe is in no way idiosyncratic, having been promulgated for some decades even by self-proclaimed Goethe specialists, it means limiting Goethe's classical period—Bidney does not, like some who take his position, suppress the fact that there was such a period for Goethe—to "the decade of his friendship with Schiller" (xii) and ignoring the fact that Goethe expressed stronger disapproval of romanticism in the decades after Schiller's death than in the one before it and was still criticizing romanticism in his last years (e.g., in the concluding volume of his account of his Italian sojourn, published 1829, and in *Faust II*, chiefly written 1825-31).

The extent to which Goethe in some periods and works is a romantic poet-thinker comparable with Blake is economically but adequately demonstrated by Bidney with reference to a limited corpus of materials, namely, representative lyrics and a few prose passages by each writer, and major

sections of *The Four Zoas* and *Faust*. His second chapter, "Between Selving and Unselving: 'The Authentic Pulse of Life,'" compares successive pairs of lyrics (from adolescence, early adulthood, and later years) to show how "Blake and Goethe express their psychological and mythopoetic affinities" in what indeed are "strikingly similar formal patterns" (23). Slightly less satisfactory is his third chapter, "Overcoming Negations: Problematics of Reason and Desire," which examines how "the selving-unselving balance" operates for each poet in the area of psychology, although this may be because some of the texts by Goethe used for purposes of illustration are less aptly chosen than in the two preceding chapters. For example, an occasional four-hexameter epigram (mis-labeled "elegantly satiric distichs" [60]), that a genuinely appreciative Goethe wrote to thank Herder (court-preacher as well as scholar, and hence "priest and wise man" in Bidney's correct translation) for his essay "Nemesis" is interpreted to mean that "Goethe's priest is a well-intentioned but impertinent mediator" like the "Disguiser of the Female Form" in Blake's verses beginning "A fairy skipd upon my knee."

In his fourth chapter, "Overcoming Negations: Problematics of Imaginative Becoming," which has as its theme ontology, Bidney convincingly demonstrates basic similarities in the two poets' concepts of time and space with lyric examples all well chosen except for "Do You Know That Land," said to represent Goethe "in his classical decade" (it was written a full ten years earlier) and interpreted—without regard for the fact that in *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* it is a narratively functional expression of Mignon's longing for Italy and the home from which she was abducted as a young child—as presenting "an Italian journey whose projected goal is a classical Eden, a comforting shelter for the nostalgic self" (87).

Chapters 5 through 7 (and a very brief conclusory 8) identify many features common to *Faust* and *The Four Zoas*, but their central concern is the two poets' "broader vision of self-transcendence" and how the "emerging form of this vision is dictated by each poet's need to try to solve, in a more comprehensive way than was possible in the lyrical utterances we have studied, the ever-growing problem posed by the power of psychological and ontological negation" (98). On *The Four Zoas* Bidney speaks with authoritative conviction; on *Faust* he is generally convincing, although at times what might be regarded as the adduction of forced parallels between these two texts seems to weaken an already well-made point. Thus Faust, Mephistopheles, Homunculus, and the Eternal Feminine are said to be the counterparts of Luvah, Urizen, Tharmas, and Urthona and, "as the four major characters in the respective poems," to "have at their command innumerable attendant (or rebellious) spirits" (99). But the Eternal Feminine—unlike Margarete and Helen of Troy—is not a character in *Faust*, and Homunculus, however important the ideas he embodies or symbolizes, merely appears as an episodic figure in it, and neither he (himself a spirit) nor the Eternal Feminine (or even Margarete or Helen) nor—normally—Faust ever deal with attendant spirits.

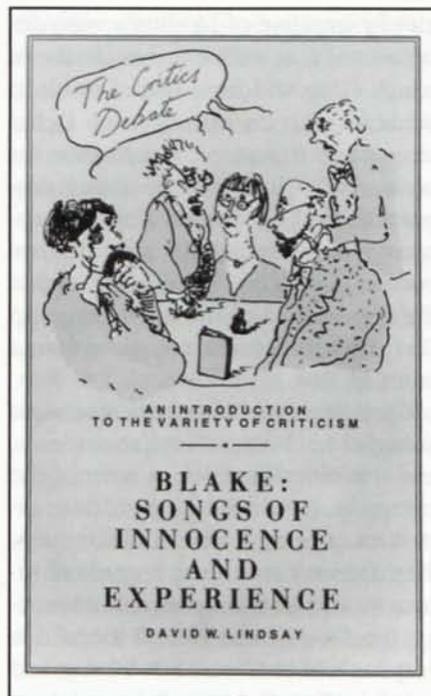
Bidney is more persuasive when, as in chapter 6, "The Spirit of Negation: Selving and Stasis," instead of forcing an exact equation, he distinguishes between the kinds of negation represented by Mephistopheles and Urizen, although even here he pre-dates the composition of *Faust*, vv. 1349-58, by over 20 years (123) to bolster (again unnecessarily) his point. Later in this same chapter his forcing of parallels between "Mephistopheles-Faust and Urizen-Orc conflicts" similarly permits him to assert that Faust dies racked by the problem of Worry and fear of the future—"in his fear of Becoming,

he mirrors the Devil"—although most readers of *Faust* agree that Faust courageously rejects Worry (at the price of blindness) and dies confident (perhaps mistakenly) that he has at last achieved something significant. (Bidney has anticipated this objection by observing that what is described in Faust's last words as a "daily battle for the right to live, fought against the daily threat of chaotic inundation hardly sounds like paradise" and actually "resembles R. D. Laing's portrait of the schizoid individual" (134), and by claiming that the dying Faust "reveals . . . his obsession with permanence and his fear of invasive flux, the twofold worry of his teacher Mephistopheles" (135). Faust has not, however, bidden the Moment tarry, which *would* be a renunciation of flux and change and growth, nor has Mephisto had any teacher-role for Faust after his Helen experience, having become at the drama's end hardly more than the mere servant of an ever more imperious Faust.)

Bidney uses Night 7a of *The Four Zoas* and the Classical Walpurgisnight of *Faust* as the texts best showing how Blake and Goethe similarly indicate that if "Humanity is to regain the authentic pulse of life, a Spirit of Mediation must counterbalance the Spirit of Negation" (138). He correlates the "three distinct types of insight" attained by Urthona-Los with those experienced in their quests by Faust, Mephisto, and Homunculus, the last of these exemplifying "the kind of self-surrender"—here Bidney as it were corrects his Laingian interpretation of Faust as schizoid—"that Faust will begin to show only in the final scene of the play." He persuasively concludes that for Los and Faust "the key to an imaginative ontology, to life in the eternal present, is finally revealed as loving creativity, or creative love" (150). But then he weakens what seems to me a effective conclusion by moralistically interpreting the tragic fate of Faust's and Helen's son Euphorion (act 3 of *Faust II*) as "an ironic reminder that in

courting Helen, Faust was moving backward in time as misguidedly as his son later tried to move forward." To observe that "Rebellious Euphorion, overcompensating both ontologically and psychologically, seeks to violate others and succeeds in killing himself" (155) is to state only a partial truth, since Euphorion's "killing himself" serves what, as the threnody on his Byronic death makes clear, we are to recognize as a noble-humane cause, Greek Independence (the historical equivalent in *Faust* of the more general good of mankind that as he dies Faust will believe he has furthered).

To the extent that Goethe was a romantic thinker, as in his Storm and Stress years, or that his ideas coincided with those of romantic contemporaries, Bidney's observations in *Blake* and Goethe persuade one of their validity, especially since they are offered with scrupulous documentation and scholarly accuracy. Exceptions to this last generalization are so few that in no way do they diminish his book's merits: (6.15 himself [for itself], 41.24 and 119.7 dumb [for stupid, Ger. dumm], 43.30 sullen [for, probably, unenlightened, Ger. trübel], 60.33 un [for the Eng. article an], 95.39 the heart [for our heart], 96.29 enjoy [not the imperative Laßt, but Läßt, can be enjoyed], 104.5 O to sink down [for O had I but sunk down], 104.21 Faust's relief [none at given point in Goethe's text], 127.18 jealous [for inconstant], 157.28 the good Lord [for a great—orfine—gentleman], and 158.27 Lusty Person [for Clown]). It might now be rewarding to compare Blake and Goethe as artists as well as thinkers, although Goethe's fondness for idealized realism and for the classics (in contrast to Blake's "it is the Classics . . . that Desolate Europe with Wars"), his limited respect for Flaxman, and his lifelong love of landscape and landscape painting suggest that here might prove to be less "spiritual kinship" between them in this area than in the areas that Bidney has so thoughtfully examined.



David W. Lindsay, ed.
Blake: Songs of Innocence and Experience.
The Critics Debate Series.
General editor, Michael Scott. Basingstoke: Macmillan and Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities, 1989. 92 pp. £18.50 cloth/ £4.95 paper; \$29.95/ \$8.50.

Reviewed by
Edward Larrissy

David Lindsay's book is part of a series the aim of which is to introduce students to "a variety of critical approaches to specific texts." He pursues that aim with lucidity, impar-

Approaches to Teaching
Blake's
*Songs of Innocence
and of Experience*

Edited by Robert F. Gleckner
and Mark L. Greenberg



Robert F. Gleckner and Mark L. Greenberg, eds.
Approaches to Teaching Blake's Songs of Innocence and of Experience.
Approaches to Teaching World Literature 21. Series editor Joseph Gibaldi. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1989. \$32.00 cloth/ \$17.50 paper.

ality, and method. The book is divided into two halves: the first is a survey of critical approaches; the second, called "Appraisal," in fact "traces the evolution of *Songs of Innocence and Experience* [sic] in the context of Blake's other writings and gives closer attention to eight poems."

The survey first defines the text, discussing the different editions. It goes

on to look at literary and artistic antecedents of the *Songs*, bringing in (according to the brief) the ways in which knowledge of these has modified critics' responses. The fact of the *Songs* being an illuminated text is then broached, and we encounter important interpretations of visual motifs, including some from such critics as Keynes, Erdman, and Mitchell. The ideas of the dramatic lyric, and of an occasionally ironic use of the represented speaker, are introduced, and then Lindsay adopts the useful ruse of using "The Chimney Sweeper" as a peg on which to hang typical reactions to Blake, because it exemplifies so many of the complexities of the *Songs*, both in its strategies and in its allusions. The discussion then moves on to the relationship between the *Songs* and Blake's "system," glancing at the opposed implications of Frye and Hirsch. It also looks at paired poems ("Counterparts"), at speakers in *Experience*, and at the symbolism of flowers.

The second part, "Appraisal," has much less to do with "the critics": hardly anything, in fact. It is Lindsay's learned and astute introduction to the *Songs*, looking at eight poems chiefly in the light of Blake's other work. The readings are tactful, and responsive to many different contexts, although the allusions to Blake's prophetic books suffer from a brevity imposed by the format of the series. In this respect they share their suffering with some previous sections of the book. There are occasions when one wonders if a student will be able easily to digest the various buffet of critical approaches so briskly served up. But this is not always a problem,

chiefly because of Lindsay's wise decision to be selective in his choice of songs. This will be a useful book to students who do not succumb to the temptation to make it a substitute for wider reading, not least because it suggests the value of many different approaches to so subtle and rich an author. It may, however, be a pity that the approaches of Hazard Adams and David Wagenknecht do not receive a mention here.

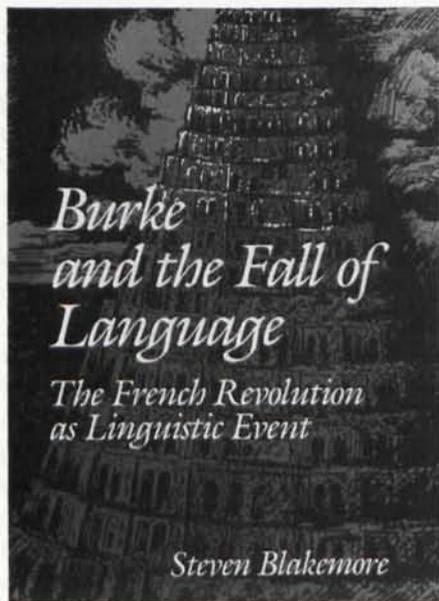
Gleckner and Greenberg's book is aimed at teachers rather than students, and this aim does control most of the essays in it. As well as providing instances of approaches to Blake, then, they are very much the records of instructors on how they go about teaching the *Songs* in the class. I found this emphasis of the book fascinating and helpful. W. J. T. Mitchell is useful on ways of talking about the "composite text," as one would expect. David Simpson, in "Teaching Ideology in *Songs*" follows almost precisely my own way of raising questions about "The Chimney Sweeper," referring to Erdman, "false consciousness," Glen, Raine, and the "corporeal" soot from Swedenborg. Joseph Viscomi recounts a most interesting method he uses of asking classes to copy designs from Blake plates. This has at least the merit of focusing attention on the facts of a given design (an important consideration in itself) as well as on the materiality of Blake's production methods. But most of the approaches treated here could yield something of value to most teachers. The editors have included an extraordinarily full reasoned bibliography to the essays.

Steven Blakemore. *Burke and the Fall of Language: The French Revolution as Linguistic Event*. Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1988. 115 pp. \$20.

Reviewed by
Lisa Plummer Crafton

Starting with the basic premise that linguistic interpretations of revolutions are as viable and important as economic, sociopolitical, or ideological ones, Steven Blakemore's book contributes to revisionist critiques of the French Revolution. *Burke and the Fall of Language* explores the language of revolutionary and counterrevolutionary discourse. Although Blakemore focuses on Burkean texts and themes, he also analyzes the "special linguistic self-consciousness" (2) that shapes all visions of the revolution. While the author makes no mention of Blake (nor of literary tradition per se), this exploration of the nexus between language and ideology contributes much to a methodology for analyzing Blake's revolutionary texts. Not only has Blakemore assembled valuable historical material, for instance on the debates over constitution, authority, and patriarchy, but also his contextualizing of the poles of revolutionary and counterrevolutionary texts amidst these themes provides a revealing, albeit narrowly focused, account.

The title, which implies that language is the unified focus of study, is misleading in that only the last half of the slender book deals specifically with the language of revolution. The first three of the six chapters offer background information on what the author considers the significant bases of the arguments and how Burke and Paine exploit various *topoi* for their respec-



tive political purposes. For example, Burke argues for a constitution that exists "time out of mind" (8) in an unwritten past preserving traditional meanings whereas Paine insists that a constitution's legitimacy comes from writing, as evidenced by the American colonists' document. Legitimacy of governmental authority is also "proven" by both sides through an argument from origins. Burke's authority rests in an "ancient" origin that is "unknowable and hence fruitless to trace" (21). Blakemore points out that Paine strategically emphasizes a Biblical myth of origins that predates Burke's abstract "ancient" sources. This answer to Burke is very similar to the way in which Blake's *French Revolution* emphasizes France's "ancient" liberties (as Michael Ferber has noted, the word carries a largely Burkean resonance throughout the poem). Finally, Blakemore contrasts how the language of patriarchy is used by both sides. Burke had used this argument in defense of the American revolution, but Blakemore notes this change of heart: "Whereas Burke envisions the American Revolution as the oppressive father denying the American child his constitutional rights, he envisions the French Revolution as a revolt of the child against his natural parents" (38).

Although the historical topics of the first half are rewarding, the last half of the book is even more so as Blakemore delves into the connection between language and ideology by examining Burke's belief that revolutionary criticism of government, religion, and, above all, language means a fall from innocence; a "stripping of linguistic veils" (70) actually creates chaos. Thus the revolution as a radical linguistic event was one that upset the entire worldview. Blakemore discusses specific historical linguistic arguments over classical versus vernacular language, the establishment of a new "national" language, and the renaming of the French calendar and streets. In fact, the revolutionaries wanted a demystification of language that would change the title French King to "king of the French," so that common men would not be, as Paine said, "immured in the Bastille of a word." The final chapter, which is somewhat loosely joined to the rest of the book (perhaps due to its being printed earlier in *Eighteenth-Century Studies*) explores Burke's nostalgia for the aristocracy in terms of language and his fear that revolution would create a second Babel or worse.

Throughout the book, Blakemore keeps his eye on Burke's "majestic presence," and this not so subtle reverence for Burke may annoy some readers, but the well-written final chapter successfully argues for Burke's "modern" sensitivity to language. Blakemore's study, aside from its value as a compendium of important revolutionary arguments of Burke and Paine, employs a rewarding method of interpreting discourse as a dialectic in sociopolitical reality, a strategy especially fruitful in Blake studies, as Blake directly and indirectly reinterprets Locke, Newton, and Burke. Blakemore's study intends uppermost to remind us how much language alters our perception of reality and, indeed, that any interpretation of history or literature is "bounded by the very language that expresses it" (105).

Jerome J. McGann. *Towards a Literature of Knowledge*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989. xii + 138 pp. \$24.95.

Reviewed by
Michael Fischer

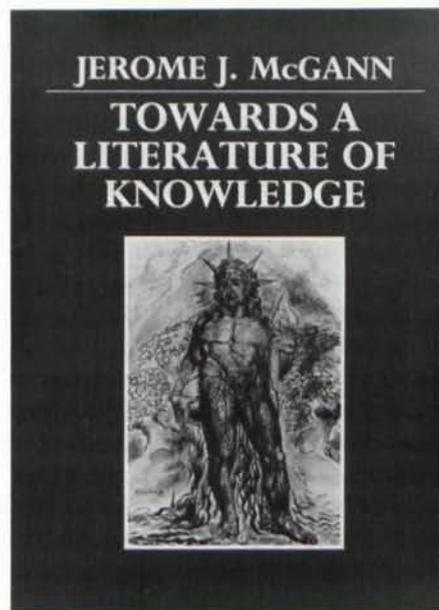
T*owards a Literature of Knowledge* is the final installment in a wide-ranging series of books on literature, history, and ideology. Elsewhere I have discussed the first four books in this series: *The Romantic Ideology* (1983), *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism* (1983), *The Beauty of Inflections* (1985), and *Social Values and Poetic Acts* (1988).¹ Here I want to consider why such a tentatively entitled book concludes this series—why, in other words, at the climax of his project McGann sees himself still moving towards a literature of knowledge instead of arriving at it.

By "a literature of knowledge," McGann means a literature that "deals in matters of truth and error" and "promotes moral and political values" (vii). For him this is all literature. "The secret of the imagination" is "that it makes statements, that it communicates, that its architectonics have designs upon us" (vii). In the brief theoretical introduction that opens the book, McGann suggests that the intellectual and political force of literature has remained a secret (rather than public knowledge) because formalist aesthetic theory has emphasized the purity of the arts, their rising above political protest, sales pitches, sermons, and other discourse with designs upon us. McGann sees literary works as speech acts interested in accomplishing a wide range of politically charged tasks, from achieving social change to identifying what ought to count as knowledge. Unlike other equally interested forms of commun-

ication, however, literary works have consequences that always exceed the intent of the writer. Although literary works are thus more intentional (or less pure) than the formalist concedes, they are also more open-ended and self-subverting than the propagandist would like.

This view of literature will be familiar to readers of McGann's other work. I remain bothered by McGann's willingness to speak of "all poetry" (7) everywhere and always. McGann has a penchant for generalizing about "art's performative function" (4) and for laying down ironclad, ahistorical laws like "The truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." This is the apophthegm under which poetry is compelled to operate" (8).² The passive voice in this statement typically avoids specifying who or what obligates poetry to operate this way. Critics of course have compelled poetry to do all kinds of things, among them imitate men in action, promote moral truths, reinforce the Bible, and tap into the collective unconscious. I think politically-minded academic critics like McGann compel poetry to operate their way in order to justify it as an especially self-critical form of discourse. McGann evades saying this perhaps because such a statement makes his critical approach seem only the preference of a particular group of critics who happen to value self-criticism and conflict. Instead of arguing for his way of looking at poetry, McGann conceals it in apparently disinterested definitions. Critics don't falsify the ideological investments of poems; "poems [again all poems] seek . . . to 'falsify' themselves" (7).

I can only speculate why McGann makes poetry itself responsible for the ideological self-subversion that he favors. In previous political criticism—in much of Marxism, for example—a critic's politics could be entrusted to history, which was presumably headed toward the socialist ending that the critic desired. For many reasons this option is closed to McGann, who wisely no longer calls on history to support his



own political choices. Still, he understandably wants those choices to feel not simply desirable but necessary. By sleight of hand (for instance, by the passive voice), he attributes his values to the operation of poetry *per se*. It turns out that "poetical works necessarily involve deconstructive critical functions" (7) at odds with not only these works' own ideological aims but with critics who try to stand in their way ("poems may be at the mercy of their readers, but readers find themselves equally at the hazard of the texts" [8]). When critics obstruct the ideological self-scrutiny triggered by poetry—when, for example, they use poems to enforce rather than contest certain doctrines—they are opposing poetry.

This appeal to poetry seems desperate to me. I can imagine some literary critics thinking twice about opposing poetry, but I doubt that such an argument carries much weight in the culture at large, where, as McGann himself notes, literary works "today do not command much more than a marginal authority and importance."³ In any case, McGann's reliance on poetry is set up by the default not just of history but of other ways of supporting political change (like "man was born free, and everywhere he is in chains"). Distrust of ends and origins has left poetry "the one form of discourse" (7) that still

somehow necessitates liberation.

The apparently inevitable struggle between poetry and ideology occupies the four writers McGann goes on to discuss: William Blake, Lord Byron, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and Ezra Pound. Except for Rossetti, each has figured prominently in preceding volumes in this series and much of McGann's analysis goes over what is now familiar ground. Even so, McGann's overview of these writers here gives us an especially clear look at his approach to poetry and his expectations for criticism.

A typical McGann reading begins by acknowledging a poet's intent as stated in the poet's literary works, letters, and notebooks. This intent usually commits the poet to the formalist literary goal of incorporating tensions, ambiguities, and paradoxes, only to resolve them in some disinterested synthesis that includes everything and privileges nothing. "Privileging nothing" means simply existing as a self-contained object; "disinterested" means disdaining to advocate a particular ideology or aim at a specific goal. Along these lines, McGann describes Rossetti's dedication to the "pure pursuit of Beauty" (72) and Pound's "quest for Total Form" (105). Blake seems less enamored of this ideal than McGann's other examples. According to McGann, "the balance and reconciliation of opposite and discordant qualities form no part . . . of Blake's programme and works" (20). Nevertheless, even Blake sought in art "a complete redemptive scheme" (34) that would not only overcome loss but make it a moment in the imaginative person's regeneration.

Having noted these writers' formalist aspirations, McGann shows how their work fails to accomplish what they set out to achieve. McGann redefines this failure as success at demystifying formalist ideology, or the illusion that a poem can be a self-sufficient organic whole. Whereas Rossetti reluctantly relinquishes his dream of purity, Blake, Byron, and Pound set in motion a process that they cannot control. Blake, for instance, scarred plate

3 of *Jerusalem* as if to introduce one discordant moment or gap that would prevent our seeing the poem as a deliberately finished whole. Later he applied water colors to soften the blow but the damage had already been done to his own ideology of imaginative redemption. Here was one loss not even Blake could recuperate or wish away.

In showing how poems subvert the ideological designs of their authors, McGann often appeals to such physical features of the text as the gouge on plate 3, the typography in *Milton*, the cover, the binding, even the kind of cloth Rossetti wanted for *Poems* of 1870, the borders and capitals in the first editions of *The Cantos*, and the different type-fonts used throughout Pound's work. These details entangle poems in the commercial transactions that literature (in formalist theory) transcends. A seemingly complete product turns out to be an unstable composite provisionally patched together by authors, editors, and publishers.

This emphasis on the often messy process of literary production sets up McGann's view of reading. The works he studies in *Towards a Literature of Knowledge* do not simply result from social actions and decisions; these works are events in history, not objects to be contemplated at a safe distance. McGann's description of Blake fits his other examples: "[The work of art] is fundamentally an action, and to the degree that the 'completed' work reveals it as an action, the work is successful. Such an activity then tries to call out in the reader/viewer/ audience a reciprocating response" (13). Merely aesthetic appreciation or censure of these works dodges their demands on us. When McGann notes, for example, that "the *Cantos* is difficult to like or enjoy" (97), I think he means that Pound's political invective has to be read as political. "When the work is fascist there is no mistaking the fact" (109), say by claiming irony on Pound's part or by turning Hitler into a metaphor. Such work cries out for a political rather than formalist response. In other words, instead of being resolved aesthetically,

Pound's contradictions summon "the reader to intervene" by creating "an opening or gap in the poetry which demands some kind of response" (118). These interventions by the reader "will be as particular as the originary acts of production" (118).

McGann is very hard on readers who turn the other cheek when assaulted by poets like Blake and Pound. Challenged to act, to return fire with fire, these readers opt for merely aesthetic contemplation. McGann calls these readers clerical (they are the academic descendants of Coleridge's clerisy), reactionary (they evade the critique of ideology that literature urges them to take up), hypocritical (they gloss over the complicity of formalist criticism with acts of power), and sentimental (they deny that "the documents of civilization—the writings of the great poets, the readings of the high-minded critics—are all of them, as Benjamin said, equally and at the same time documents of barbarism"[128]).

McGann's concluding sentences explain what he as a critic is trying to accomplish:

We move towards a literature of knowledge along the trajectory of a desire to change what we believe to be wrong, to repair what we see is broken, and to redeem what we know has been lost. Through poetry we learn how we cannot succeed in any of these quests, and how, on that very account, we are called upon to maintain them, and "not to yield" to their repeated, illusory achievement. (133-34)

"We" here is vague, but I take McGann to be referring to critics as well as poets. He asks us to judge literary criticism not by the position it finally attains but by the quest it undertakes. That quest aims at rectifying what we believe to be wrong or false in poetry, criticism, and the larger world in which literature and criticism intervene. By critiquing all ideology, even the ideology favored by the poet, poetry teaches critics to distrust all presumably final solutions, their own included. A critical project should "[learn] from itself" by constantly searching out "the falsehoods in its own truths"—constantly,

because the knowledge acquired in this process "must remain provisional, subject to change, and even sometimes unassimilated at the authoritative level of its consciousness" (57).

In light of these expectations for criticism, I think it fitting that the project McGann began in *The Romantic Ideology* pauses rather than stops in *Towards a Literature of Knowledge*. It is as if McGann were catching his breath rather than finishing up. The trajectory of his considerable critical labors has been defined by McGann's desire to denounce fascist poetry, reactionary criticism, and social barbarism, all in an effort to change what he believes to be wrong. Like the poets he admires, he has provoked comparable activity in his readers, injecting new energy and seriousness in literary criticism, especially in romantic studies.

As McGann's own view of criticism leads us to expect, he sometimes lapses from his own standards. These dead spots in his work, these "resting places and seeming sure points of Reasoning" too firmly held to be doubted (as Keats might put it), include the dogmatic pronouncements about poetry that I noted earlier.⁴ I am more concerned, however, with his needing constantly to tell himself "not to yield." This advice, of course, comes from Tennyson's "Ulysses," which is also the source of the epigraph to *Social Values and Poetic Acts* ("Tis not too late to seek a newer world"). For McGann, yielding means giving into the frustration that results when we learn that we must fail in our critical quest to mend what is broken and false. Demoralized, we are tempted to settle for someone else's (always illusory) claim to have achieved what we desire but cannot obtain. The injunction "not to yield" calls attention to this temptation even as it tries to combat it.

As already suggested, some academic readers (myself included) have been energized watching McGann work through this series of books, as if he were proving that criticism can again have political meaning. I fear this response will be short-lived because

McGann disavows any hope for success or evidence of progress in his critical quest. His doubts about the possibility of progress may explain why *Towards a Literature of Knowledge* revisits the texts and examples of McGann's earlier books. Within the book, even McGann's examples repeat themselves like variations on a musical theme, with Pound, for instance, sounding like Blake, albeit in a fascist key. McGann repeats himself because he has to; he must start all over again because in his own mind he has not gotten anywhere. More exactly, he cannot get anywhere in his attempt to rectify what he thinks is wrong. Poetry, however, calls upon him to sustain his quest even as poetry tells him that his quest must fail.

I think McGann's predicament here has less to do with the teachings of poetry than with his bleak situation as a putatively radical American academic critic working without any guarantee that he can "deliver poetry from reactionary hands" (132).⁵ In the terms of "Ulysses," although he wants to say much remains (thanks to poetry), he has to concede much has been taken, or at any rate much more political support is needed to make us confident that some constructive work may yet be done. Lacking this support, McGann mounts a holding action designed not to build a better world but to keep our current one from get-

ting even worse. He is treading water so that he won't drown; he presumably cannot move ahead.

I do not have an answer to this problem but I do want to emphasize one of its consequences. As McGann retreats from the claim to improve the world, he approaches the formalism he has criticized. The best formalist critics—Northrop Frye and many of the New Critics, for example—also praise the study of literature for checking our otherwise inevitable drift toward what Frye calls a "self-policing state," or a "society incapable of formulating an articulate criticism of itself and of developing a will to act in its light."⁶ Frye, too, sees "continually in the world around us . . . a constant and steady perversion of the vision of a free and equal social future."⁷ Literature controls the damage that will always be done to this vision.

Such claims on behalf of literature have disappointed many activist critics, who want not simply to hold the line against barbarism but to reduce and maybe even eliminate it. I count McGann among these critics. The appeal of his work has resulted from his daring us to hope for more than formalist critics accept: hence the force of his pledge that it is not too late to seek a newer world. In *Towards a Literature of Knowledge*, however, seeking a newer world replaces any prospect of finding one.

McGann's political disappointment in formalism threatens to overtake his own work.

¹ See my essay-review of *Social Values and Poetic Acts* in *Blake* 23 (1989): 32-39.

² Still another dictum along these lines occurs in McGann's discussion of the *Cantos*: "[The poem] is particular on these matters, as it should be; for being particular is what poetry does, is what poetry is supposed to do" (109).

³ Jerome J. McGann, *Social Values and Poetic Acts* (Cambridge and London: Harvard UP, 1988) 96.

⁴ Some of McGann's political judgments also seem too sure. Although I sympathize with his saying of the *Cantos* "when the work is fascist there is no mistaking the fact" (109), he never spells out, let alone argues for, his definition of "fascist." Making political terms problematic or undecidable (as in "Who's to say what is fascist?") can be a way of avoiding judgments we must make. But McGann's brusque assertion comes close to political stone-kicking.

⁵ McGann is describing his own society when he says that "in a society like Rossetti's, so luxurious and self-deceived, to attempt an exposition of 'the good' is to run in peril of mere cant, while to leave the 'ill' to guesswork and generality is to court inconsequence" (84). McGann's account of Rossetti's poetry also fits his own criticism: "This is an art difficult to practice, the index of a world not easy to survive" (95).

⁶ Northrop Frye, *The Modern Century* (Toronto: Oxford UP, 1967) 45.

⁷ Northrop Frye, *Creation and Recreation* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1980) 17.

Historicizing Blake: A Conference held at St. Mary's College, Strawberry Hill, 5-7 September 1990

Reviewed by Jon Mee

The recent "Historicizing Blake" conference at Strawberry Hill offered ample evidence of the current vitality and diversity of historical criticism, while at the same time attesting to its difficulties of theoretical self-definition in relation to the still dominant formalist tradition in Blake studies. The organizers, Steve Clarke and David Worrall, had clearly worked hard to bring together a crowded and stimulating program. There were speakers from Britain, North America, and Australia, as well as an encouraging mixture of distinguished scholars and younger speakers. The atmosphere was one of enthusiastic exchange and often as much was on offer at the bar and between mouthfuls of food as at the sessions themselves.

A range of methodologies flourished, most of which were left implicit in their presentations by the speakers (perhaps as much a symptom of the 35-minute-per-paper format as any theoretical bashfulness). The majority of the papers presented contexts, some traditional, some much less so, against which to read Blake. Three well-established scholars stood out against this tendency and presented diachronic descriptions of Blake's output. Michael Phillips described the various copies of *Songs of Experience* and hinted that Blake gave progressively less consideration to the presentation of the text of the poems and increasingly foregrounded the visual aspects of the plates. It would have been interesting to have heard a fuller debate about the significance of these changes in relation to the different cultural contexts in which they

were produced. John Grant gave a detailed account of the development of the figure of the aged male patriarch from the early Joseph of Arimathea design to the various states of the "London" plate of *Songs*. The traditional dating (c.1821) of Blake's unfinished drawings based on the Book of Enoch was discussed in John Beer's paper. He put forward an alternative date, contemporary with Blake's composition of *Milton*, on the basis of similarities between the thematic treatment of sexuality in the drawings and the poem and evidence that excerpts from the apocryphal book were available in translation much earlier than is often accepted.

The first of the contexts to be broached was the art historical one of Blake's painting and engraving. Suzanne Matheson discussed Blake's place in the hegemonic discourse of Protestant art criticism. At the center of her discriminating paper was an exploration of the *Descriptive Catalogue* and the particular fusion of aesthetic and theological notions of judgment which it employs. Alexander Gourlay returned to the *Descriptive Catalogue* at the end of the conference in a paper that was as entertaining as it was convincing. Gourlay detailed the involvement of *The Canterbury Pilgrims* in the iconography of contemporary political prints to reveal a level of signification in the engraving lost to most formalist readings. Detlef Dörrbecker's concerns were more general and his paper offered a much needed appraisal of the social and cultural position of engraving as a profession (or craft?) in the art establishment of Blake's time. Though there is a growing body of work on the techniques of engraving contemporary with Blake, relatively little has been done on the social and cultural place of the engraver. Dörrbecker's paper was distinguished by impressive historical detail and theoretical acumen which revealed this neglect in a challenging way.

The majority of the other papers provided contexts either for the poetry or broader thematic issues across the whole of Blake's work. Phillip Cox teased out the complex relationship between *The Four Zoas* and eighteenth-century pastoral poetry in some interesting developments of issues which have exercised John Barrell's criticism. Taking Dyer's *The Fleece* as his primary example, Cox showed how the genre's naturalization of the expansion of trade and industrialization seems to be unraveled in the various configurations of Tharmas in Blake's poem. The related issue of eighteenth-century attitudes to imperial expansion was the context provided in Andrew Lincoln's discussion of the seventh and eighth Nights of *The Four Zoas*. Lincoln perceptively linked Blake's poetry to the histories of empire written by Ferguson, Gibbon, Hume, Miller, Rousseau, and Smith. All of these historians offered a perspective from which to critique imperial ambition and the decadence of luxury that Blake seems to have taken up and developed in more radical directions. If time had permitted, a comparison of Blake's position with other radical developments of the critique of empire, such as Volney's *Ruins*, would have been interesting. More generally both of these papers revealed the dynamism of Blake's engagement with the cultural mainstream of the eighteenth-century, a point also made in Mary Lynn Johnson's discussion of Blake's relationship to the various theories of the atom available in both scientific and cultural discourse.

The papers given by Marilyn Butler and Susan Matthews inspected the received notion that *Jerusalem* represents a shift into nationalism for Blake. Butler suggested that nationalism was not necessarily to be identified with Church and King conservatism. Drawing attention to the pervasive and progressive influence of the literature of the Celtic fringe on Blake's rhetoric, she concentrated on what *Jerusalem* gained from the radical cast of Welsh nation-

alism contemporary with its composition. Matthews's paper came to similar conclusions, though with an approach less concerned with contexts. Her discussion of a series of key passages in *Jerusalem* confirmed that the nationalism of Blake's great epic is far from being a univocal celebration of either the political or literary establishment.

Desirée Hirst turned to a much less familiar historical ground in a paper which drew attention to a neoplatonic tradition which she and Kathleen Raine have sought to maintain as the bounding line of Blake's meaning. It was the ambiguities of Blake's own notion of the bounding line which concerned Edward Larrissy. His dexterous paper explored the significance of alchemical symbolism for what is one of the most slippery key words in Blake's rhetoric. Both of these papers touched on the popular enthusiastic culture which was the focus of my paper as well as those of Peter Kitson and Iain McCalman.

My own concern was to discuss the significance for Blake of a particular case of the pervasive antinomianism of the popular religious culture of London. The subsidiary intent of the paper was to show that some of the texts of seventeenth-century radicals to which Blake is often linked were reprinted and implicated in the public religious and political controversies of Blake's time. Kitson looked at the parallel ground of Blake's millenarianism and suggested some of the difficulties of relating it to the missions of Richard Brothers and Joanna Southcott. The limited nature of studies which confine the context of millenarianism in the 1790s to Brothers and Southcott has been admirably demonstrated by Iain McCalman's recent book *Radical Underworld: Prophets, Revolutionaries and Pornographers in London, 1795-1840* (Cambridge UP, 1988). This refreshing and challenging study has opened a substantial period of British history to reveal a neglected but vivid nexus of "unrespectable radicalism."

Its particular concern with the aspiring literati amongst the artisan classes and their political affiliations is of obvious interest to Blake scholars. The paper delivered at the conference returned to this culture by following the career of W. H. Reid, a radical turncoat who was almost the exact contemporary of Blake. McCalman took us back into a period slightly before that covered by his book to trace the struggles of the aspiring writer, his relationship to the radical movements in place before the French Revolution, his response to the Revolution controversy, and the continuing but inconsistent nature of his radicalism thereafter. Apart from the many particular similarities adduced with Blake's situation and publications, the major significance of McCalman's paper for literary studies was its description of the eclectic refashioning of cultural materials undertaken by aspiring literati like Reid. The ambivalent engagement with polite culture typical of Reid and his peers offers a new way of thinking through the alterity of Blake's own visual and written bricolage. The uniqueness of Blake relative to his familiar canonical contemporaries need not be fixed as the reflex of romantic genius; it could be the sign of his proximity to the rich undergrowth of literary activity illuminated by McCalman. The more this undergrowth comes to light, the less adequate the romanticism we derive from Wordsworth, Coleridge et al. seems either as a context for teaching Blake or, more importantly, as a description of the culture of the period.

The many questions asked of McCalman after his paper suggested just how important to the attraction of Blake is the perception that his poetry and designs open up both a politics and a history that have been marginalized in the construction of our present intellectual reality. It was the question of what this radical opportunity means for the reader now which might be said to characterize my last grouping of papers. Bruce Woodcock examined

the politics of Paine and Blake in a paper that undermined some of the received assumptions about their differences while asking searching questions about their relevance to the modern reader. What a political reading of Blake's texts have offered our recent past was Phillip Gorski's concern. His paper charted the development on the British left, from the 1930s onwards, of a cultural affiliation that sought to identify in Blake an alternative to a rigid and mechanistic Marxism which still maintained the force of a radical critique of capitalism. The possibilities and limitations of that radicalism for a feminist critique were explored by Helen Bruder and Young-ok An. Bruder offered a subtle and convincing reading of *The Book of Thel* which moved with skill between an account of late eighteenth-century restrictions on female self-determination and the modern critical maintenance of those restrictions. A more theoretical feminist approach to Blake propelled An's Althusserian explorations of "History, Textuality, and Blake."

Perhaps it was this last grouping of papers that came closest to theorizing the objectives of a historical criticism. None, however, directly addressed the issue of what historicizing Blake might be, the most obvious omission from the conference as a whole. Historical criticism does not entail theoretical illiteracy, as any number of recent studies have demonstrated, nor was such illiteracy evident amongst the participants in the conference, judging by the intense discussions which went on around the papers. What the conference did demonstrate above all was the pressing desire to practice a historicizing criticism, a desire which for many of the speakers was informed by a sense that to evacuate the site of history, especially the fugitive history brought to light by McCalman, would be a political as well as critical evasion.

NEWSLETTER

BLAKE'S FAX



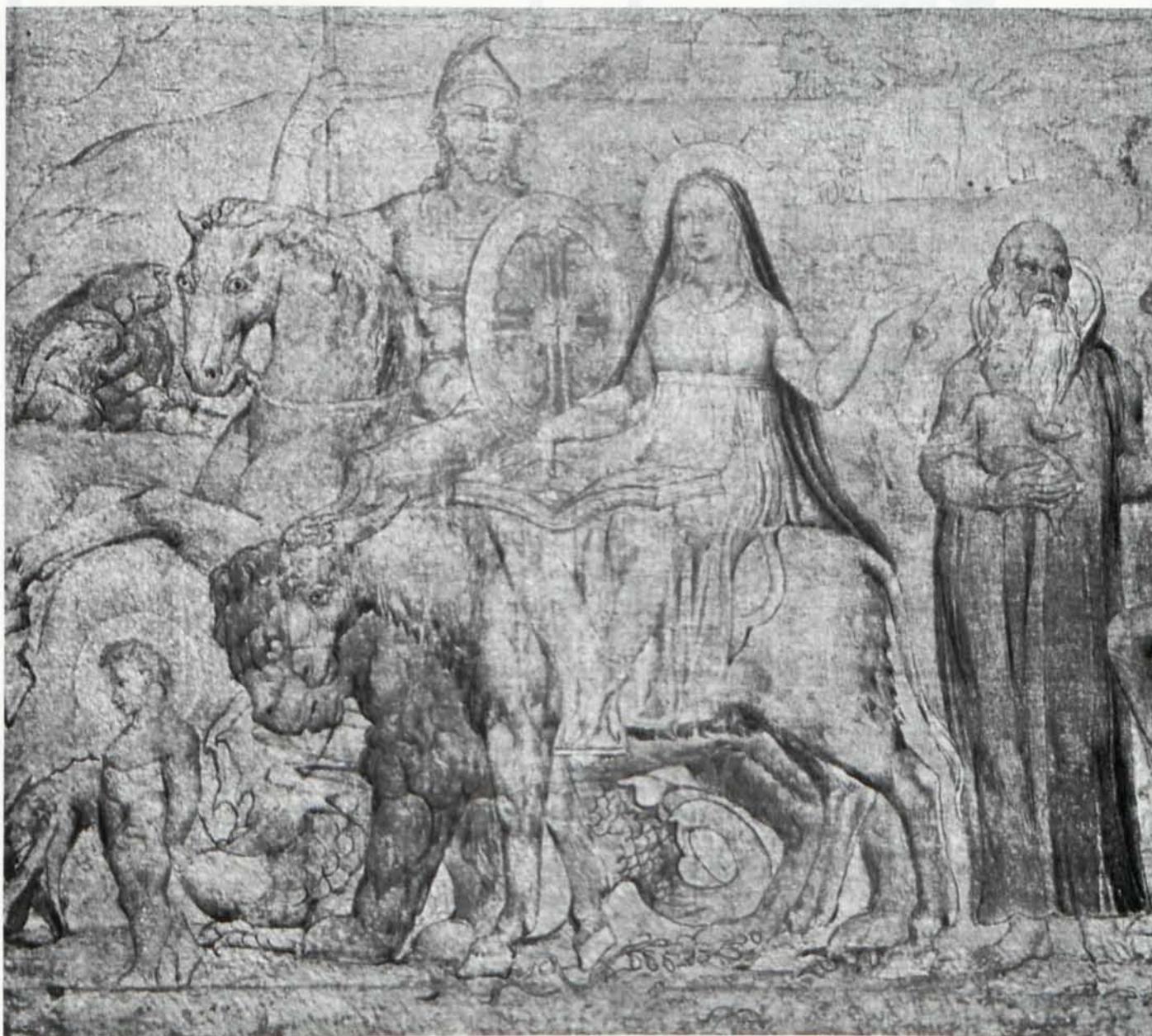
In November 1990, with help from a foundation grant, Blake purchased a facsimile machine. The number is **716 442 5769**. Our readers are invited and encouraged to send faxes to this number whenever they have a problem with their subscription, galleys to return, or news to share.

BLAKE AND THE ISSN

Only very intense readers will have noticed that the ISSN number in the front of this issue has changed. In 1977, when the *Blake Newsletter* became *Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly*, the National Serials Data Program assigned *Blake* another ISSN number, although we hadn't applied for it, nor did we print it. The new number is ISSN 0160-628X.

REPRODUCTIONS OF BLAKE'S FAERIE QUEENE

In *Blake's* small office, we still have quite a few copies of the large color reproduction of Blake's Spenser painting, which was originally published in the *Blake Newsletter* in 1975. The price is \$5 including shipping and postage. It will be sent to you by first class mail, in a cardboard tube. Make checks out to *Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly* and mail to Patricia Neill, Managing Editor, *Blake*, Department of English, University of Rochester, Rochester NY 14627.



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he breaks the shell
P. Blake by Blake 11 May 1797*

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Open Saturday, November 10 & December 8. Closed November 22 & 23.

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The UNIVERSITY LIBRARIAN and THE FRIENDS OF THE UCSC LIBRARY cordially invite you to view the exhibit and attend the following events:

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 8 at 2:00 pm
Special Collections, McHenry Library

JULIE FAWCUS will speak on
"The Trianon Press: A Triumph of Enthusiasm over Reason"

A reception in her honor, hosted by The Friends of the UCSC Library, will follow.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 9 at 2:00 pm
Special Collections, McHenry Library

A SERIES OF FOUR TALKS:

The Art of Printing and Publishing
JACK STAUFFACHER, Greenwood Press

Gislebertus, Sculptor of Autun
VIRGINIA JANSEN, Associate Professor of Art, UC Santa Cruz

Marcel Duchamp
SHELDON NODELMAN, Associate Professor of Visual Arts,
UC San Diego

William Blake
MARY HOLMES, Professor Emerita of Art, UC Santa Cruz

Please park on Hagar Drive. There will be a shuttlebus available on both afternoons.

CORRECTION

Readers may have noticed that the summer issue (volume 24, #1) was a bibliographer's nightmare; that is, instead of starting the pagination at zero with the new volume number, we continued it from the last issue of volume 23. In fact, we blundered. Essick's "Blake in the Marketplace" should have started on page 4, "Blake's Tiger" by Pedley on page 22, "A Caricature Source" by Wood on page 31, and so on. See below for correct pagination.

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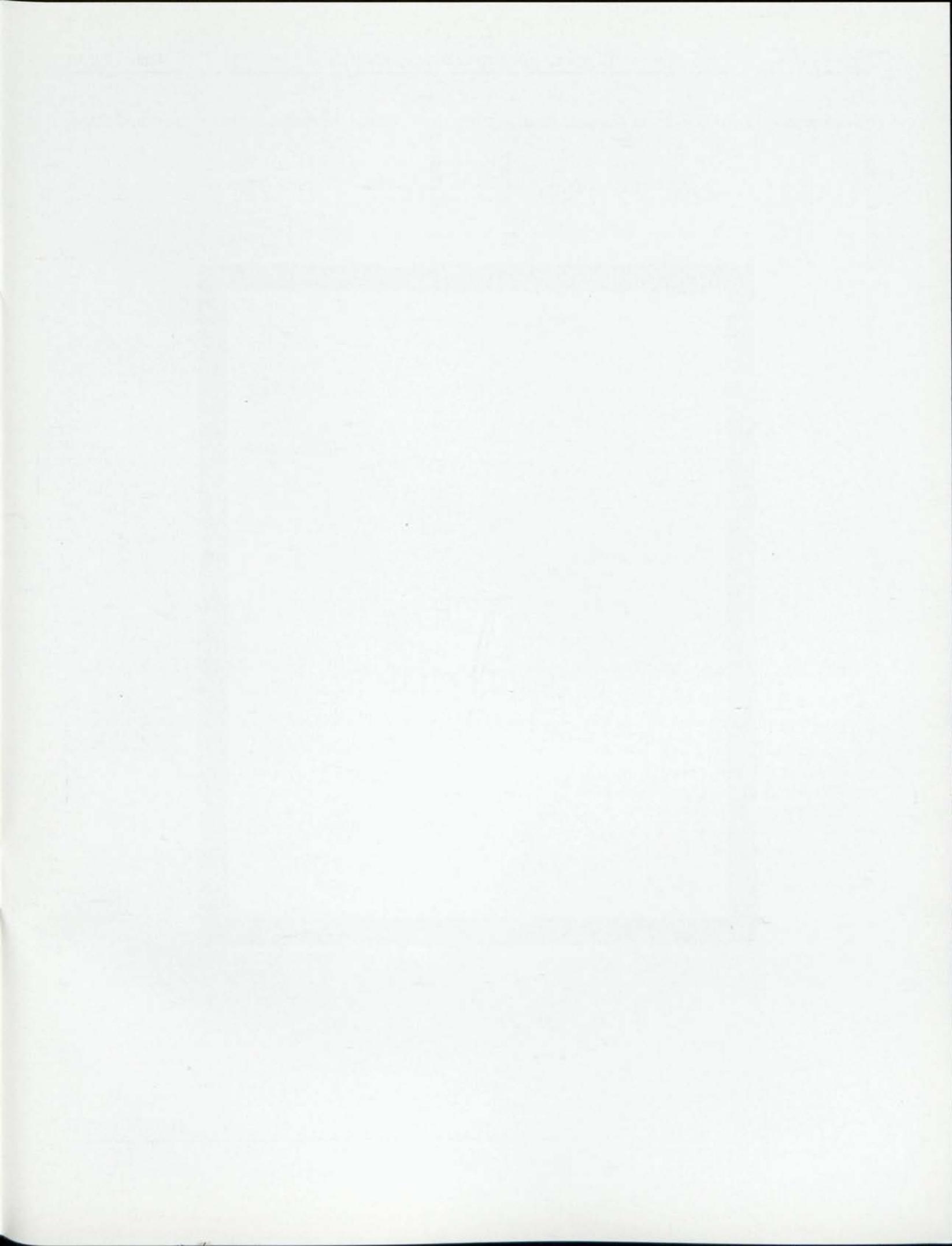
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