

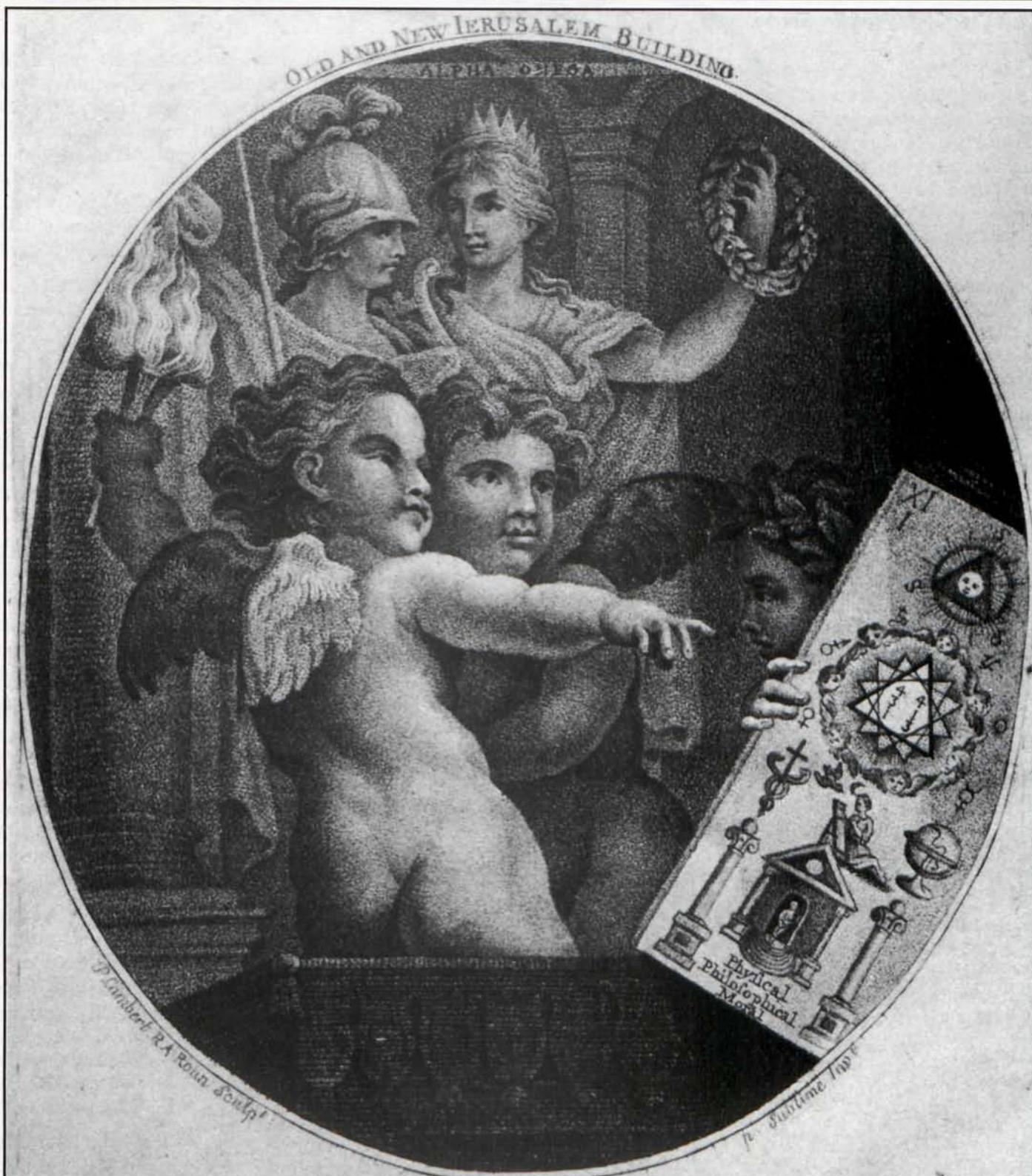
Blake

AN ILLUSTRATED QUARTERLY

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Blake

AN ILLUSTRATED QUARTERLY

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The Secret Masonic History of Blake's Swedenborg Society

by Marsha Keith Schuchard

Blake's attitude toward Swedenborg and his devotees has long been the subject of controversy among critics. That Blake and his family were Swedenborgians was once accepted as given fact, then rejected as mythology, and subsequently resurrected as a real possibility.¹ However, most commentators have relied too heavily on Robert Hindmarsh's *Rise and Progress of the New Jerusalem Church*, published posthumously in London in 1861. Few have realized that Hindmarsh deliberately slanted the history to maximize his own role and to serve a counter-revolutionary political agenda.² Like Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey, Hindmarsh labored to cover up his own early revolutionary leanings and to distance himself and the New Church from charges of subversive "illuminism." By omitting or distorting the dominant role of foreign Freemasons in organizing the New Jerusalem Temple in London, Hindmarsh created a conservative, prudish, and inaccurate version of eighteenth-century Swedenborgianism that fit comfortably into a Victorian milieu. Though Blake fit most uncomfortably into Hindmarsh's context, the visionary artist and radical prophet found a congenial—even inspirational—milieu among the Masonic *Illuminés* who were the driving force behind the Swedenborgian movement.

To bring to the surface these underground *Illuminés* of the 1780s, it is necessary to dig back to their roots in an older clandestine world of international Jacobite-Masonic intrigue. However, it is difficult to penetrate the network of "irregular" Freemasonry in England, because of the oath-bound vows of secrecy and political risks incurred by members of foreign-affiliated lodges. These dangers reached their peak during the recurrent Jacobite agitations after the 1745 rebel-



All illustrations are courtesy of the Library Museum of the United Grand Lodge of England.

lion, the revolt of the American colonies in 1776, and the French invasion scare of 1798.³ At each of these periods, Freemasonry was deeply polarized into revolutionary and loyalist factions (called generically the "Ancients" versus the "Moderns"), and governmental crackdowns on the former led to destruction of records, surveillance of members, and closure of lodges.

From the time when Emanuel Swedenborg first visited London in 1710-13, his activities were shrouded in deliberate obscurity and encoded documents, for he participated in the Franco-Swedish-Jacobite conspiracies that gave the Hanoverian kings of England nightmares throughout his lifetime.⁴ Returning many times to London between 1744 and 1772, Swedenborg acted as a secret agent for the French king and the pro-French party in Sweden, known as the "Hats."⁵ In fact, Louis XV personally subsidized the anonymous publication of Swedenborg's theosophical writings in Lon-

don as a cover for his espionage activities. To serve both his political agenda and his theosophical ambitions, Swedenborg utilized a network of Masonic lodges in England and Sweden that were linked with sister lodges in France, Holland, Germany, Poland, and Russia. By the time of his death in March 1772, these "illuminated" Masons were laying the foundations of the Swedenborgian Theosophical Society that Blake joined in the 1780s.

The Swedish lodges of Blake's day claimed to possess precious documents that contained the Masonic secrets embedded in "the hieroglyphic language of the old Jewish wisdom books."⁶ Some of these documents were obtained by Swedenborg from Jewish and French Masons in London.⁷ During his visits to the city, Swedenborg often resided in the Queen's Arms Tavern in Wellclose Square, which hosted a French-affiliated lodge that welcomed Jewish Masons. His immediate neighbor in the square was Dr. Samuel Jacob Falk, a Jewish alchemist and Cabalist, who became revered and feared as one of the "Unknown Superiors" of illuminist Masonry.⁸ Secretly associated with the radical Sabbatians of Poland and with French agents of the Stuart cause, Falk instructed Swedenborg in Cabalistic trance techniques and sexual magic, which they believed would usher in a spiritual and political millennium.

Both Falk and Swedenborg were associated with the "Rite of Seven Degrees," a shadowy Masonic order directed by Pierre Lambert de Lintot (a former French military officer, Jacobite agent, and talented engraver), who initiated many visitors to London.⁹ Anglicizing his name as Peter Lambert, the artist infused Swedenborgian themes into the mystical high degrees. He also produced a series of complex,

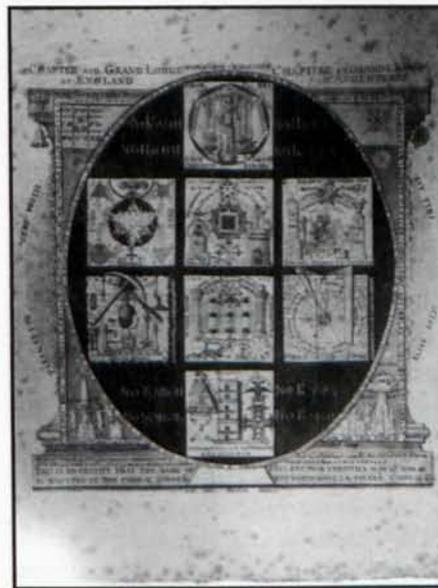
hieroglyphical engravings that were widely sought by European Masons who believed they contained the key to the Cabalistic arcana possessed by Falk and Swedenborg.¹⁰ That the ritual term "Los" was an important symbol in these degrees provides a new perspective on Blake's own symbolic figure of "Los" in his illuminist prophecies of the 1790s.

Swedenborg successfully maintained his *incognito* in London until the 1760s, when he began to receive many Masonic admirers. In 1769 he was visited by a group of alchemists—the chemist Peter Woulfe, the musician Michael Arne, and the bankrupt Robert Peacock—who discussed Hermetic philosophy with him.¹¹ Receiving an unflattering report about this discussion from Peacock, the French physician Benedict Chastanier decided not to call on Swedenborg and, instead, pursued his own independent Masonic initiatives. Chastanier had become a high-ranking Mason in France, and he was fascinated by Swedenborg's anonymous writings. In 1767 he established a lodge of *Illuminés Théosophes* in London; though the rituals drew on Swedenborgian symbolism, Chastanier did not know the identity of the author of his source texts.¹² Soon after this, the Marquis de Thomé (who had met Swedenborg in Paris in 1769) began to assist his *frère* J. P. Moët (a royal librarian) in translating Swedenborg's works into French, and he established a special Swedenborgian rite in Paris by 1773.¹³

Three years later, Chastanier learned that Swedenborg was the author of the books he so cherished, and he determined to establish a Masonic society that would publish and disseminate the master's writings. Joining with those Masons who shared his devotion, Chastanier formed in 1776 the "London Universal Society for the Promotion of the New Jerusalem Church."¹⁴ Maintaining a low profile because of the current government crackdown on "irregular" and Ancient lodges, the Universal Society apparently included Peter Woulfe, Michael Arne, General

Charles Rainsford, Lord Percy, Reverend Thomas Hartley, Dr. Husband Messiter, Dr. William Spence, Edward Maubach, Francis Barthelemon, and Henry Servanté. The artists Richard Cosway and Phillipe Jacques de Louthembourg, who were early admirers of Swedenborg and interested in Masonry, may also have supported the Universalists.¹⁵

Chastanier and Thomé joined forces with an ambitious lodge of occult research, the *Philaléthés*, which was launched in Paris in 1775 and which investigated the theosophical claims of Falk, Swedenborg, and other *gurus* of illuminism.¹⁶ Thomé evidently met Falk in Paris or London, for in December 1777 he described to a visiting rabbi his earlier studies in Cabala under the *Baal-Shem*.¹⁷ In winter 1776-77 the Duke of Chartres (Grand Master of the Grand Orient system of French Masonry) traveled to London where he sought out Falk, who consecrated a talismanic ring that would ensure the Duke's accession to the French throne.¹⁸ In the early days of the Rite of Seven Degrees, Chartres was cited by Lambert as his Deputy Grand Master.¹⁹ Chartres later became the Duke of Orleans and then *Phillipe Égalité*, an intimate friend of Richard Cosway and a hero to William Blake.²⁰



It was probably at this time (1777-79) that Chastanier began to collaborate with Lambert, who had moved next door to him on Tottenham Court Road and who corresponded with members of the Swedish Rite abroad.²¹ Lambert exhibited pictures at the Society of Artists and Free Society of Artists, and his highly finished, complex engravings may have become known to those artists who were interested in Swedenborg and mystical Masonry (such as Louthembourg, Cosway, Sharp, and—possibly—Blake). General Rainsford, who was friendly with Louthembourg and Cosway, participated in the Universal Society and Rite of Seven Degrees, and he later inherited the Masonic engravings, manuscripts, and regalia of Lambert.²² The similarity of many themes and symbols in Lambert's and Blake's engravings is provocative.

In 1777 the Universalists were visited by Charles Bernhard Wadström, a Swedish Mason who was undertaking a secret mission of industrial espionage for King Gustav III, and who returned with news of the Swedenborgian publishing enterprise in London.²³ He also told his friend Augustus Nordenskjöld about Dr. Mordecai Gumpel Levison, a remarkable Jewish physician in London, who practiced alchemy and was a Swedenborgian Mason.²⁴ Determined to collaborate with Dr. Levison, Nordenskjöld traveled to London in 1779, where he moved into the Jew's residence in Soho Square (nearby Rainsford's home in the square). In December Nordenskjöld and Levison began printing *A Plain System of Alchymy*, which combined Swedenborgian metaphysics with practical chemistry. They interrupted the printing when they decided to travel to Stockholm in order to solicit the sponsorship of Gustav III for their alchemical endeavors.²⁵ At this time, a "Mrs. Levison" was a subscriber to the *Discourses on Various Subjects* (1779), written by the Reverend Jacob Duché, a Swedenborgian whose work also attracted William Blake and other artists.²⁶ It was in Duché's home at the Lambeth Asylum

that the Universalists often met in the 1780s.²⁷

By 1778 the Swedenborgians in London and Stockholm were corresponding with kindred souls in Berlin, where the Abbé Antoine Joseph Pernety and Count Thaddeus Grabianka led a Masonic lodge of *Illuminés* who studied the master's works, while carrying out alchemical and Cabalistic experiments.²⁸ In April 1782 the unexpected death of Dr. Falk upset an international Masonic project undertaken by Falk, Rainsford, and the *Philaléthés*.²⁹ It was perhaps this development that influenced Rainsford and Chastanier to publish a brochure that sought new members for the Universal Society—the *Plan général d'une Société Universelle* (London: R. Hawes, 1782). The work was sold at the London bookshop of John Denis, who attended Lambert's lodge and who acted as agent for Swedenborgian publications.³⁰ Chastanier appealed to high-degree Masons to join their Swedenborgian rite:

Afin de favoriser l'Élite des Alchimistes, des Cabalistes, des Francs-Maçons, et, en un mot, de tous les Savans occultes, qui, quoi qu'en pensent ceux qui ignorent la nature de leurs travaux, doivent nécessairement avoir leur utilité particulière dans un système Universel, ces Savans tiendront quand et comme ils le jugeront à propos des Assemblées secrètes, où les Membres d'une autre espèce ne pourront être introduite sous aucun prétexte. La Société aura pour objet de concilier toutes les Doctrines, et même tous les intérêts, en employant sans cesse tous ses talents et tous ses pouvoirs, au bonheur de toute la Terre en général, et du Pays où elle s'établira en particulier.

On instituera différens Grades suivant les différens degrés de la Science; lesquels degrés seront formés d'après ceux qui existent dans la forme humaine, mesure et raison de toutes choses.

Chaque grade sera marqué par des ordres distinctifs, significatifs, ou symboliques, pris dans la Science des analogies ou correspondances.

Il sera libre à chaque Membre, de porter son grade dans le monde comme un marque d'honneur; mais dans la Société chacun sera constamment obligé de s'en décorer, comme d'un signe qui le rappelle à sa place et à sa fonction particulières . . .³¹



Chastanier appealed especially to artists to join the society of Universalists, for they would study the symbolic arts in their highest expression. By January 1783, according to a Swedish journal, various artists had joined this Swedenborgian society in London.³²

Within three months, Chastanier was encouraged enough by the expansion of Illuminism in lodges abroad that he once again went public in his quest for new members. On 1 April 1783 he placed an ad in the *Courier de l'Europe: Gazette Anglo-Française*, which was published on Great Queen Street and which had a large English and Continental readership.³³ He clearly linked the Swedenborg society in London with its affiliated societies abroad, which were actually the illuminist lodges at Stockholm, Paris, Avignon, Berlin, and St. Petersburg. Despite Hindmarsh's later claim that he placed the first ad and convened the first public meeting of Swedenborgians in London in December 1784, Chastanier actually earned the honor.³⁴ But Hindmarsh, who was a Freemason in his younger days, was later determined

(in the post-Napoleonic era) to cover up the Masonic nature of these first meetings.³⁵

In late fall 1783 Charles Frederick Nordensjököld (brother of Augustus the alchemist) arrived in London, where he joined the Universalists and gave them some of Swedenborg's manuscripts. In Nordensjököld's voluminous journals and letters covering his experiences over the next three years, a valuable new perspective emerges on the subsequent development of the Swedenborg society in London.³⁶ Nordensjököld listed many names that Hindmarsh suppressed (including "Mr. Cosway, Painter in History"), and he amusingly recounted the occult enthusiasm and political radicalism of most of the members.³⁷ To help Chastanier's publishing efforts, Nordensjököld donated the proceeds from his Masonic publication, *Oneiromantien* (Stockholm, 1783), which was based on Swedenborg's unpublished Italian journal of alchemical symbolism and dream interpretation.

After the printer Hindmarsh joined the society, a decision was made to form a



more public organization—the “Theosophical Society”—which would function as the publishing arm of the secret Universal Society. The two societies still collaborated, with Hindmarsh and Chastanier serving as co-secretaries (the latter handling the foreign correspondence). That the early members of the Theosophical Society shared the ecumenical spirit of the *Illuminés* is suggested by a statement in their published manifesto:

We wage war with none, but are determined to maintain peace and friendship with all; and being sensible that without variety, in religion as well as other concerns, there cannot exist harmony or true order, we allow all men the free exercise of their respective modes of worship, according to their different persuasions and habits of education; and wish nothing more than to renounce every appearance of a sectarian spirit.³⁸

Earlier in 1783 Chastanier had traveled to Paris, where he visited the Marquis de Thomé and informed him about the Universal Society. Thomé became so enthusiastic that he visited the group in London in early 1784 and held forth on his plans to launch a Swedenborgian balloon expedition to Africa. According to Nordenskjöld, Thomé “thinks it will be the second Noah’s Ark, which shall save the faithful from the frightful desolation which is to overcome the whole of Europe.”³⁹ While Thomé expounded his fantasy

of liberating the enslaved Africans via balloon, another ardent abolitionist visited the Universal Society. James Glen was a Scottish-born planter from Demerara, who became a strong supporter of the Universalist agenda. Glen arranged for Hindmarsh to ship a collection of the society’s publications to the United States and then undertook a Swedenborgian-Masonic mission to the new world. In June-July 1784, Glen lectured in Philadelphia and Boston on “the extraordinary SCIENCE of Celestial and Terrestrial Connections and Correspondencies, recently revived, by the late and Honourable Emanuel Swedenborg”:

The sublime Science teaches us from every Object in the World of Nature to learn things Spiritual and Heavenly; it is the most ancient and excellent of all Sciences, being that whereby the Holy Scriptures were written; according to which the highest Angels form their Ideas, and through the medium of which the earliest of the Human Race held Converse and Communion with these blessed Beings. The Knowledge of this useful Science has for many Ages been lost to the World. The Egyptian Hieroglyphics, the Greek and Roman Mythology, and the Modern Freemasonry being the last remnants of it. The honourable Emanuel Swedenborg, the wonderful Restorer of this long lost Secret . . . was thus taught this Science of Heaven.⁴⁰

In his lectures, Glen included discourses on Jewish manners and customs, hieroglyphics, and Freemasonry. Glen took advantage of the famous Masonic history of the Green Dragon Tavern in Boston (where many Scottish-Rite Masons gathered to plan the Boston Tea Party) to recruit members to the Swedenborgian cause.⁴¹

On 2 June Nordenskjöld expressed his hope that the wealthier members of the Universal Society, such as Rainsford and Lord Percy, would draw in more high-ranking members, and he vowed to translate Chastanier’s *Plan* into Swedish.⁴² From Nordenskjöld’s notes and list of devotees of Swedenborg, it is clear that the Universal Society had more eclectic occult interests than the Theosophical Society, which maintained a more limited publishing agenda. On 14 June Edward Maubach,

a radical writer who had recently returned from Paris, notified Rainsford that Savalette de Langes, chief of the *Philalèthes*, was pleased with the information he had received from the Universal Society and asked for more copies of the *Plan*, for many French Masons were “très jalouse” to become corresponding members.⁴³ Maubach wanted to re-publish the *Plan* in French and English, to advertise it in Maty’s *New Review*, and to publicize the fact that many “personnes de sang et merite” were interested in the Masonic project.

Rainsford and his friend William Bousie, an Anglo-French merchant, had been corresponding with the *Philalèthes* since summer 1783.⁴⁴ The Parisian lodge was laying the groundwork for an international Masonic convention to investigate all the different high-degree systems. During the sessions from August 1784 through June 1787, the Swedenborgian *Illuminés* in London participated in person and by correspondence.⁴⁵ Rainsford provided valuable information on Swedenborg, Falk, and the Cabalistic symbolism of the high degrees, while Chastanier was praised for his Swedenborgian publication efforts. Rainsford and Woulfe were also members of *Der Pilger* lodge in London, which worked in German and practiced the Swedish Rite, and they worked with several foreign members to present information on the Swedish high degrees. However, the material was partially censored because of Sweden’s stringent requirements of secrecy. Based on Chastanier’s letters and their own investigations, the *Philalèthes* concluded on 29 March 1787:

Du tout il résulte qu’il existe depuis longtemps, en Suède et à Londres, et en d’autres villes de l’Europe, des sociétés fraternelles, réunies pour la propagation de la doctrine de Swedenborg; que, concurremment à l’établissement de ces sociétés, il s’en était formé dans le nord de l’Europe, qui, dirigées par divers moyens, avaient pour but et objet des sciences religieuses, mais analogues au *Christ* . . .⁴⁶

In the meantime in London, however, the relationship between the Universal and Theosophical Societies was

becoming strained, as certain of the more provincial, lower-class British members became resentful at the more international, upper-class participants. In August 1785 the Marquis de Thomé returned to London, where he urged the implementation of Chastanier's ambitious publishing plans. The Frenchman's elegance and *esprit* delighted Duché, Nordenskjöld, Rainsford, and many members, but his "foreign" interference offended others. Thomé insisted that the publishing society change its name from "Theosophic" to "Philanthropic" because the first word connoted paganism. Though a majority accepted his reasoning, some of the British members insisted on the more localized name of the "British Society for the Propagation of the Doctrines of the New Church."⁴⁷

A discouraged Chastanier wrote Rainsford about the personality clashes and feuding that plagued the attempted cooperation of the two societies, but he soldiered on in his ecumenical efforts. Though "la Société de ceux qui se disent Swedenborgites ou Swedenborgiens" rejected his proposal to publish Swedenborg's Latin manuscript of *Apocalypsis Explicata*, they agreed to bring out two English translations of smaller works.⁴⁸ Despite the "British" name change, however, Nordenskjöld continued to use the term Philanthropic; when he founded the "Exegetic and Philanthropic Society" in Stockholm in 1786, he claimed that it was a copy of the London society. Though the public Exegetic society did not call itself a Masonic lodge, all the members were Masons and they planned to share a printing press and publishing agenda with the Masons.⁴⁹ This apparently mirrored the arrangement in London between the public Theosophical and secret Universal societies.

By 1786 the revolutionary developments in France added to the unease of the more conservative British Swedenborgians. During that year, when the Diamond Necklace Trial rocked the throne of France, two leaders of



radical Masonry—Cagliostro and Grabianka—arrived in London and sought recruits among the Swedenborgians.⁵⁰ Cagliostro, who knew Dr. Levison, merged the teachings of Swedenborg and Falk into his Egyptian Rite.⁵¹ Similarly, Grabianka merged those of Swedenborg and "a rich Cabalon Philosopher" into his Illuminist Rite.⁵² When Hindmarsh wrote his history of this period, he never mentioned Cagliostro, who won over many disciples, and he downplayed Grabianka, who won over Hindmarsh. Moreover, Hindmarsh later covered up the Masonic goal of Grabianka's recruitment in London, and he falsely claimed that the London society soon broke its ties with the *Illuminés* of Avignon.⁵³

Chastanier was initially enthusiastic about the link-up between London and Avignon, and he determined to recruit Masons from rival lodges to the Swedenborgian agenda. When he learned that the Swedenborgians in Stockholm had founded a special Masonic lodge in 1787, to circumvent clerical opposition to the Exegetic society, he utilized his newly launched *Journal Novi-Jerusalemite* to praise the new Swedish lodge.⁵⁴ It would serve the good of humanity if the whole earth became covered with such lodges. He also urged those Masons who did not belong to the *Philalèthes* to study Swedenborg

as they searched for the true secrets of the fraternity:

Maçons francs et libres, dont j'ai l'honneur d'être frère, votre société respectable est faite pour être leur émule. Vous cherchez maintenant plus que jamais la vérité, témoins les lettres circulaires que le Grand-Orient de Paris fait partout distribuer. Voici qu'elle se présente à vous. Ce sont les oeuvres de Swédenborg qui vous la dévoilant dans tous ses emblèmes, symboles et figures que vous ne connaissiez encore que superficiellement. Ne ferez-vous rien en pénétrer l'intérieur? Il est de votre intérêt de concourir à la réussite de mon plan . . .⁵⁵

Chastanier's journal, which targeted Masons of differing rites, continued throughout 1787-88, as he appealed to British lodges to admit women and to all lodges to support the revolutionary changes in France. He also made clear that the *Bureau Typographique de la Nouvelle Église*, which published the journal in London, was a Masonic society composed of "Amateurs de la Vérité" who were "Très secrets Associés du dit Bureau."⁵⁶

However, the visits of Cagliostro and Grabianka—foreign prophets of revolution—brought an unwelcome public spotlight on the Swedenborgians. Reinforced by personal antagonisms and class resentments, the political polarization erupted into battles between the Universalists and the Separatists.⁵⁷ The latter group—a small minority of the Swedenborgians—hired a chapel at Great Eastcheap where they planned to establish a separate public church dedicated to a sectarian religion of Swedenborgianism. The Universalists argued instead that members should remain affiliated with their original churches while studying Swedenborg and other theosophers in private homes and secret lodge meetings.⁵⁸ Initially, many of the Universalists tried to participate in the Eastcheap meetings and, though Hindmarsh did not mention them, the names of Grabianka and Thomé were successfully proposed for membership on 7 May 1787.⁵⁹ On 3 September William Bousie was nominated, but he was rejected by a vote of

12 to 1, perhaps because of his linkage with Cagliostro.

In May 1788 Chastanier also rejected the influence of Cagliostro and warned about "ces grand Instituteurs de ces prétendues Loges Égyptiennes."⁶⁰ He worried that Cagliostro's disciples in London tried to cure diseases by the Cabalistic pronouncement of the name of Jehovah. Though he targeted his publications at the Masons, the ecumenical Chastanier still hoped to cooperate with the sectarians. Thus, in May he also published a charitable view of the congregation at the Eastcheap Chapel:

Nous avons assisté à leur Culte, et nous y avons observé . . . le plus grand recueillement et la plus grande décence; il nous a même paru que le nombreux auditoire de gens simples qui composoient l'assemblée étoit intimement pénétré des grandes vérités qu'on lui développoit. Au reste ceux qui reprochent à cette branche des amateurs de la Nouvelle dispensation d'avoir été contre l'intention de Swedenborg, en formant une secte . . . doivent encore réfléchir que tout est progressif au spirituel comme au naturel . . .⁶¹

The Eastcheap minutes reveal the continuing arguments about priestcraft and expulsions for "irregularity," but by December 1788 Chastanier was allowed to join. With Augustus Nordenskjöld, Charles Wadström, and their English supporter J. A. Tulk also attending meetings, it seemed that a cooperative relationship might be revived.

The in-fighting was still confined to a small number, so most admirers of Swedenborg (who were on the list of 500 readers invited in December 1788 to the Great Eastcheap Conference) were not aware of the controversies. Nordenskjöld, Chastanier, and Wadström managed to influence the final manifesto of the Conference, so that it represented a patched-together compromise. Thus, when William and Catherine Blake signed the minute book in April 1789, they did not necessarily take sides in the controversies. James Glen, who had returned from his Masonic mission to America, also signed the official statement, and he



did not foresee then that Hindmarsh would eventually become "a pronounced ecclesiastic" and a "Bishop of Babylon."⁶² Soon after the Conference, however, two new issues erupted that would polarize the members over the next few months (and which Hindmarsh would later try to conceal). Both were triggered by Nordenskjöld's radical views of sexuality and alchemy, which were based on his accurate and intimate knowledge of Swedenborg's real theories.

In Swedenborg's unpublished diaries and in the Latin edition of *Conjugal Love*, he revealed with unusual explicitness the breathing and meditation techniques of Yogic-Cabalism that could produce a prolonged erection and state of orgasmic trance.⁶³ Because this visionary sexual technique was crucial to the achievement of "spiritual influx," Swedenborg worked out a radical theory of marriage and concubinage to ensure that all *Illuminés* had access to this key to spiritual vision. Nordenskjöld based his plans for African colonization and community organization on the central premise of prolonged "Virile Potency."⁶⁴ In May he presented his thesis with such enthusiasm that even the young Hindmarsh agreed with him, but the "concubine" promoters were subsequently expelled by more conservative members. The minutes were subsequently ripped out, and an older Hindmarsh

never mentioned the affair in his history.⁶⁵

Though the sexual visionaries may have been temporarily expelled from Eastcheap, Nordenskjöld had another plan which must have appealed to the many Hermetic students among the Conference participants. On 26 May he issued a broadside manifesto to "the True Members of the New Jerusalem Church," who "sincerely wish to separate themselves both internally and externally from the Old Church"⁶⁶ (see appendix). This remarkable document, which has never been mentioned in New Church histories or Blake studies, presents the Swedenborgian alchemical views that he and Dr. Levison first promulgated in 1779, and which Nordenskjöld had now perfected. As a genuinely talented chemist and metallurgist, Nordenskjöld was experienced in the practical techniques of alchemy, and he invited any interested Swedenborgians to help him set up a lab and furnace (Athanor) in order to pursue the great work. At the same time, the alchemist would undergo spiritual regeneration, which would render "the Day of his Tabernacling in the Body a continual State of Bliss." Any profits from the production of gold and the universal medicine would be consecrated to the use of the New Jerusalem Church. The broadside was sent as a circular letter "to the friends of the New Church only," but it was "particularly requested, that the Contents of this Letter be not made public; and that all Answers be directed to me at Mr. Robert Hindmarsh's . . . 32, Clerkenwell-Close."

That Blake probably received Nordenskjöld's proposal is provocative, given the artist's subsequent use of alchemical symbolism and preoccupation with the furnace of Los. Moreover, Lambert de Lintot was perhaps inspired by Nordenskjöld and the Universalists in 1789 to issue new Masonic engravings with Swedenborgian and alchemical themes. In one striking plate, there is a circular emblem in which three human legs emerge from a shared genital area. The circle

is ringed by the motto "UNA TRINUS AB UNO" at the top and "DE LOS" at the bottom, with a crown and sun relating to the respective phrases.⁶⁷ In his circular letter, Nordenskjöld pointed out that "the fundamental error in theology has been 'the setting up a Trinity of Persons, instead of a Trinity in One Person'; similarly, the fundamental error in Alchemy consisted in adopting the 'Trinity or Three-fold Principle of Matters instead of a Trinity or Three-fold Principle in the Matter.'" For Swedenborg and Nordenskjöld, the sexual dynamics between the male and female potencies created the "trine" equilibrium or androgynous unity. As Lambert appealed to illuminated Masons to help place the "First & Last Stone of the Jerusalem Church" and engraved on a pedestal "How have I found it/ By work and Experience/ SOL'S," the possibility that Blake had access to this secretive illuminist undertaking takes on plausibility.

The subsequent history of the Universal Society and Swedenborgian Masonry in London remains difficult to piece together. Evidence of the polarizations over political and theosophical issues survives in the rival Swedenborgian journals published in the 1790s, in the manuscripts of Duché and Rainsford, and in a plethora of pamphlets and memoirs published by the participants.⁶⁸ In the wake of the 1794 treason trials, which threw a frightening light on those Swedenborgians who worked for the London Corresponding Society, the *Illuminés* found themselves in a dangerous position. The intensifying crackdown on radical Masonry culminated in the Secret Societies Act of 1799, which rendered all "irregular" lodges illegal and treasonous. Subsequently, the widespread destruction of documents by the increasingly secretive *Illuminés* and the counter-revolutionary coverup by the conservatives means that the Swedenborgian underworld remains largely buried.

However, it is crucial when reading Blake's allusions, both favorable and unfavorable to Swedenborg and the



Swedenborgians, to recognize that he was responding to controversies and arguments that inspired or distressed many of his associates. The issue was not so much his response to Swedenborg—whom he accepted as a great though flawed prophet, a *confrère* of Paracelsus and Boehme—but his responses to the warring factions and eclectic opinions among the motley crew of Swedenborgians. Though Blake scorned the prudish "angels" of the Eastcheap Society, he would have found ready sympathizers for his illuminated prophecies among the illuminist "devils" of the Universal Society.



¹ See Morton Paley, "A New Heaven is Begun": William Blake and Swedenborgianism," *Blake* 12 (1979): 64-90, for a summary of opinion until 1979 and for important source material on the Swedish context of events in England; also, Christopher Heppner, "Blake's 'New Jerusalem Descending': a Drawing (Butlin #92) Identified," *Blake* 20 (1986): 4-11.

² Paley (87n8) warned that "Hindmarsh was not a disinterested party as concerns the schisms within the New Jerusalem Church." James Hyde, the able New Church historian, also warned that the standard biography of Hindmarsh by Carl Odhner could not be trusted: "it shows no sense of proportion, no historic perspective; it magnifies the insignificant, and belittles the worthy; it paints the subject's errors as his great achievements"; see "Some Notes Respecting Robert Hindmarsh," *New Church Magazine* 24 (1905): 114-23.

³ The standard but deficient histories of eighteenth-century Freemasonry in England are Robert F. Gould, *The History of Freemasonry* (New York: John C. Yorston, 1885), and Bernard Fay, *Revolution and Freemasonry, 1680-1800* (Boston: Little Brown, 1935); for a recent corrective view, see Paul Monod, *Jacobitism and the English People* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989) 300-05.

⁴ See my "Swedenborg, Jacobitism, and Freemasonry," in *Swedenborg and His Influence*, ed. Erland Brock (Bryn Athyn: Academy of New Church, 1988) 359-79; on Sweden's prolonged support of the Jacobites, see Claude Nordmann, *Grandeur et Liberté de la Suède* (Paris: Beatrice-Nauwelaerts, 1971).

⁵ See F. G. Lindh, "Swedenborgs Ekonomi," *Nya Kyrkans Tidning* (1929): 85-91, 112-18; and my "Yeats and the Unknown Superiors: Swedenborg, Falk, and Cagliostro," in *Secret Texts*, eds. Marie Roberts and Hugh Ormsby-Lennon (New York: AMS, in press).

⁶ In-Ho Lee Ryu, "Freemasonry Under Catherine the Great: a Reinterpretation" (Harvard University, Ph.D. Dissertation, 1967) 136, 145-59.

⁷ Detailed documentation on Swedenborg's Masonic activities and Cabalistic contacts will be given in my *Emanuel, the Desire of Nations: Swedenborg, Jacobitism, and Freemasonry* (forthcoming).

⁸ Hermann Adler, "The Baal Shem of London," *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England* (1908) 148-73.

⁹ W. Wonnacott, "The Rite of Seven Degrees in London," *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum* [AQC] 39 (1926): 63-98; George Draffen, "Some Further Notes on the Rite of Seven Degrees in London," *AQC* 68 (1956): 94-110; *Livre des délibérations*

de la loge de l'Union, #70 (c. 1772-90), Ms. BE 166 Uni, in Grand Lodge Library, London.

¹⁰ Erich Lindner, *The Royal Art Illustrated*, trans. Arthur Lindsay (Graz: Akademische Druck, 1976) 136-46.

¹¹ Benedict Chastanier, *A Word of Advice to a Benighted World* (London, 1795); rare copy in Royal Library, Stockholm.

¹² Alain Le Bihan, *Franco-Maçons et Ateliers Parisiens de la Grand Loge de France au XVIII^e siècle* (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1973) 53-239; Carl Lenning, *Encyclopädie der Freimaurerei* (Leipzig, 1822) 2: 448-49.

¹³ Le Bihan 239, 285-86; Alice Joly, "La 'Sainte Parole' des Illuminés d'Avignon," *Les Cahiers de la Tour Saint-Jacques* 2-4 (1960): 103; Antoine Faivre, "Un familier des sociétés esotériques: Bourée de Corberon," *Revue des sciences humaines*, n.s. (January-March 1967): 260.

¹⁴ James Hyde, "Benedict Chastanier and the Illuminati of Avignon," *New-Church Review* 14 (1907): 181-205.

¹⁵ See my "Yeats"; also, "Blake's 'Mr. Femality': Freemasonry, Espionage, and the Double-Sex'd," *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 122 (1992).

¹⁶ J. E. S. Tuckett, "Savalette de Langes, Les Philalèthes, and the Convent of Wilhelmshausen, 1782," *AQC* (1917): 131-71; series of articles in *Le Monde Maçonique*, 14-15 (1873-74).

¹⁷ Elkan Adler, *Jewish Travellers* (London, 1930) 357-59.

¹⁸ Charles Henri, Baron von Gleichen, *Souvenirs* (London: Leon Techener, 1868) 176. Gleichen was a *Philalèthe*.

¹⁹ Wonnacott 71-76. In 1764-72, Lintot claimed affiliation with French Grand Masters (Prince of Clermont and Duke of Chartres) under the international Grand Mastership of Prince Charles Edward Stuart. In 1774 he transferred the Rite's allegiance to Henry Frederick, Duke of Cumberland, disaffected brother of George III.

²⁰ Hubert La Marle, *Phillipe Égalité: Grand Maître de la Révolution* (Paris: Nouvelles Editions Latines, 1989); Stephen Lloyd, "Richard Cosway, RA: the Artist as Collector, Connoisseur, and Virtuoso," *Apollo* (June 1991): 399-400; William Blake, *The French Revolution* (1791) 10.

²¹ They lived at #62 and #64, respectively; see Algernon Graves, *The Society of Artists of Great Britain* (London, 1907; facs. rpt. Bath: Kingsmead, 1969) 142-43.

²² Gordon Hills, "Notes on the Rainsford Papers in the British Museum," *AQC* 26 (1913): 93-129. Lindner reproduced some of the engravings held by a lodge in Bamberg, Germany, and Freemasons' Hall, London; the latter possesses additional engravings and manuscripts by Lambert.



²³ See the sources on Wadström and the Nordensjökölds in Paley, 84-85n98; also, Hills 111.

²⁴ Gösta Bodman, "August Norden-skiöld, en Gustav III's alkemist," and Hans J. Schoeps, "Lakaren och Alkemisten Gumpertz Levison," in *Lychnos* (1943): 189-229, 230-48; A. E. Arppe, *Anteckningar om Finsk Alkemister* (Helsingfors: Finska Vetenskaps Societen, 1870) 1-110.

²⁵ Copy of the printed fragment in Royal Library, Stockholm.

²⁶ In the second London edition (1780), Duché included Mrs. Levison among subscribers omitted from the first edition. That she was the wife of Dr. Levison, the Jewish Swedenborgian, is suggested by the additional Jewish subscribers, Dr. de la Cour and Naphtali Hart Mier (sic), who were Freemasons and friends of Dr. Falk.

²⁷ Clarke Garrett, "The Spiritual Odyssey of Jacob Duché," *Proceedings of American Philosophical Society* 119 (1975): 143-55; and, "Swedenborg and the Mystical Enlightenment in Late Eighteenth-Century England," *Journal of History of Ideas* 45 (1984): 67-81.

²⁸ Micheline Meillassoux, *Dom Pernety (1716-1796) et les Illuminés d'Avignon* (Milan and Paris: Editions Arché, 1992).

²⁹ Hills 105; see Schuchard, "Yeats."

³⁰ John Denis, *Denis' Catalogue of Ancient and Modern Books for 1787* (London, 1787); James Lackington, *Memoirs*, 7th rev. ed. (London: Lackington, 1794) 207-10.

³¹ I found the brochure enclosed in a previously uncut volume of Swedenborg's *De la Nouvelle Jérusalem et de sa Doctrine Céleste* (Londres, 1782), which was edited by Chastanier; in archives of Swedenborg Society, London.

³² *Uppfostrings Salskapets Almannatidning* 27 (Stockholm, 1787): 212.

³³ The famous Freemasons' Hall and Tavern were located on Great Queen Street, where Blake spent his apprentice years.

³⁴ For Hindmarsh's inaccurate claim, see Charles Higham, "A London New-Church Advertisement in December 1783," *Morning Light* 36 (1913): 516-17.

³⁵ Count Grabianka recruited Robert Hindmarsh as a fellow Mason in 1786, and his brother John Hindmarsh (an artist) was listed as a Mason in 1783. See Hindmarsh 19, 41-49; and "Index to Antients Register: London Lodges," vol. 41; Grand Lodge Library, London.

³⁶ Photocopies of correspondence by the Nordensjökölds, Wadström, Thomé, and fellow *Illuminés* are preserved in the Academy Collection of Swedenborg Documents (ACSD) at the Academy of the New Church, Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania. I am grateful to David Glenn for giving me access to the archives. See also C. F. Nordensjököld, *Considérations générales sur le Christianisme actuel, et la Lumière que Mr. Emanuel Swedenborg répand sur les Religions* (posthume, 1819); this autobiography was banned and confiscated in Sweden, but a copy was smuggled to London, where Dr. Garth Wilkinson preserved it. There is a microfilm copy (#78) in the archives of the Swedenborg Society, London.

³⁷ ACSD #1664.3101—"List of Those Devoted to Swedenborg's Doctrines," compiled by C. F. Nordensjököld in 1784. Hindmarsh omitted the names of Cosway, Lord Percy (later Duke of Northumberland), William Bousie (friend of Cagliostro and co-founder of Berlin *Illuminés*), and many others. Nordensjököld lists 25 names, plus "etc., etc."

³⁸ Hindmarsh 24.

³⁹ C. F. Nordensjököld to C. B. Wadström, 31 January-13 February 1784; translation in ACSD #1664.31.

⁴⁰ Charles Higham, "James Glen: the New Church Pioneer and Hermit," *The New-Church Review* 19 (1912): 532-72. Glen's Swedenborgian belief in the importance of nudity throws an amusing perspective on the alleged nudity of William and Catherine Blake.

⁴¹ Albert Mason, "Planting the New Church in Massachusetts," *New Jerusalem Magazine* 47 (1884): 129-32.

⁴² ACSD #1664.37.

⁴³ British Library: Add. Mss. 23, 669.f.92.

⁴⁴ Though little is presently known about the Bousie brothers, they played central roles in the development of illuminist Masonry. William was friendly with Cagliostro in London in 1776, helped found the Berlin *Illuminés* in 1778, worked with the Universal and Theosophic societies in 1783-87, and served as liaison between the Swedenborgians in London,

Paris, and Avignon in 1787-90. A full biography is a scholarly *desideratum*.

⁴⁵ The proceedings are reproduced in *Le Monde Maçonlique*, 14-15 (1873-74) *passim*.

⁴⁶ *Monde Maçonlique* 15 (1874): 165-66.

⁴⁷ Charles Higham, "Pierre Frederic Gosse," *New-Church Magazine* (October 1916) 442-44.

⁴⁸ British Library, Add. Mss. 23, 669.f.99.

⁴⁹ Robert Sundelin, *Svedenborgianismens Historia i Sverige* (Upsala: W. Schultz, 1886) 216.

⁵⁰ See my "Mr. Femality"; Clarke Garrett, *Respectable Folly* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1975) 100-20.

⁵¹ See my "Yeats"; Arppe 99.

⁵² Chastanier 25.

⁵³ Grabianka's correspondence in 1788-89 makes clear his continuing Masonic ties with the London Swedenborgians; in "Grabianka Staroste et Les Illuminés d'Avignon, Lettres de Grabianka 1788, 1789," transcripts in Kloss Collection, Grand Lodge Library, The Hague. Though Hindmarsh does not mention it (see 46-47), he was the printer of Grabianka's *Letter from a Society in France, to the Society for Promoting the Heavenly Doctrines of the New Jerusalem, in London* (London, 1787).

⁵⁴ "Minutes and Papers of the *Pro Fide et Charitate* Society in Stockholm," p. 439. Trans. and ed. Alfred Stroh. Typescript (1912) in ACSD.

⁵⁵ Quoted by Achatius Kahl in Johan Tybeck, *Le Nouveau Salem* (Bale: J. Schweighauser, 1871) 147. At this time, the *Philaléthes* were competing with the Grand Orient.

⁵⁶ [Benedict Chastanier], *Journal Novi-Jerusalemite* (1787): 149, 165-66, 171; (1788): 105-06.

⁵⁷ Peter Lineham, *The English Swedenborgians, 1770-1840: a Study in the Social Dimensions of Religious Sectarians* (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Sussex, 1978) 216-20.

⁵⁸ The Duché family remained loyal to Grabianka and the Universal Society; they did not participate at Eastcheap but continued to be involved with the Lambeth Asylum. Thomas Spence Duché corresponded with Rainsford about alchemy and Illuminism until his death in 1790. See Garrett "Spiritual" 153-54, and Rainsford Papers: British Library Add. Mss. 26, 669.f.129-30.

⁵⁹ *Minutes of the Great Eastcheap Conference*. "Minute Book . . . 7 May 1787 to 7 November 1791. Copy in Conference Library, Swedenborg Society, London.

⁶⁰ *Journal Novi-Jerusalemite* (1788): 159.

⁶¹ *Journal Novi-Jerusalemite* (1788): 189-90.

⁶² "Epistolary Correspondence of the Earlier Members of the Church," *Monthly Observer* 1 (1857): 311, 418; 2 (1858): 279-81.

⁶³ For examples, see Swedenborg's *Journal of Dreams*, #87-88, 113, 157, 170-73;

Spiritual Diary, #3208, 3353, 4145, 6055, 6067, 6096, 6110; *Conjugal Love*, #51-55, 110, 310, 258.

⁶⁴ [Augustus Nordensjököld], *Plan for a Free Community upon the Coast of Africa, under the Protection of Great Britain; but Intirely Independent of all European Laws and Government* (London: Robert Hindmarsh, 1789) 35.

⁶⁵ Paley 71-72.

⁶⁶ The only known copy is preserved among the Nordensjököld papers in the University Library, Helsinki, Finland. That this copy survived the destruction carried out by the sectarians raises the hope that the lost list of 500 readers invited to the Eastcheap Conference might also survive.

⁶⁷ Lindner 136.

⁶⁸ The Universalists published *The New Jerusalem Magazine* in 1790-91, which carried on the illuminist agenda; the Separatists, led by the increasingly conservative Hindmarsh, published the rival *New Jerusalem Journal* in 1792. Rainsford's letters make clear that he continued to promote a secret Masonic lodge that drew together Swedenborgians and students of the occult, until at least 1798. The subsequent history, from 1790 to 1826, will be given in my *The Men of Desire: William Blake and Illuminist Freemasonry* (forthcoming).

Appendix

An ADDRESS to the True MEMBERS of the NEW JERUSALEM CHURCH, revealed by the LORD in the Writings of EMANUEL SWEDENBORG, who sincerely wish to separate themselves both internally and externally from the Old Church:

THE LORD having, by Means of the new Revelation and Opening of his Word, communicated to us the *Spiritual Philosopher's Stone*, which will infallibly operate in the moral World, and by Degrees change and restore it to its primitive Order and Perfection, it is my Intention therefore to shew, by the Observations annexed to this Address, that the Discovery of the *material* or *natural Philosopher's Stone* must of Course take Place, which in like Manner will operate in the natural or material World, by progressively changing and restoring all material Substances to their primitive State of Purity and Splendor.

It is by Means of the Writings of EMANUEL SWEDENBORG that the Foundation is laid for the Destruction of moral Evil; for had not Providence now sent to us these Writings, Adultery and Anti-conjugal Life, the very Fundamental of Hell, among Christians even apparently the most moral, would have soon been regarded as no Sin at all, or as a Matter perfectly unconnected with Religion; and hence Marriages would ultimately become intirely adulterous, and a general Corruption of Manners would have prevailed throughout all Societies.

But for the Destruction of natural Evil, which is the Tyranny of Money, the Foundation cannot be laid, before Alchymy becomes a general Art, and the *Philosopher's Stone* is universally known.

The Difference between the *Spiritual* and *natural Philosopher's Stone*, is nothing else than this; namely that the former is the Opening of the literal Sense of the Word of God, to disclose it's Spiritual Contents, and the latter is the Opening of Gold and Diamond to the Manifestation of *Urim* and *Thummim*. The Reason of this Correspon-

dence is, that the Holy Word is as Gold, Silver, and Diamond, the interior Quality of which has been hitherto unknown, nay, it has been intirely denied.

It is evident that the Abuse of the literal Sense of the Word has been producing and confirming all moral Evil. This detestable and abominable Abuse of these two Things, the one in the *moral World*, and the other in the *natural*, cannot be removed, without their being unfolded, so that their interior Purity and Perfection may be generally known. It then necessarily follows, that the Word cannot be made Use of, as a Monopoly among the Clergy, and moreover Gold, Silver, and their Representations, as a Monopoly among the Wealthy and commercial World.

The *Spiritual Stone*, it is already acknowledged, is to be found in the Word of God, by Means of the Writings of EMANUEL SWEDENBORG, as Man may thereby be regenerated and purified: But the *natural Stone* has not yet been discovered and known. However I hope, with the Assistance of the LORD, that this in a short Time

will also be done, when the Regeneration of all Mankind will commence as well in the Spiritual as in the Natural.

It is easy to see the Importance and Necessity of this Discovery in the New Church, when we consider that by Means of the Unfolding of the literal Sense of the Word, or the *Spiritual Stone*, the LORD has now restored Spiritual Liberty, and destroyed the Monopoly of the literal Sense of the Word among the Clergy, together with their Sulisidian System; but the Correspondence hereof, namely the Restoration of natural Liberty in the Destruction of the Monopoly of Gold, Silver, &c. in the commercial World, and by Consequence their *Money alone*, (which constitutes an abominable Tyranny over Mankind) cannot possibly be effected but by Means of the *natural Stone*, nor can the new Power and Strength, which is now descending from the New Heaven, become operative, before the Correspondence of the interior and exterior of the Substantial and the Natural is completed even in the Ultimates. Therefore, that a plain Idea may be given to every Lover of the New Revelation of the LORD, the following Articles are offered for serious Consideration.

I. That there are two Worlds, the Spiritual or Substantial, and the Natural or Material.

II. That in each World there is a distinct Sun, in the Spiritual World a Spiritual Sun, and in the Natural World a Material Sun.

III. That the Emanation proceeding from the Spiritual Sun is Spiritual Heat and Light, or what is the same, Love and Wisdom.

IV. That the Receptacles of the Heat and Light of the Spiritual Sun are all the Subjects of the Vegetable and the Animal Kingdom, the most perfect of which is Man, who is the true organick Form in all it's Power and Effect.

V. That the Emanation proceeding from the Material Sun is the Material Heat and Light.

VI. That the Receptacles of the Heat and Light of the Material Sun, are all the Subjects of the Mineral Kingdom, such as Airs; Waters; and Earths, the most perfect of which is Gold, which is the principal [un]organick Form in all it's Power and Effect.

VII. Hence it follows, that here on Earth, these two Worlds may be manifestly seen in their Ultimates, viz., the *Spiritual World*, in what is called Organick Nature, including Vegetables, Animals, and man, all which Subjects receive Influx from the Spiritual Sun; the *Material World* in what

is called Unorganick Nature, including Airs, Waters, and Earths, which Subjects receive Influx from the Material Sun.

VIII. That all the material Substances which envelope Vegetables, Animals, and Man, are only borrowed from the material Kingdom, and must be restored again. This is clearly seen, when we consider the first Rudiments of Seeds, and afterwards the successive Food and Increases they receive to their Forms, and lastly their Decay and Death, when their material Forms and Clothes return to the Air, Water, and Earth, which composed them, and from which they were derived, as from a common Store-House of Matter.

IX. Consequently that the material Substances in Organick Nature are not new Matters, in any Respect different from the material Substances which compose Unorganick Nature; which every Natural Philosopher can prove, by decomposing them and reducing them to their first Elements, namely, Air, Water, and Earth, from whence they were derived.

X. And therefore, that the Subject of the physical *Philosopher's Stone* is no wise to be taken from Organick Nature.

XI. That as the Progression of Matters in Unorganick Nature, or in the Material Kingdom, is *first*, all Kinds of Air; *second*, all Kinds of Water; *third*, all Kinds of Salt; *fourth*, all Kinds of Phlogiston; *fifth*, all Kinds of Stones; *sixth* and last, all Kinds of Metals, of which Gold is the highest and most perfect: And inasmuch as all these Kinds of Matters are but Receptacles of the Heat and Light of the Sun in different Forms; and as Gold is the most powerful and complete Receptacle of that Heat and Light; hence it follows, that the physical *Philosopher's Stone* must be a Receptacle of the Sun's Heat and Light, infinitely more powerful and perfect than Gold itself; consequently that the *Philosopher's Stone* can only be made of Gold alone.

XII. That every Angel, by his Wisdom and his Love, is a spiritual and a moral *Philosopher's Stone*, but to attempt to form an Angel out of any other Being but Man, or out of any of the inferior Animals, would be as ridiculous as to attempt to make the physical *Philosopher's Stone* out of any other Matter but Gold itself.

XIII. That the LORD HIMSELF, and consequently His Word, is the true Spiritual and Moral *Philosopher's Stone*; but inasmuch as the fundamental Error in Theology has been the setting up a Trinity of Persons, instead of a Trinity in One Person, so in like Manner the fundamental Error in Alchymy consisted in adopting a Trinity of

Matters, instead of a Trinity or Three-fold principle in the Matter; consequently that it is necessary to take Gold alone to make the physical *Philosopher's Stone*.

XIV. That in all Things, even in the smallest and most simple Substance, there is a Two-fold and a Three-fold Principle; consequently also in Gold itself, the same Two-fold and Three-fold Principles exist; and that those Principles cannot be formed by Composition and Mixture of different Substances.

XV. In short, the whole Universe is composed of two grand Series, or Chains of Links, which is manifested in the general Kingdoms of Organick and Unorganick Nature.

XVI. That the Beginning in the first Series is God in the Spiritual Sun, and in the second Series, the visible material Sun.

XVII. That the last Link in the first Series is Man, and the last Link in the second Series is Gold.

XVIII. Consequently, that there are four cardinal Points, if we may be allowed the Expression, in the whole Universe, namely, God, Man, the Sun, and Gold.

XIX. That to perfect Man, is to render him more and more receptive of God, or of his Heat and Light, that is, or his Love and Wisdom.

XX. That to perfect Gold is to render it more and more receptive of the Sun, or of it's Light and Heat.

XXI. That there are no Bounds in this Perfection; for Men as well as Gold can be rendered more and more receptive of the Heat and Light of their respective Suns, and thus be perfected *ad infinitum*.

XXII. That as God, by means of the Natural Sun as an Instrument, has created all Nature or the Material Kingdom, and also continues to support it thereby; so in like Manner must Man, by Means of Gold as an Instrument, regenerate all Nature, or the whole material Kingdom, and afterwards constantly support it in a regenerate State: For as Creation is the Work of the LORD only, so is the restoring it back to Order or it's Regeneration the Work of Man alone, and that so essentially, that if he doth not study this Doctrine of Regeneration, both he and all Nature must needs remain imperfect to all Eternity, and his Habitation the Earth must also remain in Misery and Wretchedness, which State, however, Man has it in his Power to change into Glory.

XXIII. That in this and in no other Manner, Man can actually become Master of all Nature, for which he was created; he can

restore the Earth, with all it's Materials, and bring it back to Glory, and render the Day of his Tabernacling in the Body a continual State of Bliss, correspondent with the spiritual State of Happiness, which was prepared in him before; consequently that this is only possible with the Man or Members of the New Church of the LORD.

XXIV. That the only genuine Science of Alchemy consists in the three following Branches; namely, 1st, the Theory concerning the Matter; 2d, the Theory of the Furnace; and 3d, that of the Regulation of the Fire. The first Theory shews that Gold is the only Subject Matter of the Work; the second shews that this Work requires a Furnace that can stand the Fire for the Space of a Year at least, and admits of being regulated with Ease and Facility; and the third Theory shews by what a Regulation of Fire Gold may be so opened in the Furnace, as to discover it's two-fold and it's three-fold Principles, and how to put them into Action, in Order to accomplish it's Perfection.

XXV. That the characteristic Difference between the true and the false Alchemist may be seen at once from the Theory of Matter, for, as the first works on no other Subject except Gold *per se*, so the other works on all Sorts of Materials, and is always employed with Compositions and Mixtures; as is the Case with Theology, for true Divinity admits of no other God save JESUS CHRIST alone, whereas the false, on the other Hand, does not accept of the LORD, or when it does, it takes him always in Conjunction with other Powers.

XXVI. The Alchemist who will not see, when it is laid open for him, that Gold only is the Subject Matter of the *Philosopher's Stone*, shews thereby he has little Knowledge in natural History, little in natural Philosophy, little in Chemistry, and none at all in the Science of Correspondences; for from these four Sciences it may be confirmed that Gold *per se* is the only Subject Matter of the *Philosopher's Stone*.

XXVII. That true Alchemy to this Day has been an intirely sealed Science, and an absolutely impenetrable Mystery, is from no other Reason but because they have not been able to see and perceive that Gold *per se* is the only Subject for the *Philosopher's Stone*, and that by Means of this only can Gold be made, or Transmutation rendered possible.

XXVIII. That every other Way or Method that can be imagined, in any Manner whatever throughout all Nature, to make Gold and the universal Medicine, besides

that of exalting and rendering perfect common Gold *per se* for the *Philosopher's Stone* merely by Fire, and after that by Means of the same to operate very wonderful Transmutations, is not only contrary to every Experience, but in the highest Degree irrational and absurd, when examined into with a sound Judgment.

XXIX. However, after being finally convinced that Gold is the only Subject Matter for the making the Stone of the Ancients, our Knowledge would yet be very incomplete in Alchemy, if we had not the Knowledge of the *Construction of the Furnace*, and the *Regulation of Fire*, two Things not to be attained without great and long Experience, although this in itself is very simple when known.

XXX. That in these two chief Points, *viz.* the Furnace, and particularly the Regulation of the Fire, I have laboured these 20 Years, and endeavoured to render myself Master of them; but that I did not till very lately attain to so much Knowledge and Experience as I now have; so that I can at present look on myself as almost Master of these two essential Points.

XXXI. That Alchymical Furnace or Athanor, which I was so happy as to discover 12 Years ago, and which has since been much improved, for Simplicity, Commodiousness, and the Ease of it's Regulation, is not only the best Alchymical Furnace, but also a real Regulator for Chemists, and all such as use lasting Fires in their Works.

XXXII. That the Regulation of the Fire consists in the Theory of the four Elements of Alchemists, the Weights, the Inclusion of the Matter, or the Hermetic Seal, the two Parts of the Work; namely, the Preparatory and the Afterwork, &c. all which together are nothing else but the Gradation of Fire. The Regulation of the Fire is the most difficult and mysterious Work in the whole Art of Alchemy, and can only be obtained by long Experience.

XXXIII. That in a continual and well-regulated Fire, Gold goes through a regular Circle of Colours, passing from it's own Redness to that of Blood; such a regular Circle of Colours, always consisting of three Colours, *viz.* the Black, the White, and the Red, between which all the other intermediate Colours arise during the Process. Three such regular Circulations at least must Gold undergo, before it can become the true *Philosopher's Stone*, or transmuting Fire. The Gold undergoes only *per se* the first of these Circulations, but all the succeeding Circulations must always be done with the Addition either of

Gold already exalted, or of fresh and raw Gold. The first Revolution takes 9 or 12 Months, the second 2 or 3 Months, and the third is performed in 1 Month or even less. These Revolutions can be so reiterated *ad infinitum*, that the Gold at last will pass through all it's Colours in one hour, or even in a shorter Space of Time, and on the most gentle Fire.

XXXIV. That this Process has in all Respects the most perfect Analogy with the Process of the Regeneration of Man; the fore Part of the Work answering to his Reformation and the Progress of the same, and the after or second Part to the State of Regeneration. The Black Period answers to Repentance, or the Rejection of Evils and Falses, the White to the Implantation of Truth, and the Red to the Implantation of Good; the four Elements answer to the celestial and spiritual, or to the internal and external Good and Truth. The Inclusion of the Matter answers to the Conjunction of Good and Truth, by means whereof Regeneration is veiled over, in the State of Temptations, and so forth.

XXXV. That this complete Science, which in the afore-mentioned Period of 20 Years has been confirmed in me by a most solid Theory, and a very extensive Experience, I now offer to all the Members of the *New Jerusalem Church*, who being fully convinced of it's Reality, find themselves disposed to put this Science into Execution.

XXXVI. This I will do without any Regard to pecuniary interest or Reward, as I would not make a private Advantage of the Things and Gifts of God; consequently whosoever is desirous to receive my Information and Assistance, shall have it gratuitously whenever he gives me Notice, either by calling personally, or by a Letter directed as below. The whole Apparatus can be set up, and put into complete Order, within the Space of three Weeks or a Month.

XXXVII. If one single person (which I should prefer) cannot undertake this highly important Work, I should then advise that several would associate and chuse one in whom they can place Confidence, when I would undertake to instruct him in all that is necessary to this Work.

XXXVIII. The most material Expence for this Course is in the Charcoal or Fuel, after that, in the Board of two or three Servants; and lastly, in the Erection of a proper Laboratory and Furnace. As to the Expence of the Matter itself which is to be used, though it be Gold, it will be very trifling, not exceeding 15 or 20 Grains.

XXXIX. The only Condition I have to impose on teaching the Mystery is, that the Produce shall be consecrated to the Use of the *New Jerusalem Church*, and not to any civil or political Purpose in any Society, where the New Revelation of the LORD is not received.

XL. I had three Ways opened to me to make Use of this Knowledge, acquired in Alchemy, as 1st, to set to work myself in the Process, and thus bring it out; 2d, by Means of an open Publication, to communicate the same to the whole World; or 3d, by Means of a circular Letter to impart the same to the Friends of the New Church only. As to the first, I have already tried it myself for these 20 Years, but not being independent, I was always interrupted in the Pursuit. As to the second Way, I have often intended to do it, but found that, for many Reasons, this Way should not be pursued. The third Way, therefore, appears to me the most useful, and more suited for this present Time.

XLI. At length I must declare, that I have not this Knowledge of myself, but from another, who died in 1756 in Finland, and who had obtained this Science by a supernatural Way. The same had even Revelations concerning the Last Judgment, that was to take Place in 1757, and concerning the New Church of the LORD that was to be established afterwards.

XLII. The latest Author in true Alchemy, EIRENEUS PHILALETHA, an Englishman, lived 100 Years ago in America, and was an anonymous Writer. Since which Time, in the whole learned World there has not been one proper Work published in this Science; and before his Time no other Writings deserve to be read, but what he himself has recommended in his Preface to his *Ripley Revived*, and his *Metamorphosis Metallorum*.

London, May 26, 1789.

AUGUST NORDENSKJÖLD

Member of the *New Jerusalem Church* in London,
and one of his Majesty's Superintendents of the
Mines in Sweden

P.S. It is particularly requested, that the Contents of this Letter be not made public; and that all Answers be directed for me at MR. ROBERT HINDMARSH'S, Printer to his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, No, 32, Clerkenwell-Close, London.

MINUTE PARTICULAR

Blake and the *Edinburgh Evening Post*

David Groves

The *Edinburgh Evening Post* was a weekly 8-page newspaper, with a two-page section entitled "Scottish Literary Gazette." The *Post* is mainly remembered today because Thomas De Quincey was one of its regular contributors during the late 1820s.¹ With "more original discussion than any [other] newspaper in Scotland, the *Post* apparently "acquired considerable reputation as a journal of talent."²

When Dr. John Abercrombie's book, *Inquiries Concerning the Intellectual Powers and the Investigation of Truth*, was published in Edinburgh in 1831, it received a short review in the Scottish Literary Gazette section of the *Post*. Abercrombie's speculations about ghosts and visions inspired the reviewer to include a brief comparison with William Blake. Although the remarks are not very enlightening, they at least attest to the spread of Blake's reputation in Scotland. The reviewer's allusion to Blake follows his discussion of the "visual phantasm[s]" suffered by Dr. Abercrombie's patients:

In Allan Cunningham's lives of the Painters, our author might have found another curious instance of the same thing, in Blake, the eminent artist, who had such visitors, and the appearance of them was so vivid and steady, that that writer [*i.e.*, Cunningham] tells us, that he [*i.e.*, Blake] actually painted them; and that so docile were his spiritual *sitters*, that they appeared at the wish of his friend [*i.e.*, Blake].

Sometimes, however, (he adds) the "shape which he desired to draw, was long in appearing, and he sat with his pencil and paper ready, and his eyes idly roaming in vacancy, till all at once the *vision* was upon him, and he began to work like one possessed."³

Whoever the author of these remarks may have been, his attitude towards visions was very different from Blake's. The review ends with a recommendation that readers "receive . . . the solid instruction, that those spectral appearances, which terrified our forefathers, are now ascertained to be the results of certain states of body and health, of those to whom they appear." No further mentions of Blake appear in surviving issues of the *Edinburgh Post*.

¹ See Stuart M. Tave, *New Essays by De Quincey; His Contributions to the Edinburgh Saturday Post and Edinburgh Evening Post 1827-1828* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1966).

² Anon., "The Edinburgh and Glasgow Newspaper Press," *Metropolitan Magazine* 7 (1833): 98.

³ Anon., "Abercrombie's Inquiries," *Edinburgh Evening Post, and Scottish Literary Gazette* 7 May 1831 (150-51). The reviewer quotes from Allan Cunningham's *Lives of the Most Eminent British Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*, 6 vols. (London: Murray, 1829-33) 2: 167.

REVIEWS

Vincent Arthur De Luca.
*Words of Eternity: Blake
 and the Poetics of the Sub-
 lime.* Princeton: Princeton
 University Press, 1991.
 254 pp., \$32.50.

Reviewed by Stephen Cox

"The sublime" is one of the least promising objects of contemporary study. As a cultural and intellectual fashion of the eighteenth century, it deserves a work of history analyzing its origin and fate; and that work has been written, repeatedly. As a set of artistic devices designed to create certain effects on its audience, it also deserves study; but so apparently unchallenging are those devices that when one begins to analyze their use in literature of any importance, interest easily drifts from them to the cultural attitudes they expressed and helped to shape, and attention leaves the sublime as such. One's impulse is to study the pearl and discard the oyster, especially if twenty treatises on oysters can already be found in the college library.

But if there were a book that actually attended both to the pearl and to the oyster, while posing provocative questions about the oceans in which such objects lurk, that book would be worth reading. Vincent De Luca has written this kind of subject-redeeming book about Blake's poetic uses of the sublime and about the peculiar seas of thought to which the Blakean sublime is adapted. One doesn't have to agree with everything De Luca says—and I don't—in order to recognize that his book addresses some of the most important matters with which Blake studies can be concerned.

But why should anyone make an issue of Blake's connection with the sublime? It's a question that's bound to come up, and De Luca faces it immediately. The fact that Blake used the word "sublime" a good number of times doesn't mean that he shared his contemporaries' respect for the theory and practice of the sublime effect. Blake disliked the worship of nature that his contemporaries routinely associated with sublimity, he disliked Edmund Burke's treatise on the sublime and beautiful,¹ he never explicitly elaborated any theory of his own about the subject, and he used the phrase "sublime poetry" only once. But as De Luca argues, the passage in which Blake did so is well worth examining as a possible indication of the kind of sublimity that he could work with. Here Blake says that "Allegory addressd to the Intellectual powers while it is altogether hidden from the Corporeal Understanding" is his "Definition of the Most Sublime Poetry."²

To De Luca, this suggests that Blake understood and could use the process or structure of the sublime that was fundamental to his contemporaries' enjoyments. Blake saw the sublime as a hiding and a revealing, a blocking of one kind of mental activity so that another can be released. Brought into the presence of a sublime object—an ocean, a tempest, a landscape of ruins bordering an abyss of time—the ordinary or "Corporeal" understanding is daunted, but a greater power, susceptible of deeper wonderment, is awakened. Blake's contemporaries usually thought of that power as a function of "sensitivity." To Blake, it is an "Intellectual" power. In either case, however, sublimity involves a progress from frustration to liberation, "deprivation" to "plenitude" (26).

That's De Luca's hypothesis, and it's not something that he deduces merely from the passage just quoted; he treats that passage as a convenient summary of concepts implicit throughout Blake's major works, instinct as they are with opportunities both for the

frustration of commonplace means of knowing and for the liberation of "intellectual" means. But De Luca distinguishes between two different modes of the sublime as it was practiced by Blake.

De Luca calls the first mode the "bardic." It is Blake's more commonplace means of transcending the commonplace. When Blake writes in this mode, he offers the imagery of wonder and alienation that English antiquarians and Scotch reviewers had approved for the use of aspiring modern bards: "fallen kings turning to stone, Thor-like heroes at the forge contending with batlike apparitions, continents rolling apart, dire Druidical circles and human sacrifice" (134). Bardic sublimity appears in poetry's content, in what poetry signifies (101).

The second mode of the sublime appears in poetry's form, in how poetry signifies—or refuses to signify. This is a sublimity at home with the faintly representational or the non-representational, a sublimity of the naked signifier. De Luca calls it the "iconic" sublime. This kind of sublimity can be seen in the ranks of close-set words that confront us on many plates of Blake's prophecies, words not easy to pry apart, words with meanings not easy to pry apart from them. The "iconic" sublime can also be seen in the prophecies' many "highly organized codes, not obviously meaningful in themselves": arrays of zoas, city gates, eyes of God, ages of humanity, cathedral cities, sons and daughters of Albion, all resembling "the signifiers of an unfamiliar language" (201). Blake's "iconic" mode confronts our Corporeal Understanding with a text that is "a kind of wall, against which it presses itself, groping along, trying in vain to peer through chinks in the hard, opaque surface" (32).

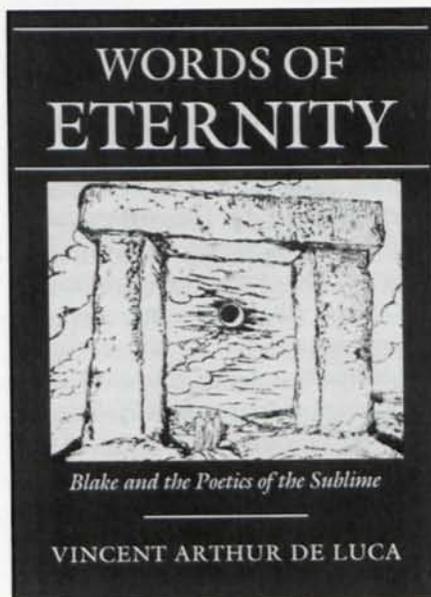
We have all groped along such Blakean walls, clinging to their surfaces like lizards ignorantly traversing words inscribed on fallen monuments. De Luca describes some of the difficulties of Blake's text as "rhetorical

equivalent[s]" of the menacingly sublime topographies with which other eighteenth-century authors plotted to daunt and inspire their audience (59). The difference is that Blake is not leading his readers into the verbal wilderness in order to surprise them, at last, with a sense of the mind's oneness with the sublime powers of time or nature. He intends to surprise them, instead, with a conviction of the mind's own powers, including and especially its sublime power of signification, the definitively human and "Intellectual" power. Blake's iconic mode presents the mind with a world in which humanly invented signifiers try to free themselves from every natural thing and exist for themselves in autonomous splendor.

As De Luca puts it, the signs in Blake's poetry "share some of the arbitrary patternings found in linguistic signifiers without participating in the attachment of such signifiers to known signifieds" (205). Thus the aroma of eighteenth-century theory fades, overwhelmed by that of postmodern theory. We are used to the Blake who eerily anticipated the best thoughts of Freud, Marx, and Jung. Does De Luca mean that Blake anticipated postmodern speculations about signs that point only to signs, about "writing" that refers, in an infinite regress, only to some more abstract "writing"?

De Luca's vocabulary indicates that the spectre of a postmodern Blake is present to his mind, and not entirely unwelcome. But De Luca is too conscientious a thinker to mistake resemblance, real or imagined, for identity. He finds in Blake no wry postmodern scepticism about our ability to know reality. He finds, instead, an emphasis on the deep and perhaps the ancient truth of things. De Luca evokes not just the theory but the look and feel of Blake's poetry, a look and feel that are far from Derridean. In this poetry, he says,

a vision out of the Burkean sensibility, a world of metamorphosis, swathed in the mists of the North, of measureless times and spaces, indistinct forms, loss, and



obscurity surrounds and adjoins another vision—one that brings to mind sacred sculptures standing in the solar clarity of the ancient East, a vision determinate and singular, measured and finite, a miraculous (or astonishing) compression of all contingent forms into one intellectual identity—the living Word of Eternity. (102)

This description, like many others in De Luca's book, carries conviction because it reacquaints us with much that we already knew about Blake's bardic and iconic modes. And it reacquaints us with something we already knew about Blake's relationship to the postmodern: the purpose of Blake's iconic sublime, the sublime of free-standing verbal "sculptures," is not mere postmodern play.

But if that's what it's *not*, what *is* it? De Luca maintains that Blake's "language . . . is an attempt to recreate a discourse that once flourished in our now dimly recollected time of origin, when reality and sign formed a single being" (204-05). Signification unchecked by anything external would, presumably, be totally free. Under these conditions, De Luca suggests, reality would be "entirely a matter of signs in free but harmonious interplay" (201). Take it one step further: if signs could be liberated from the external realities to which they are ordinarily thought to be attached, then the users of these signs might also be liberated

from externals and freed for pure self-enjoyment in their self-definitive exercise of signification. If this is Blake's final vision of the text, it broods not upon a Derridean "abyss of receding origins" but upon "the place of true beginnings, where . . . we are most ourselves." If Blake is leading us anywhere, it is to a "homecoming" to "what each one of us knows best and loved first, our own delight in our special inner being" (222).

De Luca has asked himself what Blake is doing with the sublime, and that question has led him to the question of what Blake is doing it *for*—the question of Blake's basic values. De Luca's answer is not what one might expect to hear these days. Blake's values, as De Luca represents them, are fully compatible with the individualist humanism that contemporary criticism so often denies or regrets in romantic art. De Luca's evident pleasure in Blake's cultivation of the self's delight in its special being implicitly challenges the currently fashionable unbelief in the value of the individual self and the existence of a final reality that any individual self could come home to. It is refreshing to encounter a work of criticism that does not devote itself to a predictable exposure of the supposedly social and contingent nature of truth and the banality of the modern and Western concern with individual selves.

Gently dissenting from post-Foucauldian orthodoxies, De Luca indicates that he prefers to believe that "the integrity of the self" is not "merely a construct of baleful power structures," and he admires Blake for "hoping otherwise," too (231). Hopes and beliefs aside, it is clear that De Luca's notion of a Blake concerned with "our own delight in our special inner being" can explain a lot more of Blake's text than could the rival idea of a Blake who viewed individualist values as figments of false consciousness, mystifications of a hegemonic social system. If *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* (to cite one instance) is not about a woman who rightly asserts

the integrity and significance of the self, as opposed to all structures of power inscribed by external forces, then what is the poem about?

Recent interpretations of Blake as a proto-Marxist labor under the burden of demonstrating that Blake's mission was not to indicate the means by which individuals can free themselves from social and historical determinations but to reveal the fact that individuals are inextricably involved in them. The ideological burden is not easily borne;³ De Luca does not try to bear it. He is well-informed about Blake's historical context; some of the most interesting parts of his book are delineations of the ways in which eighteenth-century cultural history influenced Blake's work. Blake did not, after all, invent the sublime; it was a fashion that he used and adapted. But in showing how Blake did that, De Luca wisely declines to take his study in a social-historicist direction. His emphasis is on the shaping power of Blake's demonstrable intentions, on what Blake wanted to do, and did do, with the cultural resources at his disposal. Here also De Luca seems to have chosen—quietly, gently, without trumpet calls—an unfashionable position, since there is nothing less common in current academic criticism than a continued emphasis on the integrity and significance of authorial intentions.

De Luca describes Blake's vision of the free self as a vision controlled by a free self, a self that can do what it wants with its own texts. De Luca talks frequently and without embarrassment of Blake's plans and purposes; he does not imagine that such highly individual things as Blake's texts could precipitate out of the eighteenth-century sublime without the constant intervention of Blake's conscious intentions. De Luca's intentionalism redresses the balance lost in studies of Blake (both recent and older) in which words and their possible meanings often acquire more importance than the authorial intentions that choose the words and try to define the meanings.

De Luca's book may, in fact, have gone a bit too far in the right direction. He believes that Blake intends to shock and frustrate his readers; that is how the sublime was supposed to operate, and Blake adopts that purpose as his own. De Luca has evidence for this. But he sometimes writes as if every shock administered by Blake's text is just what Blake intended. He sees even the apparent confusions and self-contradictions of the *Four Zoas* manuscript as evidence of Blake's virtually providential control of his material.

In De Luca's account, Blake's failure to smooth his drastic revisions of *The Four Zoas* into a coherent narrative was an attempt to mine the resources of sublimity concealed in layered and conflicting narratives. According to this analysis, Blake used his many-layered manuscript, so forbidding to the Corporeal Understanding, to convey a sublime sense of human origins lying buried beneath the ruins of successive ages. De Luca's study of the poem is one of the most engaging and compelling we have. But his reliance on authorial intentions would be more securely founded if he gave due weight to the distinction between intention and effect, if he considered more seriously than he does the possibility that what Blake achieved may often have been something other than what he most wanted to achieve.

One may doubt, for instance, that Blake "may well have been content with the look of the [*Four Zoas*] text precisely as he left it to posterity" (115). To people like me, the look of that text is more confused than sublime. It's hard for me to imagine that even the most intransigent antiorganicist could be *content* with that look. Nevertheless, De Luca performs a distinct service to healthy debate among Blakeans, not just by prompting reexamination of the various meanings that may be conveyed by the formal qualities of Blake's work, but also by emphasizing the possibility that Blake often cares more about developing or preserving the discon-

tinuous parts or layers of his poems than he does about ensuring their organic wholeness.

De Luca analyzes *Jerusalem* as a collection of episodes—sections somewhat resembling the pericopes into which books of the Bible can be divided—so that he can investigate what each might mean in isolation as well as in combination with other parts. Again, De Luca doesn't need to go as far as he goes; he doesn't need to claim that each pericope is "internally self-sufficient" (127). But his approach does allow him to illustrate the degree to which Blake's intentions for the parts of a poem can evade the discipline of his vaguer, or later, intentions for the whole.

Blake often focuses "on the piece of writing directly before him" (127). When he compiles the pieces, the result may be, in De Luca's apt analogy, a "sublime" text like the Ossianic cycle or "the Bible, as the Higher Criticism conceived it"—a text that "presume[s] the existence of a primordial core of mythic 'truth,' and then proceed[s] both to provoke a supercharged fascination with this core and to interfere with our access to it" (132). My objection to this idea—and Ossian is my witness—is that real difficulty of access need not render any work sublime. The intention may easily fail of its effect. Ossian fails of sublimity, or at least has failed for almost two centuries; Blake does not always achieve it, and he sometimes achieves it only in the eyes of analysts to whom devoted study has provided a privileged access to the core.

De Luca generally sees the most challenging aspects of Blake's text as the most significant. One of the challenging features of De Luca's own text is what he says about Blake's iconically sublime visions of a time when "reality and sign formed a single being" (205). As De Luca argues, Blake's prophecies are often so formidably full of signs that they have the look and feel of substances, substances hard enough to produce the familiar wall-like effect. De Luca ob-

serves that at the conclusion of *Jerusalem*, Albion speaks "Words of Eternity in Human Forms"; it is an explicit demonstration that language can become substantial reality (*Jerusalem* 95.9, E 255; De Luca 217). But peculiarly close relationships between language and reality exist throughout Blake's work; De Luca might have found them even in passages that do not pretend to sublimity.

Consider the statements about "contraries" in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. Sometimes the contraries appear as propositional representations of reality. After listing a series of angelic propositions, *The Marriage* announces: "But the following Contraries to these are True"; then it lists a contrary series of propositions, each one a "true" representation of the condition of life, "true" in respect to something else (*MHH* 4, E 34). But in other passages, contraries are more than ideas asserted in so many words. "Without Contraries is no progression. Attraction and Repulsion, Reason and Energy, Love and Hate, are necessary to Human existence" (*MHH* 3, E 34). These contraries aren't just propositions. They are "realities."⁴

Blake's habit of turning the insubstantial into the substantial created the ontological climate in which De Luca's iconic sublime could flourish. The habit solved certain problems for Blake. It made visions mediated by signs seem as formidable as physical objects; it obscured, or transcended, the distinction between vision understood as a "Representation of what Eternally Exists" and vision understood as the "Eternal World" itself (*A Vision of the Last Judgment*, E 554, 555). By attempting to "unite representation and substance in one concept" (in Dan Miller's phrase⁵), Blake made visionary declarations of truth appear impossible for scepticism to refute. One can refute a proposition by showing its lack of correspondence with substantial reality; one cannot refute reality itself.

But Blake's procedures created problems as well as solved them. If

there is such a thing as falsehood, and Blake certainly thought that there might be, one can get rid of it more easily if one regards the symbols that may embody it as representations or references than if one regards symbols as "a single being" with reality. A sign that makes a false reference to reality can be erased and forgotten; but if a sign entails a reality, any mention of falsehoods, even to refute them, may seem to give them substance. This is one reason why Blake wrestles so hard with Satan and the Spectre. Although he wants to be able to deny their ultimate existence, his symbolism renders them massively substantial. If the "text" is the closest we can come to reality, as various postmodernisms would have us believe, or if textuality can free itself from "known signifieds" and thus become a kind of autonomous reality, as De Luca would have it do, then the achieved reality may not be a pleasant one. Any falsehood in text or textuality will be "real," irrefutable.

The tendency of recent writers on Blake has been to preach Blakean substantialism as an ideal. Robert N. Essick, for instance, cheerfully concedes that Blake does use signs as references, but he describes the Fall as an event in which Urizen creates "the difference between sign and referent, signifier and signified." He applauds Los for seeing signs as "Things"; he regrets that the Spectre sees them as "abstraction[s] detached from substantial and individual being."⁶ De Luca works with roughly similar assumptions. He sympathetically summarizes Blake's ideas in this way:

[I]t would seem that the primal catastrophe of separation . . . involved the breakup of a unitary body of signs. Out of the wreck there came into being, on one hand, a universe of objects or referents, dumb in themselves, and on the other, a fragmented, ever-shifting, inadequately expressive array of ex post facto verbal systems that pass for the natural languages of man. (201-202)

De Luca characterizes "texts" as "belated and dependent, forever referring

back to a body of meaning that they partly reveal and partly obscure." The alternative to "texts" (in this sense of the word) is "textuality," which is "a priori and autonomous, not a vehicle of meaning but the sum of the conditions of ordering that make meaning possible"; and he calls "ordering operations" the "nonreferential ambassadors of ideal textuality" (135). De Luca's iconic sublime is largely an effect of signs that confront, like objects, instead of signifying like normal words (205). They create "the reification of a visionary textuality" (134). De Luca believes that to "reify the signifier" is to produce "the sublime experience" (90).

But if one tries to think of a signifier that is literally an absolute, non-referential reality, one may begin to wonder if this is not what Blake said an "atom" was: "A Thing that does not Exist."⁷ A signifier that really did not refer to anything beyond itself would not be a signifier at all; it would be a mere object, a mark on a piece of paper, something ontologically indistinguishable from a rock lying in the middle of a highway. When regarded from certain angles, it might have an aesthetic effect, even a powerful one; but it would not be a sign until it was taken by some visionary as a sign of something. The concept of non-referential signs would seem to be a contradiction in terms, like a two-legged quadruped, a four-sided triangle, or the sound of one hand clapping—a notion that may tease us out of normal ways of thinking, but only because it teases us into an ilimitable, because impossible, quest for its meaning.

Even in Blake, signs are notably resistant to attempts to turn them into self-subsistent entities. The conclusion of *Jerusalem*, which represents certain signs as if they were entities and certain entities as if they were signs, refers to living creatures "convers[ing] together in Visionary forms dramatic . . . creating exemplars of Memory and of Intellect / Creating Space, Creating Time . . ." (*J* 98.28-31, E 257-58). Dis-

course, form, signification are strongly identified with a reality that they help to create, but the entities created are still "exemplars" of, references to, something.

De Luca presents numerous examples of "schematic, largely nonreferential patternings of signs" (215) that may in fact be strongly referential. His argument depends, indeed, on the strong referentiality of Blakean signs. As he observes, the abstract and schematic elements of the last prophecies, their fours and sevens and twenty-fours, which have so little obvious reference to reality as we know it, suggest the existence of another kind of reality, "a world that once consisted solely of intellectually organized forms" (201). In other words, they are not self-subsistent entities but refer to something beyond themselves. They may be "highly organized codes, not obviously meaningful in themselves" (201), but that's the point: *no* code is meaningful in itself; it's *just* a code.

De Luca says that in Blake's iconic mode, "the text is foregrounded as text and *is* what it says, and is *seen* for what it is" (62). Precisely; and a text, as opposed to an object, such as a truly autonomous mark on a piece of paper, is something that refers, and not just to itself. What De Luca has in mind, of course, is the way in which Blake's text can seem to be *nothing but* a code, a code that seems to stand by itself because it has no obvious meaning and that therefore invites its audience to attach to it "omnipresent possibilities" of meaning (205). But still it is not simply a rock in the highway, if it leads us to think of codes rather than mere confusion, if it leads us to feel as if we were in the presence of an "unfamiliar language," or if it encourages us to think—in De Luca's excellent phrase—of "sacred sculptures standing in the solar clarity of the ancient East."

The conclusion that needs to be drawn, perhaps, is that Blake cannot be enjoyed solely on his own terms, if we assume that his terms entail a successful rebellion against referentiality. If we insist on his transcendence of the

mundane distinction between signs and realities, we may lose the sense of his inventive use of signs to signify particular kinds of reality beyond themselves. We may lose the sense of Blake's struggle to maintain an authority emanating from someplace beyond mere signs. We may even lose the sense of what De Luca rightly values, the freedom of the self to choose the signs appropriate to individual expressions of reality.

The startling thing about De Luca's treatment of Blake's "words of eternity" is his assumption that the pure, self-substantial signifier is an ideal, that the degree to which Blake may have been "tied to the referentiality of language" was unfortunate (61). This assumption makes it appear that the marvellous thing about Blake's cities of Golgonooza and Jerusalem is the fact that they consist of signifiers that possess a "freestanding autonomy, transcending mere descriptiveness" (89). De Luca justifies any referential quality still to be found in these cities of words by asserting that their ultimate reference is to an ideal "conclave of signifiers" from which "contingent signifieds are virtually squeezed out" (99).

De Luca does not need to argue the thesis that this rump session of signifiers represents an ideal; he can rely implicitly on the general disgust for referentiality expressed in current works of criticism, a disgust that need not be induced by argument but can simply be taken for granted. One wonders how such a strange and virtually unprecedented emotional phenomenon could ever have made itself so thoroughly at home in literary studies—which, after all, are concerned with the analysis of what people do with systems of reference. The phenomenon has been considered as an episode in the history of ideas, institutions, and social groups.⁸ It might also be examined in theological terms, as a manifestation of a peculiarly severe form of instinctive monism, a sense of outrage that the One, whatever it is—history, textu-

ality, or some other term—should ever be obstructed by such detached and secondary things as reference, paraphrasable meaning, and the possibility of contradiction, modification, or denial.

It remains surprising that so acute and independent an analyst as De Luca could swallow this particular postmodern camel, after declining so many others. The problem, perhaps, is his delicacy about subjecting to criticism Blake's own attempts to transcend referentiality. Accepting on its own terms Blake's visionary ambition, he acquiesces in the kind of postmodernist assumptions that seem most Blakean. Exception should be taken, then, not so much to De Luca as to the tendency that we all have to accept without argument the premises of the Master and the premises of at least some of the critical orthodoxies of our time. De Luca's book is stimulating, provocative, rich in ideas; it is a landmark in the study of its subject; it should be read.

¹ Blake, annotations to Joshua Reynolds, in *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, ed. David V. Erdman, newly rev. ed. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1982) 660. Future references to this edition cite it as "E," followed by page number.

² Blake, letter to Thomas Butts, 6 July 1803, E 730.

³ It is often, indeed, thrown down. Jerome J. McGann, for example, regrets that Blake the prophet of a socially contingent gospel is nevertheless prone to write in a Christian vein about the possibility of transcending historical circumstances, something which cannot, supposedly, be done (McGann, *Towards a Literature of Knowledge* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1989] 34, 2-5). This is somewhat like saying that Dickinson would be improved if she didn't write so much about death, or—to use Blake's sarcastic words—that "Homer is very much improv'd by Pope" ("Blake's Apology," E 505).

⁴ A provocative account of the reification of contraries is presented by Peter L. Thorslev, Jr., "Some Dangers of Dialectic Thinking, with Illustrations from Blake and His Critics," in *Romantic and Victorian: Studies in Memory of William H. Marshall*, ed. W. Paul Elledge and Richard L. Hoffman (Rutherford, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1971) 43-74.

⁵ Dan Miller, "Blake and the Deconstructive Interlude," in *Critical Paths: Blake and the Argument of Method*, ed. Donald Ault et al. (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1987) 156.

⁶ Robert N. Essick, *William Blake and the Language of Adam* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989) 97-103, 150, 195-96, 208-10.

⁷ Blake, letter to George Cumberland, 12 April 1827, E 783.

⁸ See, for example, Gerald Graff, *Literature Against Itself: Literary Ideas in Modern Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979); and Frederick Crews, *Skeptical Engagements* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

William Blake. *Songs of Innocence and of Experience: Shewing the Two Contrary States of the Human Soul*. Edited with an Introduction and Notes by Andrew Lincoln. Princeton: The William Blake Trust/Princeton University Press, 1991. 209 pp. \$59.50.

Reviewed by Irene Tayler

This is the second volume (after *Jerusalem*) of a projected collected edition of Blake's illuminated books, under the aegis of the Blake Trust and the general editorship of David Bindman. Both for itself and as part of this larger project, it is a welcome work.

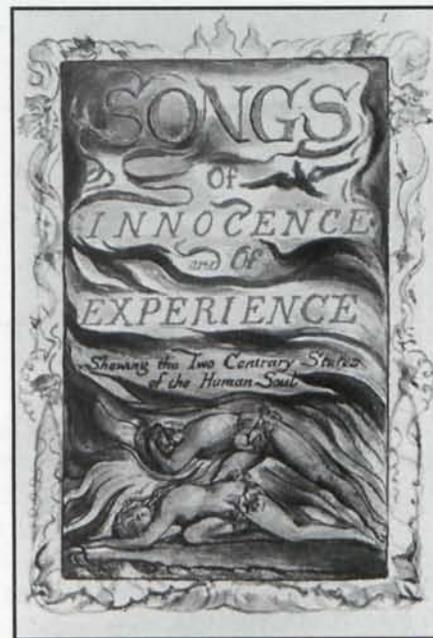
Part of the pleasure of this lovely volume results from Andrew Lincoln's intelligent introduction and commentary. The Introduction conveys a lot of technical and contextual information in readable English; and the fact that the footnotes are on the page (rather than being gathered at the back) is an advantage, especially in a volume that readers will wish to handle carefully and conserve for long life. And the commentaries at the back—which describe and discuss both the text and the plates—are helpful without pretending to be definitive.

But the greatest pleasure by far is the color reproduction itself. This volume reproduces the King's College, Cambridge, copy, which has been called "Blake's own" copy, and is certainly one of the most beautiful and finely

finished copies we have. Each of the 54 plates not only has all the usual attractions of Blake's hand-colored *Songs*, but here he also surrounded each plate with a delicate water color border that in each case bears thematically on the content of the plate itself. Several of these borders are extremely complex in design and richly colored, as in the case of the combined title-page, which is wreathed in thorns and flames and half-animate leaf-life. Others (like those for "The Blossom" of *Innocence* and "London" of *Experience*) are restrained and monochromatic, as if to suggest that in such strong encounters with the life and death of the spirit, further "decoration" could only detract.

It is pleasant to know that this copy was for 55 years owned by the novelist E. M. Forster; literary history does not often offer such appropriate convergences. The book was given to Forster in 1903 by his aunt Laura May Forster, who inherited it from her father, who received it in turn from John Jebb, Bishop of Limerick, who bought it from Catherine Blake in 1830, three years after William Blake's death. It was Forster who willed it to King's College, Cambridge, where it has remained one of their great treasures, much talked of among Blake scholars but never before available to a wide audience.

At \$59.50 it will be hard to require students to purchase this edition of the *Songs*, even for an advanced Blake seminar; but every college library should own at least two copies, as any student at all interested in Blake's composite art will want to study it carefully, and every teacher of romantic poetry will want to keep it on reserve. It will be especially useful as a tool for teaching how Blake varied his copies, both



because it affords a nice comparison with the Oxford paperback color reproduction (likewise based on a late copy of the *Songs*), and because it includes 12 other color plates for comparison—offering for example three starkly divergent images of "The Divine Image," all on a single page. On the other hand it is not clear to me why the texts of the *Songs* needed to be transcribed twice—once facing each page of color reproduction, and once again at the head of each entry of the commentary at the back. To my mind, the space saved by offering a single transcription might have been put to good use in an annotated bibliography of the most important scholarly work that has been done on the *Songs*, replacing the rather brief list of "Works Cited" that we have here. But let such small caveats not cloud my overall point: this is a volume that every Blakean may joy to own.

"An Unperishing Sun
... This Golden Age":
Joachimism and Heaven
in the Age of Blake

Marjorie Reeves and Warwick Gould. *Joachim of Fiore and the Myth of the Eternal Evangel in the Nineteenth Century*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987. x + 365 pp. 3 illus. \$65.00. Colleen McDannell and Bernhard Lang. *Heaven: A History*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988. xiv + 410 pp. 69 illus. \$35.00.

Reviewed by
Joseph Wittreich

Diminishing in number over the last decade, contextualizations of Blake (if we may judge from the two books here under review) are undiminished in their historical savvy, methodological sophistication, and critical acuity. Rigorous interrogations, both books effect reconsideration, refinement, and sometimes a complete recasting of critical clichés and cultural commonplaces. Moreover, each of these books confirms what has become a working premise of Blake criticism: namely, that what matters for Blake is less the tradition than his transgressions of it.

Taking Joachim of Fiore as "a classic example of the problems which arise in assessing the nature and extent of influence in the realm of ideas" (7), Marjorie Reeves and Warwick Gould challenge a line of historical investigation that, commencing with G. K. Chesterton, also comprehends J. G. Davies, A. L. Morton, Désirée Hirst,

and J. F. C. Harrison, according to whom Joachimism is a shaping influence on Blake. But it is an influence not so much direct as oblique and trackable chiefly through the writings of mid-seventeenth-century millennial tracts. The authors of this book are insistent questioners: "what substance is there in the claim that he [Blake] knew of, and consciously drew upon, the Joachimist myth of the Eternal Evangel?" To which question they respond emphatically, thus giving their imprimatur to a conclusion also advanced by David Erdman: "a Joachimist perspective in Blake's poem does not provide a satisfactory reading of the poem, nor does it really cast any new light on Blake's antinomianism, nor does it help us to understand his other 'prophetic books,' nor does it really contribute to our understanding of his concept of the alternating of 'good' and 'evil'..." (33-34). Nor has the case for an allusion to Joachim in Blake's title, "The Everlasting Gospel," been proved (38). Rather, Reeves and Gould argue, there is "no clear evidence of a consciously held Joachimist tradition that can be found among the mid-seventeenth-century English sectarians," and while they have "no quarrel with the view that Blake was heir to a complex antinomian tradition," they nevertheless spurn the notion that "this tradition was in itself a Joachimist one, and that Blake saw it as such":

The conclusion must be . . . that the medieval heresy of the *Evangelium Aeternum* adds nothing to our appreciation of Blake and that it could not have formed a significant part of his sources in the literature of the preceding two centuries. [In no way did Blake] initiate the nineteenth-century awareness of Joachimism. In so far as there can be discerned any interest in the subject prior to George Eliot's, it is to be found, not in the writings of the millenarians and millennialists, but in the learned pages of the *British Magazine* in 1839-40, where the Hon. Algernon Herbert wrote as an unsympathetic antiquary on *Antichrist in the Thirteenth Century*. (39)

The conclusion, very simply, is that "Of Joachim of Fiore's complete system of thought . . . there would appear

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CLARENDON PRESS
OXFORD

to have been little knowledge in the later seventeenth and eighteenth or early nineteenth centuries" (40-41). The obvious caveat is that

influence is often oblique, not direct, and is to be charted according to hidden roads, not well-trodden paths.

As Morton Paley remarks, Richard Hurd (1772) reveals "an awareness of millenarian interpretation, . . . even referring to Joachim of Fiore."¹ Or in Mary Shelley's *Valperga* (1823), Beatrice is represented as one who "delighted to read and pretended to explain the prophecies of the sacred writings, and the modern ones of Merlin, the abbot Joachim and Methodius."² Not just these but other such exclusions, once documented, tear at the fabric of Reeves's and Gould's argument wherein complicating—even contradictory—evidence occasionally goes unnoticed. For example: B. S. Capp's citation of John Securis whose almanac of 1569 draws on the prophecies of Joachim, as do the writings of Francis Moore or even those of Restoration figures like William Lilly who turn to popular traditions that for Capp (if not for Reeves and Gould) derive ultimately from Joachim of Fiore.³ Or witness T. Wilson Hayes's reference to Collier Putney, one of whose sermons

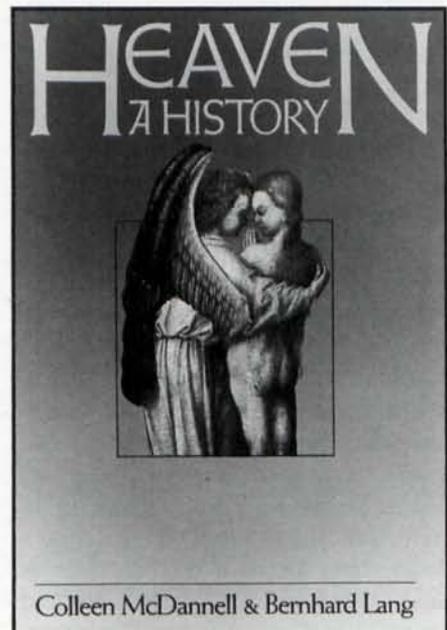
is said to contain a "clear statement of the Joachite concept [of history]"; or Katharine Firth's contention that John Knox's quotations of, John Bale's use of, and John Foxe's comments upon Joachim evince that his writings are part of the "intellectual inheritance of the Reformation," even if their influence is not easily summarized or ascertained.⁴ And witness further Richard Bauckham's acknowledgment of "the paucity of *direct* Joachist influence . . . [in Tudor England], despite the high reputation which Joachim and his followers enjoyed," together with the "many echoes of Joachist exegesis" that appear in some writers.⁵ Consider, moreover, the contrary argument of Frank and Fritzie Manuel that Joachimism, "a hidden force in heterodox medieval thought," is also "an active, unbroken tradition well into the seventeenth century" when much of the discourse (and very notably Winstanley's) has "a Joachimite resonance."⁶ If such resonances go unheard, the silence may be owing to the seemingly faulty premise (enunciated by Reeves) that the bond of prophecy, the conception of history shared by the Middle Ages and Renaissance, thereafter ceases to be of importance, "except on the fringes of modern civilization."⁷ Quite to the contrary, M. H. Abrams has shown the extent to which prophetic and apocalyptic traditions, including their respective visions of history, are at the center of romanticism, the first phase of modernism. Like Reeves and Gould, Abrams refers to the passage concerning "the time of a *neweverlasting* Gospel" from G. E. Lessing's *The Education of the Human Race* (1780); but Abrams also argues, contrary to Reeves and Gould, that the citation of "certain visionaries of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries" comprehends "Joachim . . . and his followers." Later, Abrams speaks of "Schiller's *drittes Reich*" (not mentioned by Reeves and Gould) as "an unmistakable allusion to the apocalyptic 'third kingdom' which had been prophesied by Joachim of Fiore."⁸

The point is not that Reeves and

Gould are wrong. They simply do not engage—and thus they are unable to extinguish—these contrary opinions. There is insufficient review, not to mention probing, of alternative perspectives: that Joachim is a point of reference in Blake studies not because *he* influenced Blake but, instead, because he was a crucial figure in traditions—let's say of exegesis on The Book of Revelation—that most assuredly *did influence Blake*, that the influence may be second-hand, deriving from esoteric traditions and sometimes figures like J. C. Mosheim who are its conduits—or even on occasion from such marginalized writers as Mrs. Attaway and Jane Lead; that even if Blake is not *the* romantic Joachimist, romanticism may very well have had a Joachimist in Perch Bysshe Shelley whose visions of hope, whose envisioning of a quickened and enlarging consciousness, may have moorings in Joachim's notion of *renovatio mundi*.

If the pages dealing with Blake should be read with a suspicious eye, those devoted to later authors—Pierre Leroux, George Sand, George Eliot, Ernest Renan, and Matthew Arnold, as well as (indeed *especially*) those devoted to John Addington Symonds, Walter Pater, Oscar Wilde, and W. B. Yeats are rich, rewarding, riveting. In a powerful argument, full of deft observation, Yeats is shown to have used "Joachim and Nietzsche to 'complete' Blake in what amounts to a revision of his earlier thinking about the English poet and artist whose works he had edited in 1893" (202). Giving "a Joachimist slant" to Blake, imposing "a Joachimist gloss" upon his writings, Yeats quickly turns a "Joachimist reinterpretation of Blake . . . into a recognizably Nietzschean rereading of Blake" (232, 234).

Joachimism thus becomes a point of contact between Blake and one of his most eminent critics—and between Blake and the Romantic poet Shelley with whom he displays the greatest affinities, these two poets humanizing apocalypse, historicizing prophecy, and simultaneously interiorizing both.



A less rigorously particularized scrutiny of Blake's traditions is afforded by Colleen McDannell and Bernhard Lang in *Heaven: A History*—a book that declares itself to be "a 'social and cultural history' of heaven" (xii) and that captures within its large embrace apocalyptic and Hellenistic Judaism, early Christianity, the Church Fathers, Renaissance artists and writers (both Catholic and Protestant), plus Milton, Swedenborg, and Blake quite notably. Early in the Renaissance, this book argues, "heaven was split into two levels, one human and one divine" with both heavens thus receiving their due but also with "the human side of heaven gain[ing] more prominence" as concepts like the earthly garden, the new Jerusalem, and heavenly love are "redefined and brought into a new configuration" (111, 112). The Renaissance initiates the processes of historicizing, humanizing, secularizing, and interiorizing that romanticism completes.

This book goes a long way toward confirming the suspicion that Copernican theory, in a poem like *Paradise Lost*, is an aspect of the poet's "science of salvation" (157), implying an analogy between the physical and spiritual suns. Thus, as astronomy was heliocentric, so religious life was theo- or Christocentric, "with the soul moving

around the deity as its center" and with woman herself coming increasingly to fill "one part of that divine center" (157, 167). This book provides an underpinning logic for Milton's centering of both Christ and Eve in *Paradise Lost* and for the prominence later accorded the emanation in Blake's mythological system. Between Milton and Blake, Swedenborg derives certain perspectives from Milton, even occasionally echoing Milton's writings. In the process, Swedenborg subverts the "theocentric model" of heaven where worldly activities have no place and where the whole matter of "doing" is irrelevant: "the modern heaven comes clearly into focus: a heaven near at hand, material, full of activity and progress, and based on social relationships" (178, 228). If Milton is "a transitional figure in the development of an anthropocentric heaven," Swedenborg is the principal precursor of Blake and other romantic innovators for whom man and woman are "fragments of a once primordial whole" and for whom heaven is a place of intense mental activity, as well as highly developed social relationships—a place that, for Blake no less than for Wordsworth, is to be found *in this world*, or not at all (233, 234, 245). Among the unexpected rewards of this book are the paths of influence it charts between Milton and Swedenborg and then the heady observations it makes on Blake's Swedenborgianism.

Both of these books remind us that The Age of Blake was rife with prophetic expectations, which, if they invoked the idea of returning to an Age of Gold, also made clear that what really mattered was the forward thrust of history. The process envisioned was less a return to, or renewal of, past history than escaping from it into a future that was, nevertheless, always located within history, though history in the future tense. The prophet was

not a proponent but rather an opponent of the reigning orthodoxies; his obligation was not to predict but to create a future; and his—or her—means to that end was (Joachim-like) to roll stones away from the mind, letting the light shine forth; or (Blake-like) to open the doors of perception, thereby enlarging human consciousness and, simultaneously, bringing history to its consummation. Whether or not the romantics read him, Joachim of Fiore prophesies their agenda and in the case of the Shelleys, Mary no less than Percy, particularizes their program, giving definition to their heaven on earth—their paradise in history.

The terms in the title of this essay derive from a poem, "Eternal Evangel," in the second volume (entitled *Medieval Legends*) of the Czech poet Jaroslav Vrchlický's *Frescoes and Tapestries* (Prague, n. d.) 166-68, reprinted in Reeves and Gould, *Joachim of Fiore* (323-25).

¹ Morton Paley, *The Apocalyptic Sublime* (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1986) 32.

² 3 vols. (G. and W. B. Whittaker, 1823) 2: 42.

³ B. S. Capp, *English Almanacs 1500-1800: Astrology and the Popular Press* (Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell UP, 1979) 166, 174, 252.

⁴ See T. Wilson Hayes, *Winstanley the Digger* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard UP, 1979) 225; and Katharine R. Firth, *The Apocalyptic Tradition in Reformation Britain 1530-1645* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1979) 2, 4-5.

⁵ Richard Bauckham, *Tudor Apocalypse* (Oxford: Sutton Courtenay Press, 1978) 25, 211 (my italics).

⁶ Frank E. Manuel and Fritzie P. Manuel, *Utopian Thought in the Western World* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1979) 50, 210.

⁷ Marjorie Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages: A Study of Joachimism* (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1969) 508.

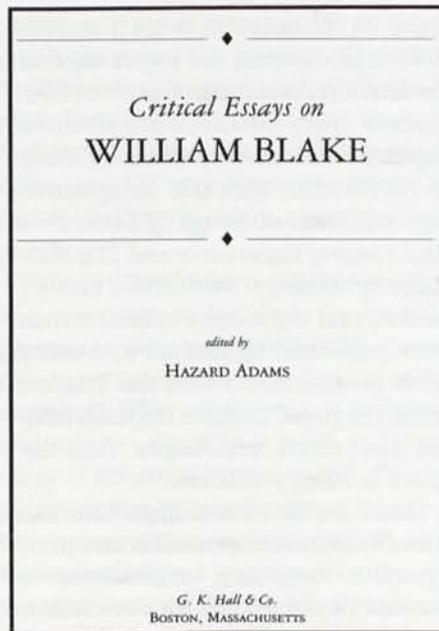
⁸ M. H. Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature* (New York and London: W. W. Norton, 1971) 202, 351.

Critical Essays on William Blake. Ed. Hazard Adams. Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1991. 207 pp. \$40.00.

Reviewed by
Jeffrey D. Parker

The most recent edition to the *Critical Essays on British Literature Series*, under the general editorship of Zack Bowen at the University of Miami, is *Critical Essays on William Blake*, edited by Hazard Adams. For this volume Adams includes an introductory essay, sixteen previously published essays, an afterward, and a selected bibliography. His introduction, like the volume itself, is divided into two parts.

Part one of the introduction provides a thumbnail sketch of Blake's reputation and notes the enormous amount of Blake scholarship accumulated during the past few decades. Adams then cites landmarks in modern Blake scholarship beginning in 1924 with the publication of S. Foster Damon's *William Blake: His Philosophy and Symbols*, followed in 1947 by Northrop Frye's *Fearful Symmetry*, and in 1954 by David V. Erdman's *Prophet Against Empire*. Although other scholars continued to follow the leads of Damon, Frye, and Erdman, the next major event does not occur until 1964 with the recognition of the important relationship between text and design. Inspired by Northrop Frye's pioneering essay "Poetry and Design in William Blake" published in 1951, the first detailed examination of this new avenue of scholarship begins with the publication of Jean Hagstrum's *William Blake: Poet and Painter*, and is followed by the scholarship of David V. Erdman, David Bindman, Raymond Lister, W. J. T. Mitchell, John Grant, Robert N. Es-



sick, Morris Eaves, and Morton D. Paley. It is from the critical contributions by Frye, Erdman, Hagstrum, Mitchell, Paley, and Essick that Adams selects six of the sixteen essays as representative examples of modern Blake scholarship.

In part two of his introduction Adams provides a rationale for having selected the sixteen essays reprinted for this volume, and for dividing the collection into two parts. The first part of the collection deals with Blake's reputation in the nineteenth century and begins with Deborah Dorfman's "Knowledge and Estimation of Blake during His Lifetime," followed by the well-known criticism of Blake by Robert Hunt in "Mr. Blake's Exhibition," Allan Cunningham's discussion of Blake from *Lives of The Most Eminent British Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*, and a selection from *Reminiscences* by Henry Crabb Robinson. Also included in part one is a letter to Alexander Gilchrist from Samuel Palmer providing information on Blake for Gilchrist's biography. Although the majority of these essays are quite familiar, they are included together here as examples of attitudes toward Blake during his lifetime.

The second part of this volume draws from recent Blake criticism and

is, according to Adams, meant to be read sequentially. This is a bit curious since Adams does not arrange these essays in chronological order, suggesting instead that the reader's attention be focused on the varieties of critical discourse rather than a concern for chronological developments in Blake scholarship as the first part of his introduction implies. Part two also includes "Spectre and Emanation," a selection from Morton D. Paley's *The Continuing City* (1983), Steven Shaviro's article "Striving with Systems: Blake and the Politics of Difference" (1982), and "The Return to Logos" from *William Blake and the Language of Adam* (1989) by Robert N. Essick, as examples of what Adams refers to as "the so-called postmodern emphasis on difference, deconstruction, Hegelian negation, and language" (6). The inclusion of these three essays by Paley, Shaviro, and Essick, produces a radically different Blake than the one presented in the earlier essays in part two by Frye, Erdman, Hagstrum, and Mitchell. In order to remedy this disparity, it would be more useful to the student unfamiliar with contemporary critical discourse, or for the generalist audience for whom the book is intended, to have divided the book into three sections, with the third section devoted to postmodern approaches to Blake.

Given the editorial objectives of the *Critical Essays on British Literature Series*, one of which is to develop a unique perspective on its subjects, Adams' strategy is successful. By providing essays on Blake from nineteenth century accounts of him, and selections representative of major critical directions taken by Blake scholars, Adams' *Critical Essays on William Blake* underscores the wide disparity between attitudes toward Blake's art and poetry by his contemporaries, and the wide range of critical directions taken by Blake scholars in the twentieth century.

William Blake. *Jerusalem: The Emanation of the Giant Albion*. Edited with an Introduction and Notes by Morton D. Paley. Princeton: Princeton University Press, The William Blake Trust, and The Tate Gallery, 1991. Blake's Illuminated Books, vol. 1. General Editor David Bindman. \$75.00.

Reviewed by
Terence Allan Hoagwood

This book is an edition of the unique water-colored copy of *Jerusalem* (copy E, which is in the collection of Paul Mellon). This copy was reproduced in full only once before, in the facsimile produced by the Trianon Press for the William Blake Trust in 1951; only 516 copies of that book were distributed, including 16 which were reserved for Trustees of the William Blake Trust. The new book here under review includes photographic reproductions of all 100 plates of the poem—in full size, and in full color—as well as excellent introduction, notes, and commentary by Morton D. Paley. The publication of this book is a scholarly event of great importance, for two kinds of reasons: the quality of this publication itself, and the matchless importance of the work which is herein reproduced.

Blake finished only one copy of *Jerusalem*, in his sense of the word "finished"; and that one is his most important work intellectually and artistically.¹ This version of *Jerusalem* includes relief etching, white-line engraving, water color, and pen-and-ink. This work differs substantially from all other surviving versions of *Jerusalem*, including those copies which Blake prepared in monochrome prints and those which were made posthumously,

apparently from Blake's own original plates.² I agree entirely with Paley that this work—not *Jerusalem* in general but this final, water-colored copy—is “Blake's greatest single work” (Paley, Introduction 16). The availability of this remarkably good reproduction makes possible for the first time a widespread recognition of the distinctiveness of this work, involving both visual and intellectual complexity. The book's startlingly low price (and for a book like this one I found the price of \$75 astonishing) was made possible by a grant from the Getty Grant Foundation, and likewise by the commendable work of the William Blake Trust.

What follows in this review are, first, a description of the book and its contents, an account of its production and history, and a discussion of some features of this version of *Jerusalem* which are now available for wider discovery, appreciation, and argument than ever before.

This volume is the first in a series, “Blake's Illuminated Books,” under the general editorship of David Bindman and published by the William Blake Trust, the Tate Gallery, and Princeton University Press. The editors project “a complete edition in the same format of all Blake's illuminated works” (Bindman's Preface 6). (Another volume in this series, *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, edited by Andrew Lincoln, has also been published.) The book is bound in sturdy and dark brown hardcover; the front of its striking dustjacket is wholly given to a color enlargement of the photograph of the title page of *Jerusalem*. The book includes a preface by Bindman (1 page), a foreword by Paley (1 page), an introductory essay on *Jersusalem* by Paley (9-16), remarkably good color photographs of all 100 plates of *Jerusalem*, photographs of five additional plates (three other versions of plate 1 of *Jerusalem*, and two other versions of plate 51), and a typographic transcription of the verbal text of this copy of *Jerusalem*, meticulously prepared by Paley and accompanied by commentary on the plates and notes



on the text (132-297); there are also “A Note on the Reversed Writing in *Jerusalem*” (128-29), a bibliography (298-302)—which is a list of works cited in Paley's Introduction and notes rather than a more general guide to scholarship—and two blank leaves.

Bindman's preface says justly that “this edition of *Jerusalem* is, even allowing for the inevitable compromises all reproduction entails, as accurate as modern technology and expert checking at every stage can make it” (6). The color photographs represent some (I emphasize *some*) features of the original work's coloration more accurately than even the hand-colored facsimile produced by the Trianon Press for the Blake Trust in 1951. The paper on which the photographs appear is of high quality: this paper is not glossy, and though it is smoother and brighter than Blake's own cream-colored wove paper, the images are both better and more attractive in the absence of glossy paper's impertinent shine. To compare this feature with relatively familiar books, the color photos from this version of *Jerusalem* reproduced in Bindman's *William Blake: His Art and Times* are on glossy paper, as are the color photographs of *The Book of Urizen* and of *Milton*, edited by Roger Easson and Kay Parkhurst Easson, which were published by Shambhala

Press in association with Random House. In contrast, the paper used in the Trianon Press facsimiles resembles Blake's own cream-colored wove paper. Readers of this journal are likely to be familiar with the inexpensive reproductions of *Songs of Innocence and Songs of Experience* and *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (in six-, seven-, and eight-color offset) which were published by Oxford University Press in association with the Trianon Press; the paper in these books is thinner and much less bright than the paper in Paley's volume.

There are of course important differences between facsimiles and photographs; “beguiling verisimulude” is Bindman's apt phrase for the former, but important advantages of the latter include the lower price. Facsimiles are so expensive that they cannot be available to many, whereas the price of the book under review is sufficiently modest to make it available to most people with an interest in Blake or in the visual arts generally. It costs less than a year's subscription to any of several journals; one could use it as a text in a seminar. In contrast, the last of the Trianon Press facsimiles produced for the Blake Trust costs £580, and only 250 copies of the standard edition were produced.³ The facsimile of *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* published by the Manchester Etching Workshop in 1984 was (to quote the publisher's description) “printed on a rolling press with handmade intaglio ink on dampened, handmade wove paper.” A total of 40 copies of the facsimile published by the Manchester Etching Workshop were made available for sale, at \$800 each.

The present volume—and I agree with Bindman about the high quality of the photographs—sacrifices some features of the original medium, including texture and three-dimensionality: copy E of *Jerusalem* consists of pictures in which india ink is placed over water color which is placed over forms printed in the ink which Blake had mixed himself, using linseed oil; in many pictures liquid gold is placed

on the surface of images. No photograph can reveal this layering of media. Reproduction using color photography does gain an exactness in the registration of the water color's gradations, and (to an astounding degree) makes the work easily available for purchase.

Paley's introductory essay is excellent in its kind, as those who know his previous books, especially *The Continuing City*, would have hoped and expected. The scholarship is careful and eclectic, the style is lucid, and the essay is informative and useful. Paley discusses the circumstances of the poem's composition and production by Blake, including a concise account of the relevance of the reported visionary experience at Felpham in 1803, the treason trial involving Scholfield, Blake's report of the enlightenment he experienced after visiting the Truchsessian Gallery, and the likely meanings of "1804" on the work's title page. Paley writes briefly and well of the importance of such facts as Blake's loss of the commission to engrave his own *Grave* designs, the negative reviews of Blake's work by Robert Hunt, the failure of Blake's own exhibition in 1809, and the conflict with Stothard and Cromek over the *Canterbury Pilgrims* picture; he notes the poem's allusions to datable events, including some in the aftermath of the Napoleonic wars,⁴ and he summarizes reasonably the biographical evidence (involving Henry Crabb Robinson, Southey, the Water Colour Society, and letters to George Cumberland) concerning the composition of the poem and the production of the visual art, as well as the evidence of watermarks.

Among the interpretatively useful arguments presented in Paley's introduction is this one concerning the economically determined history of the production of *Jerusalem*: though the monochrome copies are inked too heavily to have been water colored subsequently, "Blake may not have intended to issue monochrome copies of *Jerusalem*, as this was not his usual

practice for the later illuminated books" (13); for example, there are no known uncolored copies of *Milton* or *The Book of Urizen* (I would add that the last version of *Urizen*—copy G, with watermarks of 1815 but perhaps finished as late as 1818—is more precisely and strikingly colored than any other version of that work). Blake wrote to Cumberland (12 April 1827): "I cannot Print more Except at a great loss." Citing Joseph Viscomi's observation that Blake's method of production was obviously "not cost effective,"⁵ Paley suggests very plausibly that "it may be for this reason that he produced four complete monochrome copies of *Jerusalem* and only one complete coloured one" (13). As I shall be showing below, and as the reproduction here under review makes quite visible, these economic issues are not only relevant to the circumstances of *Jerusalem's* production; they are likewise important within the *meanings* of the work.

In this connection, the history and the prehistory of the volume are especially interesting, not only as a record of endeavors singularly important for Blake studies, but (as if so designed by Clio) as a narrative illustrating one of Blake's own most pervasive preoccupations, which is the effect of economic conditions upon the production and reproduction of art. According to the preface by Bindman, the Blake Trust was founded in 1949,⁶ "with the express purpose of making Blake's Illuminated books more widely known by producing facsimiles of the whole corpus." Arnold Fawcus of the Trianon Press used collotype printers (collotype is a photogelatin process which produces a base of outline for the design corresponding to the *printed* portions of Blake's plate); then, "up to thirty colours per plate" were added manually in water color. For the full-page illustrations in the facsimile of the water-colored *Jerusalem*, an average of 44 applications of water colors was used (according to Keynes's introduction in the volume). These water colors were applied through stencils, one

of which was made for each color. This sequence of layers, including the initial outline and the subsequent superimposition of several layers of water colors, replicates the three-dimensionality of the original work. So does the "pure rag paper especially manufactured to match the paper used by Blake" (Keynes's introduction), though there has been some question about whether the paper in this facsimile is unevenly darkening with time and exposure to light.⁷

Following the publication of that facsimile of the water-colored *Jerusalem* in 1951, the Blake Trust with the Trianon Press published facsimile editions of all the illuminated books; in 1987, the Blake Trust completed its plan of facsimile publications, with the *Job* versions.⁸ As long ago as 1979, Keynes indicated that the Blake Trust and the Trianon Press intended to publish that facsimile of the *Job* illustrations and likewise a facsimile of the manuscript of Blake's *Island in the Moon*; in the event, that was not what happened. After the death of Arnold Fawcus, founding director of the Trianon Press, complications inevitably ensued, including "protracted negotiations involved in reaching a satisfactory agreement for the mutually desired termination of the role of the Trianon Press as publishers to the William Blake Trust."⁹

A new William Blake Trust was incorporated in January 1983; this group hoped to issue the *Job* facsimiles in 1985, but the Trust found it necessary to withdraw from the *Island* project.¹⁰ Books, of course, "are not produced without arrangements of some sort,"¹¹ and it often happens that our understanding of the value and meaning of a book is considerably enhanced by an understanding of those arrangements.

As Keynes said in 1979, the Blake Trust facsimiles "have only been made possible by the generosity of our American benefactors."¹² The "protracted negotiations" in which the Trust was involved resulted in a protracted publication schedule: in 1979, Keynes expected the *Job* and

Island facsimiles to be published before the end of 1980;¹³ four years after that date, Stephen Keynes announced the Trust's hope that "*Job* will be issued in 1985";¹⁴ and then, after "a surprising number of years,"¹⁵ the *Job* appeared in 1987, and the *Island* facsimile had found a different publisher.

The new William Blake Trust has, now, turned to this new project—the complete edition, with photographs of very high quality, of Blake's illuminated books, in a form that is accessible as well as accurate and attractive. The volume here under review is, as I have said, the first volume in this important new series.

It is a point of some importance that the difficulties which were evidently undergone by the Blake Trust—and obviously overcome through the diligence and even devotion of its members—appear to have included *business* difficulties, and, to that extent, they replicate Blake's own difficulties. Shortly before his death Blake wrote, "the Last Work I produced is a Poem Entitled Jerusalem the Emanation of the Giant Albion, but find that to Print it will Cost my Time the amount of Twenty Guineas One I have Finishd It contains 100 Plates but it is not likely I shall get a Customer for it."¹⁶ Allan Cunningham reported that Blake's failure to find a buyer for his beautifully (and expensively) finished *Jerusalem* "sank to the old man's heart."¹⁷ That set of conflicts and problems also sank into the work itself, including its meanings and themes. The story told by the troubled history of production and reproduction of *Jerusalem* is already told in thematic and polemical form within the poem and designs of *Jerusalem* itself—incipiently in the monochrome copies that Blake produced, which have been photographically available for years, but most evidently, gloriously, and powerfully in the visual beauty of the final (water-colored) *Jerusalem*. Specifically, that narrative and theme are embodied in Blake's use of gold in *Jerusalem*, a topic to which I shall return. Briefly in the introduction and more specifically in the plate-by-plate

commentaries, Paley provides useful discussion of the coloring of *Jerusalem*. He includes some account of the differences in effect produced by the color as opposed to the monochromatic designs present in other versions of *Jerusalem* (though I would be inclined to make much more of this issue). Paley calls the significance of colors "largely affective"; there is no color-code of meanings. But he observes that red can suggest flames of hell (pl. 26) or the blood-colored material of bodies which Vala forms (pl. 100); green can suggest "new life and perhaps even . . . the theological virtue Hope" (as he says of pl. 76—though others who have written about this plate are perhaps less optimistic about this important design). Usefully, he points out the "only in E do we see that in 32 [46] Vala and Jerusalem confront each other on a green island with the sea breaking in the foreground" (15); I agree that this pictorial fact is important; I would add that on plate 50, the king with three heads, a crown on each, is clearly tormented on his green island with white cliffs; in all other copies, he sits on a white rock with monochromatic hatching. The fact that Blake is here portraying specifically England's green and pleasant land, and not a mythical abstraction, is splendidly evident only in this version of *Jerusalem*.

As these examples suggest, Paley's interpretations, in both the introductory essay and the commentaries which follow, are chiefly devoted to the *meanings* of the pictorial images, their reference in terms of the poem, rather than their physical makeup or their predominantly visual effects. For example, Paley observes correctly that in plate 25 the umbilical filament being drawn out of the male figure by the female figures is of the same color as the fibers which are visibly trailing from the fingers of those female figures; "the identity of colour . . . creates a visual equation" (15). But that identity of color is a matter of Blake's printed ink taken directly and initially from the copper plate—in this copy as

in every other copy—and not a matter of added water color at all; it is the added water color in *other* spaces of the picture which helps to differentiate this relationship between the umbilicus and the fibers as an identity. The gold in the designs is visually striking (it is often discernible in the photographs by its color; in the original copy E, it glitters brilliantly), and it is also thematically and polemically important. The oppressions of class distinction, poverty, massive exploitation and inequality are as everyone knows preoccupations of Blake throughout his productive life: "the Oppressors of Albion in every City & Village . . . mock at the Labourers limbs! they mock at his starvd Children. / They buy his Daughters that they may have power to sell his Sons . . . They reduce the Man to want: then give with pomp & ceremony" (*Jerusalem*, pl. 30; I quote from Paley's typographic transcription [177]). This theme is visualized in the designs repeatedly, and I shall limit myself to four examples: in plate 99 gold shines in the hair of the naked woman who is gripped by the (clothed) patriarch; gold is also placed in the flames below her hair to the left. Gold glitters in the rocks that are literally oppressing the struggling men in the two lower bands of picture on plate 23. As Paley's commentary points out (205), but as the photograph hardly reveals, there is gold around the arms of Albion in plate 47, in the design in which the naked woman, literally trodden upon, reaches desperately toward him with her arms. On the magnificent plate 76, gold shines in the tree around the crucified Christ, inside the nuts or fruit on the boughs of the tree (in four pieces of fruit to the tree's right, in eight to the tree's left, and in one leaf in a bough on the right side of the tree).

Paley's careful statement about the use of gold in *Jerusalem* mentions different thematic purposes to which the gold seems to be put in different plates, and he qualifies terminology valuably: "it is not possible to be absolutely certain that Blake's gold colouring was obtained by the use of

true gold without analytical testing by x-ray fluorescence [but] it is clear under microscopic examination that both gold coloured metal leaf and silver coloured metal leaf were employed," and Paley adds very pertinently that the gold contributes "perhaps the most extraordinary colour effects in copy E," and that the purchase of this gold, "along with the other materials for copy E, must have represented a considerable expense for a poor man like Blake" (15).

To that just observation I would add three more: (1) gold thematizes the polemic about wealth and oppression in *Jerusalem*; (2) quite apart from its conceptual meanings, the shining metal imparts visual brilliance to this work which has no likeness in any other version of *Jerusalem*; and (3) though color photographs cannot reproduce the physical thickness and brilliant glitter of the metal on the painted designs, this reproduction does make the gold *visible* in many of the plates, disclosing therefore a very important—and unique—dimension of the painted designs. Because this feature is important for connoisseurship, but also for a formal analysis of the work, or conceptual analysis, or socio-historical argument, it seems to me that all appreciators of Blake, however widely their methods and aims might diverge, are herein provided a valuable resource. No letterpress edition, no black-and-white reproduction, and most emphatically no explanation in critical prose could reproduce however faintly this effect and this theme. Blake suffered from the economically determined conflicts about which he wrote; the distribution of his work repeats outwardly the theme of economically determined conflicts which is elaborated within them; and the volume here under review is an important and even triumphant moment in the history of those same conflicts.

Paley's introduction makes brief but good use of important scholarship on the poem—such as David V. Erdman's "The Suppressed and Altered Passages in Blake's *Jerusalem*" (*Studies in Bib-*

liography 17 [1964])—but also very recent scholarly and critical work, including important arguments about the "broken text" of plate 3, and the historical meanings onto which it opens;¹⁸ Paley's introduction (and likewise his interpretive notes) make excellent use of Robert Essick's argument about plate 51, which Blake apparently separated from this water-colored version of the poem and for which he evidently substituted another version, though Essick's article was not even in print when Paley's introduction was written.¹⁹

Paley's informative and accessible commentaries accompany the typographic transcription of the text of *Jerusalem*, plate by plate. The format of presentation makes the book extraordinarily easy to use, the commentary on the visual art appearing in italic type, separated by a horizontal line from the notes on the verbal content of the poem, which appears in roman type. The letterpress version of the poem has been prepared with a specific goal: "to give as close an equivalent to Blake's calligraphic text as possible" (126). Because the original plates are reproduced in the volume, the nature of the editorial goals for the diplomatic edition in letterpress is sensibly described in this way: "the text here is offered in conjunction with the reproduction and not as a substitute for it"; this fact is important, because at all those points where problems or ambiguities might arise—and Paley is sensitive and even vigilant about textual details—"the reader will turn to Blake's calligraphic text" (127), to see plainly the etched and painted plate that Blake made and from which all letterpress texts have worked. The nature of textual problems, the guesswork of all previous editors, and the nature of all previous editorial judgments regarding textual problems are thus rendered visible as no typographic text has ever been able to make them.²⁰

Paley has examined all problematic cases under magnification; for example, Blake's commas and periods are

often difficult to distinguish, and the difference between a colon and a mark of exclamation is not always apparent. Paley has analyzed very carefully such problems as the confusion of the letter *a* with the letter *o*, occasioned by Blake's tendency to drop the loop of the cursive *o* (at 21:44, "warshipped" and not "worshipped", but at 43:19 "Forms" and not "Farms");²¹ but the immediate presence in the book of the full-size photograph of each plate is without question the best of all possible solutions to the problem of misrepresenting the verbal text. Likewise in the case of questioning whether 10:36 ends with a dash or a large period: it is here evident, as it is not evident in any letterpress text, that one confronts a work of visual art, and not an editorial problem. As soon as a reader turns to the magnificent color plates, such problems tend to diminish or vanish, because it is strikingly evident that the manual work of producing the visual art, and not necessarily an odd rhetorical strategy, frequently determines these points.

I will allow myself one example of a longstanding point of editorial confusion which the photographic reproductions help to resolve as no editorial description could do: in *Blake Books*, G. E. Bentley, Jr., writes that in plate 98, line 45, "the Coven[an] of Jehovah' was altered to 'thy Covenant Jehovah' in [copy] E" (237). In fact, it is copy F in which the word is "thy" rather than "the," as Bentley correctly says elsewhere in the same book (258); copy E has "the"; Paley correctly says so, and he cites Erdman's essay, "The Suppressed and Altered Passages in Blake's *Jerusalem*" (38-39), for the information that the original wording of the etched plate was "thy Covenant Jehovah"; Blake attempted to alter it to "the Covenant of Jehovah." "The change was not entirely successful, so this copy reads 'the Coventet of Jehovah'" (295).

In fact, as this reproduction makes quite apparent, there is no "of" in line 45 of plate 98 in copy E. It says "the Covenant Jehovah." That is exactly what

it says in the monochrome copy A (in the British Museum). And that is exactly what it says in the monochrome copy C (Harvey collection). Editors have evidently been seeing double, taking the "nt" of "Covenant" as both "nt" in that word *and* as a fuzzy "of." There is no "of."

Regarding Paley's reading, "Coventet": it seems to me that the relative lightness of the printing of that word, over a possibly corrected copper plate, has made the stem of the *a* weak, and the *n* is more completely closed at the bottom loop than it normally is; it does not appear to my eye that Blake added a *t* or that he changed the *n* to an *e*. This question might take on some significance if somebody thought that Blake used a word, "Coventet," and if that reader then went on to undertake philological scholarship to construe its usage. I do not think that there is any such word as "Coventet" in *Jerusalem*; I think, rather, that the ambiguity arises from the physical makeup of the plate, but in any case, as Paley justly says, in this book "the reader will turn to Blake's calligraphic text," and the problem is solved as effectively as may be.

Again, that problem is solved by the vivid reminder that *Jerusalem* is primarily a work of visual art: for example, on this particular plate, where the problem of "Covenant Jehovah" appears, that sort of merely verbal problem is hardly salient; more salient is the yellow water color wash that covers the text; no effect like this appears in any other version of the design. The serpent at the top of the design has minute teeth, eyelid, pupil, and forked tongue, all drawn painstakingly with pen-and-ink (not etched on the copper plate, not printed on the paper, and thus not existent in the monochrome copies). The serpent also has, in the same carefully added ink, what looks like a head of hair—this bizarre and probably important feature is likewise missing from all monochrome versions. Most of the serpent at the top of the design is painted in blue water color (though it looks gray in the color photograph);

the printing is so light that one does not see the printed rings which make the serpent's scales, or at least one does not see them so clearly here as in the monochrome copies (compare copy A, reproduced in Bindman's *Complete Graphic Works*); they are discernible only under close scrutiny, because the printed (orange) ink is spotty and more white shows than in the monochrome copies. The snail, frog, butterfly, and moth near the bottom of the page have also been drawn manually with a pen—all of them have been outlined in ink except the moth, and even the moth has a black dot of manually applied ink on his body. It is perhaps not so evident in this photograph as in the original that the black added to the limbs of the spider is water color, in contrast to the ink outlining the other creatures in this portion of the design. The lower half of the left border is painted over in green, which adds imagery of a vine to the plate, missing from all other versions and iconographically important. A thin green band of ground below the creatures at the bottom of the page, but above the last line of the text, makes that last line of text visibly subterranean here, as in no other version of the design.²²

Paley's commentary on the designs is, as I have suggested, usually concerned with the images' reference and allusions; given the necessary brevity of the commentary, and the uses for which this book is (I hope) destined, Paley has no doubt provided what most readers will find satisfying. For example, here is the complete text of Paley's commentary on the design which I have just described:

Across the top curls the 'all wondrous Serpent' of line 44, while in the lower design we see, attractively presented, creatures often considered loathsome (especially the Worm, which has been so prominent in [Jerusalem] but which now takes its place among 'Living Creatures starry & flaming' [lines 42-3]). The viewer is put in the position of the Ancient Mariner who, having first recoiled in horror from the water-snakes, sees their beauty in the process of his own regeneration. (295)

For another example, on the frontispiece, "Los is Christ entering Limbo as is emphasized by a comparison with an anonymous Renaissance engraving, *The Descent to Hell*, probably after Montegna" (130—and that helpful comparison is made in *The Continuing City*, as Paley says—see plates 14 and 15). "Architecture emphasizes this meaning . . . it is the Gothic arch that Blake associates with inspiration" (130). Paley's reproduction in this volume of the monochrome version of this design from copy C (in the collection of Mrs. Ramsay Harvey) enables an instructive comparison: "For the monochrome copies, Blake had to rely on the dramatic contrast afforded by white-line to create a different kind of striking effect" (130).²³ Clearly, however, much more than that is involved in the difference between the white-line engravings and the solid-line design in copy E, here reproduced. The legs and the hands of the male figure, for example, are white lines in all of the monochrome copies, against the solid color which is background; exactly the reverse is the case here, where the lines are drawn in black ink. The outline of the door is white line against a dark background in all of the monochrome copies; here it is black line. The picture is not the same in this important respect: what is here black is there white.

The same reversal of white and black appears in several other plates, and more than merely local effects are involved. The difference is a total reversal of the picture's constitution, like the reversals of a negative. Sometimes the reversal is achieved by Blake's drawing (often with pen and ink but sometimes in very fine lines of dark water color), whereas the lines in the monochrome copies were made by engraved lines; the drapery in the coat of the male figure on the frontispiece is an example. A more comprehensive example is the global reversal of the crucifixion design, plate 76; in all the monochrome versions, this design is a white-line engraving, such that the forms are defined by white lines

against a solid black background; in copy E, the forms are defined in black lines. In all of the monochrome versions, the rays of the sun on the horizon line are white lines against a black sky; these lines are made by printing from an engraved plate. In contrast, in copy E, those rays are black lines drawn on the paper (not the copper plate) across a sky of white and pale gray.

Another case in which the differences are spectacular between the water-colored *Jerusalem* and the monochrome versions is the wonderful design of plate 99. In all of the monochrome copies, the sun, the clouds, and the flames are defined as white spaces; the definition is achieved by black lines printed from the etched plate. In contrast, in copy E the flames are drawn very sharply on the paper—in water color applied with a fine brush and in india ink applied with a pen. The flames and the sun are defined as colored spaces, outlined in black; and the sun, which in all of the monochrome copies is white against a black sky, is here painted black.

These differences are vitally important in several ways: obviously a picture consisting of white forms against a dark background is very different from a picture consisting of colored forms against a white background; further, the lines themselves, whatever their color, are very different. Printed ink from the copper plate (copy E is printed in orange ink, and copy A in black) makes lines very different in texture, definition, thickness, and appearance from lines that are drawn on paper *after* the printing, by a pen or fine-pointed brush. Water color washed or brushed over a printed surface creates a very different effect from printed lines; and the combination, in a single picture, of several media (printed ink, water color, pen-applied india ink, and liquid gold) creates extraordinary depth and complexity. The work here reproduced is not a different "copy" of the design; it is a different work of art.

These reversals could have been achieved in a number of ways. For

example, a plate on which lines are incised, for the letters of words and the outlines of pictorial figures, can produce dark letters and lines if the plate is wiped before printing; pressure on the paper transfers ink from the incised lines. This process is often called "intaglio." From the same plate, however, an opposite effect can be produced if the plate is not wiped and if pressure is applied only lightly: in such a case, ink is transferred to the paper from the surfaces left standing, and the incised lines produce white lines on the paper.²⁴ The result is, like a photographic negative, white on one impression where there is ink on the other, and ink where there was white. This process is difficult, because the plate must be inked carefully to avoid getting ink into the incisions, but it is possible. As Essick has said, "almost any plate may be printed in either intaglio or relief"—that is, ink can be transferred from incised areas or from raised surfaces.²⁵

An alternative, however, involves Blake's producing different kinds of plates. In a dark-line relief etching, such as Blake normally made, the letters and pictorial outlines stand up three-dimensionally on the copper plate. These raised surfaces are inked, and the result is a dark-line print on the paper. In a white-line etching, such as *Death's Door* (1805) or the title page of *Milton* in copy A (both reproduced in Essick, *William Blake: Printmaker*), in contrast, the lines defining the image are incised and the backgrounds thus receive ink. This kind of etching is not "intaglio" because the ink is printed from the raised surface of the plate; thus, this sort of printing is "relief" printing. But it is different from Blake's normal method of relief printing because the lines of the letters and the outlines of the pictorial figures are white against a dark background, as opposed to the normal effect which he produces—dark letters and lines against a white background. Blake could and did use both dark-line and white-line methods in etching *Jerusalem*, on dif-

ferent plates and sometimes within a single design.

Despite the total reversal of inked and white areas, the white-line frontispiece for *Jerusalem* was evidently made from the same copper plate as the dark-line version which is in copy E. Faint traces of the deleted inscription in the arch near the top of the design are discernible under the water color of the design in copy E; this fact suggests that the same plate was used here and in the white-line engraving which is now in the Fitzwilliam Museum. Furthermore, when I have overlain exactly sized transparent photocopies of the white-line version and the dark-line version, I have found that the images are so similar in detail that it is unlikely that they were made from two different metal plates.²⁶ Instead, Blake has evidently expended effort and skill in transforming the visual effect to produce a different pictorial effect for this copy of *Jerusalem*. Blake's application of color to the pictorial surface—ink with pen, and paint with brush—makes profound differences in the appearance of the design.

These differences between dark and light, positive and negative, are perhaps important in conceptual and thematic terms as well. In the course of developing his theological inversions in "The Everlasting Gospel," Blake writes, "thou readst black where I read white" (*The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake* 524). As Joseph Anthony Wittreich, Jr., remarked aphoristically, Blake's art "is continually engaged in inversional transformations";²⁷ and those who have read Blake's works with any seriousness at all have never failed to notice the reversals and inversions that are thematized ubiquitously in his written works—including the "Angel, who is now become a Devil" and the "Bible of Hell" (*Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, pl. 24), and the "Two Contrary States of the Human Soul" of the title of Blake's *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*. In *Jerusalem*, there are many different kinds of visual tropes of reversal: on plate 45, the final line of language on

the plate is engraved in white-line; all the other language on the plate is printed ink against a white background. Reversed writing appears in several plates, as in the backward poem on the scroll on plate 41, and in the deleted inscriptions on the frontispiece. In the work of this artistic revolutionary, such tropes of inversion are laden with meanings, transformative and even insurrectionary. For the first time, this relatively inexpensive set of color reproductions makes many of the most important of these visual tropes both visible and accessible.

In fact, I am inclined to say that the largest, most interesting, and most important inversions are the total reversals of visual definition which Blake achieved once—and only once—when he made the uniquely complex and beautiful work that is so accurately and handsomely reproduced in the volume here under review. Owing to the excellence of the photographs and the scholarly apparatus with which the reproduction is accompanied, and owing further to the generosity of the Blake Trust and its benefactors, Blakeans now and in subsequent generations can open eyes into worlds of vision that had previously been closed to all but a few. For this important contribution Paley and the Blake Trust deserve considerable gratitude.

¹ Other versions of *Jerusalem* have been reproduced in a variety of visual forms, as follows: copy C was reproduced in facsimile by the William Blake Trust in 1952 and again in 1955; though its note of acknowledgment seems to me ambiguous, it appears that Minna Doskow's *William Blake's "Jerusalem": Structure and Meaning in Poetry and Picture* (Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson UP, 1982) includes photographs of that Blake Trust facsimile; copy B, consisting of only the first 25 plates, colored very differently from copy E, was reproduced by the Blake Trust in 1974; copy D was reproduced in facsimile, anonymously, in London in 1877; reduced photographs of copy D appear in David V. Erdman, *The Illuminated Blake* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1974); copy A is reproduced in black-and-white photographs of full size in David Bindman, *The Complete Graphic Works of William*

Blake (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978). Thirteen of the 20 illustrations in Paley's *The Continuing City: William Blake's "Jerusalem"* (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1983) are photographs, on glossy paper, of plates from *Jerusalem*, including two color photographs, reduced, from copy E. The 33 illustrations in Terence Allan Hoagwood, *Prophecy and the Philosophy of Mind: Traditions of Blake and Shelley* (University, AL: U of Alabama P, 1985) include 16 photographs, on acid-free rag paper, of plates from *Jerusalem* copies A and E. Joanne Witke's *William Blake's Epic: Imagination Unbound* (London: Croom Helm; New York: St. Martin's, 1986) includes 21 illustrations, all but one of them photographs of plates from *Jerusalem* (though the fact is not made entirely explicit in the book, it appears that these photographs are taken from copy D, at Harvard). Two illustrated exhibition catalogues have been so widely useful that they bear mentioning here: David Bindman's *William Blake: His Art and Times* (Yale Center for British Art and Art Gallery of Ontario, 1982) includes six color photographs (some full size) and ten reduced black-and-white photographs from *Jerusalem* copy E; Martin Butlin's *William Blake* (London: Tate Gallery, 1978) includes a full-size color photograph of the title page from copy B and 15 reduced photographs in black-and-white from copies B and E.

For the opportunity to examine in detail the water-colored *Jerusalem* and a marvelous and large collection of Blake's art in a variety of media during my tenure as Residential Fellow at the Yale Center for British Art, I am grateful to the staff of that institution, to Duncan Robinson, its Director, and to the generosity of Paul Mellon, who for a time allowed the unique water-colored *Jerusalem* to be housed at the Yale Center.

² "Not all works had to be coloured to merit [the] term['Finished']", but *Jerusalem* did" (Paley, Introduction 9).

³ This was the set consisting of *William Blake's Illustrations of the Book of Job and Colour Versions of William Blake's Book of Job Designs from the Circle of John Linnell*, ed. David Bindman (London: The William Blake Trust, 1987).

⁴ For this information Paley aptly cites Erdman's *Blake: Prophet Against Empire*, 3rd ed. (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1977).

⁵ Visconti, *The Art of William Blake's Illuminated Prints* (Manchester: Manchester Etching Workshop, 1983) 16.

⁶ Keynes had specified 1948 [Blake 14 (1979): 110]; George Goyder, "The Origins of the William Blake Trust," *Blake* 21 (1988): 150-51, shows that initial steps were taken for the project in 1945.

⁷ For instructive comments on this problem, I am grateful to Patrick Noon, Curator of Rare Books and Prints and Drawings at the Yale Center for British Art, and Peter Van Wingen, Director of the Rare Book Division at the Library of Congress.

⁸ See the excellent review of these volumes by Martin Butlin, *Blake* 22 (1988/89): 105-10.

⁹ See Stephen Keynes, "Blake Trust's Chairman's Report," *Blake* 18 (1984): 126-27.

¹⁰ The Chairman's Report announced that "Dr. Haven O'More has assumed responsibility for *The Island in the Moon* and the Trust has indicated its readiness to be associated—though without obligation—with the publication when it is eventually issued" (Stephen Keynes 127). The *Island* facsimile did appear, in 1987, edited, introduced, and annotated by Michael Phillips, under the imprint of Cambridge University Press and the Institute of Traditional Science. G.E. Bentley, Jr.'s review of the *Island* facsimile points out that "For unexplained reasons, 'it fell to the Institute [of Traditional Science] to take the work soon after its conception and bring it to completion'" (Blake 22 [1988/89]: 103, quoting O'More's Preface to the *Island* facsimile). It may be that Stephen Keynes's "Chairman's Report" of 1984 gives us an indication of those unexplained reasons.

¹¹ Jerome J. McGann, *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1983) 48.

¹² Blake 13 (1979): 110.

¹³ Blake 13 (1979): 110.

¹⁴ Stephen Keynes 127.

¹⁵ Bentley, *Blake* 22 (1988/89): 103.

¹⁶ Blake, letter to George Cumberland, 12 April 1827; in *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, newly rev., ed. David V. Erdman (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1982) 784.

¹⁷ See G. E. Bentley, Jr., *Blake Records* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1969) 501.

¹⁸ See Jerome J. McGann, "William Blake Illuminates the Truth," *Critical Studies* 1 (1989): 43-60.

¹⁹ Essick's argument appears in the *Art Bulletin of Victoria*, no. 31 (1990): 20-25.

²⁰ It is the way of subliminal things to have mistakes in them and in this sense the volume here under review is no exception; for that matter, neither were Blake's calligraphic works, as in the misspelling "incoherent," plate 5, line 3—a slip-of-the-brush which Paley's meticulous transcription faithfully reproduces. I shall record here a few merely mechanical errors in the editorial apparatus of this book (I have found none at all in the transcription of the text of *Jerusalem*); it is my hope that this volume will have a long life that will include many reprintings, and these errors are entirely easy of correction.

page 9: "the whole work cannot have been existed then" page 15: "41 [37]" means pl. 41 in copy E, here reproduced, and pl. 37 in the monochrome copies; however, without explanation, on p. 14, "41 [46]" means pl. 41 of the monochrome copies, and plate 46 in copy E. There is apparently some unintended confusion in the method of citing plate numbers for the alternative orders of pagination in the different copies of *Jerusalem*.

page 126: missing mark to close quotation: "Loss Hammer 36 [32]: 21."

page 130: missing opening parenthesis: "a portable sun. Raine 1: 223 and pl. 66)"

²¹ As Paley points out, this issue has been helpfully interpreted by Nelson Hilton, *Literal Imagination: Blake's Vision of Words* (U of California P, 1983): according to Hilton, the relationship of "worshipped" and "warshipped" in *Jerusalem* "creates another instant in Blake's identification of early Jewish history and contemporary Britain" (18).

²² That subterranean line is: "And from the Thirty-two Nations of the Earth among the Living Creatures."

²³ A fuller discussion of the differences between the monochrome version of plate 1 and the water-colored version in copy E appears in a book not mentioned by Paley; for that discussion, and a comparison of plate 1 with Blake's "Death's Door" design (in its very different versions as a white-line engraving, then as illustration 11 for *The Grave*, and then plate 15 in *For the Sexes: The Gates of Paradise*) and with "The Soul exploring the recesses of the Grave," see Terence Allan Hoagwood, *Prophecy and the Philosophy of Mind: Traditions of Blake and Shelley* (University, AL: U of Alabama P, 1985) 61-66. Like Paley's, this discussion of the plate emphasizes the meanings and reference of the images, including the backward wind and the globe of fire.

²⁴ For helpful conversation about these methods of etching, inking, and printing, I am grateful to Robert Patten.

²⁵ Essick, *William Blake: Printmaker* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1980) 24. I would like to thank Professor Essick for additional information, provided in correspondence, which has been helpful to me in the interpretation of the visual differences and in the preparation of this review.

²⁶ For advice on this procedure of comparison, and for providing the transparent photocopies, I am grateful to Theresa Fairbanks, Chief Conservator at the Yale Center for British Art. On the issue of Blake's different print methods and their resulting effects, and on many other issues that have transformed and enriched my understanding of Blake's art, I am likewise grateful to Patrick Noon, Curator of Prints and Drawings at the Yale Center.

²⁷ Wittreich, "Opening the Seals: Blake's Epics and the Milton Tradition," in *Blake's Sublime Allegory: Essays on "The Four Zoas," "Milton," "Jerusalem"*, ed. Stuart Curran and Wittreich (Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1973) 55.

Newsletter

William Blake: Innocence and Experience

The National Endowment for the Humanities has announced a Summer Seminar for School Teachers on "William Blake: Innocence and Experience," to be led by Nelson Hilton. The session will run from June 21 to July 16, 1993, and offer each participant a stipend of \$2450. The seminar is designed primarily for full-time or regular part-time teachers at public, private, or parochial schools, grades 7 through 12, but other school personnel, K-12, are also eligible to apply. For further information contact Professor Hilton at the Department of English, University of Georgia, Athens GA 30602 (email: nhilton@uga.cc.uga.edu).

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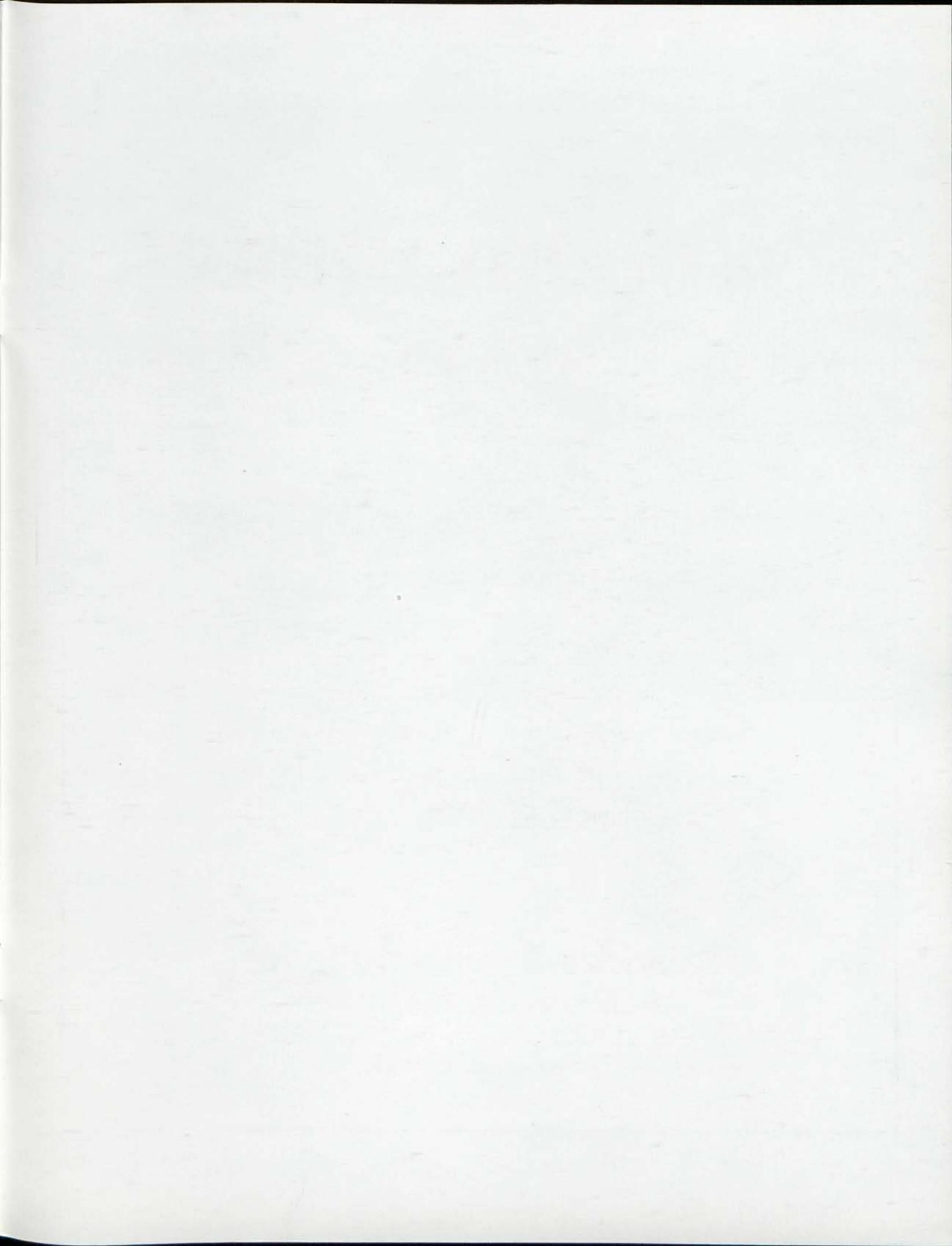
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